



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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A play with a purpose

Students and staff members of V-Excel Education Trust come together for their annual play to be staged this April

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The ground floor, usually reserved for parking vehicles, is now repurposed into a lively practice space. Here, a group of students is equipped with pens, scissors, and paint brushes. Meanwhile, another set of students rehearse their line, questioning each other, “What is your golden fruit?”

Is it a real fruit? Something edible? Or something more abstract, symbolic even? V-Excel Education Trust’s third original production answers this question. The story follows a

character who eats a mango, falls into a dream, and starts searching for a mysterious stone, a golden fruit, the key to happiness.

“Our children are highly sensitive, and they told us that in previous plays, the themes were quite serious and emotional, with a lot of crying. This time, they wanted something more light-hearted and natural. That is why the stage is set outdoors this time,” says Aparna Bubna, Kaleidoscope Learning Centre – Special School, V-Excel Educational Trust. This 90-minute play will be in English peppered with Tamil.



The students — even ones as young as six-year-olds — have finalised the play’s elaborate props, costumes, lyrics, and music. While physical on-ground work began three months ago, the ideation and creative process were set in motion six months ago. “Training the children for the play has not been without its challenges. Many children are not used to loud noises or crowds, and some dislike being touched. However, with immense effort from the teachers, no

one has given up. Even children who are typically withdrawn or do not engage physically have made efforts as simple as standing up and participating in the play,” she explains.

The play aims to raise awareness and promote inclusivity, showing that everyone has the right to dream. Aparna adds, “Inclusivity is a central theme of the production, not only in the children’s involvement but also in the community’s support. People with no direct connection to the organisation have volunteered, spending their time helping without expecting anything in return, showing the spirit of inclusivity.”

Aparna encourages the audience to approach the performance with an open and sensitive mindset. “Instead of focusing on imperfections, consider how they might react if they were in the same position as the children, and understand that even the smallest actions — such as a child lifting their hand — can be a huge achievement,” she says.

The team hopes that people will attend the play and appreciate the effort and leave with their golden fruit. “For some, it may be money, for others, it could be fame or peace. The play focuses on finding one’s “golden fruit,” representing personal happiness and fulfilment,” concludes Aparna.

The play will be staged at Kalakshetra Foundation on April 5, for school children and April 6, for everyone. Entry free. For details, call: 9920035913