

ANNA NAGAR

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Recently relaid roads in Perambur are battered

Citizens forum blames lack of coordination among GCC, CMWSSB and TANGEDCO for the sorry state of the roads

Recently, relaid roads in Perambur are in a sorry state, notes Perambur Neighbourhood Development Forum, a citizens forum. They were dug up again by the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) and the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited (TAN-

GEDCO) to carry out their works.

"A good number of roads in Perambur were relaid sometime between October 2023 and the end of 2024. Annadhana Samajam Road, Anandha Velu Street, Chinnaiyan New Colony First Main Road, Chinnaiyan New Colony Second Main Road, Chinnaiyan New Colony Fourth Cross Street are a few examples. Most

of these streets are in a battered condition and marked with potholes. A car got stuck at the junction of Annadhana Samajam Road and Meenakshi Street following the rains on April 16. Annadhana Samajam Road and Meenakshi Street where pipe laying and electricity cable laying work were carried out after they were relaid. And in the case of



Clockwise from top: Thiruvengadam Street, Ramachandran Street and Puzhal Murugesan Street following the downpour on April 16.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the roads in Chinnaiyan New Colony, sewage pipes were relaid by cutting the relaid loads. Infrastructure projects entailing road cuts should have been prioritised first before relaying of the roads. This shows lack of coordination among the government departments resulting in criminal waste of taxpayers money," says Raghukumar Chooda-

mani, the forum's convenor.

The forum suggests that the battered concrete roads should be replaced with interlocking paver blocks as they are not only durable but also environment-friendly by allowing surface water percolation in case of rain and help in ground water recharging.

Text by L. Kanthimathi

READERS WRITE

'Complaints seeking repair of fans in Ambattur OT bus terminus evoke no response'

It is two years since the ceiling fans at the bus terminus in Ambattur OT on CTH Road went out of order. It should be noted the Public Works Department carried out a sprucing-up exercise at a cost of ₹40 lakh allocated under Ambattur MLA Constituency Local Area Development Scheme (MLALADS) in July 2024. As part of the work, roof and seats were provided for the third bay. However, the non-functional ceiling fans in other bays have not been addressed. It is more than a year since residents have been raising this issue with the Metropolitan Transport Corporation but the problem remains unaddressed to this day.

S Suresh, president, United Welfare Associations Ambattur



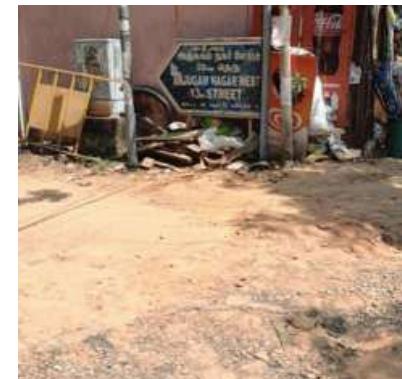
One of the fans at Ambattur OT bus terminus on CTH Road. The image was taken on April 18. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Additional transformers show wrong Ward number'

Low voltage at P G Avenue First Street in Kattupakkam (near Porur) is a recurrent problem, especially during summer. The drop in voltage results in damage of electronic gadgets and appliances.

It should be noted several buildings including illegal structures have cropped up in the neighbourhood. The current number of transformers is inadequate to meet the demand for electricity. Several complaints to Tamil Nadu Generation & Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO) have been in vain.

M.C.Vijay Shankar, Kattupakkam



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. Letters must carry the postal address and contact number.

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OUT FOR A CHARGE

Private players and even Greater Chennai Corporation are seeking to establish charging points in locations that can be quickly and comfortably accessed **P3**



ON THE TAIL OF A TAGGED CURLEW SANDPIPER

At the end of every wintering season, one can have only a broad idea about where a migratory bird would breed, unless it is tagged **P6**

READERS WRITE

'Make Selfie Point in Avadi accessible'

As you can see clearly from this picture that I shot recently, the pavement in front of the Selfie Point on New Military Road in Avadi is encroached upon.

It is outside the entrance gate of Avadi Municipal Corporation's administration building. The encroachment stretches on for about 25 metres, the Selfie Point swamped by autorickshaws.

I request the Avadi Municipal Corporation Commissioner to ensure illegal parking and encroachments around the Selfie Point are cleared and it is made accessible.

*Bala Ruban,
Avadi*



Madhavaram RWA complains of lack of piped water supply



The sump at Majestic Colony Third Cross Street and (right) the water tank at Thanikachalam Nagar.

Residents of Wards 29 and 30 in Zone 3 (Madhavaram) of Greater Chennai Corporation complain about a lack of piped water supply from Chennai Metropolitan Water & Supply Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) for the past many years. According to the Federation of Madhavaram Resident Welfare Associations, it is 15 years since piped water supply stopped in these two Wards.

"Water for both the wards was supplied from a CMWSSB water sump constructed 20 years ago at Majestic Colony Third Cross Street in Ward 30. Pipes from the sump got damaged due to frequent road cuts on account of civic works. The sump should be catering to around 60 colonies but only a handful of neighbourhoods including Majestic Colony, Devaki Nagar, Thanigai Nagar, Gowri Nagar, Thanikachalam Nagar F Block, are be-

nefitting from the sump. And others including Shasti Nagar, Thirumalai Nagar, Balakrishna Nagar, Vidyagar Nagar, Elizabeth Nagar, Ganesh Nagar rely on private suppliers of water," says D. Neelakannan, the Federation's president.

The Federation also raised the issue about the delay in operating the overhead water tank constructed at Thanikachalam Nagar.

"It is 10 years since a 15-lakh litre-capacity overhead water tank was constructed at Thanikachalam Nagar in Ward 30. We learnt from CMWSSB that the tank would be catering to the two Wards. But citing stormwater drain construction, the water pipes from the overhead water tank have not been laid to this day," adds Neelakannan.

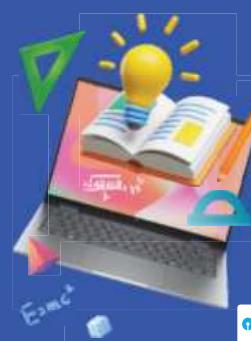
A CMWSSB official said that the problem would be addressed at the earliest.

Text by L Kanthimathi

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One does not associate notebooks and textbooks with World Book Day, but there are students out there who cannot afford to buy them fresh off the shelves. A spotlight on Prakirth Arivagam, a library in New Perungalathur that is scripting a charity on the unused pages of used notebooks



Take a page out of their book

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

On World Book Day (April 23), Sriram Gopalan was desk-bound at his non-profit children's library and thumbing through pages – not pages that flaunted printed words, but empty pages that hoped to host words, handwritten words.

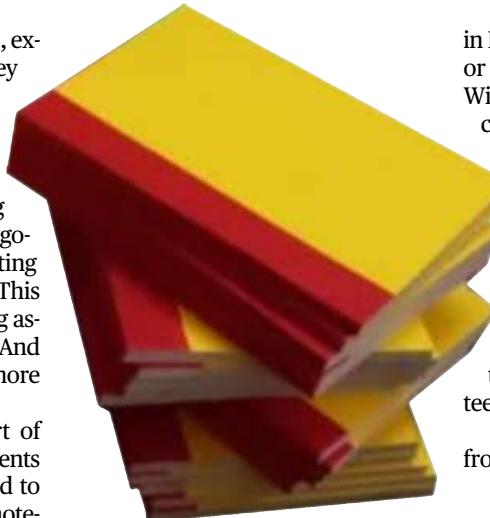
At Prakirth Arivagam, as this library at Alapakkam in New Perungalathur is called, Sriram was swamped by stacks of half-used notebooks. Ruled and unruled, long and short, white and yellowed, smudged and dog-eared notebooks. He was tearing out the untouched pages to settle them between new covers and find them a new pair of hands. Sriram was not labouring at this work alone. The sound of pages being ripped out intact filled the room: he was with people who are on the same page about how half-used notebooks ought to be treated.

They collect used notebooks, extract the blank pages which they would ultimately bind into fresh notebooks: on for weeks now, this activity would extend through May. The epilogue to the exercise: donating the notebooks thus made to government schools and benefitting underprivileged children. This "summer-vacation volunteering assignment" is in its second year. And by the look of it, it has added more pages and chapters.

Last year, with the support of volunteers from the local residents community, the team managed to repurpose and distribute 800 note-



An initiative by Prakirth Arivagam reaches notebooks to students of government schools.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



books to children at a Panchayat Union school at Alapakkam under Nedungundram panchayat in the New Perungalathur region. This year, the bar has been set decisively higher.

"This year, we started collecting in March itself, hoping to reach two or three schools," Sriram says. With over 1000 used notebooks collected already and volunteers

working nearly every day, the distance between the effort and the goalpost is shrinking rapidly.

This annual exercise is promoted in WhatsApp apartment groups, library circles, and social media – to seek half-used notebooks and the volunteers to deal with them.

Responses came from near, far

A word of praise from the PM

Prakirth Arivagam, started on January 1, 2023 by techie Sriram Gopalan after his return from the United States to pitch permanent tent in Chennai, originally had the character of an exclusive children's library.

Its scope was subsequently expanded to include books for all age groups, says Sriram. He however adds that 90 per cent of the books still cater to children. Besides, it focusses on promoting activities that would contribute to the holistic development of children. It therefore essentially remains a children's library and resource centre.

In the 116th edition of Mann Ki Baat (dated November 24, 2024), Prime Minister Narendra Modi showered encomiums on Prakirth Arivagam for how it promotes the reading habit and creativity – through memory-training classes and robotics among others – among children with the use of the latest technology.

He made this reference about Prakirth Arivagam while discussing the lofty goals of children's education and the role played by libraries in achieving them.

and wide, with Mumbai and Mylapore among places where the initiative found resonance.

The project is being powered by more than 20 volunteers this time. "It is a rotational effort," says Sriram. "Even if someone cannot make it every day, a few hours here and there really adds up."

Up to this point, the helping hands belong largely to adults. With educational institutions now closing for summer, college and school students are expected to walk into the volunteering exercise.

Volunteers collect used notebooks, either through drop-offs or home pickups within nearby areas. Sorting the pages is the most labour-intensive: it is about removing used pages, then classifying the clean sheets. "We classify everything – long books, short ones, ruled, unruled. Then we send them to a local binder, who binds them at cost," he explains. "We do not earn from this. The binder we work with has agreed to do it at cost price. We cover the expenses through small fundraisers within our community."

Sriram sums up, defining why they do what they do.

"I think this generation does not realise how much they waste. Schools now provide new books with the fees. Most of them are not even fully used. But there are still thousands of children in government and rural schools who go without basic stationery. That gap is what we are trying to bridge."

To volunteer or to donate old textbooks, call 9445411121

Out for a charge

Have you spotted the latest addition to the landscape: an EV station next to a supermarket or any other major congregating point? Private players and even Greater Chennai Corporation are seeking to establish charging points in locations that can be quickly and comfortably accessed

LIFFY THOMAS

Two years ago when Kiruba Joy brought home a new electric car, he did not anticipate objection from the residents association to having the machine charged from his individual meter. The 300-unit apartment community in Porur had only two EV users then. The association would go on to invest in a common charging point, which did not impress Kiruba as he found the rates to be on the higher side.

"We shifted from our own flat to a rented accommodation in Kolathur to be able to have EV charging at home as well as to enrol my daughter in a nearby school," says Kiruba.

Kiruba would have loved to make use of a public charging station, but he found none within a five kilometre radius.

In the last six months, the EV landscape in Chennai has improved, EV charging infrastructure keeping pace with people's openness to travelling electric.

A changing landscape

Greater Chennai Corporation has started work on identifying locations for public EV charging stations across its 15 zones. Private players are parking EV charging stations near crowd-pulling establishments like malls and cafes.

"Currently, our preference is in establishing two-and-three wheeler charging points as many electric vehicles in these categories have hit the roads in the recent months, and the charging point for such vehicles is not yet universal," says Sriram J, senior manager, charging infrastructure at Bolt.Earth.

The company has 97 public charging stations in Chennai and is in the process of establishing 10 more.

"The recent fleet of Pink Autos and load vehicles launched by the State Government are electric, so the charging infrastructure has to keep pace with the demand," says Sriram.

Plugzmart, a Chennai-based EV charger manufacturer for high-power charging, has 25 charging stations on the highways to help long-distance travellers.

The Union Government has also asked power distribution compa-

We are seeing a lot of improvement on the ground. Now we have an EV cell where concerns raised by us are being looked into



nies to set up common charging stations every 25 km along national highways.

According to Bureau of Energy Efficiency, as on April 12 2025, Tamil Nadu has 1,524 public charging stations installed over the last five years, with Chennai accounting for 218 (tier 2 cities have 459 and tier 3 has 847). Karnataka and Maharashtra are way ahead of Tamil Nadu.

EV users note that besides addressing charging infrastructure gaps in public places, signages have to be put up to improve the visibility of charging stations.

Vignesh N. works as a delivery partner and commutes more than 100 km on his e-bike from his home in Ambattur Industrial Estate to Parrys. He says the city needs not just more charging stations but the existing ones need to be better maintained and be made user-friendly. "You reach a charging point to realise it's not working or there are a queue of people waiting

for their turn or the filter option is the app is such that it directs you to a gated community where you are not allowed," says Vignesh.

Exclusive charging points for gated communities is also in the wish list.

Ragavendra Ravichandran, co-founder and COO, Plugzmart, says the focus is more on getting developers of new projects on board than persuading an existing apartment community to invest in an EV station. "Having an EV charging infrastructure is now an essential selling point for developers," he says.

Some real estate players have been opening up these unmanned charging stations for those beyond their community. Ragavendra cites the example of SKCL Prime in Guindy where

An EV charging station established next door to a supermarket on ECR Link Road in Sholinganallur; and (below) near Saidapet station.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

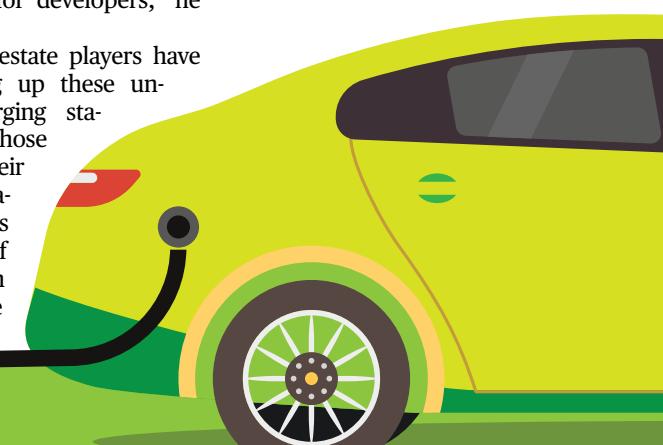
employees working in the IT park as well as those from the public can avail the charging facility inside the campus.

Wiring in

Among the challenges faced by private EV players is finding a good location where electricity load is good.

"EV vehicles need good wiring. In many cases, the wiring component is not suitable and the cost of setting up the wiring runs into lakhs of rupees. The "load fixed deposit" that has to be paid to the government is also high," says Sriram.

The process of engaging with the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board is also time-consuming. "We are seeing a lot of improvement on the ground. Now we have an EV cell where concerns raised by us are being looked into. TNEB has also asked its senior staff to give preference to EV users," says Sriram adding that a meeting of charge point operators was held on April 24.



At the end of every wintering season, one can have only a broad idea about where a migratory bird would breed, unless it is tagged. The latest illustration of how bird tagging helps conservation efforts comes from Kelambakkam backwaters on the southern rim of Chennai



On the tail of a tagged Curlew sandpiper

PRINCE FREDERICK

When a wintering bird doubles back to its breeding grounds to attend to the visceral business of procreation, it becomes essentially "unreachable" for the human friends it has made in its wintering grounds. It is impossible to keep tabs on the bird. One only knows its vast breeding range, which could straddle countries. Trying to

trace this bird down to its "hearth" would amount to looking for a needle in a haystack.

Birder Jithesh Babu is rummaging through a haystack: he is trying to trace the soon-to-be address of a curlew sandpiper (he made friends with, on April 18, 2025 at Kelambakkam backwaters). Jithesh would likely succeed in this effort. The Curlew sandpiper (already wearing its breeding plumage and likely to be around in its wintering

grounds for some more time) is wearing a tag.

A bird with a tag usually has a recorded history to fall back on. It is a matter of time before Jithesh knows where exactly the Curlew sandpiper would go. The tagged Curlew sandpiper having crossed his 150-600 mm telephoto lens, he has a photo of the creature, which he has sent to Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) along with a request for information about it.



A Curlew sandpiper with a tag at Kelambakkam on April 18, 2025; a tagged Greater flamingo at Pallikaranai marshland on April 21, 2021.
PHOTOS: JITHESH BABU

And Jithesh knows what exactly to expect.

Around the same time four years ago – April 21, 2021 – he found a tagged Greater flamingo at Pallikaranai marshland and he wrote to BNHS seeking information, and in response, Tuhina Katti, a scientist with the Wetlands Programme, BNHS, wrote back to him: "From the combination on the tag, it appears to be 'AAP'. This individual was tagged in Panje, Navi

Mumbai (on the outskirts of Mumbai) on 24 September 2018. It was resighted in Chennai in August 2020 and since then it has been resighted in Sholinganallur on a couple more occasions. It is interesting that the bird was still present there in April."

Jithesh remarks: "As this happened at the height of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the response took some time. Usually, it is prompt."



Different stages of domesticity

▼
Two pheasant-tailed jacanas, one in full and the other in partial breeding plumage, at a boggy patch on Nookampalayam Link Road in Semmancherry on April 22, 2025; and at same patch, a moorhen was seen feeding its young, on April 26.
PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

EVENTS



Rank holders receive cash awards at graduation day

RMK College of Engineering and Technology celebrated its 12th and 13th Graduation Day recently. The campus was adorned with the vibrant spirit of celebration as students from the 2023 and 2024 graduating batches, clad in their ceremonial robes, eagerly awaited the conferring of their degrees. A total of 797 eligible students were conferred with degrees, of which 54 students are rank holders, says a press release.

R.S. Munirathinam, former MLA and founder-chairman of RMK Group of In-

stitutions, presided over the event. He emphasised the importance of discipline, dedication, and innovation, and urged the students to be torch-bearers of knowledge and integrity in society. Chief Guest for the day Ajay Kumar Srivastava, managing director and chief executive officer of Indian Overseas Bank, Chennai, delivered the Graduation Day address and distributed degrees to the graduates and rank certificates to the rank holders. He also gave away a cash award worth ₹ 6.75 lakhs and distributed the degree certificates

to all 797 graduands. He encouraged students to contribute meaningfully to nation-building and technological advancement.

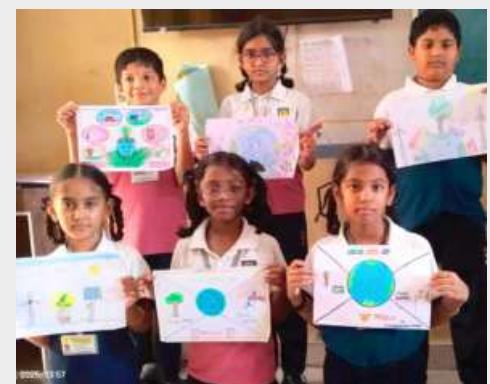
R. Jothi Naidu, director; R. M. Kishore, vice-chairman; Yalamanchi Pradeep, secretary; Durgadevi Pradeep, vice-chairperson; Sowmya Kishore, management trustee, The Advisors of RMK Group of Institutions; M. S. Palanichamy, former vice chancellor - Tamil Nadu Open University; T. Pichandi I.A.S (retd) and V. Manoharan, former director, Tamil Nadu Minerals were among those who took part.

N. Suresh Kumar, principal; K. Ramar, dean (research) and K. Sivaram, dean (academics) congratulated the students and lauded the contributions of the faculty and administration in shaping the academic environment.

A message on a poster

KRM Public School organised a poster-making activity to raise awareness about environmental conservation on World Earth Day.

Students created vibrant and meaningful posters based on the objectives and mission recommended by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education. The young learners expressed their concern for the planet through art, illustrating key themes such as reducing e-waste, conserving water and energy.



Saplings planted at Mangal Eri Park



In commemoration of Earth Day, Lions Club of South Madras and Exnora International conducted a tree planting drive at Mangal Eri Park in Mogappair. Close to 200 saplings were planted. M. B. Nirmal founder of Exnora International, journalist 'Nakkheeran' Gopal and members of Lions Club of South Madras took part in the drive.

New lessons on Earth Day



The Rotary Club of Chennai Mugappair, in association with Goodwill Trust, organised a special event at Avadi Government Higher Secondary School to commemorate World Earth Day. The event was a blend of education, environment awareness, and sports promotion, and featured a poster demonstration by students and a quiz competition. To promote physical well-being, sports materials including volleyballs and throwballs along with nets were donated to the school. Rotarian Bharathi Natesan delivered an informative session to Class 9 students, highlighting the significance of World Earth Day and the role of individuals in maintaining a healthy planet.

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Visual lesson from design professor

SAHANA MIRA S

When assistant professor of Interior design and decor, Karthiga T from JBAS College for Women went out on an early morning ride to Marina beach at the end of last year, to catch the sunrise, what greeted her was a shoreline littered with plastic waste – bags, large water cans, abandoned slippers, mosquito

bats, and other debris tossed ashore.

Deeply disturbed by what she saw, this Velachery resident felt compelled to turn her emotion into action. "This is when I decided to take this issue to a wider audience, but through the language of art. We need to keep the conversation going, one way or another," says Karthiga. She later incorporated this into her PhD research project after

lect coastal waste and transform it into art, which marked the beginning of her mural art, "Coastal Cry in Plastic".

"While my artwork used only plastic waste, our aim at the end of the day, was to clean the beach. Together with my students from JBAS, we collected all forms of coastal debris from Marina and Besant Nagar beach over a span of 30 days," she explains.

After spending another month sorting through the collected waste, separating plastics, and sending the rest for recycling, Karthiga began working on her mural.

artwork from home. Between parenting her toddler and teaching at college, she used whatever spare time she had – often on her terrace to bring the piece alive. The artwork is a statue of a pregnant woman form which has around 20 kilograms of plastic waste. “I wanted it to be a commentary on environmental degradation,” says Karthiga. “The mural work is constructed entirely from coastal waste which we collected where I mainly used plastic bottles, bags, caps, wires, and discarded containers. I wanted viewers to reflect on their own consumption and disposal habits, and

think about the sustainable practices of these discarded items through the mural art," says the interior decor professor, who used eco-friendly paints.

"This pregnant female figure is a metaphor for Mother Earth, carrying the weight of our waste," she adds.

Recently, in April, the mural was installed at the Government College of Fine Arts, Chennai. "The mural now sits in a space surrounded by artists," Ms Karthiga says. "I hope to create conversations and inspire more artists to choose sustainable practices in their work."

Table tennis champions honoured

SK Academy in Periamet hosted its first awards function to celebrate players and coaches

K. KEERTHIVASAN

said the Academy would bring in performance incentives as it moves forward.

"This is the first year we have started giving out these awards. We have recognised the performances at State and National level. Gradually we will bring in performance incentives for international events as India has been doing quite well globally too," he said.

Sharath said he wanted the players to win an Olympic medal, a dream he could not realise.

"I have won 13 Commonwealth Games medals, two Asian Games medals but the Olympic medal has been elusive. What I could not do I want to enable the next generation to achieve," he said.

who is part of the elite panel of coaches at SK Academy, said the Club did not look at short-term success. "Our idea is to show you a way to learn for life and become the best player you potentially can,"

The award winners
with the guests
and SK Academy
coaches



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