

DOWNTOWN

Sunday
December 28, 2025

THE HINDU

TAMBARAM

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



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TAMBARAM

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Lake volunteers organise an awareness campaign

On December 20 and 21, members of Saving Nanmangalam Lake Team (SNLT) visited meat shops in Nanmangalam and Kamarajapuram regions, requesting staff and proprietors not to throw the leftovers in the lake along Sembakkam - Nanmangalam Road.

"The lake water gets contaminated, rendering it unfit for use, forcing people to buy water cans," says R. Sathy, a core volunteer at SNLT on how they

highlighted the consequences of this practice.

On December 21, members also called on the chairman of the meat shops' owners' association in Kamarajapuram who assured them that the practice would be stopped. They promised to educate their association members.

If dumping of meat leftovers resumes, we will take up the issue with the Sanitary Inspector of the Tambaran City Municipal Corporation, adds Sathy.

Text: T.S. Atul Swaminathan



The volunteers who carried out the campaign. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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Residents renew demand over subway

They want the Radha Nagar Subway in Chromepet to be made a two-way and are displeased with the Tambaram Police Commissionerate's conclusion that it needs to be one-way

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Residents of Chromepet and motorists frequenting Level Crossing 27 (as also the MIT and Ponds flyovers in Chromepet and Pallavaram) want Radha Nagar subway to be made a two-way. Their demand follows an assertion Tambaram Police Commissionerate had made to the Chengalpattu District Collectorate.

Here is the sequence of events.

In October, Southern Railway had asked the Tambaram police whether the subway could be made two-way and Level Crossing 27 (also known as "Radha Nagar Gate") closed if the event of the subway being made a two-way. The petition was also submitted to the Chengalpattu District Collectorate.

After an inspection carried out by a team from the Tambaram Police Commissionerate, included L&O and traffic personnel, along with a Southern Railway engineer, the former concluded that a two-way was not feasible. The police sent the finding and conclusion derived from it to the Chengalpattu District Collectorate.

The police team and the Southern Railway engineer found that the underpass lacked a median, hindering smooth traffic flow if it



Radha Nagar subway on GST Road. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

were made a two-way.

The Tambaram City Police point out that the passageway can facilitate only smooth movement of traffic from Radha Nagar Road to GST Road, and cannot allow vehicles to take a left turn from GST Road to the subway, as there is a narrow entrance and the space along the subway on GST Road is considerably reduced, resulting in sluggish traffic.

V. Aruna, a motorist, says the space, when compared with the vehicular subway connecting Tambaram East and West on GST Road, is sufficient for two-way traffic and the construction of a median, and police personnel should be posted to regulate the traffic.

V. Santhanam, a veteran social activist and a long-time resident of Chromepet, says motorists have to wait until the gate is open or take a detour through Vels University junction to go to Nemilichery.

The other option to reach areas in Chromepet East involves going through Lakshmi Nagar, Shanthi Nagar and the MIT Flyover.

"The subway should be made a two-way, and police personnel should be deployed at the subway and its intersecting point, GST Road, to facilitate smooth movement of vehicular traffic and prevent accidents."

Link road project to be a reality

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

The 25-year-old link road project connecting Pazhavanthalangal subway and Nanganallur Fifth Main Road, which had been delayed for over two decades, received financial approval from the Tamil Nadu government on December 14.

The project is estimated to cost ₹29.57 crores, said a GO issued by the Tamil Nadu Government.

If the road is laid, vehicle users can avoid taking unnecessary turns from Fifth Main Road to the subway, a distance of 500 metres. The roads include College Street, Balusamy Street, Krishnaswamy Street and Vembuli Amman Temple Road. This initiative was led by V. Rama Rao in 2000 when he was convenor of the South Nanganallur Welfare Association Co-

ordination Committee.

"First, I approached the Kanchipuram District Collectorate and submitted a petition seeking the creation of a road to reduce the traffic on Fourth Main Road, a bazaar road. This was followed by a petition to R.S. Bharathi, then chairman of Alandur Municipality, which passed a resolution," says Rama Rao.

Following this, he submitted a letter to K. Rajaraman, Collector, Kanchipuram District Collectorate, who visited the spot and interacted with the Metropolitan Transport Corporation bus drivers.

Understanding the situation's gravity, the Collector gave a letter addressed to then Chief Engineer of the State Highways Department. But the department could not execute it that year due to lack of funds.

In the run-up to the State As-



The Link Road will provide connectivity to Nanganallur Fifth Main Road from Pazhavanthalangal subway. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

sembly elections in 2021, a private TV channel organised a meeting with residents and political party candidates, during which the Alandur MLA T. M. Anbarasan, assured the residents that the project would be implemented, adds Rama Rao.

Only land acquisition and road forming work has to be carried out. Not all the structures have to be demolished on the stretches for the creation of the road, only a section. If the road is laid, it would help heavy vehicles coming from quarries in the Thiru-

neermalai region and heading to Madipakkam, Moovarasampet, Medavakkam and Nanmangalam.

This will reduce traffic on Fourth Main Road and help light-vehicle drivers access areas in the region. Even pedestrians stand to benefit from this.

STATUS REPORT



At the Kolapakkam junction on Vandalur-Kelambakkam Road.
PHOTOS: T. ARVIND

'Accident-prone stretch'

Regular users of the road have flagged the junction as accident-prone. "There have been several accidents at this spot, though thankfully none has been fatal so far," says Seshadri, who commutes daily through Kolapakkam. He adds that a speed breaker is also needed to rein in speeding vehicles.

Call for signals

Residents and road safety activists have urged the traffic police and highways authorities to install a traffic signal at the junction to streamline vehicle movement. They have also called for speed breakers fitted with reflectors, proper lane markings and clear signage to alert motorists approaching the intersection.

In addition, activists have demanded brighter streetlights along the stretch, citing poor visibility at night as another factor contributing to unsafe conditions. Commuters say timely intervention at Kolapakkam junction would not only reduce congestion but also prevent accidents on a road that continues to witness rising traffic volumes.



'Kolapakkam junction operates without rules'

Commuters and activists demand signals, speed breakers and other safety measures at Kolapakkam junction on Vandalur-Kelambakkam Road. During peak hour, this intersection becomes a major traffic bottleneck and cannot do without police presence

T. ARVIND

The traffic passing through Vandalur-Kelambakkam Road every day is voluminous, placing this arterial stretch among the busiest on the city's southern fringe. The road, which rolls past

several engineering and medical colleges, schools, a police academy and forest department establishments, connects Vandalur Zoo with Kelambakkam on Old Mahabalipuram Road (officially called Rajiv Gandhi Salai).

While traffic flow at several intersections along the corridor has

improved with the installation of speed breakers and introduction of basic traffic management measures, commuters say the Kolapakkam junction continues to remain a major bottleneck.

Unregulated intersection
At Kolapakkam, the absence of traf-

fic signals and consistent police presence results in frequent congestion, especially during morning and evening peak hours. Motorists criss-cross the junction with little discipline, pedestrians jaywalk unchecked, and school vans are often seen overtaking MTC buses and heavy vehicles, commuters allege.

The situation worsens as motorists from Perungaluthur use Gandhi Road to join the Vandalur-Kelambakkam High Road, while heavy vehicles moving between Vandalur and Kelambakkam also enter the same junction from the opposite direction. "In the absence of regulation, everyone tries to push through and the junction descends into chaos," a regular commuter observes.



READERS WRITE

'Bus stop at Subburayan Nagar is incomplete'

B. SARAVANAN

It has been months since the Tambaram City Municipal Corporation installed bus shelters at Subburayan Nagar halftovers on Thiruneermalai Main Road in Thiruneermalai,



but the floor of the stop is yet to be tiled, and lighting and seating facilities provided. Commuters have to stand in the open to board the buses (55A, 155A and S94).

Similarly, shelters are needed at Saraswathipuram - Lakshmipuram, Thiruneermalai - Chromepet junction, Nagalkeni and Ponds flyover stops.

B. Saravanan is a resident of Thiruneermalai

'Will the railways sort out this issue?'

The escalator at Tambaram station footbridge (opposite the ticket counter booking office in East Tambaram) often goes out of order. Railway staff say the public switch off the escalator, but that is not a convincing reply. The operating area of the lift is off-limits to the public.

Long-distance passengers and pedestrians are considerably inconvenienced. There is ample

space between the FOB and the escalator to accommodate a downward escalator. Besides, there is space adjacent to the FOB to facilitate a lift, as senior citizens fear using escalators and prefer stairs.

The Southern Railway should also provide lifts or escalators on the five long-distance train platforms at the terminal.

S. Annapoorani is a resident of Tambaram (East)

Colleges as civil service coaching hubs

An increasing number of colleges in Chennai run study circles on their premises to help students prepare for UPSC and TNPSC exams

LIFFY THOMAS

From January 2026, in Chennai, those aspiring to crack competitive examinations that would open doors to civil services jobs have an added place to visit to sharpen their edge – the IAS study circle established by Annai Veilankanni college at its premises in Saidapet. While offering coaching to its arts and science students at a “subsidised” fee, the college rolls out the red carpet to aspirants in their neighbourhood.

Both arts and science and engineering colleges running their in-house academies/ study circles that serve as a pathway to a career in civil services is not a new trend, just that the number of institutions offering this option has been on the increase over the years.

From government colleges to self-financing institutions, a focused group or centre providing coaching, mock tests, inviting expert speakers and offering personalised guidance for success in examinations conducted by UPSC and TNPSC has become an important talking point.

While a majority of institutions offer these classes at no cost, some levy a nominal fee. Many of them do not promise intensive coaching, just a launch pad. This academic year, A.M. Jain College in Meenambakkam opened two study circles, one for careers in armed forces and the other for UPSC coaching, both offered free of cost.

“In a class of 40 if one cracks the exam then it motivates the others. The preparation for the exam is such that there is greater collaboration among students and there is a plenty of resources available on the campus for students to get much out of it. We only see students gaining by preparing for such examinations,” says M. Raemya, dean, AM Jain College. A faculty related to the subject is asked to handhold the students. “We ensure there is separate remuneration for any value-added course a faculty takes up,” she says.

For those keen on intensive training, A.M. Jain College has a MoU with an external academy that comes to the campus to train students at a cost.

For students focused on cracking the exam, the college grants them on-duty leave to prepare before exams or gives a re-test if they have missed an internal exam, says the Dean of A.M. Jain College.

Colleges opening their doors for external coaching academies and roping in guest speakers means students save on the addi-



Students of A.M. Jain College who aspire to civil services jobs immersed in a discussion. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tional travel they would have to undertake to access these resources.

Last year, Guru Nanak College set up a committee to support students keen on a career in the civil services.

The website of KCG Tech says

its Civil Service Aspiration Club conducts classes every alternate week for two hours, which includes exam preparation and talks from UPSC achievers and high-ranking civil servants. Easwari Engineering College calls its programme Civil Services Training

Programme. CTTE College in Perambur is increasingly focusing on helping its students excel in Group II and IV exams.

Janani G, a Union Public Service Commission aspirant and a tutor at academies, says, “When I graduated from engineering college 12

years ago, we did not have such avenues being opened to us. There may not be many success stories from colleges, but that is fine as long as students are getting exposure even while pursuing under graduation.”

With government funding

Even before Chennai began to witness a craze for civil services, Queen Mary’s College started providing free training since 2001 for

Colleges opening their doors for external coaching academies and roping in guest speakers means students save on the additional travel they would have to undertake to access these resources

women graduates who are selected through an entrance exam and interview. The free coaching centre is funded by the government of Tamil Nadu. But more still needs to be done. Despite having Anna Nagar, which is hailed as a magnet for civil service coaching centres and colleges grooming students to think of a career in UPSC, Chennai is yet to see a string of success stories. Delhi continues to see the highest number of successful UPSC candidates.

Fashioning civil servants for 25 years

For the last 25 years, Directorate of Employment and Training has been running ‘Study Circles’ that function at all the district employment and career guidance centres in the State. These centres assist aspirants in various competitive examinations including UPSC, TNPSC and RRB by conducting mock tests and inviting experts to conduct sessions. According to www.tnvelaiavaippu.gov.in, free coaching is offered to the differently-abled aspirants by engaging sign language interpreters and Braille assistance is given to the visually challenged.

Coaching classes are also conducted at various universities and affiliated arts and science colleges to help economically weak students studying in the final year. In 2024 and 2025, at least 10 students who attended classes at the



Candidates take a mock test at the Study Circle.

Study Circle have cleared TNPSC examinations. One can avail these classes on all weekdays (between

10 a.m. and 1 p.m.). They also have a library with a good collection of books. The Study Circle is

located at Alandur Road, Thiruvikka Industrial Estate, Guindy. For details, call 94999 66026.

Sports day celebrated



Vidhya Sagar Global School recently hosted its 18th Junior Sports Day on the theme 'Our School'.

Dr. Rajesh, assistant professor of Cardiology at Madras Medical College, Egmore, was the chief guest and declared the sports meet open.

Students presented various sports events and a mass drill. Following this, the awarding ceremony took place, recognising the achievements of the young sports champions.

V. C. Govindarajan, principal, VSGS, was also present.

Free health camp at Echangadu today

A free multi-speciality health camp is being conducted on December 28 at Echangadu Village, near Mambakkam; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Organised by Lions Club of Madras Fort St George District 3241C, doctors from Kauvery Hospitals will be available.

Vaikuntha Ekadasi festival in Nanganallur on December 30

Naadhabrahmam is conducting a series of special programmes on the occasion of Vaikuntha Ekadasi from December 30, 6 p.m. onwards at Sri Sudarshan Kalyana Mahal in Nanganallur.

On the occasion, Cuddalore Gopi Bhagavathar will be honoured the title 'Naadha Bhagavatha Siromani'. The felicitation event will be followed by namasankeerthanam and Bhaktha Vijayam by Cuddalore Gopi Bhagavathar and Ramananda Saraswathi Swamigal.

The programme is open to all. For further details, call 9381043396

Volunteers spruce up temple



As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Sri Krishna Sweets, in coordination with YACD Trust, Gopalapuram, held the 165th 'Paramam Pavithram' (cleaning seva) at Sri Raghavendra Swamy Temple in

Triplicane. More than 70 volunteers, formed into four groups, handled different aspects of the Seva, including cleaning the silver vessels and the temple premises, said a release.

Headmaster of government school honoured at convocation

Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research confers degrees upon 1,257 students



During the event.

More than 1,200 students (undergraduate and postgraduate courses) and Ph.D. scholars were awarded degrees and doctorates at the two-day 19th annual convocation of Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research (MAHER).

Additionally, 103 meritorious students received medals and certificates in recognition of their outstanding academic performance, said a press release.

The ceremony was held on December 22 and 23 at the Meenakshi Medical College Hospital and Research Institute, Enathur in Kancheepuram district.

Renowned ophthalmologist Dr. Amar Agarwal, chairman of Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital, was the chief guest.

He emphasised the importance of lifelong learning and encouraged graduands to pursue success through hard work, perseverance

and discipline. During the two-day ceremony, Professor Nihal Thomas, head of the Centre for Stem Cell Research, Christian Medical College, Vellore, was conferred the 'Degree of Doctor of Science' in recognition of his contribution to the field of diabetology.

S. Ayyappan, Headmaster of the Government Tribal Residential School, Udumalpet, Tiruppur district, was honoured with the 'Jayanthi Radhakrishnan Award' for educating tribal students.

The 'Akash Prabhakar Distinguished Sportsperson Award' was conferred on Shiny Gladssia, a final-year BBA student, for her achievements at the State and National level athletic events.

Jayanthi Radhakrishnan, chancellor of MAHER; Gomathi R, pro-chancellor; and Sureka Varalakshmi, registrar, took part in the ceremony, the release added.

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Handcrafted wishes

In a few days, there would be a burst of greetings. They would resonate with different wavelengths of emotion and effort. Simple and insincere. Simple but sincere. Complex yet insincere. Complex and sincere. That last category would encompass physical greeting cards that come at some price to the sender, the cost more hidden than revealed. These are customised and handcrafted cards; if the reader fancies sending them when 2026 dawns, they might want to pick the brains of these two residents of Chennai, one a corporate professional and the other yet to outgrow the school uniform



Jyotsna K and a couple of her works; and (below) Kavya Aravind and a display of some of the greeting cards she crafted. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

ASAP tech analyst Jyotsna K has an additional name card, one qualifying her as a crafter of greeting cards, always customised and sometimes elaborately so with the process of creation taking bites out of multiple days. Her works are up on Instagram (@that.corporate.artist), the page title underlining two parallel universes she occupies. Handcrafting greeting cards with a tone meant for the receiver and no other being in the entire cosmos was not meant to be her day job; it never was, and did not morph into one along the way. On the grounds that the works, as presented on Insta through reels, are strikingly good, it can across as her primary job. Hence a clarification from her is in order.

"I never planned this as a business," Jyotsna spells out. "People kept asking me to make something meaningful for someone they loved. That trust pushed me to continue. Working an evening shift as a SAP tech analyst (4 pm to 1 am) gives me a few quiet hours in the mornings, which I dedicate to my art – usually around three hours for creating orders or filming reels. On weekends, I shoot content in bulk and schedule it through the week. It's not always easy to balance both, but doing something I truly love brings immense joy and



keeps me going."

Besides making personalised greeting cards for customers, she also teaches how to make them, through workshops. A cache of reels on her Insta page function somewhat like tutorials, dishing out DIY greeting card ideas for special days – Teacher's Day, Father's Day and so on.

Handcrafted cards obviously do not roll off the assembly line, and they gobble time like a gourmand. On an average, work on a hand-crafted card is wrapped up in two days, obviously given her corporate job, with free hours snatched out of those days. But Jyotsna also runs marathons with these greetings. Scrap books with ten to twelve pages take several days, while resin elements require up to



six days simply to dry. "Waiting becomes part of the experience," says Jyotsna, a resident of Adyar. "When someone orders a New Year card early, it already shows care."

Personalisation is ever an unpredictable child, there is no telling what new demand it has tucked in its armpit. Some customers arrive with reference reels saved on their phones, but many come with stories instead. "They tell me about their journey, their relationship, their memories," she says. These narratives are translated visually through photographs, handwritten messages, song references, dates and timelines. "It is never just dec-

oration. It is about their story."

Handmade greeting cards start at ₹200, while scrapbooks are priced per page depending on complexity. Pricing often invites questions. "To some people it looks like just paper," she admits. "But behind it is time, creative effort, multiple revisions, and quality material. Only the maker understands the patience involved."

Jyotsna notices that younger customers respond strongly to handmade New Year greetings. "Gen Z values emotional connec-

flowers, trees and festive motifs (an immediate example being Christmas trees) out of thin paper strips. Greeting card making fits into the margins of her days shaped around school, homework and weekends – the support she receives from her parents ensures she does the balancing act commendably well.

"I started making greeting cards when I was in third grade," Kavya says. She learnt the art of quilling from a neighbour, beginning with a simple card adorned with quilled flowers. While not placing a cap on creativity, Kavya respects the power of seasonality while crafting greeting cards. For example, Christmas and New Year have their unique idioms, flavours and even tropes. She settles designs into the language of the season without a frown. "My friends asked me to make a Christmas greeting card with a tree," she says, as if such requests were inevitable.

Simple greeting cards can be completed in twenty to thirty minutes; the one with intricate designs, close to an hour. The tools are modest. Paper. Quilling strips. Glue. A slender quilling tool. Yet the smallest step often proves the most unforgiving. "The sticking part is the most difficult," Kavya admits. "If we do not put the right amount of glue, it will come off and we have to start again."

Kavya prices her greeting cards at ₹ 200; and canvas wall hangers at ₹ 250. Orders now arrive through WhatsApp groups.

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