Who’s the fastest runner of them all?

The seventh edition of Chennai Marathon is here and the theme is ‘Access to Sports for Parathletes’

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The Chennai Marathon, one of the biggest sporting events in the city, is back with yet another edition. The seventh edition of the run, Skechers Performance Chennai Marathon 2019, is happening this weekend, and according to the race director VP Senthil Kumar, 25,000 runners are expected to participate. "The Nandanam Metro Station being the starting point for all categories, Chennai Metro is organising special train services for runners from 4 am," he says.

Senthil adds that Nandanam Metro Station’s parking lot will turn into a warm-up area for runners, where they will be doing stretches ahead of hitting the route. Organised by the volunteer-run Chennai Runners, a non-profit organisation, the Chennai Marathon’s theme this year is ‘Access to Sports for Parathletes’. "Our immediate aim is to support para athletes in the city with equipment," he says. "There are several able-bodied athletes in Chennai, but sadly, they lack infrastructure that are disability-friendly," he says. In the long-run, the team plans to identify and train athletes for the 2034 Summer Paralympics.

Among the new features in the run is the Perfect 20 Miler, that is, 32.186 kilometres. "Several runners, who are able to complete the half marathon, will want to finish the entire 42 kilometres," says Senthil. But that’s double the distance they’ve covered. Pushing themselves to cover a few more kilometres may be easier, which explains the 32 kilometres. “We’ve had tremendous response for this category," he adds.

The run has three other categories – 10 kilometres, the half and full marathon. "All the races will be flagged off at the Nandanam Metro Station," says Senthil. While the 10K run will end at the OMR IPL Ground, Taramani, the others will cover ECR and end at VGP resort. "We have arranged buses for runners to be dropped back," he adds.

The Chennai Marathon is being held on January 6. For details, visit www.chennairunners.com