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A new forum to conserve Thiruneermalai Lake

Thirty residents have formed Thiruneermalai Eri Pathukappu Kuzhu

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Residents of Thiruneermalai have come together to protect the sprawling waterbody in the region. Towards this end, they have started a forum, Thiruneermalai Eri Pathukappu Kuzhu. Thirty residents are enrolled as its members.

Recently, the members held a meeting near the lake bund. The meeting was also attended by residents of Saraswathipuram, Ranga Nagar and Subburayan Nagar.

They exchanged ideas on protecting and rejuvenating the lake on the lines of Chitlapakkam Lake and 'Nattu Kalvai', a channel carrying excess lake water to the Adyar river. Planting of trees and laying a walkers' path were among the other points of discussion.

Social activists B. Saravanan and V. Seetharaman presided over the meeting.

"Before the lake restoration work begins, the Water Resources Department should take steps to



plug illegal sewage inlets," said B. Saravanan.

On May 4, the Forum members and Exnora volunteers cleaned the lake bund and weeded out 'Seemai Karuvellam'. The clean-up will continue in the weeks to come.

To get more people to volunteering for lake cleaning exercise, the forum members are planning to distribute pamphlets and create awareness about the importance and need to protect this waterbody, says Saravanan.



On May 4, volunteers cleaned the Thiruneermalai lake bund.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Currently, the bund along Thiruneermalai Road is strewn with trash. The bund is overrun with vegetation, including thorny bushes and Seemai Karuvellam. They also plan to request the police to patrol the bund to prevent mischief by antisocial elements.

For details, contact B. Saravanan at 98417 83744.

Perungalathur subway needs better maintenance



The area along the walkway to the Perungalathur subway is marked by squalor. Photo: Special Arrangement

The pedestrian subway at Perungalathur Railway Station can do with some more maintenance. The subway connects Srinivasa Raghavan Street, Railway Station Road and GST Road to Kamarajar Salai. The walkway to the underpass is used as an open toilet and a space to throw garbage.

The tiles in the entrance walkway (along GST Road) are broken.

K. Durai Murugan, a resident of New Perungalathur, says: "For months, the ceiling and the tiled walls have not been cleaned. The ceiling has developed cracks due to water seepage from the rainwater pipes."

The tiles on the subway walls marred by posters. The lights and fittings are hanging loose. The steps are not pedestrian-friendly either.

The area behind the subway is used for illegal activities. Southern Railway should deploy RPF personnel to ensure public safety, adds Durai Murugan.

Commuters and pedestrians risk their lives by crossing the tracks even after the level crossing gates (LC 32) are brought down. The youngsters cross the tracks and jump over the wall along platform 1 (towards Chengalpattu) to reach GST Road.

Text: T.S. Atul Swaminathan

'Prioritise drinking water supply in Thiruneermalai'



Some areas in the Thiruneermalai region do not get water supply. These are areas that come under Ward 31 of the Tambaram City Municipal Corporation. Saraswathipuram Fourth Street Extension, Ranga Nagar and Temple Town are among these areas. The Thiruneermalai Zone of the Tambaram Corporation supplies water from a well at Subbarayan Nagar in Thiruneermalai every two

days. The water is not treated. The Corporation should provide residents with treated drinking water through connections. It should prioritise this section in terms of providing water connections.

B. Saravanan
Thiruneermalai.

(Write to us about civic issues in and around your neighbourhood to downtownfeedback@thehindu.co.in)

Tambaram Tamil Sangam meets today

The eighth anniversary function of Tambaram Tamil Sangam will be held on May 5 at 5.45 p.m. at Valluvar Gurukulam Higher Secondary School, GST Road, Tambaram (West). Sree. U. Ve. Akkarakani Srinidhi Swami will speak on 'Manipavala Thamizhamudham'. For details, call 98413 52030.

Grand Trunk Express to originate from Tambaram

Due to the ongoing engineering works in the Chennai area, Chennai Central–New Delhi–Chennai Central Grand Trunk Express will originate from Tambaram railway station. This arrangement starts from May 9 onwards.

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Safety compromised



Work on laying electricity cable is under way along the Medavakkam stretch of Tamabaram Velachery Main Road. As part of the project, trenches have been dug up. But an adequate number of barricades have not been places along the work site. The image was taken on May 2. PHOTO: R. RAVINDRAN

Tree survey today

Nizhal has chalked up plans to carry out a tree survey in sections of Chennai Metropolitan Area, taking the initiative neighbourhood by neighborhood. For May 5, it has inked in a survey in parts that come under Tambaram Municipal Corporation, namely Chromepet and Chitlapakkam. According to a press release from Nizhal, the thrust of these surveys is to understand tree diversity, identify greening possibilities and take stock of avenue trees in a neighbourhood.

Shobha Menon, founder-trustee, Nizhal, says volunteers would map the green landscape of a neighbourhood in terms of what exists and what could exist. In the map of the neighbourhood, they will mark spots where trees can be planted. While marking the trees that already exist, they would spotlight those trees that might require special attention.

The meeting point for the May 5 tree survey is Nallappa Street Entrance (Landmark: Casual Moves, Chromepet).

The survey is scheduled for the evening, between 5.00 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.

For details call 9840882940.

Volunteers would map the green landscape of a neighbourhood in terms of what exists and what could exist

Changes in parking patterns at Metro stations

The Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has made changes to its parking preferences based on space availability and occupancy at stations, with effect from May 1.

The monthly pass provision has been extended only for metro commuters (who have undertaken 15 rides in the last 30 days) at parking lots of six stations: Wimco Nagar Depot, Sri Thiyagaraya College, Nehru Park, Koyambedu, Ashok Nagar and Alandur.

The pass provision has been suspended at four metro stations: New Washermenpet, Nandanam, Egmore, and Shenoy Nagar due to a lack of parking spaces, said a release.

Due to increase in non-commuters demand, the hourly parking tariff for non-commuters has been increased at 18 stations. This includes Thiruvotiyur, Thiruvotiyur Theradi, Kaladipet, High Court, Washermenpet, Government Estate, LIC, Guindy, Nanganallur Road, Meenambakkam, Thirumangalam, Chennai International Airport, Mannadi, New Washermenpet, Nandanam, Egmore, Ashok Nagar and Alandur.

The monthly pass tariff for non-commuters (no metro travel or less than 15 rides in the last 30 days) has been increased at Arumbakkam and Saint Thomas Mount metro stations. The parking tariff has not been changed at the remaining stations.

For details, visit chennaiemr.org/parking-tariff/



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‘Power cable work should be completed at the earliest’



The cable work in Velachery that is in progress. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Tamil Nadu Transmission Corporation (TANTRANSCO) is carrying out a massive underground electricity cable work along Link Road which connects the followings MRTS railway stations: Taramani, Perungudi, and Velachery. Called “Inner Circle Ring Cable,” the project aims to connect the sub-stations at Guindy, Ottiyampakam, Pallikaranai, Velachery and Taramani. As a result of this inter-connection, uninterrupted power supply can be ensured.

Hence, we welcome this project but we request that the work be completed at the earliest.

Because the entire road (where traffic is towards Velachery railway station) has been dug up. In some points, both side of the road have been taken over by the work. This is quite inconvenient. The work could have been carried out, stretch by stretch.

Ever since the work began in February, there has been a few minor accidents. Besides, solid waste is strewn in some spots of the road adding to the trouble. Measures should be taken to prevent dumping of waste on this road.

S. Kumararaja,
Velachery

New hall inaugurated

An air-conditioned hall called Sri Sastha Mahal was opened recently in the city. According to a press release, it was inaugurated by Dr. Sudha Seshayyan, former Vice-Chancellor Dr. M.G.R Medical University in the presence of Dr. Thillai Vallal, director, Venkateswara Hospital, Nandanam; and Alex Paul Menon, Development Commissioner, MEPZ - Chennai. The seating capacity and dinning capacity is 500 and 200 respectively. There are 14 air-conditioned rooms and an ample car parking lot. For details, call 9841659929 / 9003010611 / 9841659931.



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Apartments feel the heat from AC installations

With households installing multiple air-conditioners, apartment associations are saddled with the job of regulating the placement of outdoor units

LIFFY THOMAS

Over a year ago, when the Sundarams returned to their gated community in Padur from the United States, they were greeted by a “monstrosity”. An outdoor unit of an air-conditioner was sitting just a stretched-hand’s length away from their main door. By no stretch of imagination is an AC outdoor unit a monstrosity, but in their eyes it was. It was intruding into their space. They wasted no time in letting the managers of the gated community know of their displeasure.

“The office team carried out an inspection and got the outdoor unit relocated,” says Lalitha Sundaram, a resident of Mantri Synergy.

Also a member of the managing committee of the Association at the gated community, Lalitha notes the rules of installing AC outdoor units. The rules include sharing details of the AC vendor with the office as well as getting a no-objection certificate from neighbours.

With households investing in additional air-conditioners, the placement of outdoor units often makes a contentious issue in apartments. The older the community, the greater the challenge.

At the 384-flat Ceebros Gardens in Virugambakkam, no provision had been made for the placement of outdoor units of split ACs. “As this project came up more than two decades ago, the developer did not foresee the demand for split ACs,” says Deepa Makesh, a committee member.

“The Association has said that no outdoor unit must be fixed on the OTS (Open to Sky) because in our apartment it opens to the living room or bedroom of another flat,” says Deepa. Servicing the external units is also a challenge.

She says those living on the sixth and seventh floor are permitted to leave the outdoor



A tall order.

unit on the terrace. “Most of the time, we ask a resident to solve this issue through a conversation with their immediate neighbours,” she

says.

Anand Flats, a 40-year-old apartment at Dr. Ranga Road in Mylapore, discourages tenants/owners to keep the

outdoor unit on the sunshade without any “angle/stand” as it might affect the building stability.

Increasing transformer load

In high-end gated communities, on an average, a household has more than three AC units and during summer, there is the additional challenge of the grids being burdened with additional load.

BBC City Paark Apartments in Porur has had to approach

Tangedco to have its transformer upgraded to meet the increased demands of summer. The residents association also sends out reminders asking people to see if they can avoid running the ACs through the day to ease the burden on the transformer.

“We cannot restrict people from installing ACs or its usage, so we got Tangedco to upgrade our transformer post-COVID as the old one had also suffered damages,” says Subramanian Murali, president of Sangath Apartments in Velachery.

“Going by the load felt by the transformer, there is probably a need for another upgrade,” says Subramanian.

He says they insist that outdoor units are installed at specific points, some marked by the residents association’s office, to ensure it does not affect the building.

“Most of the time, we ask a resident to solve this issue through a conversation with their immediate neighbours

It is seldom an easy exercise

When an apartment builder has not created a provision for the placement of AC outdoor units, the challenge of installing one is in proportion to the height of the floor it has to be installed on.

“Fixing an AC outdoor unit in a multi-storey apartment complex often throws up logistical problems. A tall ladder would be required. In some cases, we try scaffolding but that is expensive. The other option is the “belt and rope” system, which is risky,” says Ashwin Kumar, director, Techno Power Aircons, a 40-year-old company in the AC segment.

With window ACs fading away, technicians say conversion to a split AC is a humongous task as not all old apartment complexes are favourable, in design terms, to the installation of outdoor units.

“Although split ACs were launched in the early 1990s, they were then a luxury product. Big manufacturers came to the market with split ACs only from 2000s,” says Ashwin.

Ashwin says they work with developers to create a “cat-walk” system at the side of the building. Here a number of AC units can be kept in a common area and the design allows technicians to work on the outdoor units without any difficulty.

Fixing an AC outdoor unit in an apartment complex often throws up logistical problems. A tall ladder would be required. In some cases, we try scaffolding but that is expensive. The other option is the “belt and rope” system, which is risky

It is not always easy to get a buy-in for this idea, he adds.

“Recently, in an upcoming project in Mandaveli, which has five floors, two flats in each, clients that were willing to purchase ACs from us wanted a common space where the outdoor unit could be placed. The builder, however, was not keen on the idea. Later, the builder agreed to keep the outdoor unit of 1st and 2nd floor in the parking area and third to fifth floor on the terrace,” says Ashwin. Where outdoor units are installed on the terrace of apartments, lengthy copper pipes are required. “There is no guarantee that the wiring will last a long time, so this can turn out to be expensive for a flat owner,” says Ashwin, and on a positive note, adds that VRF system which can support multiple indoor AC units, is emerging.

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