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July 10 - 16, 2021

4 pages Free Circulation

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## Many people are unhappy with arrangements for *pradosham* at Sri Kapali Temple

By S. Prabhu

A few hundred people waited patiently outside the eastern raja gopuram of the Sri Kapaleswarar Temple on Wednesday evening (July 7) to have a darshan of the *pradosham* procession since the temple officials decided to temporarily shut the temple for devotees till the end of the event.



But not all of them were happy with the arrangements. A group of senior citizens who have been regulars at the temple for two decades vented their disappointment.

K. Jayabalan who has been at the *pradosham* for the past 22 years said that since the temple campus is big, people could have been let in and spread them out inside.

He also said that people were forced to keep moving in the queue and that they were not able to stand in front of the swamy or amal even for a minute to have a darshan. "If

the officials allowed devotees around the prakara, social distancing can be easily maintained," Jayabalan said.

K. Vaidyanathan, who is a regular at Srikanth's Shiva Puranam group recital and at the Artha Jaama Pooja every night here, says that it was a bad decision to 'lock' people in a barricaded queue when the temple space is big. "If they had allowed people into the prakara, the crowd would have spread out," he added.

V. Sethuraman, a regular at the temple for two decades questioned the temple's decision not to permit the recital of the Shiva Puranam recital inside the temple at 7 p. m.

Since the regulations were relaxed at temples across the state, people at this temple have not been allowed to move around in the prakara except during artha jaama pooja. Temple executive officer D. Kaveri said that there was a government direction to not allow people access when a festival / ritual is conducted.

Mylaporeans point out that at Sri Parthasarathy Temple in Thiruvallikeni, people are allowed to go on a *pradakshinam* around the prakara of the temple. Also, during last Friday's Thayar procession inside that temple, all people were allowed to participate in the procession.

Interestingly, a wedding was held at the Navathri mandapam inside the Sri Kapali Temple last Wednesday morning that saw a big attendance.

-Photos - Madhan Kumar

## Grand abhisekam for lord Nataraja at Sri Karaneeswarar Temple on July 15

By S. Prabhu

Aani Uthiram is one of the six days in the year when there is a special and grand abhisekam for lord Nataraja at Sri Karaneeswarar Temple.

The abhisekam will start at 5.30pm and run up till 10pm. This year the day falls on July 15.

It was on this day that lord Shiva provided darshan to Saivite saint poet Manickavachakar.

Shanmugha Gurukul, who has been performing pooja at the temple for three decades, told Mylapore Times that Aani Uthiram is one of the special festive days in the year at this temple.

"Hundreds of devotees visit the temple that evening to watch the abhisekam for lord Nataraja."

With the opening up of temples for devotees, he expects devotees to turn up in good numbers on July 15 evening.



Photo: Prabhu

## Sanjay Subrahmanyan's musical snippet

Carnatic music artiste Sanjay Subrahmanyan has just released the seventh episode of his video series titled 'On That Note'. This one is themed on the raga Kuntalavarali.

In this series of snappy videos, conceptualised and executed by Adyar-based Bhargavii Mani, Sanjay dips into a ragam and then shares an experience or a thought or a career facet associated with it.

And this far, each episode has brought up some fascinating nuggets of Sanjay's musical journey. Bhargavii Mani says she and her team have been shooting the episodes on a regular basis at her studio in Adyar "taking 100% precautions required of the pandemic time" and it has been an enjoyable experience.

You can access On That Note series on the YouTube channel at - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOwMXGjxY-otFyVdby5i4m1g>

Sanjay also runs a paid-for Sanjay Sabha titled channel where you get to listen to his concert music for a subscription fee.



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The buzz was back at local restaurants on Monday morning – the buzz created by people who like to have an early breakfast.

Following further relaxation of pandemic-time rules by the state, restaurants are now allowed to entertain only 50% occupancy by diners on their premises.

This far, only take-aways were allowed.

At Sangeetha restaurant on South Mada Street in Mylapore, there was a regular stream of people who dropped in to enjoy a hearty breakfast or just sit and enjoy a cup of hot coffee, as this photo shot on Monday shows.

## Geetha Lakshmi and Revathi launch their social work project

By Our Staff Reporter

Geetha Lakshmi has been running an educational academy on Madha Church Road in R. A. Puram primarily aimed at

offering tuitions to school and college students.

This week, she ventured into an activity whose idea she had been nursing for sometime – social work.

Human Foundation Educational and Charitable Trust, which has Geetha and her friend Revathi as the two trustees, on Tuesday (July 6) distributed notebooks and stationery

to 30 children who live in the slum area of Meenam-balpuram in the shadow of Citicentre shopping mall, Mylapore.

“I have been educating some poor school students for free at my academy,” said Geetha. “The idea of a Trust was formed last year.”

Since funds are slow to come by in these trying times, Geetha says they will space out their charity work. Next on their plan is to support children in the coastal Nochi Nagar in San Thome.

Geetha, a resident of Mandavelipakkam has informally run the tuitions centre for over 20 years but Right Choice Academy was formalised much later. Plans to offer training to youths attempting exams that admit people to

state government services have had to be put on hold due to the pandemic.

“The pandemic has hit us all badly,” says Geetha. “So though my teachers offer tuitions online I have asked them to keep the fees students pay so that their earnings keep continuing.”

Contact Geetha Lakshmi at – 8438989109.



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Photo: Juliana Sridhar



## Teachers of this Chennai School make special efforts to attract admissions, support families in distress

By Juliana Sridhar

The Headmistress and teachers of the Chennai High School located on Eldams Road hit upon a novel idea to enrol students in their school for the new academic year.

They printed handbills highlighting the academic facilities on campus and set out to visit the neighbourhood colonies fringing the school, walking down alleys and into congested spaces.

A few teachers carried a plate with betel leaves and fruits as a traditional mark of welcoming and some handed over masks and sanitisers to the people they met.

Said a senior teacher who was part

of this campaign, "Our efforts have paid off and the strength of the school has increased from 307 to 405 students in the past few days."

As many local area children hail from economically-backward sections of society and their parents are struggling to make ends meet during this pandemic time, the school teachers have made efforts to get NGOs involved in order to reach out to affected families.

Some charitable bodies have helped. Satya Sai Trust from Mylapore is one such – its members donated 360 bags of groceries.

The foodstuff bags are distributed to the students whose families are in dire straits.

## Symbolic Farewell

Dr. C. Sylendra Babu took charge as the new head of the Tamil Nadu Police at the Police Headquarters located off the Marina in Mylapore.

On June 30, Babu was greeted by the retiring DGP, J. K. Tripathy in the office and after the two formally signed the files required for the change over, the two exchanged flower bouquets.

When it was time to bid goodbye to the retiring police officer, senior officers set in motion a symbolic act which the Police seem to have borrowed from the Indian Army. They had coloured ropes tied to the car of Tripathy, who was accompanied by his wife and the car was slowly pulled to the gates of the campus - a warm, symbolic farewell to the retiring officer.



## Feast of saint Thomas celebrated over four days at St. Thomas Cathedral

By Our Staff Reporter

The annual celebration of the feast of saint Thomas at St. Thomas Cathedral in San Thome falls at this time of the year. But this time around, the religious and the laity here curtailed it so as to fall in line with the state-ordered restrictions during pandemic time in places of worship.

So, the feast was celebrated for just four days, from July 1. The flag hoisting ceremony was held on July 1 in the midst of a small number of people.



Daily, from 5.30 p.m. novena, recitation of the rosary and Holy Mass was held, with guest priests celebrating the Mass. Services at the cathedral are webcast on the San Thome TV YouTube channel.

## A community where youths are snared by addiction puts its hands together to address the problem



By Our Staff Reporter

Last Sunday, the community at Visalakshi Thottam, a colony that lies off Warren Road joined the Mylapore MLA, Dha. Velu to highlight the social problems they face today and to promise to discourage various forms of addiction that its local youth are indulging in.

The local community body organised this short event.

The MLA was invited so that with his support and the backup from local police, a few shady people who sell liquor and ganja and consume either inside this colony after dark, are challenged and booked.

A few participants emptied liquor bottles and let the booze fall to the ground as a symbolic sign of their protest.

One resident of this densely-habited colony of some 400 families says that the problem of addiction has grown in recent times and one reason could be due to the listlessness among youths at pandemic time when education is affected and employment is iffy.

Visalakshi Thottam is a colony of residential blocks developed by the TN Slum Clearance Board.

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## R. A. Puram community collaborates with state agency to arrange for local sales of vegetables, fruits

By Our Staff Reporter

The R. A. Puram Residents' Association (RAPRA) has been collaborating with the state government's Horticulture Department to arrange for the sale of vegetables and fruits in this neighbourhood.



Photo: RAPRA

And residents are happy with this effort since pandemic-time rules have restricted their shopping and they also get good quality foodstuff.

On three recent occasions, during the recent lockdown period, a team of the Horticulture Department heeded to the request of RAPRA and transported farm-fresh vegetables to be sold locally, says Dr. R. Chandrasekaran, patron of RAPRA.

Once, it was the sale of a 'combo bag' containing an assortment of vegetables and this was priced at Rs.100 per bag.

A week later, people got to buy fresh vegetables which were sold a la carte as

per buyers' choice in a quiet, open space in the R. A. Puram colony.

The next week, a sale of organic vegetables mix, priced at Rs. 200 per bag was organised. Some 60 bags were sold.

Dr. Chandrasekaran says that the association has built a close rapport with the Horticulture Department over recent years. For gardening enthusiasts in the locality, RAPRA has organised many gardening workshops.

Besides talks by officers, seeds, saplings, tools and manure have been sold at such meets. A few months ago, the staff demonstrated to home gardeners a 'Do It Yourself' (DIY) drip irrigation kit - this is now sold at subsidised rates.

The kit allows for watering of potted plants in a systematic manner. This kit can be used at ground level as well on terraces.

In the past weeks, naturally-ripened Baganapalle mangoes were sold locally - the department's van halted at three vantage locations and sold these mangoes in no time.

Dr. Chandrasekaran says that residents are so happy with this arrangement that they want a regular 'sandhai' (market) to be arranged inside the neighbourhood. Modalities are being worked out.

If your campus / colony wants to also enjoy a similar arrangement, talk to the Horticulture Department. Get details from Dr. Chandrasekaran - 9841030040.



Youth of a church in Maduravoyal who have been involved in social service

## Motivating youth groups in churches to be involved in social service . . .

By Our Staff Reporter

The director of the Youth Commission of the Madras-Mylapore diocese of Catholics, Fr. Ronald Richard has been a busy man the past weeks.

From his office at the Pastoral Centre in San Thome, this young priest has been motivating youth groups based in churches across the diocese to get involved in pandemic-time charity work. The diocese now has 127 parishes across Chennai and parts of neighbouring Thiruvalluvar district.

The outreach began with local youths providing medicines to people belonging to the parish church who needed it badly but didn't have the money to pay for the stiff bills.

Says Fr. Richard, who earlier served at various parishes in the city, "The youths generated their own funds to support their work and this is commendable in these difficult times."

The social work moved on to youths serving cooked meals to families who were in distress when the lockdowns were ordered. This was carried out under the Good Samaritan project.

In the case of families who needed groceries, the youth groups pooled in donations and provided this too.

Fr. Richard, who took charge of the post some months ago, says diocese archbishop Rev. George Antonysamy was keen to see that church youth groups got involved in social work at the height of the pandemic.

"The archbishop has been very encouraging and I am keen to bring more youths into our projects," said the priest on the phone as he left a suburban church one recent evening where he had celebrated Holy Mass.

Youths are also encouraged to join the daily, one-hour-long prayer meet held on Google Meet, says Maria I. Regilan, a youth in suburban Chennai who co-ordinates the projects.

Now, the focus is on holding vaccination camps in far-flung churches for the community. This project was launched at Holy Trinity Church at G. G. Nagar parish with the help of the parish youth team and the guidance of parish priest Fr. Peter Thumma.

Currently, Fr Richard is overseeing the 21-Day Challenge Run - in this, a bunch of youths have been running from San Thome Cathedral to Madras University and back at dawn ; they will have to do so for 21 days and the best runner gets a cash prize.

## MARINA MAGNET



Relaxation in the rules at pandemic time is now allowing more people to be at the Marina beach.

The regular walkers and fitness enthusiasts are here every morning, go about their workouts on the broad pavement. Some have begun walking on the service road too. Here and there, you get to see sportspeople also working out - on Sunday we spotted this group of amateur boxers behind the Gandhi statue, sweating it out.

In the evenings, families are here and since access to the sands is blocked, many people creep on to the lawns here and sit on the granite arenas, their eyes feasting on the sea to the far east. Some others make use of the equipment at the open-air gym behind the statue.

Police patrols, moving up and down the service road challenge the adventurous few who walk onto the sands and shoo them away, the police blaring their warnings on the loud speakers.

The fish hawkers' market on the Marina Loop Road is busy since dawn, more so every evening and very crowded on the weekend.