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September 18 - 24, 2021

4 pages Free Circulation

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Community College in Alwarpet is open for admission to short-term, diploma courses

By Our Staff Reporter

Admission to a slew of one-year diploma courses are open now at the GCC Community College in Alwarpet.

And they are best suited for economically poor students who have passed their Plus Two exams and seek skills that can help get a job quickly.



While the bakery training and some courses related to the medical field fill up fast, openings are on for courses like Health Assistantship, Lab Technician and Radiology Tech courses as well in Spoken English.

The course fee is Rs.1500 and while classroom / online classes are taken at the classrooms located in the GCC premises behind Winners Bakery, hands-on training is given at Kauvery Hospitals closeby which is a partner here.

Says R. Sankaranarayanan, college administrator who retired as GCC school HM, "Due to the pandemic situation we are taking admissions till end September. GCC issues a certificate to those who pass the courses and many have got good jobs."

He is busy visiting schools to enlist students for the courses that need more admissions. And asks Mylaporeans to share this information with people whose children may benefit from these skills courses. Call 9941629635.

How is this baking course doing?

By Our Staff Reporter

Chennai Corporation commissioner Gan-gandee Singh Bedi and a team of GCC officers visited the Winner's Bakery campus in Alwarpet, where a community college programme has been running for many years with GCC as a lead partner. GCC's Deputy Commissioner for education, Sneha Divakaran accompanied Bedi.

GCC along with Rotary Club of Madras East & Foundation of Vocational Training is part of the team which manages this Community College. 'Hot Breads' Mahadevan has played a big role in this project.

A note from GCC says that currently, 53 students are being trained here. 13 students are being trained in baking; in addition to the training, they also get a monthly stipend of Rs.6000.

30 students are trained in paramedi-

cal courses and 10 in computer applications and in spoken English.

The college is alongside Winners Bakery on C. P. Ramaswamy Road, near the south end of the flyover.

This bakery draws a big crowd every day, especially in the post-lunch and early evening hours - people wanting to have a quick bite or to pack baked food for tea time.

- Photo courtesy: Chennai Corporation



Like to adopt a kitten from the lot at Nageswara Rao Park?



By Our Staff Reporter

K. Sundari of Alwarpet is a regular at Nageswara Rao Park. And she loves animals too. So when she noticed that a stray cat seen in the park had given birth to three she began to help provide food.

Sundari says that some people seem to be dropping off kittens in the park when these people are burdened with the new lot and that these kittens need nursing. "There must be over a dozen kittens in the park now," she says.

She says she has vaccinated some of the bigger cats but wants people to adopt the kittens in the park. "With the monsoon season with us soon, these cats will have a hard time in the open," she says.

If you wish to lend a hand, call Sundari K. at 9840329444

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MLA in TN Assembly: speaks on urban habitat development, temple circuit, Tholkappiya Poonga

By Our Staff Reporter

Mylapore MLA Dha. Velu of the DMK party made his maiden speech in the Tamil Nadu Assembly last week; these sessions are being held at Kalaivanar Arangham now to suit pandemic-time regulations instead of sessions at the premises in Fort St George.

Topping his presentation, Velu says he highlighted issues around redevelopment of Slum Board tenements, now renamed Urban Habitats, saying that though these tenements are many across Mylapore zone, there is a need for the Board and for residents



Dha Velu.

here to dialogue and develop projects that best suit local needs.

Velu also touched on the need to develop and manage what he calls a Temples Circuit here since there are many well known temples in Mylapore.

He says he mentioned the 'unreasonably high' rentals fixed by the HR&CE Department (on properties it owns) in recent years which could not be met by the tenants and wanted the rentals revised.

Velu also suggested that people must be given access to the Tholkappiya Poonga (Adyar Poonga) for morning walks and that the Poonga be well-maintained. He says he highlighted the need to resolve the issue of granting patta to people who have been living on plots of lands for a few generations and have not got a patta. He also asked the government to part with properties of Chennai Corporation near the Ambedkar bridge, so that redevelopment of slums could be undertaken in a larger area there.

Tenements under construction in Doomingkuppam, along the Marina Loop Road.



October may see sabha halls coming alive, hosting plays and concerts

By Our Staff Reporter

Programmes with guests and audience at sabha halls in the neighbourhood are slated to begin from October 1.

Narada Gana Sabha will open its doors to its members and guests for the release evenings from Oct.1 when Komal Theatre stages a play in Thamizh, with the first show repeated on the next two evenings under the banner of other sabhas.

Narada Gana Sabha's Harishankar says that there are at least two other sabha



events listed for October as of now.

"Our sabha members have been calling to ask when shows will re-start and we are making sure all the protocols required will be followed," he says.

The last time such live shows were held at this venue were in mid-March this year. In recent times, a few music concert recordings have taken place in this auditorium.

At R. R. Sabha, Mylapore a few arangetrams have been held privately, open to limited guests. And concerts are now open to sabha members.

This Bharatnatyam arangetram in Seattle had a touch of Mylapore



When 15-year old Nina Khilnani performed her Bharatanatyam arangetram in Seattle, her family used the occasion to pay respect to their family roots in Mylapore.

Nina's father Sunil was born in Mylapore and their family resides close to the Mylapore temple. In 2019, Nina had performed Bharatanatyam inside the Sri Kapali Koil, and snippets of this performance were played at her arangetram.

Nina has been trained by guru Vidyalakshmi Vinod at the Nrityalaya Dance School in Seattle for the past 10 years. Her family in Mylapore could not attend in-person because of travel restrictions, but were able to watch the livestream through YouTube Live.

Nina studies in 10th Grade at North Creek High School near Seattle, and says she has aspirations to continue learning, performing and teaching Bharatanatyam in the years to come.



Obituary

Vasanth Bhandarkar was a master in foundry engineering

Vasanth Bhandarkar, a resident of Luz Avenue since 1953, passed away at his residence on September 12. He was 83.

An alumnus of the Cascadia High School, Mangalore and Vivekananda College, Chennai, Bhandarkar graduated with a B.E. in mechanical engineering from the Alagappa Chettiar Institute of Technology, Karaikudi, in 1959. In 1961, he completed his M. E. in foundry engineering from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, standing first in the course.

Subsequently, he worked at Ennore Foundries before starting a die-making unit in Alandur in 1971. Soon afterwards, he founded an aluminium gravity die-casting foundry in the Guindy Industrial Estate. Over the next two decades, the foundry built and maintained a reputation as a supplier of quality castings for critical components and gained and retained a slew of marquee customers such as MICO, Eicher Motors, Kawasaki Bajaj, etc.

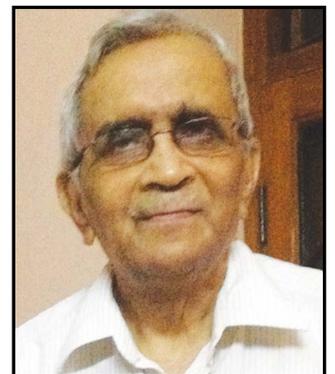
Peers, customers and competitors alike acknowledged Bhandarkar as an authority in the field of gravity die-casting and admired his die-hard commitment to quality in the manufacturing process. He was one of the first foundry owners to import a spectrometer for in-process analysis and control of aluminium alloy composition in gravity die-casting. In 1995, he sold the business and became a consultant to several of his erstwhile customers.

A man with boundless energy, an infectious zest for life, and an insatiable thirst for learning, he was a big fan of Hindustani classical music and its allied genres. He was a past treasurer of the Old Boys' Association of his engineering college and the Luz Avenue Residents' Welfare Association.

Later in life, he bore the health issues he had to face, caused by the removal of a cyst in his brain, with great fortitude, his son said.

He is survived by his wife, Shantheri Bhandarkar, and two sons – Sarvotham (in Dallas) and Ashwin (in Pune)

The family can be reached at 23/43 Luz Avenue, Mylapore. Ph: 24995867.



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By Our Staff Reporter

Two Catholic nuns of the FMM congregation based in the San Thome campus of St. Raphael's Girls School have been deeply involved in a slew of social work projects which were triggered by the pandemic situation in 2020.

These are projects that empower women who are either socially or economically weak or discriminated.

The latest project that Sister Philo and her colleague started is a short-term course in Home Nursing. "We have seen a big demand in home nurses since last year and want to train women in this line," said Sr. Philo.

With basic lessons provided by senior nurses, the three-month course has 25 young women attending it. The tie-up with Venkateswara Hospitals provides for hands-on training.

Once the first batch is skilled, the women will be placed and Sr. Philo says that a smart home nurse can earn as much as Rs.20,000 per month, working either for a few hours at a couple of places or for long hours at one place.

Since mid-2020, the nuns have been running courses in tailoring, computer skills for trans-women and in baking. And they credit their Provincial, Sister Nirmala G., for encouraging them

WHEN PANDEMIC TRIGGERS PROJECTS WHICH SKILLS PEOPLE ON THE MARGINS

Two nuns in a San Thome campus are behind a slew of courses which seek to support young girls and women



on these projects.

The trigger for this project called 'Sudar' was set off by the impact that the pandemic began to have on the poor in April - May 2020. The nuns decided to launch a tailoring course for women because the skill was in demand and women could earn. When word went around, many women signed up.

"We did not want to offer it free because most people take these things for granted," says Sr. Philo. But she still found takers for the course priced at Rs.300. The women, after training were asked to take a government exam "because this made them eligible to apply for bank loans to buy sewing machines."

Some have begun

earning after they set up the sewing machines at home.

Meanwhile, the nuns were visited by trans-women of this area, who sought food and help. This set off another trigger - to curate a skills course that would empower these people and move them away from the margins of life. Thus started the course in the basics of computer skills.

Some of these trainees even got employment - Chennai Metro contracted them for work at the Old Washermenpet station.

The nuns realised that there was more to be done with this community. So they started a course in psycho-socio analysis with the guidance of experts from the

Alwarpet. This place adjoins Winners Bakery where Mahadevan, a city Rotary Club and Chennai Corporation run a baking skills training centre.

A few women have passed this course in baking and have begun making biscuits and bread at a unit set up in the campus in San Thome where the nuns base all their activities.



reputed NIMHANS in Bengaluru.

Says Sr. Philo, "Many of these women need guidance and help to move out of their old lifecycle and get mentally positive and strong to embark on new goals."

Another project got underway when the owner of the Chennai-based multi-chain-restaurants 'Hot Breads' Mahadevan agreed to train a few single mothers at his bakery's backyard in

But funds are needed to get a full-fledged business going.

The Home Nursing course was also born out of needs expressed around the nuns at pandemic time - when some families with seniors or sick people sought out skilled home nurses.

The nuns are looking ahead, as the courses continue. But they are short on funds and welcome donations. Contact Sr. Philo at 9894480194.

A BAKERY IS THE GOAL

If all goes well, a small bakery may well open in the campus of St. Raphael's. The small batch of trained women are now producing biscuits and cookies but a full unit and more staff must be in place to run a bakery here. Then, one will be able to shop for bread, biscuits, cookies and more here.



Orderly immersion of Vinayaka images

Small groups of people, carrying images of lord Vinayaka arrived at the seashore of Pattinapakkam last Friday evening to immerse the image in the sea after Vinayaka Chaturthi celebrations at home.

Some people arrived in cars or in autos, some on bikes and police said that there were no lorries carrying large images – the large images were not allowed to be set in public spaces this year due to the pandemic.

Police men and women were posted on San Thome High Road and near the seafront and everything was orderly.

In the past, the immersion was a massive, loud and crowded affair, with the Pattinapakkam seafront being one of the key locations for the immersion of images.

Students of P. S. Higher Secondary School, Mylapore participated in the launch of the centenary celebrations of poet-freedom fighter Subramania Bharathi held on the campus. One set of students designed a visual of Bharathi using colour powders.



San Thome school alumni donate to support poor students



The 1992 batch of alumni of San Thome Higher Sec. School in San Thome has made yet another donation to support students.

This time, the group donated Rs.60,000 to meet the fees of ten students of Montfort Matric School in the same campus; these students are children of single parents.

The cheque was presented to Bro. Arockiaswamy, HM and correspondent of this school recently.

Statue of Tagore to come up in Queen Mary's College

A statue of Rabindranath Tagore is to come up in the campus of Queen Mary's College, Mylapore.

The TN minister for information and publicity, M.P. Swaminathan has announced this in the recent Assembly session. The statues of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, of former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and that of former TN finance minister V. R. Nedunchezian would be erected in three campuses in the city.

The statue of Tagore will come up on the campus of Queen Mary's College, that of Kalam in Anna University campus and that of Nedunchezian in the State Guest House in Chepauk.



Photo: S. Prabhu

Hawking on Mada Streets at festival time draws all sorts of people

By S. Prabhu

Ramesh drives the auto for a living but on the eve of the Vinayaka Chaturthi festival, was seen hawking near the Chitrakulam; he says he has been doing this for the last seven years.

He displayed around 200 handmade Ganesha idols of different sizes and expected to sell every piece by the evening of the festival.

"Customers come to check out the idol of their choice and the prices on the eve of festivals. Most of them come back on the morning of the festival to make their purchase," Ramesh said, even as scores

of customers made enquiries late that evening.

The smallest idol costs Rs. 50 while the beautiful large-sized hand-made Ganesha sells at Rs. 1000.

He seemed to know his local customers well and said this helped sell fast.

Ramesh resides near the Mundagakkanni Amman Temple, Mylapore.

There are lots of people like Ramesh who reside in Mylapore, who suspend their daily jobs or work and hawk stuff on the Mada Streets at festival time. They seem to earn more and in double quick time too.



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