



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This year Bala Mandir celebrated its milestone 75th anniversary this year on 10th March.

The celebration was also a time for reflection on the past, the historical legacy, and thinking about the future. The theme selected for the 75th year was 'Every Child Matters', which summarises Bala Mandir's vision and mission in a beautifully succinct manner. The logo for the 75th year can be seen in the masthead at the top of this newsletter.

Multiple celebrations around this special day are covered as part of this newsletter from pages 4 to 6. Initiatives to commemorate this event – a film about Bala Mandir and a coffee table book covering its history – are talked about in page 8. Do check out the film and book on our YouTube channel and website!

Our various other events, festivals and activities continued as well during this quarter, and these are covered in this newsletter too. One of the key highlights especially for the SMHS children was a first-time trip on a flight to Bengaluru, to participate in the inauguration of a new Centre by Boeing (one of our CSR partners)!

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and the recap of a very 'happening' quarter!

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BALA MANDIR MNC SPORTS DAY

Bala Mandir MNC held its annual Sports Day on 9 February 2024. The Chief Guests of the day were Mr. Edgar Pang, Consul General and Ms. Nicole Chen, Vice Consul of the Consulate of the Republic of Singapore in Chennai.

The event included various games based on categories – birth to four years, four to six years, Montessori, Jivikam, inter-school, and mainstream school. The children also performed a yoga demonstration, based on what is taught to them as part of their daily schedule. The highlight of the day was a drill and formation on the theme of 'Sea', where the children brought to life aspects of the sea, including the waves, boats, fishermen and fish. The formation was thoroughly appreciated by the audience.

The chief guest was all appreciation for the good work done by BMMNC, particularly in empowering the parents and helping them train their children.



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NEWS BITS FROM AROUND BALA MANDIR

→ The annual food festival of BMMNC, **Nutrifest**, was conducted on 8 March 2024. The theme this year was 'Incorporation of Millets rich in Micronutrients in daily diet'.

Nutritionist Dr Rama Narayanan, Dr Nikhila Sharma, G Deepa Nutritionist and Millet Queen Krishnakumari were the judges.



← **Satyamurthi School Sports Day** was held on 26 January 2024.

Mr Srinivasa Rao and Mr Muralidara Rao (Indian table tennis coaches) were Chief Guests, and Mr Rajath Kamal (Indian TT player) was the Guest of Honour. The event displayed the spirit of sports and teamwork in the School.

↑ **Vidyalaya Sports Day** was held on 17 February 2024.

Mr Shreyas Balakrishnan, Coordinator of FC Madras football club was the Chief Guest. Students performed various events like March past, Mass Drill, Silambam, Aerobics, Pyramids and yoga.



← Bala Mandir Day was celebrated on 10 March 2024 in the Nagercoil Home. Ms Kaleeshwari, RDO, Kanyakumari District, was the Chief Guest.

→ YRG Care conducted a **tree planting** initiative for the students of Satyamurthi School.



↑ **Trustees of Braade Stiftung** made their annual visit to Bala Mandir in the month of March 2024, and were participants in the 75th year celebrations. In addition, they visited all the units of Bala Mandir, including the Nagercoil Home, and interacted with the children and staff in all the units.



← A **pooja** and farewell was held for outgoing students of Standard X and XII.

→ Rotary donated **Tata Edge smart class projectors** to Satyamurthi School, for interactive teaching.



← **Down Syndrome Day** was celebrated on 21 March 2024 by KARE staff and students in Bala Mandir Vidyalaya

→ Eight students from the Just for Kicks team visited the **FC Madras Football Academy** in Mahabalipuram.



FESTIVALS & CELEBRATIONS

Glimpses into the various festivals and important days celebrated across Bala Mandir!



↑ **Pongal** celebrations in the Chennai Home (L), Nagercoil Home (C) and BMMNC (R)



↑ **Republic Day** celebrations in the Chennai Home (L), Nagercoil Home (C) and Satyamurthi School (R)



↑ **Women's Day** celebrations in Nagercoil (L) and Satyamurthi School (R)



↑ **Shivaratri** in the Chennai Home

CONVERSATIONS ON EDUCATION

‘Celebrating Dr. Anandalakshmy – **Conversations on Education**’ Series was inaugurated by BMRRC on 24 February 2024. The first in the series was entitled ‘Empowering Teachers’. Various experts shared their insights on Dr Anand’s views on education, including Dr V R Devika (Founder, The Aseema Trust), Mr G Gautama (Director-Secretary, Palar Centre for Learning and Pathashaala, Krishnamurti Foundation India), and Dr Aruna Rathnam (Consultant, Bala Mandir). The knowledge and thoughts shared during the event were enlightening and insightful for the attendees, both physically present and online, including teachers, heads of educational institutes and Bala Mandir Education Unit staff.



BALA MANDIR 75: SARVA DHARMA DAY

The first event for the 75th year celebrations of Bala Mandir was Sarva Dharma Day – invoking the blessings of the Almighty on Bala Mandir and its staff to enable them to expand their child centric activities. Scriptures from various religions were read by women staff and associates of Bala Mandir. This was followed by bhajans.



Islam



Christianity



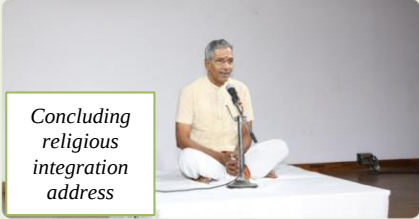
Jainism



Hinduism



Sikhism



Concluding religious integration address



BALA MANDIR 75: VOLUNTEERS DAY

The second event of Bala Mandir’s 75th anniversary was Volunteers Day. Various volunteers who have been contributing in many ways (both in the past and presently) to different units were invited and got the opportunity to interact with each other. It was deeply motivating to see the large group share their experiences at Bala Mandir.



BALA MANDIR 75TH ANNIVERSARY

On 10 March 2024, a function was held at Sir Mutha Venkatasubba Rao Concert Hall to celebrate Bala Mandir's Diamond Jubilee. President Mr N Kumar, welcomed all the attendees to the function. Mr P Natarajan (Trustee and Hon. Treasurer) shared an interesting presentation about the history of Bala Mandir and its founders. Honorary General Secretary Ms Maya Gaitonde talked about the integration of Bala Mandir as one large family. Chief Guest Mr Sanjay Kishan Kaul (Former Judge, Supreme Court and Chief Justice, Madras High Court) spoke about the need for education for children. Guest of Honour, Mrs Andal Damodaran (President, Indian Council for Child Welfare, Tamil Nadu) shared her long association with Bala Mandir. Guest of Honour, Mr Lars Odd Petttersen (Chairman, Braade Stiftung) released a coffee table book about the history of Bala Mandir and its units.

These were followed by a wonderful cultural entertainment programme by the children from across all its units, capturing the activities of Bala Mandir and its units in a meaningful way. The children were accompanied by a live music group. The programme had been put together by a talented in-house team of Members, volunteers and staff, and it received praise from one and all. It was indeed a very special and unforgettable day!



BALA MANDIR 75: ALUMNI MEET

On the evening of 10 March 2024, a meet was held for the alumni of Bala Mandir. The event saw large participation. The alumni were thrilled to meet various ‘Ammas’ and ‘Akkas’, and to sing childhood songs and share anecdotes with each other. An Alumni Association was launched on the day to coordinate alumni activities.



BALA MANDIR 75: VILLUPPATTU

As a finale of the 75th year celebrations, a Villuppaattu was performed by Kalaimamani Smt. Bharathi Thirumagan and her team in the Satyamurthi School premises. The Villuppaattu emphasized the importance of holistic education, being provided by Bala Mandir. A highlight of the programme was the active involvement of parent volunteers of the School.



CHILDREN'S CORNER

Different vignettes from the lives of our children!

→ A **Science Fair** held on 16 March 2024 at Satyamurthi School. The Chief Guest was Mr D Chandrasekhar, Education Sub-Committee Member. The theme for the fair was 'Cosmic Connections'. The fair included working projects that incorporated Artificial Intelligence as well.



↑ '**Express Your Talent**' showcase event was held on 23 March 2024 in Vidyalaya. Teachers came up with very creative models based on the academic content and students participated enthusiastically.



← The students of Satyamurthi School took up a social work project and cleaned up the Primary and High school campuses. This taught the children the importance of maintaining cleanliness.



← The girls from the Nagercoil Home went on a **day picnic** to Kanyakumari and Sitharal cave temple. They enjoyed the outing and the picnic lunch very much!



→ Boeing Future U and E-week Program was celebrated in the High School, including project demonstrations, quizzes and talks by staff from Boeing.



↑ Fun sports activities were conducted for the children belonging to the Infants and Toddlers Block. The staff also participated with gusto and enjoyed playing a game as well!

TRIP TO BENGALURU

Ten girl students from Satyamurthi School were part of a group that met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bengaluru at the inauguration of the Boeing India Engineering & Technology Centre (BIETC) campus on 17 January 2024. The children were selected as part of the Boeing Sukanya Program, which aims to empower more girl children to join India's aviation sector. The children stayed at Shishu Mandir in Bengaluru and interacted with the children there as well. It was a wonderful experience for them especially to take a flight for the first time in their lives!



75TH YEAR — BALA MANDIR FILM

A film about Bala Mandir and its various activities was released as part of the 75th year celebrations on 10 March 2024. The film was conceptualised and shot by Mr Niranjana Arcot and his team in a short period of 2 months.

The crew followed the various teams from different units as they went about their daily work and captured the essence of the social impact created by Bala Mandir through each unit. The film takes the viewers on a journey through the Bala Mandir Home onto a glimpse of the school activities, to the focused early intervention work being done at BMMNC, then to the outreach and impactful ECCCD programmes of BMRRC, and finally to homes where children in the Kinship Care programme live. The film is available on Bala Mandir's YouTube channel at [this link](#) (click to view). This will also be available soon in Tamil and Hindi. Shorter versions of the film are also available on the channel.

The team that worked on the film was honoured for their contribution during the 75th year celebrations.



75TH YEAR — BALA MANDIR HISTORY BOOK

A coffee table book was created and released on 10 March 2024, covering the history of Bala Mandir and its various units. The book was developed and designed by Jouve India (now called Six Red Marbles India), which has been a long-standing partner of Bala Mandir in many ways.

The team from Jouve worked closely with the Bala Mandir team to put together the different chapters relating to each unit, capturing its history and activities through writeups, pictures and illustrations. The highlight of the book was a timeline, that captured the history of the Office Bearers, Trustees and Executive Committee Members of Bala Mandir from its inception. The team also created a [video teaser](#) (click to view) for the launch of the book.

The book is available for reading and download on Bala Mandir's website [here](#) (click to view).

The team that worked on this book was thanked for their support during the 75th year celebrations.



EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR — 2023-24

The annual awards for Employee of the Year were handed out during the Sarva Dharma prayer on 7 March 2024. The staff members who received the awards this year were:

- Praveen B, Vidyalaya
- Dhivya Elangovan, Vidyalaya
- Janani Priya N, Satyamurthi School
- Sudha D, Satyamurthi School
- Padmavathy V, Satyamurthi School

- Venkadesh D, Children's Home
- Vasanthamma, BMMNC
- Arthi N, Kinship Care
- Lajapathy Roy Viagappan, Accounts

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