

DOWNTOWN

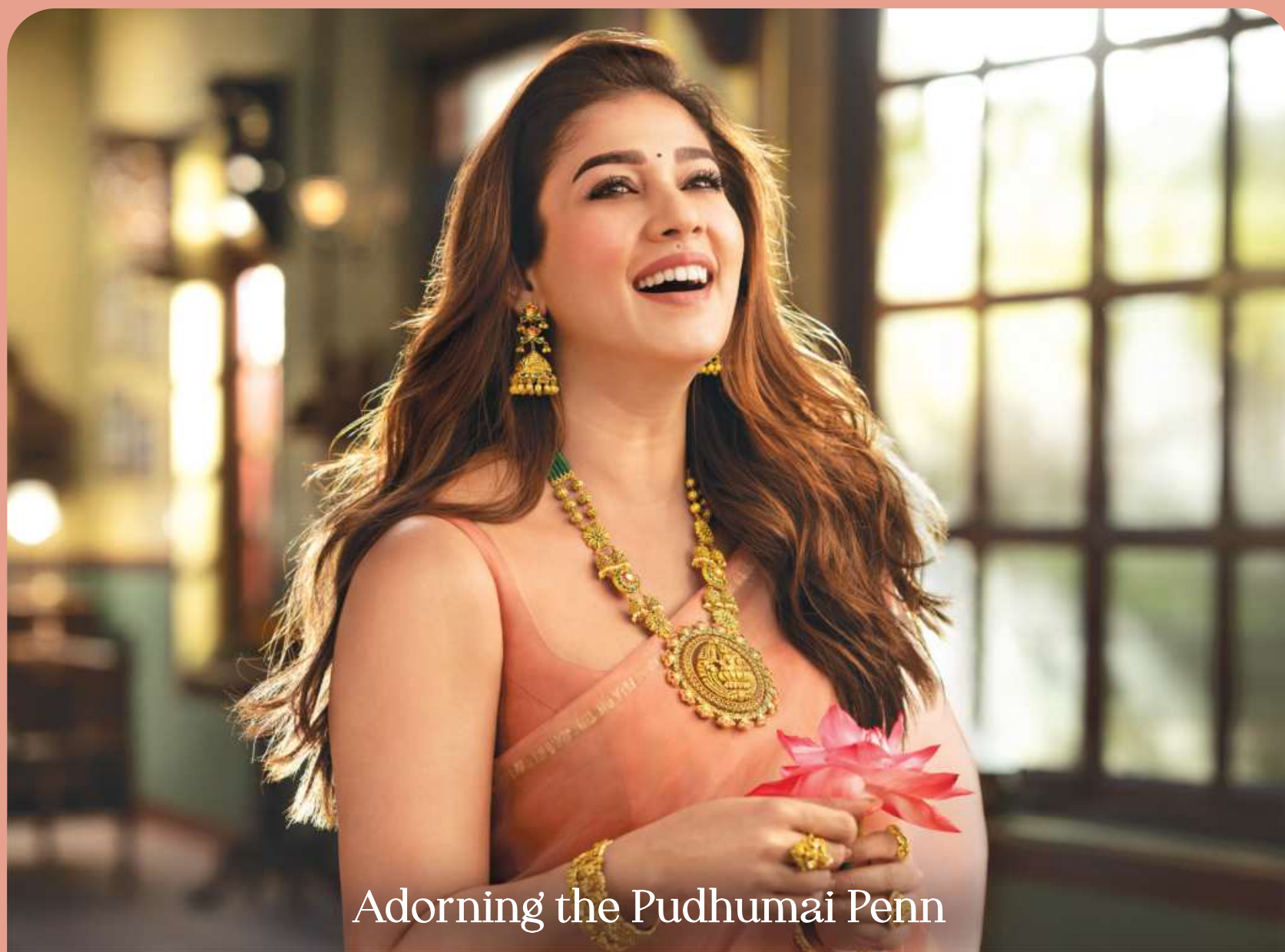
Sunday
October 13, 2024

THE HINDU

T. NAGAR

Saidapet » West Mambalam » Vadapalani » Porur » Kattupakkam » Irungattukottai » Nungambakkam » Manapakkam » Ashok Nagar » Valasaravakkam
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MTC introduces new bus route

The route 49K connects Porur and Mandaveli via Kotturpuram



Metropolitan Transport Corporation has introduced a new bus route, 49K, connecting Porur and Mandaveli.

According to MTC sources, it a fortnight since the new service was introduced.

"There is a bus service connecting Mandaveli and Poonamalle. By the time the bus arrives at Porur, it is heavily crowded. The stop at Porur also witnesses a

good number of commuters, especially during the rush hour. Therefore, a new service has been introduced. As of now four buses have been devoted to this route: two from Porur and two from Mandaveli. They will be operated during peak hours."

The route covers Nandambakkam, Guindy Industrial Estate, Sardar Patel Road (Anna University) and Gandhi Mandapam Road - Kotturpuram and Adyar Gate.

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 downtown_feedback@thehindu.co.in.

Letters must carry the postal address and contact number



Jaywalking is a common sight near Porur junction

The narrow gaps in median on Mount Poonamalle High Road near the arm of the flyover at Porur junction encourage jaywalking. Here, pedestrians are supposed to cross the road at the junction which is under the flyover. Instead they cross through these gaps unmindful of the approaching traffic. There is a bus stop (meant for buses toward Iyyapanthangal) near the arm of the flyover and hence commuters on the other side of the road (where traffic moves towards Guindy) cross the road through the gaps compromising safety rules.

Mount Poonamallee High Road in Porur. The images were taken on October 10. PHOTOS: VEDHAN M



On a slippery stretch



▼ The waterlogged Samayapuram Main Road in Porur following the recent rains. The image was taken on October 10. PHOTO: VEDHAN M

READERS WRITE

'This EB post spells danger'

The electricity post at PG Avenue First Street in Kattupakkam near Porur is rusty and the metal rods are exposed. It is likely to fall during heavy rains. Several complaints to electricity department and Kattupakkam Panchayat were to no avail. It should be noted there is a school in the vicinity. Hence, this problem needs to be addressed at the earliest as north-east monsoon is round the corner.

M.C.Vijay Shankar
Kattupakkam



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READERS WRITE



An obstacle course

A resident of Zackaria Colony Main Road in Choolaimedu for the past 33 years, I have found the approach pathway to the Kodambakkam bridge on the western side marked by poor upkeep. An electricity junction box obstructs the approach to the staircase, narrowing the space available to pedestrians. Because of this junction box's presence and the unwanted vegetation that is being tolerated, it is difficult to step on to the staircase. Besides, there are other obstructions on the approach pathway. This situation does not do much for the safety of senior citizens like me accessing the staircase. The images I have shared illustrate the issue. Spoken complaints to Corporation have been in vain.

Bhavani Ananthasubramanian,
resident, Zackaria Colony Main Road,
Choolaimedu



FINDING HIGHER GROUND

Residents of certain inundation-prone areas in Chennai are increasingly seeking the benefits of building-lifting technology. **P4**

Will this good run continue?



Sucharitha Sundararaj, president, McNichols Road Residents Association Second Lane sent these images that show a clean pathway on McNichols Road leading to the station. As she points out, this was a den for unwanted elements and there was garbage pile-up. "Above all, the highlight is Gurusamy bridge is being painted," she says. It is a collective hope that this stretch stays clean.

World Sight Day: quiz on eye health conducted

Observing World Sight Day, Rajan Eye Care, in collaboration with Chennai-based quizzing firm X Quiz It, hosted a special eye-health quiz in T. Nagar. The quiz led by Quiz Master Arvind Rajeevsarathy, brought together students from grades 7 to 12 from thirty schools in and around Chennai.

The quiz finals began with a round where the six finalists selected chits with eye parts, indicated them in the display and answered corresponding questions. The second round tested attention to detail through a spot-the-difference challenge, while the third round allowed students to choose from a grid of topics, from eye diseases to idioms related to



The winners with the dignitaries.

the eye. The final round was about choosing between “fact or fake” on eye-health statements.

Dr. Mohan Rajan, Chairman and Medical Director of Rajan Eye Care addressed the students, “It

is important for children to get regular eye check-ups every year and a vitamin A-rich diet for

maintaining good vision.” He also added how the theme of ‘World Sight Day 2024: Children, Love your eyes’ coincides with the students participating in the eye-health quiz.

Chief guests Gautam Venkataramani and Dr. Supriya Dabir Gautam praised the students’ enthusiasm and commitment to learning.

Anirudh P., a 7th grade student from PSBB Millennium School, Gerungambakkam won the first place. “I sit with my mother every night, and we do quizzing on all subjects, including eye-health from 9:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. before sleep,” he added. Other winners included Hari Madhavan, 11th grade, and K.L. Dheeraj, 10th grade, both from PSBB KK Nagar.

Understanding mindful consumption of goods and media

Students of the second M.A. Communication programme at Women’s Christian College launched two insightful campaigns on mindful consumption of material goods and media content at YWCA Women’s Community College and WCC recently. The campaign at YWCA focused on raising awareness about mindful consumption of media, highlighting how traditional and social media shape thoughts and behaviours. Through interactive sessions, skits, and speeches, students encouraged participants to reflect on their media consumption habits, said a release.

At WCC, the campaign expanded to cover mindful consumption of both goods and media. Activities and speeches reinforced the message of making thoughtful decisions in purchasing and media engagement.



A three-day workshop for SHG women was conducted at WCC

Training SHG women

In another event, the college in collaboration with the Centre for Women’s Studies, organised a three-day workshop titled “Training for Liveli-

hood and Income Generation for SHG Women” recently. The workshop aimed to equip SHG women with practical skills in mushroom cultivation, food preservation, and baking.

PSBB Nungambakkam conducts ‘Business Battle 2024’

The Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan Senior Secondary School organised “Business Battle 2024” at its Nungambakkam branch recently.

“Business Battle 2024” an event organised for commerce students featured various competitions related to legal studies, finance, accountancy and Business studies. This annual fest is held across different branches of PSBB Schools in the city. This year’s event was hosted by the Nungambakkam branch.

To add an element of fun the competitions were named after English movies and shows.

The highlight of the event was “Pitch perfect”

where the students presented their innovative business ideas. Another major event “Wolf of Wall Street” was the stock market competition of the business battle. The fest also included a quiz competition covering topics such as current affairs, business concepts and global trends.

The event concluded with the valedictory ceremony where Babu Krishnamoorthy, Chief Sherpa at Finsherpa was the chief guest.

Sheela Rajendra, Dean, Director and Correspondent of PSBB School, S. Vasanthi, Principal and Asha Pillai, Vice Principal, were present.

‘Terra Fest’ at Stella Maris

Nimal Raghavan, founder of Mega Foundation and a water conservationist, emphasised the importance of conserving waterbodies for ensuring a sustainable future, at the ‘Terra Fest,’ held at Stella Maris College (SMC) recently.

Speaking at the event Mr. Raghavan highlighted the importance of restoring lakes and canals to secure a better future. He shared an inspiring story of restoration of Peravurani lake in Thanjavur district which motivated him to pursue further conservation efforts. “The government report estimated that restoring the 565-acre Peravurani lake would take 2 to 3 years at a cost

of Rs. 5 crores. However, we took it as a challenge and completed the restoration in 107 days at Rs. 27 lakhs,” he said. He noted the importance of community involvement, saying that Mega Foundation has restored 180 water bodies all with the support of local communities.

Terra Fest was organised by Stella Maris College’s Think Tank in partnership with Prakruthi Foundation. The fest is a celebration of trees and water bodies.

Dipankar Ghose, Founder, Prakruthi, Stella Mary FMM, Principal, SMC, Judith Anitha Gonsalvez FMM, Secretary, SMC, were present.

Kamadhenu Theatre is now sheer history

A favourite entertainment space for residents of Mylapore and surrounding areas for decades, the structure has been razed to the ground

RAJALAKSHMI V

The once iconic Kamadhenu Theatre, formerly known as Lakshmi Vilas Mansion, near Luz Junction has been razed to the ground. On October 12, the space was marked by mounds of rubble marking the end of a chapter.

Built in the 16th century by the Portuguese, Lakshmi Vilas began as a distinguished mansion on Luz Road in Mylapore. Home to a prominent family, it showcased ornate architecture and expansive courtyards, serving as a lively venue for social events and family celebrations.

As Mylapore evolved in the mid-20th century, Lakshmi Vilas transformed into Kamadhenu Theatre.

“Kamadhenu was a famous landmark in those days and it was one of the best entertainment destinations for all classes of society even until the 1970s,” says Baskar Seshadri, a resident of Mylapore for over five decades.

While many believe it only screened reruns, it actually show-

cased numerous new releases in the 60s. After being converted into a *kalyana mandapam*, it gained some popularity, but not for long.

Following the pandemic and re-routing due to Metro Rail work, attendance dwindled significantly.

C.R. Balaji, a resident of Mylapore, says Kamadhenu Theatre was a haven for those unable to travel to Mount Road for new films as well as old reruns. “There was always demand for MGR and Sivaji films. The noon show featured black-and-white films, while the remaining shows showed partially new films, usually in colour. Former Chief Minister Kalaingar Karunanidhi’s films starring SSR and Savithri were also screened. Tickets were priced at ₹1, ₹1.60, ₹2.00, and ₹2.90, with occasional children’s English films shown on Sunday mornings for schools,” says Balaji.



In recent years, Anna Nagar-based SCARF established two departments meant for the benefit of two different demographics

For the young and the elderly



Over the last five years, in response to needs felt in the community, Schizophrenia Foundation of India (SCARF), a 40-year-old not-profit NGO located in Anna Nagar, added two departments to its regular set.

Snapshots of events conducted by the Department of Youth Mental Health on October 10.

They are the Department of Youth Mental Health (YMH) and Dementia Services to serve two constituencies parked on the extreme ends of the age spectrum.

YMH was an outcome of a

felt need to work with the young as they navigate the challenges of a world that is fast-spinning, digital and largely impersonal.

With a primary focus on prevention and promotion

of mental health for individuals under age 25, the department extends its reach across schools, colleges, communities, workplaces and childcare institutions, says a communication from SCARF.

Focus areas include enhancing mental health literacy through age-appropriate materials and engaging methods, with the provision of clinical services tailored to youth needs, the communication states.

The department has set up a youth advisory board, comprising young volunteers who actively guide and support activities across all domains, it adds. The department's commitment to community engagement was exemplified on World Mental Health Day, October 10 when they organized a mental health fest and launched "Vaanga Pesalam", a peer support programme aimed at destigmatising mental health and improving help-seeking behaviours.

The other department instituted in recent years – SCARF's Dementia Services – focusses on providing comprehensive care, support, and awareness for individuals affected by dementia and their caregivers.

The dementia team at SCARF conducts early screening, diagnosis, and management, ensuring that individuals receive timely interventions tailored to their

needs. They offer cognitive assessments, counselling, and personalised care plans, aimed at improving the quality of life for those with dementia, the communication adds.

Recognising the critical role of caregivers, SCARF also provides caregiver support programmes that offer education, training, and psychological assistance to

help them cope with the challenges of caring for individuals with dementia.

In addition to clinical services, SCARF actively works on dementia awareness and prevention through community outreach and educational programs. This initiative is aimed at building dementia-friendly communities, the communication notes.

A film festival on mental health at Egmore

Frame of Mind, a film festival on mental health organised by Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) in collaboration with Madras School of Social Work (MSSW) will take place on October 19 (3 p.m. – 8 p.m.) at The TAG Auditorium, MSSW on Casa Major Road in Egmore.

In its eleventh edition, Frame of Mind aims at raising awareness and dispelling misconceptions about mental health related issues.

The competitive section of the event this year, was on the theme "Mental health -Then and Now" and it received good response with several entries from across the country, says a press release.

An eminent panel of

jury chose the winners whose names will be announced during the function on October 19 at 6 pm. All the 13 shortlisted entries will be screened during the event.

J BABY, a feature film in Tamil, directed by Suresh Mari, based on the real life experience of a person with bipolar disorder will be screened. This will be followed by a panel discussion with the director of the film and a mental health professional.

The chief guest for the evening, Ashok Selvan, popular actor in Tamil cinema, will give away the prizes to the winners of the short film contest.

For more details, call 9444027388 / 9600073509.

Grievance meet on October 19

In view of Vijaydashami, a public holiday, the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board will hold the monthly consumers grievance meeting on October 19. The meeting is normally held on the second Saturday of every month.

The meeting will be held at the Area Offices 1 - Thiruvottiyur, 2 - Manali, 3 - Madhavaram, 4 - Tondiarpet, 5 - Royapuram, 6 - Thiru Vi Ka Nagar, 7 - Ambattur, 8 - Anna Nagar, 9 - Teynampet, 10 - Kodambakkam, 11 - Valasaravakkam, 12 - Alandur, 13 - Adyar, 14 - Perungudi and 15 - Sholinganallur, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Consumers are requested to participate in the meeting and voice their grievances regarding drinking water and sewerage, and queries related to water and sewerage tax and payments, and pending water and sewerage connections. The consumers can also raise queries about Rainwater harvesting (RWH) and RWH pits maintenance.

Have you visited the new park at Cathedral Road?



The city has a new attraction. Kalaingar Centenary Park located on Cathedral Road and opened recently. The sprawling park has a glass garden, a horticultural museum, a zipline, a musical fountain show and an aviary. The entry fee for adults is Rs 100, while children will be charged Rs 50. The park is open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

PHOTOS : B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM





▲ A raised building; and a boat pressed into service at Varadharajapuram during the November 2021 rains. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND VELANKANNI RAJ B

Finding higher ground

Residents of certain inundation-prone areas in Chennai are increasingly seeking the benefits of building-lifting technology

LIFFY THOMAS

D. Bhuvanesh and his family of six lost the fear of the monsoon in 2020 when they had their independent house at Telephone Nagar in Perungudi lifted by 5.75 feet. Before they had that improvement carried out, flood waters would wade into their rooms during heavy downpours.

"The years 2016 to 2018 were the worst," recalls Bhuvanesh, a resident of Perungudi for over two decades.

Much of the problem began when Greater Chennai Corporation started blacktopping interior roads without proper milling. "Our house sunk 1.5 feet below the road level," says Bhuvanesh, a software professional.

During the monsoon, the family would shift all their belongings from the ground to the first floor. "We would return after the rains, a practice we followed for at least four years," he says.

After hearing about "house lifting technology", they found a service provider who charged them ₹3 lakh for the first three feet and ₹50,000 for every additional foot. "The work was pretty simple and fast. It was completed in one month. We just had to remove all our things from the ground floor

for the labourers to undertake work on raising and filling with sand," says Bhuvanesh. As homework, he had visited a few projects in Nehru Nagar and a building (housing a bank) where this technology had already been adopted.

The civil work of laying the floor and tiles was undertaken by another contract company. Bhuvanesh says at least four other residents at his street have lifted their houses since 2000 to stay safe from any flood-like situation.

In T. Nagar, B. Balaji had his house raised by one foot in 2022. "We did not go with "jacking system" as it was an old house with the frontage having been added in 1992. We did not want to weaken the building in any way, so we went in for the simpler solution of adding one foot gravel and raising the height by just one foot. Now, our house is above the road level and we are safe unless there is heavy downpour lasting many days," says Balaji, an insurance surveyor.

The 2021 December rains forced the family to find a solution. The rains had flooded central parts of the city including T. Nagar and Ashok Nagar. "We were literally swimming in the house and we dug a small hole to push the water that had collected in the rooms. We also used a pump to drain the water," he recalls.

A simple Google search will

throw up a number of firms that are engaged in raising height of houses. R. Yuga Balan, proprietor of one such firm says that although lifting a house in flood-prone areas is not new it caught up after the Chennai Rains of 2015.

"We get maximum enquiries in the month of January to March, a majority from areas close to a lake where the road height has gone up," says Balan.

Structural stability

Buildings that are more than 40 years old must be assessed for structural stability before being lifted. "Apartments with ground plus four floors can also go in for lifting technology," he says.

Benny Raphael, head of department, Civil Engineering, IIT-Madras, says that from a structural

point of view there are no specific restrictions regarding plinth level from the ground.

"The main consideration is the usability, the number of steps people have to climb to enter the building, the slope from the existing road level to the ground level," says the professor.

Increasing the height of a building does not weaken the structure in any way. Benny adds, "The foundation has to be adequately designed to ensure the stability of the structure. It can be done, even if the plinth level is high."

All eyes on temple in Nanganallur

Sri Utthara Guruvayoorappan Temple is all set to face the first monsoon after having been raised by 5.5 feet

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

This year's North East Monsoon will serve as a litmus test for members of Sri Guruvayoorappan Asthika Samajam that manages the Sri Utthara Guruvayoorappan Temple at Ram Nagar in Nanganallur. This is the first monsoon the temple will be facing after having been raised.

"The temple was raised by 5.5 feet by engaging the service of a company based in Haryana, so we are confident about not facing any repeat of past events," says N.V. Subramanian, secretary of the Samajam.

In this entire exercise, the

structure of the temple was not disturbed, he says.

The heavy rains of 2017-18 led the temple management to consider raising the height of the temple. "Sewage mixed with water was collected on the temple premises for four days. None of us could enter the temple and a bad smell hovered over the premises, spoiling the sanctity of the holy place. We were pained to see that," says Subramanian.

As per the temple authorities, the difference between the road level and the temple was 2.5 feet. The drainage system added to the problems as even during minor downpours water mixed with sewage entered the temple premises.

During the executive committee meeting of 2022-23, it was decided that lifting technology should be adopted. "The company had the experience of raising heights of various temples including a 300-year-old temple in Guindy, so we went with them," says the secretary.

After the lifting work was completed, it took the temple management 10 months to complete all the related civil work. During this period, a makeshift arrangement was made adjacent to the temple for devotees to offer worship.

On July 12, the *kumbhabhish-ekham* of the temple, which is more than 50 years old, was celebrated with much fervour.

Footpath near Chennai Primary School is unsafe



▼
A stretch of the footpath near Chennai Primary School located at the junction of Chetty Street and Mount Poonamalle High Road in Porur is unfriendly. The tiles are broken and uneven. Besides, a small portion of the footpath is occupied by a funeral ice-box.
“Given the ongoing metro rail construction near the school and heavy traffic on Mount Poonamalle High Road, the footpath should be intact,” says a resident of Chetty Street.
The images were taken on October 10. PHOTOS: VEDHAN M

Medical camp for conservancy workers



L&T Prayas Medical Centre in association with Kaveri Rangan Nagar Narpani Mandram, a residents welfare association in Saligramam, conducted a medical camp for conservancy workers of the Greater Chennai Corporation.

According to a press release, no fee was charged. Around 150 workers from Saligramam, Virugambakkam and Dasarathapuram attended the camp.

The medical centre is at Ilango Nagar in Virugambakkam. It is managed by the women of Prayas Trust.

The trust is also engaged in the field of education, women empowerment, water sanitation, and village development, adds the release.

Computer lab inaugurated

A computer lab has been inaugurated at Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya. According to a press release, the facility was sponsored by City Union Bank Foundation as part of its corporate social responsibility programme for the financial year 2024-25. The authorities of the bank advised the students to utilise the facility. Students who excelled in various sports events were honoured on the occasion. The centre can be reached at 9176624283 / 8939771592

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Postman gets a *fitting* farewell

A job appointment letter is a source of joy. The recipient also remembers the postman who handed it. One such recipient, a resident of West Mambalam honoured the postman K Mohan who brought him the good news way back in 1980s. the occasion being the postman's retirement.

Of his 39-year-long service in India Post, K Mohan served West Mambalam for 24 years. Hence, Vivekanandapuram First Street Narpani Mandram, a voluntary group based in West Mambalam bid farewell to the postman on September 28.

"He has earned the goodwill of the residents here. Mohan always goes beyond the call of duty to ensure the letters are delivered even when someone has moved out of West Mambalam. He has helped pensioners get life certificates," says S. Murali, the forum's president. Ward 134 Councillor Uma Anandan and the Postmaster of West Mambalam Sub Post Office, Poorna-pushpakala, presided over the event.



Postman K. Mohan (second from left) being honoured by West Mambalam residents on his retirement in the presence of Ward 134 Councillor Uma Anandan (extreme left).
 PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"I joined the postal department in 1985 as a temporary staff. Then my job was to cover for postmen who were on leave. I became a permanent employee in 1995. I was assigned Thiruvanniyur

Circle and IIT- Madras for a few years. But a good number of years was spent in West Mambalam," says the postman, a resident of Ashok Nagar.

Text by L. Kanthimathi

Saligramam RWA honours senior citizens



Residents of State Bank Staff Colony in Saligramam.
 PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

State Bank Staff Colony Residents Welfare Association, Saligramam, conducted its 21st annual general body meeting recently. According to a press release, the early occupants of State Bank Staff Colony were honoured on the occasion.

"The colony, comprising three streets, was formed in the year 1974 by State Bank of India Staff Cooperative Housing Society Limited. Then, 82 SBI employees bought plots from the housing society. But today only 35 of them continue to hold their property here and they are all aged above 75. Hence, the association honoured them recently," says the association's president, S. Shyamsundar.

The event was held at a private hall wherein the women's club of the association entertained the senior citizens with various games such as quiz, solving puzzles and riddles. Besides, they were treated with sweets and snacks, adds the press release.

Nine-day festival at church

Our Lady Fatima Church in Kodambakkam is celebrating its Feast Day on October 13. According to a press release, it is part of a nine-day festival called Novena marked by special prayers and masses.

Procession of the idol "Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Fatima" through the streets of Kodambakkam is also part of the celebration. The church is celebrating the festival for the 68th year, adds the release. For details, call 9566697379

Workshop on mushroom cultivation

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on mushroom cultivation on October 17.

Also, a culinary workshop on preparation of jams and fruit syrups will be held on October 18. The sessions will be held at the centre's premises at Agro Tech Green Park, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. For details, call 044-29530048.

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