

## TAMBARAM

Chromepet » Pallavaram » Tambaram West » Rajakilpakkam » Mannivakkam » Guindy » Keelkattalai » Nanganallur » Guduvanchery » Hasthinapuram » Pammal » Tambaram East

Medavakkam » Srinivasa Nagar » Kathipara Junction » Kovilambakkam » Sadasivam Nagar » Potheri » Selaiyur » Sembakkam » St.Thomas Mount » Madipakkam » Urappakkam » Paralur

## Bus terminus at Pozhichalur needs a facelift

As the facility has been neglected for a long time, commuters have a long wish list

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

The Metropolitan Transport Corporation bus terminus at Pozhichalur needs better maintenance. Patches of the flooring at the entrance and exit are battered. There is water stagnation, creating an unhygienic environment for commuters.

The terminus has been neglected for years, with no additional

amenities being provided, say commuters.

A monthly passes renewal centre can be set up for the benefit of commuters. S. Venkatesan, a commuter, says residents of Pozhichalur, Anakaputhur and Pammal renew their passes at the Pallavaram stopover on GST Road.

Commuter M. Sushila says: "The frequency of buses to Guduvancherry should be increased. Cur-



The entrance to the terminus, on October 15. PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

rently, commuters break their journey and board buses from Ponds Flyover or Saravana Stores halting points on GST Road. Earlier, bus services were operated to Thiruvanniyur but that was later discontinued."

Commuters from Rajiv Gandhi Salai, Thiruvanniyur and Pallavaram - Thoraipakkam Radial Road must come to Chromepet and board another bus to Pozhichalur.

An official at the terminus says: "We had carried out patchwork in the areas before the monsoon. It was washed away in the heavy rains. Remedial work will be carried out."



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## ‘Deepen Puthu Thangal Eri’



The waterbody needs to be desilted

**R**esidents of Tambaram West have requested the Water Resources Department to desilt and deepen ‘Puthu Thangal Eri’ so that it can store rainwater.

The encroachments on the lake’s northern side bring sewage into the waterbody, resulting in the growth of water hyacinth, say residents.

R. Sukumar, a resident, says, “The trash should be removed and the water drained out before undertaking any restoration process. The Tambaram City Municipal Corporation should arrest sewage discharge and provide an underground drainage network connection in Gandhi Nagar.”

The region has an underground drainage network. Follow-

ing desilting work, bunds should be created up to height of 10-15 feet on the lake’s eastern and northern sides.

As per the natural course, the lake should receive rainwater from the Tambaram hills located opposite the waterbody, but due to the construction of walls from end to end around the hill, the lake cannot receive water and flows into the Adyar river through ‘Papan Kalvai’.

Sukumar adds that the Tamil Nadu Forest Department and the Water Resources Department should construct a check dam and lay two-foot-wide diameter pipes that 200 to 300 metres long to drain rainwater from the hills to the lake.

Text: T.S. Atul Swaminathan

## ‘Chitlapakkam Lake should have an inlet channel’

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

**A**fter years of waiting, this May, the State Highways Department desilted a culvert on GST Road. Following this exercise, Chitlapakkam residents were hopeful that the rainwater from Pachai Malai, a hillock in Tambaram Sanatorium, would reach Chitlapakkam lake and flow further into Pallikaranai marshland.

To facilitate the flow of rainwater, the State Highway Department dug a lane towards Chromepet. This work on the lane towards Railway Station Road should have been done in coordination with the Water Resources Department (WRD), says M. Ravi, secretary of Sri Sarvamangala Nagar Residents’ Association, Chitlapakkam.

Ravi continues: “On the night of October 14 and 15, the Chitlapakkam region witnessed 13 centimetres of rain. But not a drop of water flowed from the hills to the lake. The inlet channel should have been restored as part of the Chitlapakkam Lake restoration project.

Even the Chitlapakkam pond did not receive rainwater from Pachai Malai. Adds Ravi: “The pond received rainwater from the skies.” On Nehru Street, a sub-channel with two pipes, one for the pond and the other for Sembakkam



A pond in Chitlapakkam

Lake, has been facilitated. From Nehru Street, the water should flow through the channel that courses through Haridossapuram Main Road, Thiru Vi Ka Nagar and Vino Bhaji Nagar 11th Street. The width of the channel is not what it was originally, due to encroachments. Due to the narrowness of the channel, the machine is unable to desilt it. Restoring lakes is fruitless unless sewage is arrested, and inlet channels to the lakes are restored.”

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# Kolu contest scales new heights



**M**ade of Chennai *The Hindu Downtown* Kolu Kondattam 2024 contest conducted from October 3 to 7 was a big draw with entries pouring in from all regions of Chennai. Marked by keen participation, the contest reached its denouement on October 20 when the winners were felicitated at an event at PRC Hall in T. Nagar. In keeping with a practice followed in all the previous editions of the contest, three winners and 10 recipients of consolation prizes were chosen in each of the five regions covered separately by *The Hindu Downtown*. The event started with

an elegant dance performance by the students of Anitha Guha's Bharathanjali. They entertained the audience with a professionally choreographed dance performance. The winners were felicitated by Niranjana, MD, Gopuram Products, Natarajan, principal, Saraswathi Vidyalaya Senior Secondary School, Kumaaravelan, MD, Madras Coffee House, Rithi Sakthi, proprietrix, Amman Sarees. The title sponsor for the contest was Gopuram Products. The contest was co-presented by ITC Mangaldeep and the Associate sponsors were Aroma Ghee and Rajamanickam Mudaliyar company.



Dance performances mark the prize distribution event; winners from Tambaram region. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**Winner**  
Shreeyaa V R  
**First runner-up**  
Mythili Nithyanand  
**Second runner-up**  
Aishwarya Lakshmi and Usha Mahalingam  
**Consolation prize winners**  
Srividya R  
Bharathi Shankar  
Swetha Natarajan  
Sripriya Rajagopalan  
Nisha Srikanth  
Kamalashruthi  
Mythily Ramani  
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Gifts were sponsored by Aachi Masala, Medimix, NAGA products, P.S.Tamarind, Maestro Multi Cooker Electric, Cotton House, Amman Sarees, Wondr Diamonds, AI chips, Repute, RAS chekku Oil and Hanbao.

Madras Coffee House was the Food Partner; and Saraswathi Vidyalaya Senior Secondary School, Vadapalani, the Education Partner.

## READERS WRITE

### 'Extend EMU services till Chengalpattu during rush hour'

**T**he Southern Railway should extend the services of electrical trains operated between Chennai Beach and Tambaram to Chengalpattu during rush hour.

Between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., there are no EMU services between Chennai Beach and Chengalpattu; the services are operated only till Tambaram.

The 9 a.m. Chengalpattu train

is packed beyond capacity, forcing commuters to stand and travel for more than an hour.

After Tambaram, a good number of IT parks come up, in New Perungalathur, Guduvanchery, Chengalpattu and Maraimalai Nagar.

Office goers are the worst affected. The Southern Railway should operate three train services to Chengalpattu between 8

a.m. and 9 a.m. The trains should run every 20 minutes during this time frame.

In the evenings, at the Chengalpattu railway station, the trains towards Chennai Beach are not operated on time. They are put on hold due to the arrival of long-distance trains.

I request the Railway to reintroduce first-class coaches. Before the pandemic, three first

class coaches were in an EMU: front, centre and at the last coach. The railway should also crack down on commuters who travel in first-class compartments with a second-class ticket. Doing this will reduce crowding in the coaches and help first-class commuters travel comfortably.

**K. Karthikeyan**  
Mambalam (West)



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# Leave the street sparkling clean, leave the waste in a separate bin

As usual, environment-conscious groups are sounding a word of caution about the improper disposal of hazardous cracker waste. Are residents listening?

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**W**ith a few days left for Deepavali, many environment-conscious groups and individuals are propagating for responsible waste management during the festival.

Urbaser Summer, which is responsible for managing waste in many zones within Greater

Chennai Corporation limits, has launched a social media campaign focussing on three situations that can result from bursting crackers: It wants residents to keep their cracker waste separate, not mixing it with the regular dry waste; ensure the cracker waste is completely cooled before being sealing; and hand over the waste to the conservancy staff separately so that it can be treated separately.



FILE PHOTO : B.JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Beautiful Bharat runs multiple online campaigns across the country to create awareness about festival waste. Last year, its campaign sought that the public “make the morning after Deepavali less of a nightmare for our fellow human beings who clean the mess we create.”

The awareness posters requested residents to place two cartons, one for dry waste (cracker boxes and packaging) and another for toxic remains (reject waste). This segregation can increase recycling percentage and reduce waste going to the landfill, also alleviating the burden on conservancy workers.

Last year, GCC distributed separate jute bags in various areas for collection of cracker waste. All the division workers were required to collect burnt crackers and store them in the jute bags, which were later sent to the hazardous waste plant in Gummidipoondi for processing as per TNPCB norms.

# The air *we breathe* together

Air monitoring systems established at two addresses in Chennai are helping understand pollution in their immediate environments

LIFFY THOMAS

**O**nce in six months, SRM Institute of Science and Technology at Kattankulathur has the ambient air quality on the campus tested by a National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accredited laboratory. High volume samplers are brought from the lab and kept at different locations on the sprawling campus for an entire day to capture dust particles.

“The filters inside capture the particles, the devices are then taken to the lab for study. The report gives us data about the concentration of particles under various parameters,” says Blessy A., assistant maintenance engineer, Environmental Management System, SRM Institute of Science and Technology.

The campus also has a micro pulse lidar (MPL) that provides everyday reading in Kattankulathur, but this data does not provide a comprehensive and specific information about the pollution. It only tells whether air over the neigh-



FILE PHOTO: M KARUNAKARAN

bourhood is clear, polluted or dusty.

As per the June report, the various particulate content such as PM 2.5, PM 10, ozone, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide are within the limits specified by the Pollution Control Board.

“We also have a hospital on the campus, and which makes monitoring air quality additionally meaningful. For instance, sapling plantation is a regular feature on the campus,” says Blessy, adding that the campus has an ISO certification.

## Focus on Gopalapuram

The U.S. Consulate General’s air pollution monitor covers the Gopalapuram area. The air quality data collected by the U.S. Mission in In-

dia is translated into actionable information by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) NowCast algorithm, says a note on the website.

This algorithm converts raw PM 2.5 readings into an air quality index (AQI) value that can help inform health-related decisions. The index is calculated based on data over a 3-12 hour period depending on the variability of particulate concentration, adds the note.

“The Consulate installed an air quality monitor for routine readings several years ago, which are publicly available and updated on the U.S. Mission to India’s website,” says a spokesperson of the U.S. Consulate General Chennai.

While air quality monitoring can help increase environmental

awareness among residents and make neighbourhoods more sustainable, not many organisations and institutions have invested in them.

Many environmental groups have been asking Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to ensure all industries in Ennore put up air quality monitors.

Early this year, *The Hindu* reported that residents of Ennore wanted to access the online continuous effluent/emission monitoring system maintained by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board as they found gaps in the monitoring of emissions from industries.

According to C40 Knowledge Hub, low-cost sensing technologies and data analytics can identify areas of poor air quality that a

## At a glance

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board operates eight ambient air quality monitoring stations in Chennai, located at Kathivakkam, Manali, Thiruvottiyur, Anna Nagar, Adyar, Thiyarayana Nagar, Kilpauk and Nungambakkam. Real-time data can be obtained from [www.aqi.in/in/dashboard/india/tamil-nadu/Chennai](http://www.aqi.in/in/dashboard/india/tamil-nadu/Chennai); [tnpcb.gov.in/aqidatachn.php](http://tnpcb.gov.in/aqidatachn.php) [airquality.cpcb.gov.in/](http://airquality.cpcb.gov.in/)

sparse network of traditional monitors often miss. Pinpointing air pollution where people live, work and play can inform tailored interventions, more effective policies and, ultimately, lead to cleaner air.

A senior TNPCB official says the department has been mandating all power plants, cement mills and heavy industries to put up air quality monitoring stations. He notes that they do not want sensor-based data reading as it is not recognised by both TNPCB and Central Pollution Control Board.

“The method we follow is approved by the ministry. TNPCB has five stations in Chennai in addition to the three by CPCB. Erecting an individual station would cost crores of rupees whereas sensor technology is highly affordable. We do not give importance to such readings as the values would be haphazard,” says the official, adding, “They have to adopt the same methodology that we follow only then will they get correct readings.”



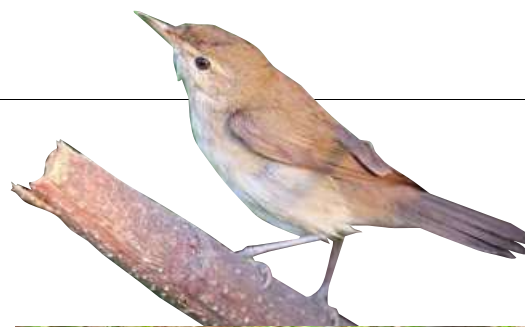
From 27 bird species in 2017, this hotspot now is credited with hosting 93 species — the result of more pairs of human eyes being focussed on it

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**P**uzhuthivakkam lake was hidden in plain sight.

From Velachery Main Road, this waterbody is easily get-at-able. From this arterial road, roll into Madipakkam Main Road (also known as Bazaar Main Road) and before long, the lake heaves into view. Despite its door being always open, the mat lying in front of it remained undisturbed except by residents of houses ringing it. The lake was not having visitors scuffing their shoes on that mat. Even for a majority of those residents, the interest in the lake was hardly connected with the lake. The neatly-raised bund providing an ideal ramp to walk on, the space enabled them to limber up for the day. On hindsight, that was an opportunity missed, an opportunity to record natural history. There was some birding interest from time to time, but it was desultory. The tide began to turn in 2017-2018 when a resident not of Puzhuthivakkam, but of a nearby area began to work the lake into his morning walking route — at first, once a week which would evolve into an everyday engagement. Fortunately for natural history, he was a binoculars-carrying and telephoto lens-lugging fitness walker.

Under the dotting gaze of someone genuinely interested in the lake for the lake's sake, it began to re-



Puzhithivakkam lake is a treasure trove of natural history, as these images show.

PHOTOS: A.M. ARAVIND



## Puzhuthivakkam lake on the map



veal its charms.

That gaze belongs to birder A.M. Aravind and it has only become more intense. The results of the sustained gaze have ensured other

pairs of eyes were drawn towards the lake and what it offered.

"From 27 species in 2017 to 93 species now on eBird, Puzhithivakkam lake has come a long way," says Aravind, clarifying a great number of feathers had been there all along, but not enough pair of human eyes to acknowledge their presence. The lake had been "underbirded". The Puzhuthivakkam lake and the Pallikaranai marshland are separated by eight kilometres or thereabouts, and was bound to mirror avian movements associated with the marsh, but this data was waiting tediously long to be mined for want of keen and inter-

ested pairs of human eyes.

"Initially, I was going to the Ram Nagar Swamps and I would head to the Puzhuthivakkam lake once in a week. In the last three to three-and-a-half years, it has become a daily thing. I had also moved house and I was closer to the Puzhuthivakkam lake than Ram Nagar Swamps," explains Aravind.

(For the benefit of Martians unfamiliar with the Madipakkam region, Ram Nagar Swamps is essentially water-logged plots where birds moved in before their human, legally-entitled owners did. With the humans "reclaim-

ing" their land by building houses, the Ram Nagar Swamps in now almost dead in terms of avian activity.) Back to Puzhuthivakkam lake, Aravind notes that during the last wintering season, birders could see the Indian Pitta every single day.

Last season, garganey showed up. This season, the whiskered terns having been doing mad sorties over the lake, dipping into it to fuel up. Aravind further remarks that the Asian pied starling's nesting activity at the lake has been intense this season. "The crested winged cuckoo also showed up; it sojourned for a week," says Aravind. The presence of trees around the lake draw such avian life. Among his greatest finds at the lake, Aravind counts the mottled wood owl, which he heard hoot. He also has a few non-Avian records that are worth a mention. He explains: "I had a clear sighting of a Southern Birdwing butterfly. But, the bigger news is that Indian Flapshell turtle (which is "vulnerable" on IUCN scale) nested this year and I saw nestlings and have some terrible photos of the young ones. But, reasonably good photos of the adult."



## The count continues

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**B**irders come in all feathers. Narrowing down to three types of them, one birds only in spots that offer a full complement of birds, migratory and resident. Their birding is therefore a seasonal pursuit, their binoculars usually rested outside the wintering season. There are birders whose relationship with feathers is regular but desultory — the weekend birders. And the other category, the one helpful to citizen science, are the patch birders, who have identified a patch near home and hit the path to it every morning, and whenever possible, at other hours as well.

In the Sembakkam-Hasthinapuram region, a bunch of patch birders have mined sufficient data from Nanmangalam lake to



place it in an all new ornithological light. Their familiarity with the topography of the lake being total, they come up with new finds regularly.

One of the highlights of their birding is the persistent documentation of the crested winged

cuckoo's visits and sojourns in the Nanmangalam forest area overlooking the lake. Their records over the years have refreshed an understanding of Chennai's place in CWC's winter itinerary. A conclusion that some of them stay in Chennai through



A black headed bunting and a cinnamon bittorn around Nanmangalam lake.

PHOTOS: JITHESH BABU

the winter, and do not just pass through it seems just inches away from being drawn.

These birders squirm into patches along the lake that a superficial birder would not bother to set a toe in. One such section is the west end of the lake, accessed via Saraswathi Nagar extension. Adjoining the lake, this section is

overrun with bulrushes and weeds. As recently as October 23, one of these birders, Jithesh Babu came upon a black headed bunting at this patch. There are only rare records of this bunting in these parts. This patch supports breeding of Asian pied starling and purple herons, says Jithesh.

Due to the dense vegetation, avian skulkers are at home in this patch. The cinnamon bittorn is a classic example: it would emerge out of such vegetation and melt right back into it before one could say Jack Robinson. On October 24, 2024, a cinnamon bittorn exhibited this familiar behaviour and in the short window of opportunity it provided — 11 seconds — birder Jithesh Babu clicked a picture of the bird.

Taking in the overall picture, Nanmangalam lake has an impressive count. Jithesh says even migratory waders such as the long-toed stint has been sighted at the lake.



## Chairs morph into umbrellas



Participants who came to attend an event at the housing board quarters in Perumbakkam on October 19, organised by the Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust and National Domestic Workers Movement to celebrate The International Decent Work Day, were caught off guard by the rain gods. Those attending the meet picked up the chairs, turned them upside down and shielded themselves from the rain. Ma Subramanian, Minister for Health and Family Welfare, was addressing the meet. PHOTO : R.RAVINDRAN

## The Deepavali rush



GST Road saw heavy traffic on October 25 as many from the city were heading to their hometown to celebrate Deepavali. PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

## Telugu classes from November 2

World Telugu Federation is conducting a six - month course in Telugu. According to press release, no fee will be charged. Classes will be held on every Saturday from November 2. Time:

From 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. For details, call 7305557322 / 9841616465

World Telugu Federation is at No: 113, G.N. Chetty Road, Ankur Plaza, Second Floor, T. Nagar.

## Handloom mela at Nanganallur ends on October 31

The Rajasthan Artisans and Weavers Welfare Trust is conducting a 'Rajasthani Handloom Mela' at J. K. Mahal in Nanganallur till October 31.

On display at the exhibition are Orissa saris, banjara bags, Jaipur chudidhar, five-stone jewellery, Rajasthan bedspread, Madurai saris, readymade shirts, Chennapatna wooden toys, leather bags and belts, wall hangings, shoes and sandals. The exhibition-cum-sale is open to the public from 10.30 a.m. to 9 p.m. and offers a discount of 10 and 20 percent on handicraft and handloom items. J. K. Mahal is located on MGR Road, State Bank Colony First Main Road, Nanganallur. For details, call 99404 22426.

## Special long-distance buses for Deepavali

The State Transport Department will ply special long-distance buses in view of Deepavali from bus terminuses in the city on October 28, 29 and 30. The buses will be operated from Kilambakkam bus terminus, Chennai Mofussil Bus Terminus (CMBT), Koyambedu and Madhavaram New Bus Terminus.

### Appeal to the public

The Transport Department has requested that the public travelling by private modes of transport drive through the Rajiv Gandhi Road-Thiruporur-Chengalpattu route or Vandalur Outer Ring Road to avoid traffic congestion on Grand Southern Trunk Road, Tambaram, and Perungalathur.

The public can make reservations at Kilambakkam and CMBT terminuses from October 28 to 30. The reservation counters will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Around nine counters have been facilitated at the terminuses. The public can also buy their tickets through www.tnstrc.in and TNSTC app, available on Apple and Google Play.

### Helpline numbers

To know more about bus operations and register complaints regarding services, the public can con-



tact the following number - 94450 14436 (24X7). To register complaints against fleecing Omni bus operators, the public can call 044 24749002, 044 26280445, 044 - 26281611 and a toll-free number 1800 425 6151.

For the safety of passengers, a control room will be set up on the premises of the Kilambakkam bus terminus, which will function around the clock. Besides, 'May I Help You' booths (to provide information about buses and routes) will be set up at the terminuses. The public must use the reservation counters and facilities (app and online) for safe and hassle-free travel. Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) will operate connecting buses from Koyambedu bus terminus round the clock to the other bus terminuses.



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