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October 16 - 22, 2021

4 pages Free Circulation

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## Chennai Metro

What used to be the Chennai Corporation's playground at the far south end of R. K. Mutt Road in R. A. Puram is now a massive operational zone for Chennai Metro.

Over the month, heavy equipment has been arriving here to work on the underground rail line that will run from North Chennai via Luz and Mandaveli to Adyar and beyond.

## Balu has brought smiles to *kolu bommai* hawkers of Mylapore



By Our Staff Reporter

One man is bringing big smiles to a few hawkers of Kolu bommais on Mylapore's Mada Streets.

He is photographer G. V. Balasubramanian.

Balu, as friends call him, loves street photography, a passion that has grown since his retirement from Indian Bank. So when he has time, Balu hits the streets of the city. Streets with character. And Mylapore is his muse in some ways.

The past fortnight, Balu spent an evening on North Mada Street, shooting pictures of the hawkers,

something he has done on a few previous occasions.

"I don't disturb them. They have stuff to sell for a living," says Balu.

When he gets back home, besides musing on his day's work, posting on social media and setting aside a few frames to be entries in professional contests ( his work has been appreciated formally ), he makes prints of the frames with the hawkers, goes back to the spot and gifts them.

'At first, these people are surprised. They

smile shyly. And they ask me when I shot these pictures," says Balu. This Navaratri season, he made two trips to Mylapore to hand over copies of prints.

"I could see happiness on their faces. Happiness is sharing not only in social media," Balu said in a recent social media post showcasing a shot he took of a couple holding up the prints he gifted them. ( first photo, above)

Balu, who has loved photography since his college days got going with his camera after his retirement as a senior banker.

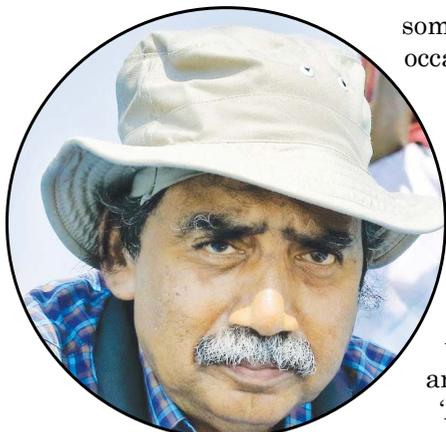
"I first enjoyed shooting on the street at the Mylapore Festival in 2014. I still remember the kokkalikattai artistes performing on the Mada street," he recalls.

Thereafter, he joined like-minded groups on photo assignments, was on PhotoWalks and became a member of the famed Photographic Society of Madras, helping organise contests for the annual Madras Day season.

Mylapore's streets always beckon him, he says. This is also an excuse to meet up with colleagues who pursue the same hobby.

And of late, he has begun to gift pictures to people whom he shoots on the streets. "If I cannot give it personally I courier the photo," he says. "It costs me just a bit."

- Photo credit: G V Balasubramanian



# KANTHI HAS FOR YEARS SUPPORTED VISUALLY DISABLED STUDENTS

This former professor of QMC has not let her disability stop her from educating blind students

By V. Vasantha

When K.M. Kanthi, retired assistant professor of English went back to Queen Mary's College recently - where she had taught - she was there for a small but special event. To be felicitated at a symposium held by the college's English department, for her service to the less abled



Kanthi served at QMC from 1982 to 2015 as assistant professor of English.

She was a student of English from 1975 - 78 at QMC. She did her M Phil in the year 1981 from University of Madras. She was the first blind woman to get qualified as a M.Phil qualified in the entire Tamil Nadu.

Kanthi lost her vision at the age of 16 due to retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic disorder. She fondly recalls that her colleagues in

QMC who pampered her all the time. She taught only spoken English at QMC. In 2013, she arranged a three hours long cultural programme exclusively by visually challenged students.

Kanthi is a trustee of 'Help the Blind Foundation' (HTBF). This Trust has branches in Singapore, Hong Kong and in the USA.

In India, HTBF helps some 4000 blind students studying all over India by giving them scholarship to complete their graduate studies.

Kanthi has been busy during the pandemic year. Doing what engages her all the time. Helping the less abled.

"When the colleges were shut due to the pandemic we took spoken English classes and classes on Reasoning and Logical thinking and the like," she says. All this was done on-line by expert teachers."

Further poor hostelites who could not go back home and had to stay in the city were given

Rs.10000 each to pay for their hostel fees.

Says Kanthi, "Today's students are highly talented in using laptop, smart phones and latest gadgets specially designed for visually handicapped. They are more focused on their assignments."

Kanthi has a few words for society and for companies - help the less abled with funds for their studies and provide them employment when qualified.



Spots on the Marina Loop Road provide a window to local fishers' life.

On some evenings, you will notice something not so common - the Illipoochi.

Fishers walk into the waterfront and use their bare hands to pounce on what look like a cross between a cockroach and a crab!

You peel off the shell and fry these and they make a nice snack. Fishers here said the Loop Road seafood stalls offer this every day.

## GCC health centres continue to offer vaccine



By Our Staff Reporter

People who still have not taken the vaccine jab and looking for it have options in the local area.

Just walk down to the GCC Health Centres.

The Centre in Alwarpet on C P Ramaswamy Road, near the flyover and Mylapore MLA's office offers the jab every morning.

Nurses here say the Covishield and the Covaxin jabs are available and it takes less than 10 minutes to get the job done.

People continue to drop in here nowadays.

## Mylapore Times Trust invites donations to fund local students

By Our Staff Reporter

Over 25 students from 5 neighbourhood schools who need funding to continue their high school studies have applied for support to Mylapore Times Charitable Trust (MTCT), managed by Mylapore Times.

The delayed annual process is taking place due to the hiccups posed by the pandemic.

A sum of Rs.2.5 lakhs will be needed to support all eligible applicants.

MTCT is supported by donations made by Mylapore Times readers and by the newspaper itself and has been in operation for over 20 years now.

If you want to make a donation, please talk to Shanthi, MT office manager at 24982244 / 24671122 or mail - mylaporetimes@gmail.com.

Donations get IT exemption too. They can be made directly to the MTCT bank account and receipt mailed to you.



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# First batch of Home Nursing course get certified: a project of FMM nuns run in San Thome campus

By Our Staff Reporter

SUDAR (Socially United for Development and Access to Resources) is a project that was launched a year ago by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM nuns), Chennai Province to facilitate a range of developmental activities for the subaltern



community, primarily for the women, single mothers and the transgenders.

In order to provide employment opportunities and make them self-reliant, this San Thome based NGO launched a three-month Home Nursing course completely free.

This course is also known as bedside

nursing where it focuses on care taking of the geriatric, palliative and patients at the hospitals.

The course was conducted at St. Raphael's School campus by a facilitator, Ashareyona who is a License Holder for Adult Basic Life Support. The course had 20 students. For the first two months, theory classes were taken and in the third month, students



were sent for a one-month internship at Venkateshwara Hospital, Nandanam.

After completing the course, a practical and theory exam was conducted for the assessment.

On October 6, the certification programme organised for the students of Home Nursing with Sr. Nirmala, Provincial of this religious body of FMM nuns as chief guest.

One student, Gayathri has secured a job in Venkateshwara Hospital where the students had done the internship.

To apply for this course and or donate to the projects call 73053 89425

# For many families, caution and online interaction mark this year's Navaratri

By S. Prabhu

The mood on North Mada Street is reflective of the return of positive sentiment at festival time in the Mylapore zone. Business has been brisk and residents have been lining up the road side shops till late in the evening.



Kesava Perumal Sannidhi Street resident Pavithra Sundararaman and her children

a few relatives and friends visiting us, we are back to pre Covid type celebrations this Navarathri. Most of my relatives and friends have visited us this year. Having been stuck inside homes for over a year, the overall sentiment is to go and visit relatives and friends. Also, most of the elder relatives have had both their doses and the fully vaccinated people are feeling comfortable and

grand uncles and aunts have been vaccinated, there has been hesitancy among senior citizens to visit others' homes. "I have been missing them this year as well as they have not been able to make it. But we have used the social media platform to share photos of our kolu with them and they have taken delight from that."

## A Quieter Celebration

Kesava Perumal Sannidhi Street resident Pavithra Sundararaman has been interested in kolu decoration during Navarathri right from her childhood. She brought in a Nava Narasimha set of idols from Thiru Vahindrapuram (Cuddalore) this year as a new addition to her kolu. A couple of years ago, she had added idols depicting the life story of Vaishnavite Acharya Vedantha Desikar. One of her favourites is the 'made to order' very distinctive idols of all the Azhvaaars.

A large number of friends and relatives from across the city used to be regulars at her kolu. While last year's Navarathri was very low key with very few friends visiting her, this year has been better though the family has been playing it safe inviting only select people from the neighbourhood.

She says that especially elders with young children are apprehensive about visiting relatives and friends to take a look at the kolu decoration.

"Only about one third of our usual group of friends and relatives have visited us this year. To make up for the loss of physical presence, we have been sharing online our kolu decoration and exchanging thoughts and ideas. But there is nothing like taking a physical look of the decoration and discussing the significance of each of the seven steps and the thought behind the placement of each of dolls," says Pavithra.



Sundararajan Street resident A. Anjana Krithika

And for many families, this is a Navaratri that is so different from the greyness of 2020 when the pandemic had swept the city

Sundararajan Street resident A. Anjana Krithika, a class VIII student at P S Sr. Sec School, has been involved in the decoration of her kolu for many years now. While she skipped a grand celebration in 2020 following the lockdown and the negative mood at that time, she has been all excited with this year's Navarathri celebrations. Her kolu with her favourite Durga right at the top is the showpiece.

"While it was low key last year with only

confident to reach out to people," she said.

Interestingly, in addition to many of her classmates visiting her kolu for Navarathri, she has had surprise visitors the last week "My school teachers too have visited our kolu and that has been a huge positive boost to us. The current feeling among my friends, relatives and teachers is that the second wave is behind us and the sentiment is definitely looking up. This is endorsed by the fact that everyone that I invited this year turned up for our kolu."

The one dampener for Anjana has been the absence of senior citizens. Even though her

# A Vedic Tradition passed on through Generations

By S. Prabhu

It is 9.30am on Friday morning in early October.

14-year-old KVR Sastha has been reciting the Krishna Yajur Vedam sitting all alone at the Venkatesa Perumal Temple on Mari Chetty Street for an hour. He has been directed to do this by his Vedic acharya G Krishna ganapadigal.

It is now a couple of years since the young boy made the trip from Hyderabad to Mylapore for a vocation.

Shortly after 1 pm, Sastha gets back to a terrace with a thatched roof, of the Gurukulam on Kesava Perumal (Sannidhi) East Street.



He is now teaching the first set of verses to three young kids who are not yet 10. They repeat the verses thrice after him. There is joy in the face of Sastha. At this young age, he seems to have taken to the Vedas quite well. Not for him watching soaps on local TV channels or wandering around the Mada Streets of Mylapore.

All his interest is around the Vedas and he has been learning the Patham along with Krishna Ganapadigal's younger son Prananathan at the Sri Vidya Saraswathi Maha Periya Niyama Adyayana Gurukulam, located

a few hundred yards away from the Vedantha Desikar Srinivasa Perumal Temple.

An interesting feature here is that the Vedic tradition is being passed on from one generation to another. For

his duty the passing on of the Vedic knowledge to his two sons.

While the original plan was to initiate only his two sons into the Vedas as part of continuing the Vedic tradition in his family,

14 years, Krishan Ganapadigal had learned the Vedas from his father Gopala Ganapadigal in Tirupathi, where the latter presented Veda Parayanam.

And over the last seven years, Krishna Ganapadigal has been initiating Krishna Yajur Vedam to his elder son Vishwanathan. Currently, the father is playing the role of Vedic acharya to his second son who has just started out on Vedic education in the last couple of years along with Sastha.

Just in the way he learnt the Vedas from his father, Krishna Ganapadigal now sees it as

a few other students too have joined this way of life, staying full time at the Gurukulam and learning the Vedas.

Krishna Ganapadigal's wife has been a big source of strength in running the Gurukulam.

She plays the role of the caretaker of the students and serves them well, the food they relish. Currently there are six students at the Gurukulam in addition to the two sons of Krishna Ganapadigal.

Those interested to contribute to the Gurukulam in any way may call: 99529 73321. Yes, donations are welcome.

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