



**Two feet and a vision**  
25,000 runners are expected to participate in the run  
■ R RAGU

# 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'

■ AKILA KANNADASAN

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 such well-performing athletes in Chennai, but sadly, they lack infrastructure that are disabled-friendly," he says. In the long-run, the team plans to identify and train athletes for the 2024 Summer Paralympics.

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**Among the new features in the run is the Perfect 20 Miler, that is, 32.186 kilometres**

The Marathon, this year, will feature runners from the Chennai Runners' Star Runners programme. "The idea is to train runners from rural Tamil Nadu. We support them with funds for travel and nutritious meals. We see that compared

to athletes from other places who come with a heavy sponsor backing, what they lack is a healthy diet," explains Senthil.

Another new feature 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 CPT IPL Ground, Taramani, the others will cover ECR and end at VGP resort. "We have arranged for buses for runners to be dropped back," he adds.

*The Chennai Marathon is being held on January 6. For details, visit [www.chennai.runners.com](http://www.chennai.runners.com)*