

MYLAPORE

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Washermenpet » Tondiarpet » Manali » M.R.C.Nagar » Teynampet » Mount Road » Broadway » Kondithope » Tiruvotiyur



A BIG DRAW

The redeveloped 58-acre Tholkappia Poonga is now the place to visit **P6**



A TECH BOOST

Greater Chennai Corporation has made sure that water pumps are not alone in the battle against flooding **P5**

A *clean sweep*

SYMA volunteers roll up their sleeves to assist conservancy workers in removing cracker waste on the Mada streets around Sri Parthasarathy Swami Temple in Triplicane, thereby easing the path for the traditional, Deepavali procession

LIFFY THOMAS

Clearing the Mada streets in Triplicane of Deepavali cracker waste should have been a breeze for conservancy workers thanks to a bunch of resident-volunteers.

Every year on Deepavali, there is a tradition at Sri Parthasarathy Swami Temple of taking the deity on a procession around the four mada streets and tank streets.

To welcome the deity, devotees light lamps and burst crackers on the road before the event starts, making it a challenge for those part of the procession to navigate the littered streets.

For the first time, a group of resi-



dents and SYMA members swept the streets, leaving the cracker waste in corners so that those carrying the deity can walk safely and

comfortably.

Sanjeevi Raghunathan, president, SYMA, says it was their member, S. Sampath Kumar, who initiat-



Volunteers in action.
PHOTOS:
SPECIAL
ARRANGEMENT

ed this clean-up exercise last year. He did it all alone, and this year Sampath motivated us to do it as a group.

Sanjeevi says on Deepavali most of the residents around Mada streets reserve their crackers for a bout of bursting during Sri Parthasarathy Perumal purappadu. Residents from neighbouring streets also come near the temple to burst crackers and many devotees are in attendance to witness the spectacle.

The procession started around 6.15 p.m. and went on till 10.40 p.m. Armed with brooms, volunteers cleared the path for the pro-

cession.

"Most of those who carry the deity walk barefoot, and many a time the crackers are not lit off completely or hard objects hurt their feet. By sweeping the area to clear cracker debris, we made the path safe and clear for the procession, especially for those reciting prabhandam in the front," he says.

While the volunteers swept the streets of cracker litter, Urbaser Sumeet staff helped gather the waste making it a coordinated exercise.

Sanjeevi says they want to continue doing this service in the coming years and also involve more volunteers.

A Deepavali gift to Urbaser workers in R.A. Puram

In a communication Raja Annamalaipuram Residents Association (RAPRA) shared with *The Hindu Downtown*, it notes that the Association maintains cordial relations with all the service providers, helping solve the residents' grievances in time through better coordination.

Urbaser Sumeet the private company entrusted by the Greater Chennai Corporation for removal of garbage plays a vital role. Even a day's absence by them is visible and generates complaints from the residents.

RAPRA keeps the workers and staff of this company in good spirits by gently bringing up to their notice their lapses and get them redressed.

Many houses in the area have gardens and whenever the resi-

dents prune their trees or harvest banana from their garden tree, they bundle and keep the waste in front of their houses and alert Urbaser supervisor, who is also in the residents' WhatsApp group. Within the next few hours the garden waste gets cleared, keeping the roads tidy all the time.

RAPRA members wanted to gift the workers and staff of Urbaser who are assigned for this area. Contributions were made willingly and in a small function on the eve of Deepavali, 18 October 2025, thirty of them were personally handed over cash gifts and sweet boxes with exchange of greetings.

The noticeable joy on the faces of the workers after a day's hard work gave immense satisfaction to the residents.



Palm seed plantation drive at Presidency College



Have you ever visualised a redbrick heritage building being ringed by tall palm trees? If you waited for a while, you need not go to the trouble of visualising it; you can behold it in reality.

"Seeds of Tomorrow" launched on October 23 at Presidency College, saw the planting of 1,000 palm seeds on the campus.

According to a press release, the drive was a fruit of collaboration between environmental group Exnora and Kuzalosai, which donated

1000 palm seeds. Madras Presidency College Alumni Association, headed by Arulnayagam and K. S. Syed Ahamed Kabeer, and NSS executed the plantation drive successfully, says the press release.

The event was inaugurated by Advocate A. Arulmozhi of the Madras High Court.

Presidency College Principal Raman and IT Wing Chief C. Mahendran led the plantation activities, joined by students, alumni and volunteers.

A symbol of red-brick architecture



Victoria Hall doused in soft light on the night of October 13, 2025. PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

'Roll out additional trains to southern TN'

The second 'Amrit Samvaad' programme held at Egmore railway station saw commuters seeking measures to ensure safety for women passengers

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Better security measures for women at Egmore railway station was a key point stressed by commuters at the 'Amrit Samvaad' programme held recently at the terminal.

Tej Partap Singh, additional divisional railway manager, Chennai Division, who took part in the meeting, heard grievances from commuters and also shared measures that are being taken.

This is the second 'Amrit Samvaad' programme in the Chennai Division, which is aimed at engaging with passengers and listen to their grievances, the Southern Railway said in a release.

Other feedback shared by participants includes improved facilities for Divyangjan passengers and additional trains for southern districts.

Interacting with passengers, Partap Singh said the Egmore terminal, which is getting a facelift, will feature "airport-like amenities" including a separate arrival and departure terminal to ease passenger flow.

The renovation work has been



thoughtfully planned keeping comfort of all passengers, especially senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

As part of the modernisation, all platforms will be connected by wide foot overbridges

, with each platform equipped with sufficient lifts and escalators (32 escalators and 44 lifts across the station), ensuring easy and convenient movement, he added.

In addition, several inclusive features are being introduced to make the terminal a passenger-friendly station, he pointed out.

These include tactile flooring to guide visually impaired passengers



from the entrances to platforms, booking counters, and waiting areas; reserved seats, booking counters, and dedicated waiting



Tej Partap Singh, additional divisional railway manager, Chennai Division presided over the meeting.

lounges for Divyangjan passengers; wheelchairs; Braille-enabled signage and clear audio announcements for better navigation; and parking spaces near entry and exit points.

Similar programmes were held at Saint Thomas Mount and Tambaram railway stations.

At Saint Thomas Mount, commuters suggested adding additional lifts and ticket counters to en-

hance convenience, particularly during peak hours.

The Tambaram railway station will soon be equipped with nine lifts and 10 escalators to enhance passenger convenience. Apart, work on the new foot overbridge is progressing well, and platforms 7 and 8 have been widened to facilitate smoother passenger movement and improve station capacity, the release added.

READERS WRITE



'Open it for light vehicles'

N. SUNDAR

In the morning hours, when the section of the road from Lighthouse to Santhome High Road is badly needed, it is made out of bounds for traffic with a "No Entry" board. I reside near Rosary Matriculation Girls school, Santhome High Road and this traffic arrangement, typically in place between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m., inconveniences local resi-

dents immensely.

Subsequently, the section will be open for movement of normal traffic. Currently it is a complete "No Entry" with the retractable barricades stretched fully. The intention of the traffic regulators is to block MTC/ heavy vehicles and commercial vehicles. However no vehicle, not even a motorcycle or a car, is allowed except on Sundays and public holidays. I do not understand this. It is a huge hardship for those who reside/want to

travel between Light House and Santhome High road (near Sangeetha), which is a two-kilometre stretch, as they have to take a circuitous route via Loop Road to reach their destination. The traffic regulators can consider opening this section for at least for motorcycles and cars which will help the general public immensely.

N. Sundar is a resident of Lalitha Nagar I Street, Mylapore.

Silt pit gets a cover



Kasim Razvi, a resident of Srinivasa Road in Mylapore, shared an update about the silt catch pit that was provided with a cover recently after a picture about it was posted in these pages. The images of the silt catch pit then and now.



A lesson in resilience



This is Prakash from Bihar. Some eight years ago, he met with an accident and lost one leg. And on account of it, he could not take up any big work. Prakash landed in Chennai and started selling helmets and other accessories. Currently, Adyar Bridge near R.A. Puram and old Malar Hospital is where he has his pavement shop. His helmets are reasonably priced.

Text and photo: Baskar Seshadri from Mylapore

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 [downtownfeedback @thehindu.co.in](mailto:downtownfeedback@thehindu.co.in).

Letters must carry the contact number.

Students simulate the IPL auction

Fifty teams from various colleges took part in the event conducted by the Department of Management Studies, University of Madras

ZUHAIR AHMED N

Cricket craze hit a new high at the Department of Management Studies, University of Madras in Chepauk as students turned into team owners, strategists and auctioneers for a day at the IPL auction event, part of the much-awaited Synergy Management Meet.

What started with over 50 enthusiastic teams from various colleges was narrowed down to the top 10 through a fast-paced and fun-filled IPL quiz round. These 10 teams went on to represent real IPL franchises, stepping into the shoes of actual team owners and bidding for their dream line-up of players. The atmosphere was electric as paddles went up, budgets were balanced, and strategies were

put to the ultimate test.

The excitement reached another level during the press conference round, where teams had to justify their selections and explain their team-building strategies. From clever reasoning to witty one-liners, participants impressed everyone with their cricket knowledge, confidence and communication skills.

The event was conducted under the dynamic guidance of J. Khaja Sheriff, Head of the Department and Vaneeta Aggarwal, faculty head. The smooth execution and creative organisation were made possible by the dedicated efforts of student coordinators Zuhair Ahmed, Abishake, Logeshwaran, Thamrai Kannan, Velan, Nitish, Hari Vignesh, Giridharan, and Muth-



uelan. Kishore S. also coordinated the event.

The IPL Auction event turned out to be more than just a game, it was a celebration of teamwork, strategic thinking, and the undying passion for cricket that unites everyone.

(Zuhair Ahmed N is a student of the Department of Management Studies, University of Madras)

Two sides to those view cutters



V. GANESAN

The view cutters being installed by Greater Chennai Corporation to hide roadside electricity infrastructure – distribution transformers, fuse boxes and switch gears – and their surroundings from the public gaze are also hiding things that should not be found amidst this gadgetry.

Inside many of these enclosures, one can find big stones, rods, shrubs, broken glasses and unwanted waste materials – things that ought to be carted away but are being hidden away by those view cutters. Even trees are inside

these partially closed compartments. There is no proper entrance for inspecting the transformers. Some transformers are weeping with leaking oil. Inspection becomes nearly impossible. During heavy rain, these enclosures with their small support walls for the view cutter might act like water tanks and water might enter electrical pillar boxes and cause major power outages. Removing a failed transformer would also be very difficult as view cutters might prove a hindrance. Hence restoration of power may take a longer period. Utilising sophisticated machines to clean debris inside these closed view cutters would be a

challenge. Transformers are trapped inside unsafe, poorly planned metal enclosures.

As an example, a partially built view cutter at Vasudevapuram, West Mambalam is shown here to understand how a view cutter is constructed without removing the unwanted materials, stones, wire fence, shrubs, glasses and other garbage including broomstick. There is also a papaya tree inside. Clearly, danger lurks inside.

Summing up, these view cutters around transformers are a beauty on the outside, and a danger on the inside.

(V. Ganesan is a retired executive engineer of TNEB)



A partially built view cutter at Vasudevapuram, West Mambalam.
Photos: Special Arrangement

Citywide awareness campaign marks World Polio Day

Rotary District 3234 observed World Polio Day across the Chennai Metro Rail network. The campaign reached out to commuters through interactive awareness sessions, posters, and volunteer drives at Alandur, Guindy and Central Metro stations.

The initiative aimed to educate the

public about ongoing vaccination efforts and the importance of remaining vigilant until the world completely eradicates polio, said a press release.

District governor AKS Rotarian Vinod Saroogi, S. Ashok Kumar, chief general manager, track and elevated construction, CMRL, and the district polio team participated.

Rotary's End Polio Now campaign remains one of the organisation's flagship global programmes, with over 2.5 billion children vaccinated since its inception, added the release.



On rain duty at Koyambedu metro station. This image was taken on October 23.
PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B



LIFFY THOMAS

Low-lying, Elaya Street junction in R.K. Nagar has been a bugbear every monsoon for residents and Greater Chennai Corporation. Rainwater from VOC Nagar, Thiruvalluvar Nagar and surrounding areas would pour into it. This monsoon, a number of interventions are making sure the water level at this junction does not cause any hindrance to the movement of people and vehicles.

A 280 HP submersible pump is stationed at the junction. A sump and a well ensures water drains easily. If that is not enough then additional drains and an additional pump have been put into service to ensure excess water goes down easily. An executive engineer says that because of various measures taken well ahead of the monsoon the inundation time has reduced at this vulnera-

A tech boost

Greater Chennai Corporation has made sure that water pumps are not alone in the battle against flooding

ble spot by almost half. "In the previous monsoon, water would stay on for a day. Now in hours time water is drained out," says the engineer.

With the help of GPS-enabled tracking devices installed in portable water pumps, Greater Chennai Corporation officials are monitoring many such areas prone to flooding during heavy rains.

"Until last year, they arrived at a decision based on the feedback we presented. There was no mechanism to cross check whether the information that was fed was right or wrong. Suppose three 100 HP motors are stationed on

the road they can monitor whether it is being put into service and for how many hours it ran etc.," says the engineer with

Zone I.

A clause in the tender
Use of GPS in dewatering equip-

Monsoon helpline

1913 - for any monsoon-related complaint that has to be attended by Greater Chennai Corporation

Residents can also reach out to GCC through its social media platforms such as X **@chennaicorp** and Instagram **@chennaicorp**

1916 / 044-4567 4567 - Besides calling these two dedicated numbers, the public can share their grievances with CMWSSB through their **WhatsApp number 8144930308**

Call TNEB at 94987 94987 for power-related issues

ments such as pumps/ motors and tractors saw a mention in the GCC tenders from this year. The move is aimed at ensuring accountability.

"In the previous years, engineers would manually verify and cross-verify with us if an area is getting flooded or if the pumps are running effectively. Now in real time they can monitor the pump functioning," says an entity associated with the industry.

GPS when installed in the motors and pumps helps to correlate the info that GCC is getting through other platforms. This can also be used by the department to give a status report on an area.

While technology can enhance flood mitigation through advanced monitoring, it can only be effective with other measures on the ground and can also fail at times. For example, in 2015, the city went without power for an extended period, and in such scenarios, one would need to look beyond this technology, say experts.



PHOTOS: R. RAGU AND SRINATH M

The 58-acre Tholkappia Poonga in R.A. Puram is now open to walkers and visitors all days of the weeks except on Thursdays and public holidays.

The Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust has earmarked certain days of the week for visits by educational institutions. For instance, Chennai Corporation Schools are permitted on Tuesday and Saturday; Government / Government Aided Schools on Friday; and Private Schools / Colleges on Monday, Wednesday and Sunday. It has an online booking system.

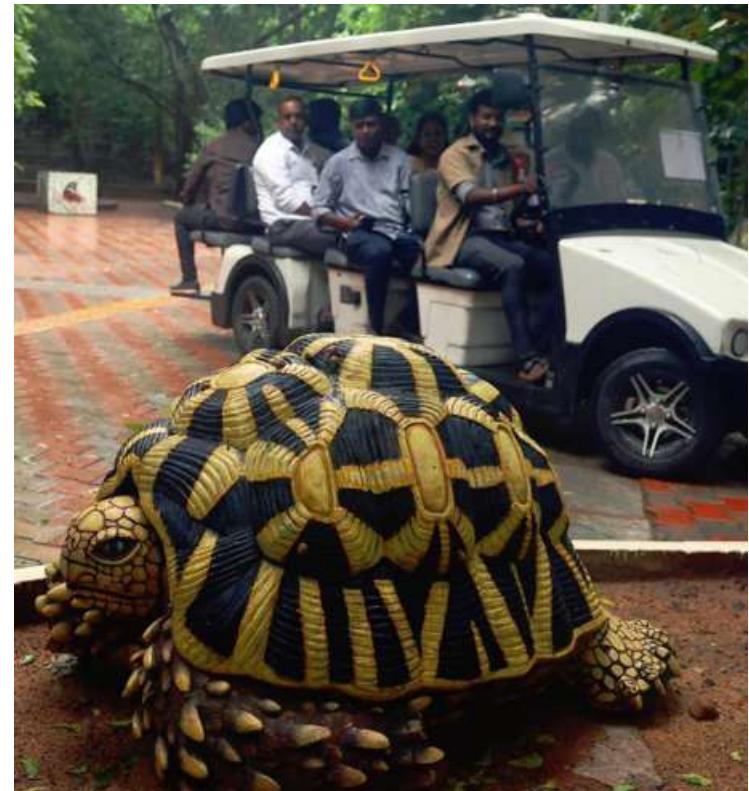
Morning walkers can use the sprawling campus and book monthly passes that are priced at ₹500. Just as in Semmozhi Poonga, additional charges levied if someone wants to use the premises for video and camera shoots.

The Eco Park will be closed on Thursday for weekly maintenance.

Walkers and visitors can obtain passes/ tickets on online payment at www.crct.tn.gov.in.

A big draw

The redeveloped 58-acre Tholkappia Poonga is now the place to visit



Nowhere to run when it pours

That is the current state of commuters at Guindy Race Course bus stop as the shelters have been removed

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Commuters at Guindy Race Course stop (towards Five Furlong Road) are frustrated over the removal of shelters and the delay in installing new ones.

Recently, Greater Chennai Corporation carried out an exercise to install new shelters, say Metropolitan Transport Corporation officials. It has been weeks since the old shelters were removed, and there is no sign yet of the new ones.



M. Bhuvana, a commuter, says, "There was no need to remove these shelters, which were helpful

during the summer and rains."

Now, most commuters have nowhere to go, so they gather at



Guindy Race Course bus stop when it had shelters; and now, when the shelters have been removed. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the timekeeper's makeshift office, which is surrounded by trees. On the other side, commuters need to be careful not to get hit by buses. A small shelter along the timekeeper's office has been put up with no seating arrangements. How can the commuter traffic at this halter fit under the roof? questioned commuters

"Commuters had a tough time

scrambling for shelter, says D. Sathyaranarayanan, a long-time resident of Guindy and a social activist.

At any time of the day, the stop (no less than a terminal) sees hundreds of commuters heading to Kilambakkam, Tambaram (East and West), Poonamallee, Kundrathur, Guduvancherry and Pazhanthandalam.

PANORAMA

Based on her experiences during her pregnancy, Carnatic vocalist Divyalakshmi Kamalakkannan has designed a programme for expectant mothers

A mom's project

Can music begin to shape a child's life before birth? Carnatic vocalist and educator Divyalakshmi Kamalakkannan believes it can and has designed a programme to help expectant mothers explore this possibility.

An engineering graduate who chose music over a corporate career, Divyalakshmi founded her music school at the age of 23. Aarohanam - the school of music ran for close to six years in Kilpauk until

the pandemic forced her to down its shutters. It was also the time when her daughter was born.

Recently, Aarohi opened in Shenoy Nagar, with noted conductor Augustine Paul as chief guest. The event also saw the launch of her latest initiative: music lessons curated exclusively for expectant mothers.

Her inspiration comes from her own journey as a mother. "My daughter, Aarohi Kiran Kumar, would identify 1,000 pictures when she was just one-and-a-half

years old and played the violin at 3.5 years," says Divyalakshmi, a resident of Shenoy Nagar. Divyalakshmi notes that music is partly behind her daughter's intellectual precocity. As a vocal trainer, Divyalakshmi sang almost daily, and that constant exposure did play a role.

She has been researching on the role of music with a small circle of expectant mothers for over four years – many of whom shared positive experiences – to launch this programme.

"Each musical note carries a unique frequency. When sung at the

Two Adyar residents add to the greenery on a divider near Kasturbanagar MRTS station by planting *mahilam* saplings; over the years, this divider and its surrounding area have been the focus of greening exercises by individuals. In the light of this commitment, here is a sweeping look at a few efforts by residents to green other patches in the region



Saranya P. during the recent planting exercise; C. Namachivayam with M. Sundararaman.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



A green tradition continues

PRINCE FREDERICK

Recently, a cherished practice among residents of Adyar gained more ground, nay more soil.

From time to time, a divider on a broad concrete pathway running past the Kasturba Nagar MRTS station has been the focus of a greening exercise. The exercise is almost always of a minor key – a volunteer or two in attendance and presiding over a green exercise – but the message it sends out is always huge, and it plays out at multiple levels. One, engagement with public spaces. Two, bringing natural relief to a drearily grey, concrete environment. And three, emphasising the indispensable role of trees in fighting one of the stiffest environmental battles of our times, the battle to check climate change.

Recently, this green bank was enriched by an addition of five *mahilam* saplings. The divider itself has been designed as a row of concrete planters, rectangular in shape. The planting of the five *mahilam* saplings was carried out by C. Namachivayam, a resident of Indira Nagar and Saranya P., a key member of Residents of Kasturba-nagar Association (ROKA).

"In the past, residents of Kasturba Nagar and members of ROKA such as Janani Venkitesh have planted saplings on this divider, as also the pathway that extends further," observes Namachivayam.



"Some of them have grown to maturity and are strike any observer as full-grown trees. Some others have disappeared as infrastructure work has overtaken them."

But the effort to keep the greening tradition continues, with some resident or the other taking the time to keep it alive.

A scattered team

The whole of Adyar has a rich tradition of residents-driven tree planting. These residents can together be seen as a scattered team fighting green battles individually.

At a park on Gangai Street in Besant Nagar, 15 poovarasan trees stand as testimony to an effort of this kind. A resident of Sashtri Nagar, M. Sundararaman, aged 85, recalls the genesis of those poovarasan trees.

Sundararaman is known for collecting seeds in public spaces, turn them into seedlings, and put them on the path to being trees. "I aimed at having 45 Poovarasan trees, and raised as many seedlings. Only 15 of them prospered," he observes. And that is not a bad number at all, when you know they are indeed 15 robust trees.

In 2007-08, Sundararaman along with another resident, Sivaraman, collected seeds, raised seedlings and proceeded to green the park near the gym at Elliots Beach. Part of the greenery there was born out of that initiative.

'Pasumai' Murthy is a veteran of tree-planting in these parts, and his efforts continue with unflagging intensity.

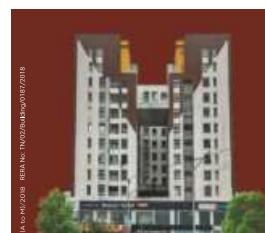
An orthopedic surgeon, Dr. M.



Parthasarathy was an inspiration to "green beings" with his enthusiastic efforts to green various parts of Adyar and beyond. He had also undertaken tree planting exercises at Periyar Science and

Technology Centre on Gandhi Mandapam Road.

In what a massive loss to Adyar's scattered green team, Dr. Parthasarathy passed on, on May 11 2025.



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