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Perambur RWA questions the quality of footpath work

The covered stormwater drain under Murasoli Maran flyover on Perambur High Road - South (Ward 74 - Zone 6 Thiru Vi Ka Nagar) near Murasoli Maran Park - Two doubles as a footpath. Greater Chennai Corporation replaced the slabs (which are meant to cover the drain) with paver blocks recently.

But we find the quality of the work questionable.

Because the paver blocks are not firmly set. There are gaps between the blocks especially along the margins. This suggests adequate cement was not used and paver blocks were laid with loose concrete wet mix. Therefore, the tiles are likely to get dislodged easily.

This work is not yet complete



and the manholes of the stormwater drains are wide open. This is unsafe during night. Hence, GCC should barricade these drains and install signboards to the caution the public.

▼ The pavement under Murasoli Maran flyover on July 10.

It should also be noted that a segment of residents near the flyover have been misusing the covered stretches of the drain to attend to the nature's call. The pavement would be ridden with night soil rendering it pedestrian-unfriendly. So many do not walk over this stretch. Now, a tiled footpath is in place. Hence, GCC should ensure the new facility is not misused as an open public convenience.

Raghukumar Choodamani, convenor, Perambur Neighborhood Development Forum

An obstacle course?



▼ A damaged bus shelter occupying a footpath at Kaliyamman Koil Street in Koyambedu on July 12. PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

'Soma Sundaram Second Street's name board needs replacement'



▼ The name board of Soma Sundaram Second Street on July 8.

Soma Sundaram Second Street is off Konnur High Road in Ayanavaram. One of its name boards which is at the entrance of Soma Sundaram Sixth Street serves no purpose.

It is marred by posters. Also, the poles of the board are not firmly grounded.

TANGEDCO uprooted the

poles of the name board five years ago while carrying out cable-laying work. But after the work it was not restored and gradually the board fell into a sorry state.

Greater Chennai Corporation should have the name board replaced.

Vinod Kumar KR
Ayanavaram



▼ The footpath on Ambedkar Road on July 8

Watch out!

A section of the on Ambedkar Road near ICF Hospital is unfriendly to pedestrians. Here, the slabs of a stormwater drain are wide open. Pedes-

trians need to watch their steps. This road connects Konnur High Road and New Avadi Road. Besides, a section of the drain is completely open.

'Resume lift construction work'



C onstruction of a lift that began three years ago at Pattabiram railway station is still not complete. Further, there is no work in progress for the past several months. It appears that a major part of the work is over. The existing foot overbridge is very steep and hence commuters crossing the railway tracks is a common sight at this station. Southern Railway should do the needful to ensure resumption of work.

K.K. Sridharan, president, Gopalapuram Residents Welfare Association

▼ The lift at Pattabiram railway station on July 10.

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Power cables: too obtrusive for comfort

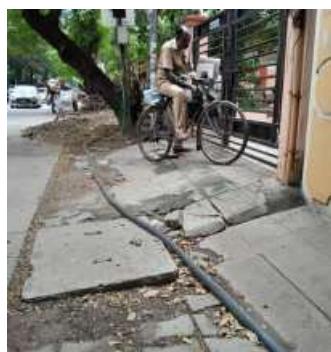


Soma Sundaram First Street and Venkatesapuram Colony South Street on July 8

L. KANTHIMATHI

In a section of Ayanavaram, some underground power cables do not stay underground. Temporary cables installed by TANGEDCO to address overloading, they snake noticeably on Soma Sundaram Second Street, Soma Sundaram Sixth Street, Soma Sundaram First Street, Venkatesapuram Colony South Street and Ujjain Street. Residents are obviously concerned over this situation.

At Soma Sundaram First



Street, a cable cut across the street till TANGEDCO repositioned it to the street margin under pressure of repeated com-

plaints by residents.

"The pillar box attached to this cable has let out sparks and emitted smoke," says a resident of Soma Sundaram First Street on condition of anonymity.

Vinod Kumar K.R., a long-time resident of Soma Sundaram Second Street, notes the neighbourhood received underground power cables two decades ago and an explosion of housing development in the area since then has led to problems of overloading. To address the issue, Tangedco has resorted to introducing these temporary cables.



Violation at underpass

PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

Shenoy Nagar skating park: give the garden hoe more work



A mention of Shenoy Nagar skating park should spark a gleam of recognition in the eyes of those living light years removed from it. And it draws people from even distant geographies for its well-maintained sporting infrastructure. Tennis courts that come complete with coaching, the basketball court, and spaces for other sports, played with nets and goalposts. And of course, the famous skating rink, the first thing a visitor claps their eyes on while entering the park from Pulla Avenue. Intact and kept spic and span, the walkways continue to have ready patrons. That which lines the walkways can bring a frown though. These spaces which sport benches look dishevelled with weeds that seem to have faced little interference from the garden hoe. As visitors do park themselves on the benches, the weedy overgrowth would be taking away from the overall positive user experience at the park. The images were taken on July 10, 2024. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The underpass at Dr. Gurusamy bridge might have the width of a needle's eye, but is sufficiently wide for unidirectional flow of traffic.

Though its mandate is to only assist traffic movement from McNichols Lane Number One (landmark: Kuchalambal Kalyana Mandapam) to Aranganathan Street (on the other side of the bridge), it is arm-twisted into serving geisterfahrers, those misusing the underpass to travel in the other direction.

The unauthorised traffic movement from Aranganathan Street to McNichols Lane Number One clogs the underpass, the problem being particularly severe during school opening hours. A cluster of schools are located behind McNichols Lane

Number one, and hence the violation in the morning hours. In the evening hours, when they gather their wards from the school and return home, the same violators would be using this underpass in a legitimate manner as they would be entering it from McNichols Lane Number One to hit Aranganathan Street and beyond.

Metro Rail marshals from the Chetpet metro rail station work site point out they intervene and unknot the traffic issue at the underpass, but it is obviously a Sisyphean task. Stationing traffic police personnel at the point where Aranganathan Street begins to run by the side of the bridge, at least during school-opening hours, can call a halt to the unauthorised traffic movement before it becomes a full-blown, unmanageable violation at the underpass.

A grand stage set across the city

Organised by Young Indians and CII, 'Chennai Got Talent 5.0' offers school and college students a platform to showcase their abilities relating to art, craft, dance, music, sustainability and innovation.

Ahead of the event, a spotlight on the philosophy driving it

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Youth for nation-building – a trope that looks jaded from dreadful overuse. But Young Indians (Yi) have taken that trite old theme and burnished it to a glitter. It has made the process of turning students into leaders (and by extension, nation-builders) enjoyable for the students that have signed up for it. Right now in Chennai, there is a handy illustration – Chennai Got Talent, a multi-level “talent mining” event involving college and school students across the city.

Word about this talent event is being transmitted to the target group through a modern version of the bush telegraph.

Young Indians has a presence in schools and colleges comparable to that of Rotary's Rotaract Clubs. In recent weeks, Young Indians Clubs at colleges and schools have been astir getting students to register for the auditions.

Due to these efforts, registrations from 50 educational institutions have come in.

Lest one gets the impression that Yi's engagement with the student community is entirely on the lighter side of things, the movement offers a raft of programmes that seek commitment from students over an extended period of time. That brings Yi Yuva into the picture. Yi Yuva bridges the gap between academia and industry by offering mentorship, internships and entrepreneurial guidance. This initiative empowers students with essential skills and networks, preparing them for successful careers and turning academic knowledge into real-world success.

It is time to step back and take in the larger picture, and that would explain the afore-mentioned corporate jargon (mentorship and internship).

Young Indians Club (Yi) was birthed and cradled and continues to be nourished by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). This child of CII is 22 years old and therefore has a finger on the pulse of the younger generations, particularly Gen Z.

With 68 chapters (one for each city and town) and 6,650 young professionals and 2,50,000 college students and 12,00,000 school students as members, Yi's impact spans across India. Each chapter orchestrates the activities of the school- and college-based clubs in its respective city or town, besides



Snapshots of Yi initiatives across the country.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

engaging with young professionals that are card-carrying members of the organisation.

“Being part of Yi has unlocked a world of opportunities. The leadership programmes and community service projects have instilled in me a profound sense of civic responsibility and leadership” says Sai Meera. K a student of Sri Kanyaika Parameswari Arts & Science College for Women.

Srivas Anantharaman, Yi Chennai Chapter Chair 2024, states, “Yi is the only place where you can achieve the collective dreams of making a better future by working with school and college students.”

“Chennai Got Talent is a platform created by Yi Chennai to showcase the city's diverse talents. Now in its fifth edition, CGT epitomises Chennai by highlighting its uniqueness and creativity for all to admire,” says Varan Mittal, Co-chair, Yi Chennai 2024.

“Yi Entrepreneurship Summit”, “Thalir Innovation Fest” and “Thalir Lit Fest” are among other Yi initiatives aimed at bringing out students' latent talent and providing them with a direction for the future. Designed to be enjoyable for the participants and audience, these programmes come with a cladding of information.

For example, “Young Indians Parliament” aims to educate participants on legislative processes, foster constructive debates on national issues, develop public speaking and critical thinking skills and promote civic responsibility. This initiative aims to cultivate informed and proactive young leaders prepared to contribute meaningfully to society.

Registrations for 'Chennai Got Talent 5.0' on till July 20

Chennai Got Talent 5.0, under the theme “Lovable Chennai”, is a platform organised by Yi Chennai and CII to spotlight the city's diverse talents.

This event seeks to unite Chennaiites, offering them an opportunity to showcase their skills across various domains such as art, craft, dance, music, X factor, sustainability, innovation and entertainment.

The event will feature an array of performances under “Cultural Chennai”, including vocalists, rappers, beatboxers, instrumentalists, dancers, acrobats, come-

dians, yoga practitioners and distinctive acts that stand out. “Emotional Chennai” will focus on the visual and literary arts, showcasing artwork, crafts, photography, poetry and creative writing. A significant highlight is “Inclusive Chennai”, which provides a prestigious platform for individuals with intellectual and/or physical disabilities to demonstrate their talents.

This segment will feature a wide range of performances, including music, dance, acrobatics, comedy, yoga, and unique acts, along with displays of visual and literary arts. The “Mindful Fashion

Chennai” segment will present a fashion show that emphasises sustainable practices and conscious consumption in the fashion industry.

Additionally, “Young Innovators Chennai” will offer schoolchildren a stage to present their entrepreneurial ideas and innovations.

Registration for Chennai Got Talent 5.0 closes on July 20, 2024, and the Grand Finale is scheduled for August 18, 2024, at the Anna Centenary Auditorium. For more details and registration, visit (<https://chennaiday.org/cgt/>).

ENVIRONMENT

The Hindu Downtown runs a status check on a handful of green initiatives in Chennai aimed at reducing the amount of waste going to the landfills



FILE PHOTO: VEDHAN M

LIFFY THOMAS

'Sanitary napkin vending machines at Metro stations suffer from rough handing by users'

Back in 2021, in coordination with Rotary Club of Madras and Geo India Foundation, Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) installed sanitary napkin vending machines at 39 Metro rail stations across the city. Though these machines continue to dispense sanitary pads, they have been stretched to their limits on account of vandalism and poor user behaviour. The need for continual repairs has taken a toll of the resources of the NGO maintaining these machines.

"Currently, machines from 16 metro stations have been brought to us for repairs," says Priya Jemima, founder, Geo India Foundation.

While in some stations, the keys to the machines are missing, in many others, the locks are broken.

How does the machine work?

The user collects a free token from the ticket counter to drop it in a slot on the machine and collect the sanitary pad. The NGO supplies the sanitary pads either at the

Alandur or Koyambedu metro station for refilling. As this is a manually-operated machine, the NGO was expecting to service them once in six months, but to their shock, complaints started flooding in from the first month itself.

"The respective station master is in charge of the key but at least in six stations they have lost the keys without which the napkins cannot be refilled," says Priya.

The NGO has also observed that the machines installed at Alandur, Teynampet and Airport metro stations are a source of frequent complaints.

The NGO had asked CMRL if they could charge a small fee from the public but the idea was shot down.

"Our MoU with CMRL has ended but they have requested us to continue and have even promised us that they will work out an arrangement when the next phase of the Metro line is opened," says Priya, adding that the least they could do was create awareness among housekeeping staff who could help cu-

rious users about using the machine. The machine is dispensing sanitary napkins three times more than it is normally expected to.

"When we started 1000 napkins was sufficient for each station. Now, it is 5,000 a month which is a huge cost on us," she says.

Get compost from GCC's division offices

Does Greater Chennai Corporation still sell compost? Yes, it does, but not on the same scale that it had achieved sometime ago. In 2022, Corporation staff from various divisions were aggressively marketing the compost it produces locally from garden and vegetable waste. These were sold by putting up temporary stalls at malls, parks, beaches and busy roads. A conservancy inspector with Division 125 says public can buy compost from any division office during office hours. A kilo is priced at ₹10.

Have you switched over to the Manjappai?

single-use plastic products.

Koyambedu wholesale market is covered by five vending machines. Sathish R, a staff with the Market Management Committee, says the bags are a hit among shoppers but there is scope for improvement.

"Currently, the machine dispenses only bags of one size, which can roughly carry two kilos of weight.

Those shopping at the fruit and vegetable market return with a heavier load and if the bag could be customised then it could bring in more benefits," he says.

Recently, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board conducted a campaign on International Plastic Bag Free Day where hundreds of bags were distributed to shoppers and

shops. "Supplying shops with manjappai and slashing its rate to ₹5 (currently the bag is sold at ₹10) would make the cloth bags even more popular because many shops continue to stock up on shopping bags of other materials as well," says Sathish.

Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG) is coming out with a study covering eight districts of Tamil Nadu to understand the effectiveness of the Meendum Manjappai campaign.



The chequered life story of a reverse vending machine

For four years, this reverse vending machine at Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. MGR Bus Terminus in Koyambedu was playing its role to the hilt. The user would drop a used PET bottle, get a reward in exchange and leave wreathed in smiles. If the reverse vending machine had the power of thinking and feeling, it would have clinked with delight. And then, it fell on bad days.

Hors de combat, the machine was lying in the office of Industrial Waste Management Association

(IWMA) for long, and during that time, it was reminiscing about the happy days.

IWMA had sponsored the machine and was maintaining it, and when in disrepair, it was packed off to the IWMA office.

"The machine is in working order now and waiting for a new public space," says K. Baskaran, chairman, IWMA.

Chennai Central station and the Tambaram railway terminus are two places the Association was keen on taking this social project to, but delay in permissions re-



During the inauguration of the machine at Koyambedu.
PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

mains a roadblock to this objective being met.

IWMA had spent a few lakhs of rupees to install this machine but the pandemic cast a shadow over

the initiative. "In the initial years, the machine was collecting close to 150 kilos of plastics a day, which was taken by a vendor to be recycled into various products includ-

ing t-shirts," says Baskaran, adding that gift coupons of ₹ 5 and ₹10 were dispensed by the machine which could be redeemed at certain stores close to the terminus.

However, the initiative lost momentum as people started dropping other waste and the quantity of plastic collected plummeted to a single digit number. He says: "All that we want is a space that is easily accessible to the public with electricity connection. We will pay for the power bill and hire a person to maintain the machine as well."

Madras Day: the seat of power

At the administrative block of the Young Women's Christian Association in Egmore, two chairs and two foldable tables come lacquered with history and nostalgia

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The seat of power never loses its sheen; the sheen only increases with time. That is putting it figuratively. It might be also true in a purely physical sense.

The visible, physical seat of power that can be handled is always an attractive piece of furniture. The longer back in time the power seat goes, the greater its appeal; as the symbol of power would now be lacquered with history and nostalgia.

At Young Women's Christian Association in Egmore on EVR Periyar Salai, two chairs and one foldable table are at the service of the organisation's executive general secretary and the support staff. A similar foldable table is parked in the reception right outside the office.

They had been handed down from British times, and they are no ordinary hand-me-downs.

The office is part of the famous Clive House (which now is YWCA's



PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



administrative block) and there is a firm belief this furniture has been passed on from the times of Lord Clive.

E.B. Vithya Padmini, executive

general secretary, YWCA, says: "The wire work in the chairs would be relatively new, but these two chairs and the two foldable tables, one in the EGS office and the other

in the reception area, are believed to stretch long back in time, probably all the way to Lord Clive's. There are a few antique furniture in the International Guest House

and in the hostels too."

Even if Clive's times predate these chairs and tables, they are considerably old and offer a vignette of Madras' colonial past.



Keep those concrete toadstool seats intact

A jumble of toadstool seats were bequeathed to Chennai when Madras was put out to pasture. This quirky collection is entirely concentrated at a concrete bus shelter. Both the shelter and the seats, also made with concrete, are placed -- one would say, congruously -- outside Valluvar Kottam which stands out in bold relief on account of the times it represents. The toadstool seats seem to blend into the otherworldliness presented by the monument to the great poet-sage. An exercise carried out when the civic body was Corporation of Madras and the public transport body was Pallavan Transport Corporation, the seats at the Valluvar Kottam bus stop are in fine fettle except for a small minority. As commuters are comfortable using these seats, those seats that require repairs should receive it. They bring novelty to the wait at a bus stop and help residents discover and rediscover Madras in the bustle of everyday life. This bus stop has a row of shelters. Except for this shelter, all the shelters sport the modern steel frames and seats. Keeping these concrete toadstool seats and the concrete shelter hosting them well-preserved would be to have Madras and Chennai juxtaposed in a manner that would be instantly attention-grabbing. The image was taken on July 11, 2024.

PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

Discovering Madras in the bustle of Chennai

In the run-up to Madras Day, *The Hindu Downtown* will be presenting a series of articles that would present Madras as it is ensconced in the everyday things of Chennai.

These are not major monuments, but minor markers of the past that are often ignored because they have woven themselves intricately into the fabric of Chennai and are in plain sight.

The Hindu Downtown requests its readers to write in to downtownfeedback@thehindu.co.in about such markers of time. It could be a lamppost, a very old milestone marker or an antediluvian bus shelter that has survived time.

PANORAMA



On a weak plank?

Sometimes the cure can be more pathological than the disease. On Taylors Road in Kilpauk, pedestrians are up against a comparable situation. A manhole cover pertaining to the stormwater drain is broken, the steel rods exposed. To ensure pedestrians safety, weather-beaten plywood boards have been placed on it. With intermittent rain, often intense, these boards can get damaged before one can imagine. The prints of footwear on the white plywood board -- as seen on the image taken on July 10, 2024 -- suggests that people trust it to be sturdy and so plant their feet on it. After continual exposure to rainwaters would it be sturdy still? Is not having the SWD manhole lid replaced a more dependable safety measure. The section of the pavement where this manhole lid is located looks tumbledown. PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

A new salon in Anna Nagar



Let's Transform Unisex Salon is an addition to the city's beauty and wellness scene. Located at No. 153, First Floor, Sixth Main Road, AC Block in Anna Nagar, the salon is marked by a modern and chic design and provides a serene and luxurious atmosphere, says a press release.

The salon's range of services includes: Hair Care (Expert cuts, coloring, styling and treatments tailored to bring about unique look); Skin Care (Facials, exfoliation and skin treatments) and Nail Care (Manicures, pedicures and creative nail art), says the release.

Exclusive discounts and special packages are offered to celebrate this new beginning, the release adds. For more information, call 9363439739.

Special children showcase talent at annual meet



they courageously face daily, said a release.

This year's event was particularly special, with a record number of participants showcasing their talents across various categories including music, dance, art, and sports. The annual "Medallion Award" was presented to the special educators and care givers for their dedication and commitment towards the special children.

District Governor Nominee Rtn. Suresh Jain B, Rtr. Flt. Lt. Ramesh L, Rtn. N.S Saravanan S and Rtr. PHF. PP. Essaki Sekar were among those present.

The 15th edition of Vidiyal, an annual event dedicated to specially abled children, was held recently at Vels University in Pallavaram.

Organised by the Rotaract Club of Ambattur, this year's event featured over 500 special children from 25 special schools across

Chennai.

Initiated in 2006, Vidiyal is a tradition aimed at showcasing the unique abilities of special children and promoting awareness and acceptance within society. The event serves as a platform to highlight the achievements of the participants, shedding light on the challenges

Temple in Perambur conducts consecration

Om Sakthi Vinayagar Temple, located at State Bank Colony, Jamalia in Perambur for more than four decades, performed the fourth Maha Kumbhabhishekham (temple consecration) on July 12.

The consecration was conducted with all due rituals from July 10 to 12 and presided over by chief guest Nalli Kuppusamy Chetti, partner, Nalli Chinnasami Chetty Silk Cloth and Piece Goods Merchant.



The temple has been a symbol of hope and belief or residents of State Bank Colony for the last four

decades, said a release.

Nearly 1000 people were offered lunch during annadhanam.

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A lesson on road safety



Rotary Club of Mogappair and Goodwill Trust organised an awareness programme on road safety at Government Higher Secondary School, Villivakkam. Students were taught about traffic rules and the importance of using seat belts and helmets. They were also advised to refrain from using mobile phones while driving and walking. A total of 90 students attended the session and took an oath to follow safety rules, says a press release.

Blood donation drive at two venues

Aalam, the philanthropic arm of Chennai Cyclists, is conducting its biannual blood donation drive on July 14 from 9 a.m. to 1.45 p.m. at the Government Hospital in Chromepet and at the Institute of Child Health in Egmore.

This initiative is aimed at mobilising blood donors to improve the blood bank reserves at these public hospitals that serve patients from various socio-economic backgrounds.

A number of running groups from across Chennai are also participating in the blood donation drive, said a release.

For details, call the organisers at 9789982110 or 9750975070. Aalam volunteers will be present at the blood bank to guide volunteer on the donation process.

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PLAN YOUR WEEK



Humour Club meeting today

The monthly meeting of Anna Nagar Humour Club will be held on July 14 at 4 p.m. at Shri Krishnaswamy Vidhyashram, Vaigai Colony, Anna Nagar West.

Udayakumar (*in picture*), chairman of Abdul Kalam Dream Trust, will be the chief guest. Hariharan, Club's new president, will deliver the keynote address.

Other speakers include Anantharamakrishnan and Jayaraman.

All are welcome. Audience are welcome to tell jokes.

For details, call 90802 55081 / 81909 06675

Flavours of Coimbatore

Kovai Naruvi offers authentic flavours of Coimbatore to Chennai, offering a diverse range of traditional dishes. Their signature offerings include biryani made with seeraga samba rice, elaneer payasam, and Coimbatore chicken specialities such as chicken monica, chicken palli palayam, maharani chicken, and mutton chukka.

The outlet is at 13/8 Welcome Colony, near HP Bunk, Anna Nagar West Extension. For details, call 9042729942

Ambattur toastmasters meet today

Ambattur Achievers Toastmasters Club, a unit of Toastmasters International, will be meeting on July 14 at 9.45 a.m.

"Budget" is the theme for the meeting, and club's members will be delivering prepared and impromptu speeches.

All are welcome. Entry is free.

Venue : PNET Global School, Murugappa Reddy Street, Ambattur

For details, call J Tamilselvi 90257 60703.

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