

TAMBARAM

Chromepet » Pallavaram » Tambaram West » Rajakilpakkam » Mannivakkam » Guindy » Keelkattalai » Nanganallur » Guduvanchery » Hasthinapuram » Pammal » Tambaram East

Medavakkam » Srinivasa Nagar » Kathipara Junction » Kovilambakkam » Sadasivam Nagar » Potheri » Selaiyur » Sembakkam » St.Thomas Mount » Madipakkam » Urappakkam » Paranur



WHISKERED TERN: A SKY-BOUND ARTISANAL FISHER AT NANMANGALAM LAKE

A sketch of how this tern lords over the Nanmangallam lake **P3**



WATER CONSERVATION BEGINS AT HOME: AN ILLUSTRATION FROM ZOHO

Four wells and a sprawling pond ensure the Guduvanchery campus of the company does not face a water crisis **P6**

On slippery ground in Alandur

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Alandur subway, along the Police Office Road in St. Thomas Mount, is a slippery ground. Whenever water stagnates at the subway, pedestrians say, the area gets slippery.

The tiled walls and ceiling of the subway have developed cracks. Through these walls, the water leaks and stagnates on the staircases and flows into the walkway, more towards the opening that leads to Police Office Road.

The subway comes under the maintenance of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and was opened for pedestrian traffic in 2005.

Due to water stagnation, the subway has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

N. Sriram Narayanan, a resident of Nanganallur, says, "The water seepage issue is not new and water stagnation at sections in the underpass is a long-standing issue. The repairs must be carried out, and the water on the subway should be directed to the stormwater drain network on GST Road."

A. Sadasivam, a senior citizen, said, "First, maintenance work should be undertaken to fix the seepage."

Some of the lights are not functional. The subway also needs to be cleaned.



Water seeping through a crack in the wall.
PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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▼ The broken wall along Race Course Road, Guindy.

Call to fix broken wall at Guindy station to check trespassing



T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Recently, three youngsters were heading towards the railway track at the Guindy station. One of the them was about to jump on to the track when his friend pulled him back, having heard the sound of an approaching express train.

The three friends were crossing the track having found access to it through a broken wall on Race Course Road in Guindy.

This broken wall is a temptation to commuters to cross the tracks and not take the FOB, which obviously demands the effort of climbing. The Southern Railway has placed iron boulders along the wall area to prevent commuters

from jumping on the tracks but the measure hardly helps.

Many commuters want the Southern Railway to reconstruct the broken walls.

D. Sathyanarayanan, a senior citizen and long-time resident of Race View Colony, says, “While jumping on the tracks, one could fall into the ditch and get injured.”

READERS WRITE

‘Battery cars are not adequate at Tambaram railway station’



Tambaram Railway Station. PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

A few more battery cars are required at Tambaram railway station. Further, escalators are required at the foot overbridge. These amenities will be of im-

mense help to senior citizens as the station is a stop for super fast, express and passenger trains.

P. Thiagarajan
Tambaram

‘Restore the frequency of 104 bus service’



File photo

Regular commuters find a reduction in the frequency of 104 bus service. It connects Red Hills and Tambaram covering Puzhal, Surapedu, Kallikuppam, Orgadam, Amabattur OT, Amabattur Industrial Estate, Vanagaram tollgate and Porur tollgate.

The bus service is important as it provides connectivity to Tambaram railway station which is a terminus now.

Residents of Porur, Madura-

voyal and Iyappanthangal largely rely on this service to access Tambaram.

It is learnt that some of the buses dedicated to 104 route have now been diverted to the recently-inaugurated bus terminus in Kilambakkam.

Therefore, those who need to go Tambaram alight at Perungalathur and take up another bus or local train to reach Tambaram.

J. Giridharan,
Iyyapanthangal

You can be our volunteer writer

Dear readers, you can be our volunteer-writer by writing to us about issues and events in your neighbourhood. You should send the write-ups to downtown.feedback@thehindu.co.in. Letters must carry the contact number

Essay contest for women

In commemoration of International Women's Day, Jothi Madhar Sangam, a women's forum along with Levelup Studio is conducting an essay writing competition on March 16 at No: 28, Second Floor, South Usman Road, T. Nagar. According to a press release, the topic is *Malarndhum*

Malaradha Kanavugal wherein participants have to write about their unfulfilled dreams. The last date for registration is March 13. Cultural events, games and sessions on health and fitness are also part of the celebration.

For details, call 86108 16088 / 96772 50039 / 9841158018.

Handicrafts sale by women entrepreneurs

In commemoration of International Women's Day, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation is organising its annual exhibition of handloom products, handicrafts and food products made and marketed by women entrepreneurs at

C.P. Art Centre on Eldams Road, Alwarpet. The sale ends on March 12. According to a press release, around 50 women's groups are participating this year. Time: From 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. For details, call 9444073008

Citizens' group meets Tambaram Commissioner

On March 2, members of Peoples Awareness Association submitted a petition to Tambaram Commissioner R. Alagu Meena that dwelt on various issues concerning residents.

It sought Thiruneermalai Eri to be rejuvenated; Seemai Karuvelam trees be removed from the bund of the eri; and sewage water to be prevented from entering the stormwater drain network in Chromepet as this is polluting Veeraraghavanth lake and other water bodies. The petition also states that water charges for Chromepet and Pallavaram should be made uniform. They wanted street name board with ward and



zone number to be fixed at every street.

In a release V. Santhanam said the Commissioner has

promised to look into the concerns of residents. Work on new street name boards has begun, says the note.

Whiskered tern: a sky-bound artisanal fisher at Nanmangalam lake

The whiskered tern is comfortable in a variety of environments and has a wide "dining table". During its winter-migratory season, it can be seen hovering over the coastal Perumbakkam wetland, the inland Nanmangalam lake or over an estuarine system such as the Muttukadu backwaters. As the curtains have almost entirely come down on the season, here is a sketch of how this tern lords it over the tilapia-rich Nanmangallam lake



Atop a power pole at the Nanmangallam lake during a fiery-hot pre-noon hour on March 3, 2024.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Among terns that change their postal address to the Indian sub-continent during winter, the whiskered tern is arguably the most at home.

It is comfortable in a variety of environments, coastal and inland. One might espy it flying indefatigably across a water-filled Perumbakkam wetland, a coastal wetland. It would fit equally into inland set-

tings, hovering over the Nanmangalam lake, perching itself on power posts overlooking the lake. The lake is rich in tilapia (locally known as "jalebi") and artisanal fishermen are known to wade into the lake in coracles with nets and manage sizeable catches of it. Sometimes simultaneously, in bright natural lighting conditions, the whiskered tern would hover over the lake or sit on a post, head down, to see all the way through to

a shoal of tilapia.

Besides fish and crustaceans, the whiskered tern, also known as the white-winged tern, has a taste for frogs and toads and insects too, a factor increasing their dining table across terrains. During winter when they have settled into the landscape, the whiskered tern is a possible sight at sites where invasive plant species are clawed out of waterbodies with amphibian vehicles. In the massive churn of water

and greenery, the whiskered tern spots a feeding opportunity.

Years ago, during a massive water hyacinth removal exercise on the Buckingham Canal close to the bridge on ECR Link Road in Sholinganallur, this writer was witness to a swallow-like behavior of hovering and flitting across the waterbody. Growing out of a Greek root, the first part of its scientific name – *chlidonias hybrida* – suggests a similarity with swallows.

The comparison might seem to work at two levels. One, when wings down and tucked into place, the whiskered tern parallels the stream-lined look of the swallow, particularly the barn swallow. But so do other small-sized terns. The second, and most likely the only justified reason for any comparison is the persistent hovering over waterbodies that both swallows and the whiskered tern are capable of.





‘Endless’ row of waiting vehicles on Nookampalayam Main Road

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

It comes with the incredulity of a hat trick. A magician pulling an endlessly flowing strip of colour paper from a hat. But this is no sleight of hand. The endlessly stretching row of vehicles – sitting helplessly on their haunches – on Nookampalayam Road as it meets Perumbakkam Main Road is real, exasperatingly real.

This scenario plays out during the morning rush hour when streams of vehicles head out of Nookampalayam Main Road towards workplaces on the IT corridor. It is not uncommon for the queue of waiting vehicles to extend 300-400 metres, if not more, into Nookampalayam

Main Road.

Metro Rail work has narrowed the Perumbakkam Main Road, including this junction. As a result, the “nozzle” of Nookampalayam Main Road letting traffic into Perumbakkam Main Road is sticky and sluggish. A senior traffic police officer on the ground remarks that this situation has to be lived with till Metro Rail

This scenario plays out during the morning rush hour when streams of vehicles head out of Nookampalayam Main Road towards workplaces on the IT corridor

work runs its course. “Unlike at teh junctions on Anna Salai, it is not possible to close the right turn from Nookampalayam Main Road into Perumbakkam Main Road and make a compulsory left turn followed by a U-turn to make the traffic free-flowing. Perumbakkam Main Road is a narrow road made narrower by the Metro Rail work. That option therefore is non-existent,” he says.

But some measure should be available to ameliorate the situation? The officer observes that when schools close for summer, there would be a temporary respite. This problem can be fully and reasonably resolved only when Metro Rail work is completed on this section, he adds.



These images were taken on March 7, 2024. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

IN THE SHADOW OF METRO RAIL WORK



On Mambakkam-Medavakkam Main Road, Babu Nagar Third Main Road junction feels the effect of traffic diversion

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

If a road is receiving a greater volume of vehicles than ever before, watch its traditionally busy junctions for telltale signs of overwork. They will never disappoint you. Between Sai Baba Koil junction and Velachery Main Road, Mambakkam Medavakkam Main Road finds an extremely busy junction at Babu Nagar Third Main Road. Here vehicles pour into Mambakkam Medavakkam Main Road from Babu Nagar Third Main Road and Annai Kasturibai Gandhi Street. But it is the added traffic flowing down the arterial road towards Velachery Main Road that has tipped the balance. With traffic being diverted from Perumbakkam Main Road towards Mambakkam Medavakkam Main Road, this side of the carriageway has taken a battering. Since the diversion was clamped into place one side of this junction has looked worn-down. From time to time, a quickfire restoration would lift up its spirit only to send it careening back down the valley – as the effects of the remedial work would be short-lived. Now, the managers of the road (the highways) seem to have given up on this section. It has never looked as battered as it does now.

An interior junction

In the interior section, another junction bears the effects of overwork. Through running parallel, Babu Nagar First Main Road and Babu Nagar Second Main Road meet through an extension of the latter. This junction wears a pitted look and raises dust during rush hour as this junction is part of the route taken by motorists headed towards Tambaram that want to avoid taking the Medavakkam flyover. In normal circumstances, these motorists would have taken a left turn at the junction of Velachery Main Road and Mambakkam-Medavakkam Main Road and driven towards Tambaram. Metro Rail work has now shut down that option.

From time to time, a quickfire restoration would lift up its spirit only to send it careening back down the valley — as the effects of the remedial work would be short-lived

Intersection on arterial road ravaged by ‘overwork’



A broken ‘slide’ on Thalambur Main Road



Just ahead of a gated community – Casagrand Pavilion – Thalambur Main Road turns into a “slide” for motorists headed towards OMR.

Their section of the carriageway dipping like a swale, these motorists should ease through it. But the benefit the road offers in terms of gradient is un-

done by the surface. Due to the broken surface, vehicular traffic is sluggish on this section during rush hour which has domino effect on the traffic behind it. The broken patch needs to be mended. The image was taken on March 7, 2024.

Photos: Prince Frederick



Four wells and a sprawling pond ensure the Guduvanchery campus of the company does not face a water crisis

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

In a post on X on November 20, 2023, Sridhar Vembu, chief executive officer of Zoho Corporation, tweeted about the water storage ponds on the company's Guduvanchery campus; about how they "capture" and store rainwater. He also touched upon his "plan to swim in it soon" with an emoji.

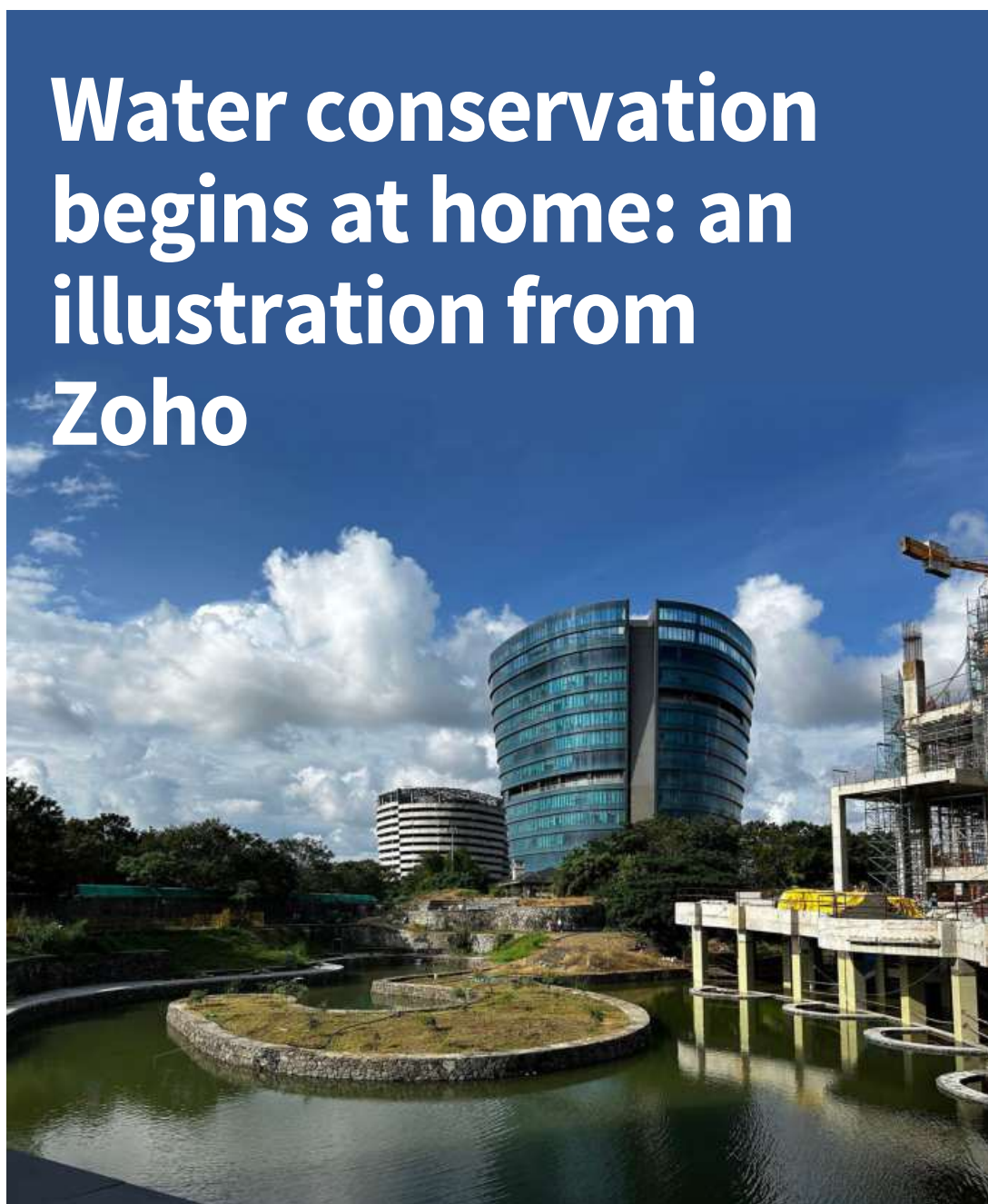
With the temperature in the city shooting up, there should be more employees who would want to dive into this sprawling pond spread across 1.5 acres.

The Pond Project at the Estancia campus was initiated two years ago and the results were evident following last year's November rains and later, Cyclone Michaung. In November, the water level stood at 13 feet.

"During cyclone Michaung, the water level in the pond rose to more than 18 feet. Owing to our mechanism, there was no water logging inside the campus," says Praval Singh, vice-president, marketing and customer experience, Zoho Corp, responding to questions over email.

The campus is designed in

Water conservation begins at home: an illustration from Zoho



The pond at the Estancia campus. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

such a way that all the water from the terraces and roads across the campus is diverted to underground storage tanks. Once these tanks are filled to the brim, the water is then stored in the pond. When the pond reaches its full capacity, the overflow is let out to the main stormwater drainage system.

The provision for outflow is kept at more than one meter above Grand Southern Trunk (GST) road's level, the highway adjacent to the campus.

In addition to the pond, the campus also has four wells and one borewell. The stored water is used for fire hydrants and domestic use after RO treatment. "We house thousands of employees at the Estancia campus, and the stored water can fulfil our domestic requirement for three to four days. So, if there are 25 days of rain in a year, a maximum of 100 days of water for domestic use can come from the stored water.

For the rest of the domestic use, we use both well and borewell water. We use treated sewage water for chillers and flushing the water closet," says Praval.

Zoho believes that rainwater management should be incorporated into infrastructure planning and design to prevent wastage. This will also replenish the groundwater table. "By doing this, we believe the neighbourhood will not get flooded with the water that falls within the campus during rains. And in very extreme situations, the impact of excess rain can be curtailed," Praval adds.

'Chennai should have a comprehensive drainage master plan'

Former director of Madras Institute of Development Studies Janakarajan Srinivasan on how Chennai can be made more climate-resilient

LIFFY THOMAS

Flooding during heavy rains has been a thorn in Chennai's side. Among contributory factors that can be controlled is the floodwater drainage mechanism. Studying and mastering this mechanism and getting it to do our bidding in the most efficient manner begins with preparing a

master plan around it – that is echoing the thought of Janakarajan Srinivasan, former professor and director, Madras Institute of Development Studies. He is also president of South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies.

"We need to understand drainage system and drainage density, and come up with a master plan that links land and drainage," says Janakarajan Srinivasan.

Delivering a speech at Anil Agarwal Dialogue 2024 in Nemli, Rajasthan on 'Why cities flood: The case of Chennai', Janakarajan pointed out that the high population density and decreasing per capita drainage space is taking a heavy toll on the city during heavy rains.

In fact, the Third Master Plan of Chennai Metropolitan Deve-

lopment Authority had discussed the question of mapping the city's water catchment and rainwater flow patterns. "No layout approval should be allowed without a drainage master plan," says Janakarajan. There should be an "integrated urban land and water management" approach that involves coordinated management of land and water. "This approach will help a great deal in conserving water as well as in controlling urban flood," says the professor.

Flood-induced ravages of the city within living memory were witnessed in almost every decade in the last 50 years or so – 1977, 1985, 2005, 2015 and 2023. He questioned whether conventional wisdom followed by the State has yielded any sure-fire methods to mitigate floods and droughts.

What lessons have we learnt from the past extreme events?

"Bad or myopic urban planning and a mere development-centric approach can be disastrous to ecology and environment," he said, adding that this would eventually place enormous pressure on the entire economy, in the present as well as in the future.

Stressing on policy implementation and better monitoring mechanisms, Janakarajan suggests that the state government should rediscover and rejuvenate thousands of waterbodies around Chennai.

As most parts of the city are under "Low Elevation Coastal Zone", a number of concrete steps must be taken now. He said that studies have shown that North Chennai is going to be very

Bad or myopic urban planning and a mere development-centric approach can be disastrous to ecology and environment

badly affected; and ECR and OMR will be more vulnerable.

The professor stressed on the need to conserve runoff water and that necessitates restoration, protection and continuous monitoring of rivers and flood plains.

There must be strict enforcement of laws against encroachments on waterbodies, rivers and streams, says the professor, adding utmost care need to be given to protection of natural wetlands, both inland and coastal.

An art installation on the impact of plastic pollution

Students from five schools extend support to the cause



Bhumi, in collaboration with Ambattur Lions Club Middle School, recently unveiled a plastic art installation at Shivan Park in KK Nagar. The installation accounts for over 50 kg of solid plastic waste collected by

the school students. The exercise is aimed at sending out a powerful message on the harmful effects of plastic pollution.

Lead by Sai Swetha, a Bhumi Fellow, in association with

Walk For Plastic, 42 students from Ambattur Lions Club Middle School undertook the exercise aimed at raising community awareness and fostering action against plastic pollution.

The campaign involved a series

of impactful activities. Beginning with a rally, 42 children gathered to collect plastic waste from their community, actively participating in creating a compelling art installation. Students from five local schools lent support to the cause by

collecting plastic for the installation.

This initiative is a powerful advocacy against plastic use, igniting conversations and inspiring behavioural change within the community, said a release.

Engineers' forum conducts its annual meet



Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers (IEEE) - Madras Section organised its annual meet recently. According to a press release, founder director of C - DAC Hyderabad, N. Sarat Chandra Babu, was the chief guest. The forum honoured him by conferring the Life Time Achievement Award. The chief guest, in his address, appreciated the efforts of IEEE - Madras Section for conducting workshops, seminars and funding research projects.

R. Hariprakash, the forum's secretary, was awarded and felicitated for being globally recognized with "IEEE MGA Achievement Award 2023" in recognition of exemplary leadership and sustained contribution to membership development in IEEE Madras Section.

Also, awardees of the "Leadership Qualities, Research and Development Activities" were felicitated on the occasion.

Mobile medical camp



Sevabharathi Tamil Nadu and Tagore Medical College & Hospital organised a mobile medical camp recently. According to a press release, the drive was aimed at helping the underprivileged in Tambaram and Chengalpattu. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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A homecoming for the West Bengal Governor

C.V. Ananda Bose taught English at Guru Nanak College in Velachery a year after the institution was established

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

It was a homecoming of sorts for C. V. Ananda Bose, Governor of West Bengal, who visited Guru Nanak College in Velachery on March 4.

Ananda Bose was among the early faculties in the Department of English at the college. He had a year-long stint there in 1972. Guru Nanak College started in 1971 when Velachery was on the fringes of the city map and connectivity left a lot to be desired.

"I had to take two buses to reach the college," the Governor recalled. A native of Kerala, Ananda Bose left the college after clearing the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examination.

As it was the early days of the college, it had only two buildings and started as a men's college. "This was a baby institute and I was

a baby teacher," he said in his speech laced with anecdotes stressing the power of education.

The sanctioned strength in those days was 450, and Velachery was sparsely populated.

"The greatness that has happened to this institute has also been replicated in my humble life," said the bureaucrat who retired as chief secretary to the Secretary to Government of India. The institute has more than 7,000 students now.

He also mentioned his association with the Governor of Tamil Nadu R.N. Ravi as "service mates".

The English faculty announced rewards to the institute. Five for present and past faculty, five for past and present students and two for non-teaching staff, said a release.

Each award will carry a citation, cash award of ₹ 10,000 and a plaque, the release said.

He suggested that the institute start a chair in the name of Guru Nanak in Raj Bhavan - West Bengal for Academic Research and Publications. The chair will be headed by one of the faculty members of the college.

He has also extended an invitation to Guru Nanak College to be the nodal institute for the cooperation of the South and East Zone in the upcoming 'Kala Kranti Mission'



that promotes art and culture.

He appreciated the institution's efforts towards an integrated approach to education through the skill development and empowerment of women through Udayal Padai. The Governor took a tour of the campus including the The Saragarhi Shooting Academy.

Principal of the college T. K. Avvai Kothai presented a brief profile of the institution since its inception in 1971.

Manjit Singh Nayar, general secretary and correspondent, highlighted the major milestones

This was a baby institute and I was a baby teacher



CMRL's animation contest to promote public transport among college students

The Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) is conducting an animation video contest on the theme 'Use CMRL - Save Your Money and Time' to promote public transport among college students.

The entries should be 30 to 60 seconds of multimedia content (animations and videos). Only

students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses (regular college students) can participate in the competition, and those who want to participate individually must submit a scanned copy of their college identity card. UG and PG students who want to participate as a group (four students in a group from the same

college) must submit their bona fide certificates from the institution. Students must register online through the CMRL form/link before March 31. The entry deadline is April 30. For details, contact lmc@cmrl.in The registration link:

<https://forms.gle/oa3qyGG3kmW2vHn16>

CMWSSB office at Adyar shifted to Taramani

To facilitate the Indira Nagar metro rail station construction, Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) has shifted its Depot Office 178 from Adyar Indira Nagar Second Avenue to Taramani Sewage Treatment Plant, Peeli Amman Kovil Street, Taramani.

People whose residences are in the Adyar Zone of the Board and want to register their complaints about water supply and sewerage and pay 'Water and Sewerage Tax' are requested to contact the assistant engineer at 8144 930 178 and the deputy area engineer at 8144 930 239.

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Two-day culinary workshop

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre at Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate in Guindy is conducting a culinary workshop on March 13 and 14. The sessions will focus on preparation of pickles, pastes and chat items.

Yet another workshop on organic farming will be held on March 15.

The session will focus on chemical-free methods of pest management, soil nutrition and preparation of manure.

For details, call 044-29530048.

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