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Sunday
January 4, 2026

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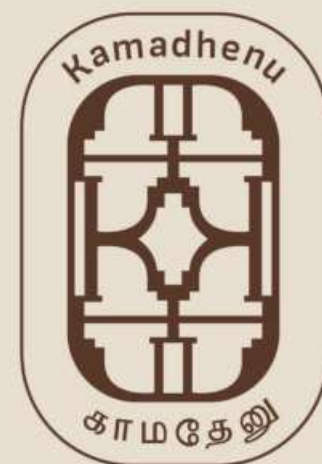
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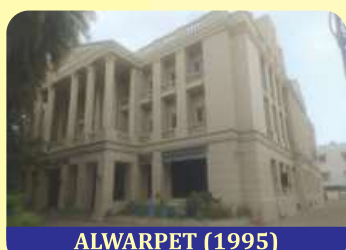


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Pelathope residents push back *against parking*

They have sought the Mylapore MLA's help in addressing the issue of unauthorised parking on a section of R.K. Mutt Road that hinders access to their street

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Three years ago, Pelathope Residents Association in Mylapore slammed the brakes on unauthorised parking in their narrow street. They put up 'No Parking' boards and got resident-volunteers to have a hawk's eye on the street, making sure the exhortation of those boards were heeded.

Fifteen CCTV cameras were installed along the street.

The Association has now taken up a campaign to prevent vehicles from being parked at the entrance



of their street. Off RK Mutt Road, the street is located opposite a well-known textile shop, and many people shopping in the area find it convenient to leave their vehicles on the road.

On December 27, the Association invited Mylapore MLA Dha. Velu on a walk of their street, highlighting various initiatives they have taken and concerns they want addressed, and prominent among

them is the concern of unauthorised parking.

"Metro work is happening at the end of our street, so many people park their vehicles on RK Mutt Road. From Indian Bank to our street, many cars and tempos are parked in such a way that we residents cannot enter or leave the street with our four-wheelers," says N. Venkatesh, secretary of Pelathope Residents Association.



Mylapore MLA Dha. Velu with Pelathope residents on December 27; and the entrance to the street.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Residents have spoken to establishments on this section of RK Mutt Road seeking that they do not direct shoppers to park their vehicles around the entrance to Pelathope but that has had little effect.

They requested the MLA to make a 150-meter stretch from Indian Bank to the MRTS station a 'No Parking' zone. "Or, at least have regular towing of vehicles, which will deter people from parking on the road," says Venkatesh.

RWH wells

Every year, the Association has been taking up some improvement work or the other. To harness rainwater from the street, three recharge wells have been sunk. During the meet with the MLA, residents wanted an open junction box to be fenced. "The MLA assured us that it could be part of Greater Chennai Corporation's view-cutter project," says the secretary.

The issue of poor lighting near Thirumayilai Railway Station was also taken up.

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Waste on Wheels in Mylapore

GANGA SRIDHAR

On December 28, 2025 a goods carrier popped in at multiple addresses in Mylapore. The wheels started rolling at RA Puram Murugan Stores with a team from Raja Annamalaipuram Residents Association (RAPRA) waving a flag to symbolise the launch of a waste collection drive. Called “Waste On Wheels”, the exercise collected recyclable and reusable items from various places

Organised by EcoKonnectors Trust in partnership with SAAHAS-Chennai, the Waste on Wheels col-

lection drive witnessed the participation of multiple Residents’ Welfare Associations in Mylapore and Mandaveli. Ahead of the waste collection, the organisers had encouraged residents to declutter their homes with the objective of giving away things that can be owned again.

Various RWAs responding to the call with enthusiasm, community participation was the defining feature of the day.

In the week leading up to the drive, RWA representatives actively engaged residents through door-to-door visits, newspaper notices and social media campaigns. Their efforts ensured widespread aware-

An impressive number of Residents Welfare Associations participated in a drive to collect recyclable and reusable items. Ahead of this exercise, residents had been encouraged to declutter their homes



Snapshots of the drive held on December 28. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ness and enthusiastic involvement.

Collection points were set up at R.K. Nagarra, Mandaveli Raja Street, Poonga View, T.P. Scheme Road, Ganeshram Apartment (Srinivasa Avenue), Ragamalika, Jeth Nagar.

A separate vehicle was arranged for bulky waste such as mattresses, making it convenient for households to responsibly dispose of items long stored in lofts and wardrobes.

Residents expressed visible satisfaction as they contributed to the collective effort. Usable clothes collected were distributed by the SAAHAS team to orphanages and senior homes, while recyclable materials (plastics of all grade, cardboard, glassware, e-waste, Thermocol) were sent to the SPRECO recycling unit for processing.

(Ganga Sridhar is a resident of Mandaveli Raja Street and associated with EcoKonnectors)





After the work; and when the work was being carried out. PHOTOS: M. SRINATH

Regular traffic restored

A cave-in on a section of RK Mutt Road had led to traffic diversions in the region

M. SRINATH

With a section of RK Mutt Road (landmark: Vivekananda Book House) in Mylapore caving in on the morning of January 1, 2026, there were implications for how habitues travelled or did not travel not only on this section, but a few others on this major road as well.

A damage in the sewage system had triggered this cave-in. Traffic, particularly MTC buses, was diverted for

two days (Thursday and Friday) through other connected routes.

Buses were diverted from St. Mary's Road to Mandaveli Market, from where they would take a right turn to Norton Road. Heavy and sluggish traffic prevailed in the area due to the blockade at RK Mutt Road. CMWSSB attended to the sewage system damage promptly and resolved it without any delay. Regular traffic, including buses, are now back to operating in this section.



READERS WRITE

'Free' this road in RA Puram

School Road in R.A. Puram has been reduced to a narrow lane due to encroachments, forcing students and other pedestrians to walk on the carriageway.

Vehicles are parked on the sidewalk along the school compound. Passersby urinate around this space, behind the vehicles. The silt has not been cleared which lets off a foul smell. Overall, road user experience on this road, which has two schools, is abysmal.

There is no sidewalk on the BSNL quarters side as it has been totally encroached upon. Adding to list of woes, a gaping pothole is found in front of BSNL Staff Quarters and also on both the sides of the speed breaker. Thanks to these potholes, motorists suffering a fall is



common.

The CCTV camera installed right above the nameboard is non-functional. Recently, a couple of thefts were reported from inside the BSNL staff quarters.



Both GCC and the traffic police should take steps and restore the original width of the road by dealing with the encroachments.

Ravimanickavasagam Ravi,
RA Puram

Newly laid road dug up

Mukurnalla Muthu Street in Parrys, George Town, was relaid in October as it suffered damages due to rain. Unfortunately this newly laid road was dug up recently for some maintenance work. Now for nearly one week a heap of rubble stays there without proper patchwork. Lack of coordination among government departments results in a situation where the public have to put up with poor civic facilities.

Ilyas Haidari
Angappa Street



Dance performance in Alwarpet on January 6

Sarada Kala Nilayam (SKN), a performing arts organisation, presents 'Vaa Velava' by Sweta Ravisankar and Jayashree Seshadri on January 6 at Media, The Stage, Alwarpet; 7 p.m.

The teacher-student duo of Sweta Ravisankar and Jayashree Seshadri will present a performance rooted in the Bharatanatyam tradition, said a press release. An unwavering devotion to Muruga will be expressed through the compositions of violin maestro Lalgudi G. Jayaraman, it added.

For tickets, visit <https://www.theticket9.com/event/vaa-velava>

'Gifting Smiles' completes a decade

AGUA Gifting Smiles has completed a decade of spreading smiles, dignity and hope. As part of the initiative, thoughtfully chosen toys are wrapped with love and placed gently in a child's hands. What began as a small act of kindness has now touched 1,08,000 young lives. From underprivileged neighbourhoods to fishing communities, volunteers have walked through 16 districts across Tamil Nadu, carrying brand-new toys chosen with care and gifted with respect.

From Tamil Nadu, the initiative has now extended to Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Pune and Hyderabad as well as to other countries.

The release adds that at the heart of AGUA Gifting Smiles are people. More than 600 volunteers, students, professionals, and families, have come together, many returning year after year.

For details, visit www.aguagiftingsmiles.com.

In the company of books

At DLF Garden City in Semmencherry, we currently have a room with a pile of books. A factor that is conspicuous by its absence is a keeper of books. There are also no volunteers to maintain a catalogue of books that come in and arrange them on the shelves neatly and systematically according to subjects. I would like to take a leaf out of the library at Tata Sherwood, a gated community in Bangalore for the space's ability to drive knowledge seeking in a lively community spirit.

There are also lessons to be taken from the Palakkam District Library, once my go-to place for knowledge. I would want the library at DLF Garden City to reflect the qualities these two libraries represent, enabling residents to connect over shared interests.

Dr. Vinatha Chettoor, resident, DLF Garden City, Semmencherry



Residents'

wish list for 2026

The Hindu Downtown spoke to a cross-section of residents welfare associations across Chennai on the initiatives they want to kickstart, sustain or extend in the New Year

LIFFY THOMAS



Powering a green transition

Last year, we launched an initiative to switch to clean energy source for our power needs. We are a community with more than 160 villa-type houses; and 20-25 of us have installed rooftop solar units in a case of shared inspiration. I got motivated to go in for this system after seeing it in a neighbouring community where my friend resides. The 5.4 kW solar unit has made a huge difference to how my power bills read. From ₹25,000 billed every cycle, the bill now ranges between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000. The Association has been supporting this drive by bringing on board vendors who help clarify nagging doubts residents harbour. We hope to add to the count of solar rooftop installations this year.

Logendrakumar M.K., president, Chettinad Enclave Village Owners Association, Pallikaranai

Replicating a social project

Jagannatha Nagar and SIDCO Nagar are neighbouring colonies in Villivakkam known for exchanging notes on their best practices. South Jagannatha Nagar Residents Association's blackboard project is worthy of emulation. Residents have given jaded, lack-lustre blackboards at the Government Boys School in the neighbourhood a fresh coat of black paint. These boards had lost their defining colour over the years and children found it a challenge to read what had been written on it. Residents pooled in money and many of them also rolled up their sleeve to paint these boards to restore its lost colour. The RWA has painted close to 25 blackboards at the school. There is a government school near us and I am hoping to get my Association to launch a similar project this year.

S.V. Kumar, treasurer, SIDCO Nagar Welfare Association, Villivakkam

Saving trees

We have started the groundwork for the redevelopment of Jeevan Bima Nagar, an apartment community that came up in 1995. Spread across 15.5 acres in Anna Nagar, we have one condition for the probable developer - ensure none of the trees in the society is cut down. Over the decades, residents have nurtured more than 1000 trees in the society and we want this green treasure to be intact.

TV Radhakrishnan, president, Jeevan Bima Nagar Flat Owner's Welfare Association, Anna Nagar West Extension



No plastics, please!

This year, we are focusing on shoring up a campaign to make our gated community, Ceebros Garden in Virugambakkam, and its immediate surroundings environment-friendly. Towards this, we have formed a green team 'Swacch Ceebros'. Posters reminding residents that plastic carrybags are banned are placed at prominent spots. The team has also been campaigning with vendors outside the community to not sell items in single-use plastics, so this drive will continue covering more ground.

As we are more than a 20-year-old community with over 350 flats, we have been studying waste management models adopted by other communities. Our objective is to minimise the amount of waste that has to be collected by conservancy staff. As part of this goal, we have started studying composting models. Space is the main challenge to this initiative but we hope to resolve this issue in 2026.

Shankar Raman G, president, Ceebros Garden Owners' Association, Virugambakkam

A decentralised waste management system

On January 4, Residents of Kasturba Nagar Association will be visiting us to explain the waste management model they have adopted. The initiative is being piloted by Mrs. Indu Jagannathan. We hope to take lessons from them as well as discuss ways to overcome challenges in waste management faced by residents welfare associations.

Earlier, we studied the model followed by Casurina Drive on East Coast Road and a community in Nungambakkam. An effective decentralised waste management model, which is also affordable and sustainable, is our goal for 2026.

Priya Rajashekhar, member, Kalakshetra Colony Welfare Association, Besant Nagar

Photos used for representational purpose



Yuva Tyagaraja Festival brings young musicians together

Youth Artists Development Association (YADA) presented the Yuva Tyagaraja Festival, a soulful celebration dedicated to the timeless legacy of Saint Tyagaraja, on December 30 at Sri Tyagaraja Sangeetha Vidwath Samajam in Mylapore.

At the heart of this festival was Yuva Tyagaraja Pancharatna Seva, spearheaded by Ramya Ranganathan Srinivas, founder and director

of YADA, and showcased as part of YADA's 6th Margazhi Yuva Utsav. Rooted in deep reverence for Sri Tyagaraja and his profound devotion to Lord Rama, this initiative aims to introduce children and youth to Rama Bhakthi through Tyagaraja Aradhana, said a release.

The Pancharatna Seva offered an immersive, bhakti-centered musical experience where young participants sang, listened and absorbed the spiritual essence of the

Pancharatna Kritis as an act of prayer.

The morning commenced with a youth-led rendition of Sri Tyagaraja's Pancharatna Kritis, guided by eminent gurus. Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan provided insightful commentary throughout the programme, while the Yuva Pancharatna Seva was conducted by YADA's Raga Ratna awardee, violin maestro Raghavendra Rao.

Vittal Ramamurthy presided over

the Pancharatna rendering as guest of honour, blessing the young artists with his presence and encouragement.

YADA Award Function

The title "Raga Ratna" was conferred upon violin maestro B. V. Raghavendra Rao in recognition of his exemplary contributions to Carnatic music. The award was presented by A. Ramji, vice-president of Sri Tyagaraja Sangeetha Vidwath

Samajam and president of the Global Vishnu Sahasranamam Satsang Federation. The festival concluded with Utsava Sampradaya Bhakti Kirtanam, rendered by students of Kalaimamani Vid. Shri Neyveli Santhanagopalan, along with young artists. Supported by Vijayashree School of Harikatha, Sishyakulam, GCMA Car Project, and TTVV Trust, children and youth of all levels actively performed and participated in this initiative.



An evening of devotion

Sanskriti, an initiative by Lakshmi Vibhu from R.A.Puram, presented a narration of the Thirukollur Penpillai Rahasiyams on December 27 at Ragamalika Apartment.

The presentation was rendered by students Rachana, Supriti, Vedanth

and Saranga under the guidance of Lakshmi Vibhu, their Guru.

The evening was marked by a serene devotional ambience and concluded with the chanting of Sudharshana Ashtagam, followed by an engaging crossword designed to test listeners understanding.

Bhavan's Natya Utsav till January 15

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is conducting Bhavan's Natya Utsav till January 15 at its Main Hall, East Mada Street in Mylapore. The series consist of 63 performances in Bharath-

natyam, Kuchupudi, Kathak, Odissi and Mohiniattam by various groups and individuals.

The programme is non-ticketed and open to all.

PLAN YOUR WEEK

Dance production

Chathur Lakshana Academy of Fine Arts, a Bharathanatyam dance school in Mylapore, will be presenting 'Anbe Jeevadharan', an unconventional, thought provoking dance production based on four inspiring stories around the world. It explores the unifying force that connects people across borders - love. Every person touched by this performance could be more empathetic and understanding, says a note.

The event is on January 8; 7.15 p.m. at Karthick Fine Arts; and January 12, 6 p.m. at Bharathiya Vidhya Bhavan

Kolam contest on January 11

Mandaveli Raja Street Residents' Welfare Association will be hosting its signature Pongal Festival featuring a variety of cultural activities that celebrate Tamil heritage and community spirit. The theme based kolam competition on January 11 is based on 'Media World'. Resi-

dents from other neighbourhood are also welcome to take part. The theme based competition will be conducted under three categories - A) Raja Street residents B) Guest participants from other areas and C) Children.

For details, call 9841033715, 9940056069.

Spiritual event on January 11

Sri Krishna Sweets, in association with YACD Trust Gopalapuram, will conduct "Vitala Vitala" Veedhi Namasankeerthanam, a spiritual event on January 11, 5 a.m. at from Kapaleeswarar Temple, Mylapore

The event will feature a lineup of performances including Nadaswaram, Veda Parayanam, Lalitha Sahasranam chanting, Namasankeerthanam, classical dance and Siva Vinyasam. Over 250 students and devotees are expected to participate along with eminent musicians and artists from diverse backgrounds, said a release.



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The juvenile Red-backed shrike at Broken Bridge Road in December 2025. PHOTOS: SUNDARAVEL PALANIVEL

Before going into this question, a word on the unlikelihood of a Red-backed shrike, adult or juvenile. Between its breeding grounds in Europe and northern Asia and wintering grounds in Africa, the Red-backed shrike's points of contact with India lie in the north-west as passage migrant. There are records of the bird from north-west India.

For a bird to veer so far from its course and end up on Broken Bridge Road, it must be a Jonathan Livingstone Seagull to the power of 100.

Now, on the question of ascertaining if it is indeed a juvenile Red-backed shrike and not a youngster from another shrike family, eBird has accepted it as a true-blue Red-backed.

Sundaravel rattles off the features present in the bird that make it a Red-backed shrike: "Squarer tail end (as opposed to the rounded one in a Brown shrike); greyish rump; darker vermiculations on the breast; and darker subterminal bands to tertials."

The adult Red-backed shrike can be identified with eyes closed: striking red on the back and grey on the head making misidentification a statistical impossibility.

Ending it on a chirpy note

Adyar Estuary and Broken Bridge Road are known to spring surprises consistently and they were true to form till the fag end of 2025 when they hosted a juvenile Red-backed shrike, triggering a procession of camera-toting birders to this part of the universe

PRINCE FREDERICK

How something ends sticks in the mind faster than how it began, except where the beginning and the middle had been singularly impressive. A batsman fending off genuinely quick deliveries more with the arm than the willow would make a scorn-worthy sight. But charity would be extended towards this player if they had lorded it over the 22 yards until twilight dawned on their career. Memories of past exploits would lighten current reality, recasting it in less gloomy shade.

If Adyar Estuary and Broken Bridge Road had ended 2025 without a curious chirp, birders would not have frowned upon the non-show. Through the year, these two patches, considered first cousins even co-joined twins, had been pulling a rare bird out of their heavily decorated feathered hats frequently. Even a non-show at the tail end would have been described in a celebratory tone much in the manner of the incomparable Don's last-inning duck, stranding him 1/

The bird that showed up being a juvenile, anatomical feather-splitting was inevitable. Biological sketches are rarely etched until people grow up; so it is with birds. Juveniles of the Brown shrike and the Red-backed shrike can pass off as siblings till they are viewed with knitted brows for diagnostic features

16th of an inch short of a glorious average of 100 in Test cricket.

Far from having a non-show, these patches ended it with a thumping six off the last ball. They would not have hoped for a better ending to 2025 than the continued sighting of a juvenile Red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*) through December.

Until recently, the bird seemed to have pitched tent around the Broken Bridge Road. On the day this write-up was flapping towards the press (January 3), a party of

hopefuls had headed to the twin patches seeking a glimpse of this bird.

Birder Sundaravel Palanivel remarks that in December, close to 40 birders would have seen this bird and documented it. The sightings of this Red-backed shrike had largely happened on the Broken Bridge Road outside the Theosophical Society compound wall. Sundaravel adds that only for around a week now, the bird

has gone unnoticed; it is probably inside the TS campus.

The bird that showed up being a juvenile, anatomical feather-splitting was inevitable. Biological sketches are rarely etched until people grow up; so it is with birds. Juveniles of the Brown shrike and the Red-backed shrike can pass off as siblings till they are viewed with knitted brows for diagnostic features.

