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RETHINKING BUS SHELTERS

Beginning to dot the Chennai landscape, these facilities draw upon the flexibility of 3D printing construction technology **P4&5**



50 AND COUNTING

Blood donors honoured at an event organised by the Department of Health and Family Welfare **P7**

Move to check unauthorised parking on ECR



On East Coast Road, there is a possibility that a snippet of a road behaviour from your end would end up being a crucial input in a study. The State Highways Department is carrying out a behavioural study on the arterial road to assess the feasibility of a measure to check unauthorised parking.

At least in a couple of locations in Palavakkam on ECR, a row of paver stones has been parked. One set of them has been grouted; and the other set only gently placed on road in a row without any grouting. These lines of stones have been placed in sections with adequate CCTV Coverage. The electronic eye would watch whether a road user parks the vehicle along a line of these stone markers, thereby occupying critical carriageway space or moves away from the spot, realising this space is not for parking. Either way, the road user ends up as a subject in the study.

According to those familiar with the exercise, the data collected over a period of time would provide the basis on which the department would decide whether to continue with the exercise to lay paver stones along the road leaving just enough space between this line and the pavement for, say, a cycle to be ridden. Or, abandon the exercise.

The question of what to do with this space -- if a decision to create this space, marking it off with a line of grouted stones, were taken -- would lead to exploration of many possibilities/uses. Two or more uses can be combined, and one of them would certainly have to do with checking unauthorised parking.

If having these lines would only aggravate the situation of unauthorised parking, the idea would be dropped like a hot potato.

Parallelly, Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) is conducting a study on having parking spaces on Revenue Department lands on ECR that have been identified for the purpose. These images are from June 18, 2025.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

MTC issues tokens to senior citizens

The Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) has started distributing bus pass tokens to senior citizens for free travel in its buses. The half-yearly tokens are being issued for the July-December 2025 period.

Under a scheme introduced in February 2016, people over 60 are eligible for free travel on MTC buses ten times a month. Beneficiaries can renew their identity cards.

Senior citizens in Chennai, who want to apply for the tokens and for new iden-

tity cards, should submit photocopies of their ration card (address proof), Aadhaar card, driving license, educational certificates, and electoral identity card (age proof), and two-colour passport-size photographs.

The tokens will be issued from 8 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. till July 31 in more than 30 terminuses across the city.

After July 31, the tokens will be issued in the terminal offices during working hours on working days.

The centres are located on the premises of the bus

terminuses / depots at Adyar, Besant Nagar, Thiruvanmiyur, Mandaveli, T. Nagar, Saidapet, Saidapet terminus, Central bus depot (Pallavan Salai), Chennai Central Railway Station bus terminus, Chromepet, Palavaram, Alandur, Guindy Industrial Estate bus stop, Anna Nagar, Koyambedu (CMBT), Ambattur Industrial Estate and Old Terminus, Madras Export Processing Zone bus terminus, Poonamallee, Perambur bus terminus, Vallalar Nagar and Semmencherry.



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TRANSPORT

CLRI stop 'too high' for comfort

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Commuters boarding buses from the newly-created Central Leather Research Institute stop on Sardar Patel Road in Adyar want State Highway Department to correct the height.

The stop is located on the footpath, with a good height difference between the carriageway and the flooring of the stop.

According to Greater Chennai Corporation's "Inclusive Design Manual", bus shelters should be located along the length of pedestrian walkways that can have only a maximum height of 150 mm from road level. When the bus



stop is not on level with the walkway or pathway, it is essential to provide two separate ramps –one for boarding and one for alighting.

Step height from the kerb to the (kneeling) bus platform should not exceed 150 mm to accommodate passengers with limited mobility, says the manual.

V. Sujatha, a school teacher, says that the young men and women stretch their legs when the buses halt along the kerb area. Even while stretching, the commuters can fall.

"If it is a trolley bus, there is

At CLRI stop in Adyar.
PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

not much of a problem. Getting on to regular buses is difficult – the knee jerks when getting down and boarding the buses," says Sujatha.

Though a bus bay has been facilitated, motorcyclists use it as a thoroughfare increasing the risk of accidents.

Recently, a motorcyclist overtook a bus. A woman was sitting, luckily, the moving motorcycle did not hit her.

When a row of buses arrive, they do not enter the bus bay area. In a hurry to board the buses, commuters can fall while stepping off the pavement.

The State Highways Department must either reduce the pavement's height or provide a ramp, commuters pointed out.

READERS WRITE

'Create a stop for buses from Besant Nagar'



To facilitate Metro Rail work at Adyar depot, MTC has asked its crew to halt the buses outside Shri Periya Palayathu Amman Temple. Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has created two sheltered seating facilities along the temple, which is meant for buses from East Coast Road and Rajiv Gandhi Salai proceeding towards George Town, T. Nagar and Thiruvottiyur.

MTC should earmark another site where the buses can take a left (towards Indira Nagar First Avenue), and either Chennai Metro Rail Limited or GCC should create sheltered seating facilities for commuters using buses from Besant Nagar terminus.

The stretch is one-way from Mahatma Gandhi Road and Lattice Bridge Road to the Adyar telephone exchange junction, and buses from the Besant Nagar terminus cannot halt near the temple.

Route numbers 5E, 23C, 29C, 47, and 47A halt at the old Adyar depot stop but commuters have to wait in the open.

They lean on to the metro worksite barricade board to avoid sun exposure.

At the stop, shelters and the seating facilities have been removed.

MTC, GCC and CMRL should coordinate and alleviate the woes faced by the commuters.

(S. Varun is a resident of Kottivakkam (East Coast Road)



New police station in Perumbakkam

The T-17 Perumbakkam Police Station in Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board in Ezhil Nagar in Semmancherry is all set for inauguration. The police station comes under the jurisdiction of Tambaran Police Commissionerate in Sholinganallur.

PHOTO: RAVINDRAN R.

A message about waste segregation from children



Perumbakkam Village Panchayat of Saint Thomas Mount Panchayat Union organised an awareness rally on waste segregation as part of Clean India Mission. Students of Government High School in Perumbakkam and Panchayat officials took part in it.

PHOTO: RAVINDRAN R.

Rethinking bus shelters

Beginning to dot the Chennai landscape, these facilities draw upon the flexibility of 3D printing construction technology. It remains to be seen how the potential for greater aesthetics and safety offered by this technology is realised



PRINCE FREDERICK

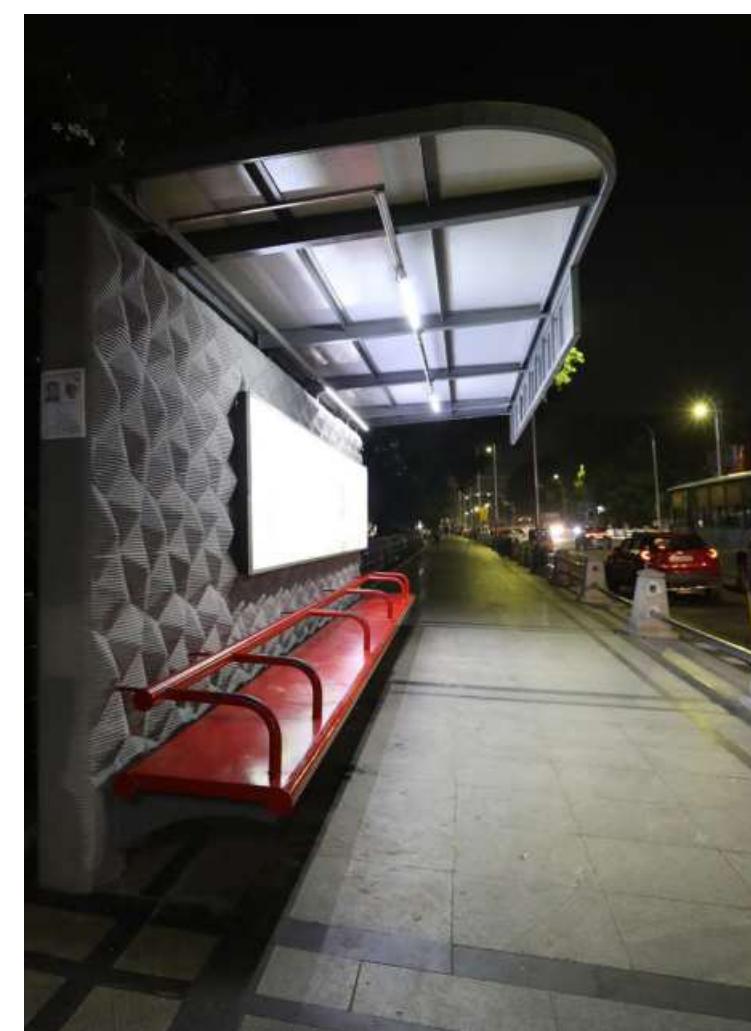
Anyone hitting Marina Loop Road, Kamarajar Salai and Sardar Patel Road with the regularity of tidal action would have had a long, scarlet-red, metal bench crossing their field of vision.

On these roads, even if they were on their own private wheels,

they would likely end up taking in the view of bus shelters sporting these attention-grabbing benches. Greater Chennai Corporation's Bus Route Roads Department is installing these bus shelters constructed with 3D printing technology. With an air of extemporaneity, these bus shelters are simply called "3D bus shelters".

Though announced at least a year ago, these 3D bus shelters are

only now beginning to draw attention as a "sub-species" of bus shelters in Chennai, as they seem to show up with a slowly increasing frequency across the cityscape. Given the target the BRR Department is working towards – ninety 3D printed bus shelters across Chennai – it has the chance of being elevated to the status of a separate species under the broader genus of bus shelters.



3D-printed bus shelters at Anna University bus stop and Kamarajar Salai bus stop (opposite the TWAD Board office) on June 20, 2025. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

Only recently, a 3D bus shelter was constructed at the bus stop right outside the Pattinampakkam bus terminus on Marina Loop Road. This facility still looks a bit ragged around the edges, as secondary features are still in the process of being added. If one desired to clap eyes on a 3D bus shelter that has been functioning for quite some time and is therefore expected to be fully "suited up", they could head to the bus stop on Kamarajar Salai diametrically opposite the TWAD Board office.

The one on Kamarajar Salai has a concrete wall with a scraggy surface, the scragginess forming a uniformity of design, that does not lend itself to posters being pasted.

3D printing technology-based construction provides immense flexibility in terms of design. Customisation being possible, these bus shelters can bring variety to the landscape and likely be a refreshing break from the uniformity that marks bus shelter design. It remains to be seen if the BRR Department is going to "format" the look of the bus shelters, or experiment with it.

According to a top GCC official familiar with developments to 3D bus shelters, in contrast to what is now seen as the conventional shelter with SS pillars, this one has reinforced concrete pillars.

3D bus shelters at Anna University bus stop on Sardar Patel Road, the bus stop outside the Pattinam-

pakkam bus terminus on Marina Loop Road and the Ice house bus stop on Kamarajar Salai share the look, the reinforced concrete pillars particularly following a format. The GCC official notes fitting the humongous bench takes some doing; it demands a greater outlay of space (which most bus stops can ill afford). The BRR department needs to work around this challenge while going about their target: constructing 3D shelters at 90 bus stops across Chennai.

The bench has a ground clearance that is just right for people of varying heights to be parked on it comfortably.

The stainless steel bus shelters across Chennai one is accustomed to are known to have offered in many cases benches that are too high or too low for comfort.

The benches at the afore-mentioned 3D shelters comfort in terms of height.

According to Greater Chennai Corporation's Inclusive Design Manual, at bus shelters, the seating should be "no higher than 450mm from pavement level for better comfort for all users".

It remains to be seen how in the days to come, the full potential of 3D printed construction technology is realised in the bus shelters which would include introducing features that would enhance safety of commuters (particularly, women commuters) and also address climate concerns.



Accessibility features being incorporated at the Ice House bus stop on Kamarajar Salai on June 19, 2025.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

On Kamarajar Salai, the Ice House bus stop is almost contiguous with Vivekananda Illam. Mention of the bus stop will call the memorial to mind. The Museum of Possibilities which showcases systems and products that promote accessibility for the differently abled is not an immediate neighbour to the Ice House bus stop, but a neighbour a little removed. But this bus stop would soon refresh one's memory about the museum.

The bus stop is in the process of being made accessible to the differently abled, right from their movement to the benches at the bus stop via a ramp, designed on each side.

The height of the flooring at the bus shelter was reportedly measured and built just right for it to be on par with the height of the flooring on low-floor buses. The kerb seems to have a slight curvature aimed at ensuring the side of the bus with entrances eases neatly into place. The benefits of this design can be enjoyed not just the wheelchair-bound differently abled but

anyone with mobility challenges.

In its inclusive design manual, GCC makes the following observations about bus boarding platforms

The manual points out that the "step height from the kerb to the (kneeling) bus platform should not exceed 150 mm to accommodate passengers with limited mobility."

It goes on to add: "raise the en-



tire footpath platform to 300mm to be able to board low floor buses without difficulty."

The Bus Route Roads Department of Greater Chennai Corporation is driving this initiative. A GCC official familiar with the work notes that the accessibility feature would be extended to various bus stops across Chennai.



On Durgabai Deshmukh Road, an assistive feature to enable the wheelchair-bound to embark on a bus journey with ease carries the tenor of a postlude, added after hurriedly retrieving the letter after it had been dropped in the post box. The ramp and the boarding platform are close to a bench in a manner approaching a hernial protrusion, and it robs commuters (sitting on the bench) of leg space. When a disabled-friendly feature is introduced at a bus shelter as an afterthought, it can consume added space and still stick out awkwardly. In contrast, the disabled-friendly features built into the design of a bus shelter draw little attention and does its work without any fuss. The image was taken on June 20, 2025.

PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

Enhancing access

'No standard timings for Makkal Marunthagam outlets'



A store on Bells Road

LIFFY THOMAS

Chennai has over 30 Makkal Marunthagam outlets and each of them seem to be functioning with a great deal of autonomy which reflects in their timings. The opening and closing hours of the shop are decided by the respective store in-charge. Makkal Marunthagam in Thirumullaivoyal, for instance, functions from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. including on Sundays; the Pallikaranai outlet remains closed from 1.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

These outlets are run under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana.

The stores launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India, sell allopathic medicines at 30-90% discount from market prices, says a note on its website. They also deliver medicines.

"I purchase my medicines from this pharmacy because it offers heavy discount, but when I went there the other day the store had not opened at 5 p.m.," says Sainathan.

The senior citizen believes Makkal Marunthagam stores have a crucial role to play, providing medicine at a huge discount, and therefore accessibility to them is of vital importance. He would like to know if Makkal Marunthagam stores in Chennai follow any set timings and whether they are required to be open through most part of the day.

In Chennai Division of Southern Railway, despite several efforts to check trespassing and jaywalking on tracks, accidents happen with disturbing regularity

Tracking a dangerous trend



LIFFY THOMAS

Statistics has it that nearly two lives are lost every day on the railway tracks of the Chennai division of Southern Railway. As per data collected by the Railway Protection Force, in the last five months, 275 people were killed and 24 sustained injuries while crossing railway tracks in the Chennai division.

In 2024, 712 people died on the railway tracks and 77 sustained injuries; and in 2023, 669 people died and 63 suffered injuries.

Trespassing, falling from a crowded train and talking on phone while crossing tracks are main reasons for loss of lives in the railway network covering Chennai, Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Chengalpattu, parts of Vellore and some areas of Andhra Pradesh.

Southern Railway adopts a three-pronged approach to changing this deadly behaviour: create awareness, register cases under Section 147 of Indian Railways Act as trespassing is punishable with a fine of ₹1,000 or six months of jail or both and close vulnerable points on the tracks.

On June 19, the staff and officers from Villivakkam check post conducted an awareness session for students of Sri Kanaka Durga



The numbers

Year	Cases registered	Number of deaths	Fine amount collected
2023	2778	669	13 lakh
2024	2850	712	14 lakh
Until June 2025	1650	275	7 lakh

Source: RPF, Chennai Division

Telugu Higher Secondary School. Footboard travelling, skating on train platforms, trespassing, taking selfies and videos on the footboard, pelting stones on the train were among the topics covered.

B. Ramakrishna, senior divisional security commissioner, RPF, says such awareness programmes run through the year. "In fact, we are increasingly reaching out to younger children in schools as they get the message faster and

would also take it home to their parents," says Ramakrishna.

While the Southern Railway has been replacing level crossing gates with rail overbridges (ROB) or subways to prevent commuters from crossing the tracks, jaywalking along unauthorised points along the tracks make it a bigger challenge to check this offence.

In suburban areas such as Korukkpet, Ennore and Basin Bridge, fences are



A scene from Annanur railway station; students take the safety pledge at Sri Kanaka Durga Telugu Higher Secondary School in Villivakkam during an awareness session by the Railway Protection Force.
PHOTOS: VEDHAN M AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

erected so that people cannot get on to the tracks.

"Fencing is the most effective measure," he says.

According to an official from the Safety Department, 10-15 railway level crossings are closed every year.

"Unmanned level crossings have been completely eliminated. Currently we have 153 LC gates across Chennai division, and all these are interlocked gates that provide more safety," says the official.

Vandhe Bharat trains run at a speed of 130 km/hr, so there must not be an LC gate or cattle crossing over the tracks.

On Chennai to Arakonam section, more LC gates are waiting to be closed as Southern Railway is waiting for funds.

When the number of vehicles/units taking a gate crosses 1 lakh, the gate must be replaced with a ROB or a subway. That is the thumb rule, he says.

Do fines act as a deterrent? From January 2025 to the second week of June, RPF had booked 1,650 people and collected a fine amount of ₹7 lakh.

Officials say these measures are helpful to some extent. Are youngsters fined? They are usually let off with a warning but repeat offenders are booked. "Youngsters performing stunts in local trains was a serious concern and we would call their parents, show the videos of their antics and take a written undertaking that if the child indulges in such activities a criminal case will be filed. This has worked to a great extent," says senior divisional security commissioner.

He says institutions and the larger society must also play a role in sensitising people about the danger of jaywalking on the tracks. "Talking on the phone and crossing are a strict no. Use foot overbridges and subways where they are provided. Do not take reels on trains. After all, life is precious," says Ramakrishna.

A case study from Western Railway: Using behavioural science to prevent trespassing

A behavioural science approach was adopted to check the increasing number of deaths on Mumbai's suburban railway network many years ago.

Indian Railway approached Final Mile, a behavioural science and design consultancy firm, that studied data and investigated the psychology of risk perception. The simple, science-informed, and cost-effective design interventions brought down the number of deaths on tracks.

Their research found that "the current system of warning signs, using text and stick-figure illustrations, was ineffective. Second, the train drivers' practice of sounding the horn was not successful in alerting people: either it was too familiar to catch people's attention, or they honked too late to make a difference: once people were on the track and heard the horn, they decided to run for it rather than to turn back - but they could not outrun the train. A third, related observation was that people crossed even when they could clearly see the oncoming train," says a note on www.thefinalmile.com.

They designed solutions that worked at a "nonconscious level" and even recommended changing the way drivers used their horns to warn people. To tackle the problem of incorrect perception of the train's speed, railway ties were painted yellow at regular intervals on either side of trespassing points. The bright stripes attract attention, and as they disappear under a moving train, the brain quickly and unconsciously recalibrates its estimate of the train's speed, says the note. Their first pilot reduced fatalities by 75% in a year and this was scaled up to multiple locations around the suburban railway network. In 2019, a 5 km stretch of the Central Line that had seen 88 deaths experienced a 44% decline in fatalities.

Hemanth Kumar Sharma has built a team of blood donors, and he is one himself: he travels to Chennai regularly to donate blood to groups that conduct blood collection drives

Taking a cue from Chiranjeevi



Hemanth Kumar Sharma seen with actor Chiranjeevi. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Adiehard Chiranjeevi fan, Hemanth Kumar Sharma started donating blood after he turned 18 inspired by the actor. "Audio cassettes featuring Chiranjeevi movies would have lines by the actor requesting people to donate blood and that is how I got started on donating blood as a small gesture to my idol," says 33-year-old Hemanth, who was among those honoured at a World Blood Donor Day celebration in Chennai.

Hemanth works as a *pujari* in Sullurpetta, a small town bordering Tamil Nadu, and has built an army of volunteers by conducting blood donation camps under the banner of Chiranjeevi Charitable Trust. But what is

more commendable about him is that he does not hesitate to travel to Chennai every time he is presented with a request from any of the groups to donate blood.

"It was Srivatsav Vema of Platelet Club who motivated me to start donating SDP or Single Donor Platelets and until today I have volunteered more than 40 times," says Hemanth who has given blood more than 30 times.

Unlike regular blood donation, platelet donation is time-consuming. "This takes at least two hours. First they collect the sample, screen it and start the process for donation. One can donate SDP once in 15 to 30 days," he says.

At his home town, Hemanth conducts SDP camps four times a year and he donates the collected SDPs to the Indian Red Cross Society.

Felicitation function organised

Visankirtali Trust organised the 29th Lakshmi Narasimha Jayanti Utsavam at Shri Kanchi Mahaswamy Anantha Mandapam, adjacent to Sri Anantha Padmanabha Swamy Temple in Adyar recently.

Eminent bhagavathas including Pudukottai Narasimhan, Bombay Satya, Mumbai Sundararaman, Thanjavur Thiagarajan, Srivanchiam Murali Bhagavathar and Abhang Ratna took part in it, said a press release.

The Trust felicitated senior advocate K.S. Bharathan with "Dharma Samrakshana Kainkarya Ratnam" and G.S. Mani with "Namasankirtana Kainkarya Ratnam".

The publication team of the Trust is working on bringing out publications in Devanagari, the release added.

50 and counting

Blood donors honoured at an event organised by the Department of Health

More than 100 volunteers from across Tamil Nadu were honoured by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu at Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital, Ommandur Government Estate, to commemorate World Blood Donors Day observed on June 14. One of the eligibility criteria set by the Department was that the individual should have donated blood for a minimum of 50 times. From Chennai, 15 volunteers of the Platelet Club were honoured at the event.

"We have close to 40 people who have donated more than 50 times but we could gather only 15 of them in the short notice that we got," says Srivatsav Vema, who runs the Platelet Club.

Donating blood is an unshakeable habit for many of them in the Club. Rohith Fernandes, for exam-



The donors with their citations

ple, has donated blood 221 times; Karthik Natarajan 252 times; and Poorna Chandran 200 times. There are many others in the 100s club including Kishore Gupta (182), Muthukumarasamy R. (100), Suresh Kumar (112), R. Vallinayagam (110), Naresh E. (183) and Baskaran from Villupuram (160).

The blood donation camps organised by Srivatsav Vema and his team of donors are exclusively for government hospitals. A key feature of this club is they donate platelets that is used for those undergoing treatment for cancer, dengue and for transplantation surgery.



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