

# Adyar Newsletter

March-April-May 2025

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Crimson-tip Butterfly Nectaring on Flowers

## WHITE LOTUS DAY (8 MAY)

Today, Theosophists the world over observe White Lotus Day as a Day of Remembrance, not only of H. P. Blavatsky but also of all theosophist workers who have passed over in the course of the year.

At the Adyar Headquarters, the members assembled in the Great Hall to pay homage to the memory of that great soul who lighted the lamp of truth in a world filled with darkness. After the opening remarks by Shikhar Agnihotri, there were customary readings from *The Light of Asia* by Edwin Arnold (Merike Martsepp), *The Bhagavad*

*Gita* (Mr C. A. Shinde), and *The Voice of the Silence* (Catalina Isaza Cantor). The meeting concluded with the offering of flowers to the statues of the Founders.



## NEWS FROM THE TS SCHOOLS

### OLCOTT MEMORIAL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL (OMHSS)

Before the school closed for the summer, a Parent - Teacher meeting was held, presided over by the OMHSS Director, Mrs Sashikala Sriram. Mrs Sumathi, a V-Excel Counsellor, who had been specially invited to interact with the parents, explained to them the importance of giving proper attention to their children, for motivating them towards academic progress as well as to ensure their well-being and safety. She stressed the crucial importance of parents and teachers working together for the holistic growth and emotional well-being of the children, majority of who come from poor and abusive homes.

The Rotary Club of Chennai Mithra, a long-standing and generous benefactor of the school, donated chairs for the classrooms that significantly enhanced the school's infrastructure.

The Board exam results which were published in May 2025 showed a marked improvement over the previous year, though there is scope for even more improvement. The percentage of pass for Class XII was 88%; Class XI, 81%; and Class X, 55%. We hope that OMHSS will further strengthen its academic rigour to show substantive

improvement in the coming academic year.

OMHSS students went on an educational field visit to Pitchandikulam Forest, Swaram, and Nadu Kuppam School and adjoining forest, which proved to be unforgettable learning experiences. Joyfully, they explored the wonders of Nature, learnt about nursery practices, identified various trees, and discovered the value of seeds in sustaining biodiversity. Interested students also attended a summer camp at the newly inaugurated Blue Green Centre located adjacent to the Olcott School in the orchard area of the TS. Thus, the hot and steamy May summer transformed into a month of joyous growth, exploration, and meaningful experiences!



OMHSS students seeing exhibits at Pitchandikulam

**ADYAR THEOSOPHICAL ACADEMY (ATA)**  
***Umang & Beyond: Igniting Minds, Crafting Futures at ATA***

From February to April, ATA blossomed with a vibrant tapestry of festivities and activities that ignited student creativity and uncovered hidden sparks of talent.

The much-anticipated Annual Day of the kindergarten, 'Rendezvous at Samudra', was a delightful dive into the wonders of marine life with an adaptation from Ruth Galloway's cherished book, *The Very Fidgety Fish*, staged as a lively play filled with song, sparkle, and unfiltered joy.

For Grades 1–7, the Annual Day, *Umang* 2025, was a cultural kaleidoscope. From Kashmir's graceful *Rouf* to Punjab's high-energy *Bhangra*, Goa's spirited *Corridinho*, Karnataka's *Kamsale*, and Gujarat's vibrant *Garba* — each performance was a splash of colour, rhythm, and tradition. Students also sang soul-stirring melodies, some devotional and others celebrating India's rivers with pieces like *Ehi Murare* and *Phulava Binat Dari Dari*. Three theatrical performances were also presented.

The Art Exhibition, by Grades 4–7, featured live sessions of charcoal portrait and delicate watercolour drawing sessions. The students

also displayed beautiful ceramic creations — bowls, plates, and tiny sculptures, made during their pottery classes.

As part of their Sustainable Waste Management studies, Grade 6 went aboard the 'Plastic Odyssey' vessel, docked at Chennai Port — a floating laboratory on an expedition across 30 countries to promote practical solutions for reducing plastic waste and enhancing recycling. Grades 1 & 2 explored the Integral Coach Factory while the Adyar Eco Development team from the Theosophical Society inspired Grades 6 & 7 to take up environmental initiatives in their neighbourhood.

'Robofusion', hosted by the ATA Robotics Club, showcased numerous projects like the Soil Moisture Detector, Weather Detector, Project Moonlight, and so on, that combined creativity with real-world problem-solving.

Meanwhile, the teachers honed their skills through participation in a series of skill-building workshops. Together, these events and workshops fostered creativity, inclusivity, and holistic learning, strengthening ATA as a dynamic and unified educational community.



Grade 1 visits Integral Coach Factory



When circuits, code, and curiosity, come together!  
President Tim Boyd at 'Robofusion'

### **ADYAR ECO DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (AED)**

The Adyar Eco Development project continued with a flurry of activity in the last three months, with an earnest start to

environmental education programmes with students from the Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School and the Adyar

Theosophical Academy, and the continuation of restoration activities through the development of the nursery and planting of more saplings across the campus.

The gardening team continued their diligent care for the hundreds of saplings planted around the Olcott Bungalow, and within the wooded areas behind it, maintaining the vital arteries of this green space. Paths were cleared, including those leading behind the Olcott Bungalow. Efforts were made to combat invasive creepers, like the relentless Mexican creeper (*Antigonon leptopus*), removed from gardens and in front of the Olcott Bungalow, giving native flora room to thrive. Structures were tended to, from fixing up new gates around the Olcott School Blue Green Centre, to the beginning of the renovation of the toilet block outside the Olcott Bungalow. Several new stone benches were also placed in various parts of the campus, inviting rest and conversation, and the sharing of dreams and plans for the gardens around us.



Joss Brooks takes visitors around the Olcott Bungalow

A new Blue Green Centre (BGC) behind Olcott School was established, with a novel, airy, prefab structure that runs on solar power, and with beautiful seating spaces around it, dotted with mini-gardens, a demo nursery, and artwork. Its inauguration was a moment of significance, with a project display by students for visiting community members and inspiring words from President Tim Boyd, Joss Brooks, and other attending

dignitaries. The BGC will play a vital role for Olcott School, providing a dedicated space for discovery and learning, while also empowering the students with a novel approach to planning and living sustainably.



President Tim Boyd speaking at the inauguration of the Blue Green Centre

We celebrated the arrival of new life, with over 1,300 saplings of native flora finding their way to the nursery. Most of them will take root in different parts of the campus in the coming months, slowly but surely bringing back a healthy diversity to the greenery around us. The younglings are meticulously watered, transferred to larger covers as they grow, and tagged with their names. Discussions about plans and techniques for the burgeoning nursery, drawing on expertise from visiting professors and botanists. Seeds are being carefully collected and organised from various parts of the campus, some being peeled and readied for germination, others bottled and labelled. Experimental plots are being established for native species germination studies. Careful documentation of the flora in the TS and updates to the botanical map are constantly being made, which will provide the foundation for future planning.

The environmental education programme continues to take wing providing a bridge between mother Nature and young minds. New educators joined the slowly expanding team, that enthusiastically developed engaging lesson plans for visiting children and

community members, exploring innovative activities like sensory maps and building migration timelines for birds and insects. The team met with teachers from Olcott School and ATA to plan out the curriculum and activities in the coming year.



Discussions under the shade of a hospitable tamarind tree!

A Summer Camp was conducted for 9 Olcott School students throughout May. This was no mere classroom exercise, but a vibrant, hands-on exploration of Nature, including insect sessions, butterfly garden mapping, birding, and journaling. Practical skills were learnt, like changing grow bags and identifying plants, while the kids' artistic sides were also encouraged through drawing and painting sessions. We also collaborated with accomplished partners like *Aaram Thinai*, who conducted wonderful



Seed germination tray at the nursery

immersive workshops and experiential tours that left a lasting impression on the children and teachers. The students were also taken on Eco Trips — visiting places like Pitchandikulam and diverse wetlands, broadening their understanding of our interconnected world. Our educators also refined their craft by attending some dedicated training programmes conducted by senior educators at other Blue Green Centres across the city.



AED botanist, Mr Iyyappan demonstrates how seedlings are to be planted

From the meticulous care of the land and the nurturing of new life in the nursery, to the vital work of educating and inspiring young minds through the Blue Green Centre, the Adyar Eco Development project marches on in its quest to conserve, connect, and inspire through its commitment to the landscape and community alike.



Stone benches being installed on the campus

## THE FALL OF THE BAOBAB OUTSIDE THE YOUTH LODGE

We mourned the loss of an old soul in the campus in April, as the big baobab tree outside the Vasanta Youth Lodge finally gave in to an extensive infestation by the

woodborer beetle and a mysterious fungal infection, consequent to which it started rotting from within, despite our best efforts to try and revive it. This beautiful,

hulking giant, likely hundreds of years old, and witness to some historic events on the campus, was carefully removed, and prayers were said in its memory by the residents as we grieved the loss of an unfathomable spirit. As a walker eloquently put it, 'We have all loved and enjoyed the mighty chap...his mission is done and he has merged with the energy he came from.'



The Baobab tree which cracked and fell on 23 April 2025

## BESANT MEMORIAL ANIMAL DISPENSARY (BMAD)

In an effort to make this brutal summer a little more bearable for our four-legged friends, BMAD distributed 500 water bowls to the public free of charge. These bowls were placed in various locations across Chennai and its suburbs to ensure that street animals have access to clean drinking water, helping them stay hydrated and safe during the scorching heat.



Volunteers with water bowls for thirsty animals and birds

BMAD conducted a summer camp for kids aged between 12 to 16, and it turned out to be a huge success! Through a mix of



Summer camp attendees help to bathe a dog

interactive sessions and fun-filled activities, the children not only had a great time but also gained valuable insights into animal care, compassion, and teamwork.

The Wildlife Unit of BMAD had a heart-warming success story to report. A jungle cat with pelvic and spinal injury had been admitted in the wildlife unit by the Forest Department in October 2024. After several months of treatment and care, he was fitted with a radio collar and released back into the wild. Radio signals giving his precise location were received twice a day, enabling the Forest Department to keep tabs on his movement and well-being. Traversing regularly between the Guindy National Park, Indian Institute of Technology and the Voluntary Health Service campuses, our jungle cat seems to be thriving. It is the first time this species has been radio-collared and studied, making it yet another feather in BMAD's much-decorated hat!



Radio collar fitted on the sedated Jungle Cat

## LEAVES FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Casket Made for HPB's Ashes

After the cremation of HPB's body at Woking, England, the ashes were divided into three portions: each portion to be deposited at the Headquarters in Adyar, London, and New York, for as Colonel Olcott felicitously remarked, 'If we consider the Theosophical career of HPB, we shall find it divided into three stages, viz; New York, India, and London — its cradle, altar, and tomb.' This is how the division came to be made.

Col. Olcott carried the portion reserved for India with him across the ocean to America, across America to Japan, and thence to Madras. Thus, once again after HPB had passed away, her ashes made the circuit of the globe. In 1899, after consulting the General Council, he buried the ashes under the statue of HPB in the Headquarters Hall at Adyar.

A Swedish Theosophist sculptor, Herr Sven Benggston, an expert in bronze work, offered to make an urn for the London Lodge for keeping the ashes. The offer was accepted, and a member of the Blavatsky Lodge, London, Reginald Willoughby Machell, who was a painter, designed the urn.

The urn is just about two feet high, two wide, and two deep. It rests on a bronze platform of three steps, and locks upon this by an ingenious arrangement. Each corner of the platform has a small dome. Its top is crowned with a fiery heart resting on a silver lotus. All around it are emblems and also the motto of the Society, as well as the four important dates in the life of HPB — her birth (1831), year of the formation of the Theosophical Society (1875), her going to India (1879), and her death (1891).

The block rests on a fluted copper dome, round the base of which runs the motto of the TS: *Satyat nasti paro dharma*. The

pedestal of the dome is carved in panels with theosophical emblems — the Tau with Serpent, interlaced Triangles, Triangle of the initiate, Elephant of Wisdom and others.

Within and under the dome is a smaller Indian vase in which were kept the ashes. In addition, there was a document signed by witnesses and executed in London on the day the ashes were put within and the completed urn was presented to the Convention in London in 1892. The signed declaration was to show that the contents were the ashes of HPB, and when and by whom they were placed inside. The whole casket shows the influence of loving hearts and grateful recollection.

The urn which was later transferred to Adyar, is now exhibited at the Blavatsky Museum of Arts. In an article 'The Death of Colonel Olcott' in *The Theosophist* (August 1932), it is mentioned that when the ashes of Colonel Olcott were collected the day after his cremation, a part was carried out to the sea and scattered on the waves; the rest was put in a casket, to be carried to Benaras, to rejoin, in the bed of the holy Ganga, the ashes dropped therein of H. P. Blavatsky. In a footnote to the article, C. Jinarajadasa writes: 'The ashes of HPB dropped into the Ganges must be that portion of the ashes kept in Europe, and brought to India by Dr Besant when the Headquarters at 19 Avenue Road, London, NW, were given up'.



## LIBRARIES AS COMMUNITIES (LaC) AND WISDOM FOR LIVING (WfL) LECTURE SERIES

Interesting lectures were organised during this period. LaC lectures — March: Sahachar, In Step with the Other (Jyotsna Narayanan); Books by Dr Besant (Sukesh); April: Evolution (Dr M. A. Raveendran); May: Gaia (Vighnesh Ramachandran). The WfL Lectures organised were — March: Therapy Yoga (Venugopal); April: Wisdom of the Truth (Shikhar Agnihotri); May: Beyond the Hustle — How Purpose Outlives Performance (Dr Sri Vidhya).



### INDIAN DONATIONS TO THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

1 March 2025 to 31 May 2025

(Above Rs. 75,000)

	Rs.		Rs.
<b>CSR DONATIONS</b>		Argano Software Pvt. Ltd.	1,50,000
Baashyam Constructions Pvt Ltd.	1,67,00,012	Sifive India Pvt. Ltd.	20,72,647
<b>CSR DONATION FOR BESANT MEMORIAL ANIMAL DISPENSARY</b>		Spectra Medical Pvt. Ltd.	3,50,000
AH Vallalar Palluyir Kaapagangal Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Service	12,50,000	<b>BESANT MEMORIAL ANIMAL DISPENSARY</b>	
SpringML India Development Pvt. Ltd.	3,86,352	Neelima Bajaj Swamy	1,80,000
Jan de Nul Dredging India Pvt. Ltd.	3,50,000	AGS Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.	7,00,000
Infinithism Spiritual Foundation Pvt. Ltd.	6,00,000	Radiance Realty Developers India Ltd.	5,00,000
		K. Priyadarshini	84,050
		S. Fardeen	1,10,500

### INDIAN DONATIONS TO THE OLCOTT EDUCATION SOCIETY

1 March 2025 to 31 May 2025

	Rs.		Rs.
Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology	85,000	Microsoft Corporation India Pvt. Ltd.	1,28,429
Fire And Security Association of India	85,000	Shiv Nadar Trust	1,89,250
Wipro Foundation	13,75,000	The Theosophical Society	1,00,00,000

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**Cover Picture:** A. Chandrasekaran. The Crimson-tip butterfly (*Colotis danae*) is a small dainty butterfly belonging to the family *Pieridae* (the yellows and whites). They can be commonly seen in spring and early summer in spaces with plenty of nectar-filled flowers.

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