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'CMWSSB's water supply is contaminated with sewage'

Water supplied from Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) to Metro Nagar Third Cross Street in Alapakkam is contaminated with sewage. The water is full of foam and exudes a foul odour.

Several representations to CMWSSB have been of no avail. CMWSSB's efforts to locate the source of the contamination have been unsuccessful. Hence, we request CMWSSB to lay new pipes.

A. Shreevas, Alapakkam



'Street in Kolapakkam needs mending'

You can be our volunteer-writer

Dear readers, you can be our volunteer-writer by writing to us about issues in your neighbourhood. The articles have to be factually well-grounded. The write-ups should be sent to downtown feedback@thehindu.co.in. Letters must carry the postal address and contact number.



Following the heavy rains in the first week of December, Sarojini Street at Rammurthy Nagar in Kolapakkam has gone from bad. Prior to the rains, the road was battered for nearly six months. It had been dug up for a pipe-laying work. Though the work got completed, the road was not re-laid. The patchwork is not good enough as the stretch is slippery and gravel is exposed. This street provides connectivity to Mount Poonamalle High Road and Kunindrathur High Road.

V Pattabiram, Iyyappanthangal



Sarojini Street at Rammurthy Nagar in Kolapakkam, on January 2
PHOTOS: VELANKANNI RAJ B

A trying drive



Various stretches of Mugalivakkam Main Road are battered, as illustrated by these photos representing (clockwise from left) Madhanthapuram, Vasugi Nagar and Lakshmi Avenue, on January 2. PHOTOS: VELANKANNI RAJ B



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HOTLINES TO CIVIC AGENCIES

MTC is the latest to join the list of government line agencies that are harnessing the reach of social media platforms **P2**



CONSUMER PLATFORM HELPS TRAIN PASSENGER FIND JUSTICE

Suffering physical injury on account of an infrastructural shortcoming at a railway station, Perambur resident K.V. Ramesh takes his grievance to consumer court and wins the case **P5**



A quickfire exercise on Greams Road

The top five feet of a 28-feet-high machine hole had to be reconstructed; given the traffic situation on this road, CMWSSB had to carry out this work on a war footing

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Greams Road comes across as narrow to motorists at the best of times. Throw an infrastructure into that space and cordon off the work site, motorists would wish they had to enter the eye of the space instead of that constricted space on Greams Road.

When part of the machine hole on Greams Road imploded, CMWSSB had its work cut out. The machine hole had to be re-

constructed, the workers moving about with winged feet.

According to a CMWSSB official connected with the work, part of the 28-feet-high machine hole had collapsed, its door and structural wall imploding and thereby gumming up the works. The top portion of the machine hole, up to five feet, had to be reconstructed. The official says the rest of the machine hole was not only intact but strong enough to continue in its existing form, but without the collapsed top section being reconstructed, the entire machine hole was going to be of little use.

First up, the collapsed portion of the machine hole had to be removed, and machinery was pressed into action towards this end, the CMWSSB official says. And following this immediate intervention, construction had to be carried out on a war footing, given the traffic situation on the road, he adds.

Reportedly, the work was carried out round the clock.

One of the images is from January 2, 2024, when work was under way. The other one comes from January 4, when the work had been wrapped up.



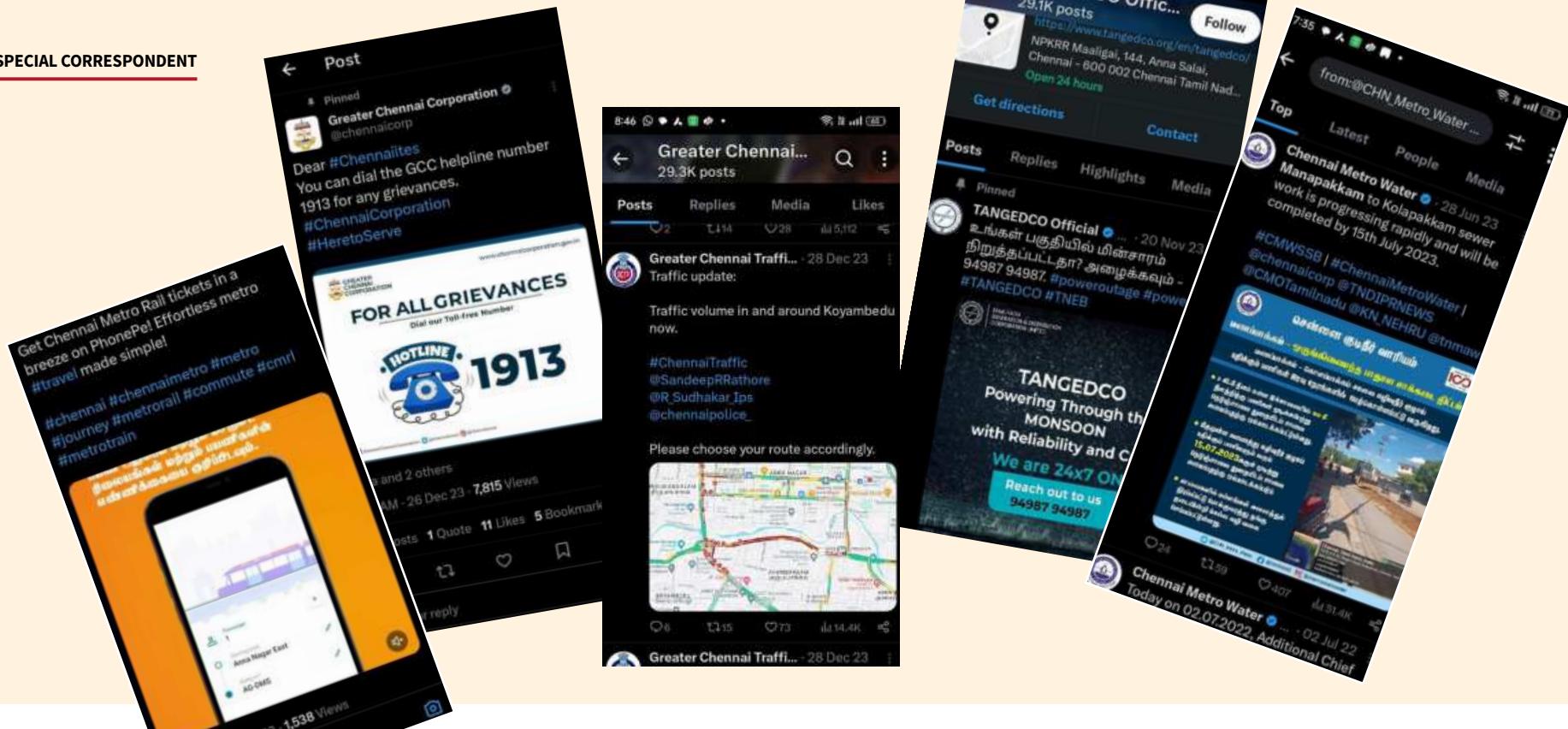
The machine hole reconstruction work at Greams Road on January 2; and (below) after it had been completed, on January 4, 2023.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

Hotlines to civic agencies

MTC is the latest to join the list of government line agencies that are harnessing the reach of social media platforms

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



A trivia from Metropolitan Transport Corporation. Name this popular destination on MTC's 21G route. The answer can be accessed @MTCChennai on X (formerly Twitter).

Chennai's public transport is a new kid on the social-media block. By ensuring its presence on Facebook, Instagram and X in October 2023 (when its newly-appointed

chairman and managing director Alby John took charge), MTC has sent out a message that it wants to engage with the public.

The beginnings are humble: updated information about bus routes and engaging with users through such trivia.

A staff in-charge of the social media section notes the focus currently is on offering information based on feedback from commuters. They

have also started forwarding grievances raised by commuters.

A robust grievance redressal mechanism that combines multiple platforms can raise any civic agency's profile.

In the last calendar year, Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) received over 8,000 complaints through social media and an official says almost all of them were attended to. Complainants are sometimes called before

closing the complaint.

Posts on the 24x7 helpline number (4567 4567), details of tanker lorries and water level at lakes are among its most popular tweets. Its post about work being under way on Manapakkam to Kolapakkam sewer

network witnessed 52,000 views in a single day, making it one of the best responses it has received so far.

Chennai Traffic Police and Tangedco are among other government line agencies that post news about

activities being carried out by the department.

Greater Chennai Corporation, which has 283K followers on X, is also big on grievance redressal, if we have to go by data it shared in the past.

In an article in *The Hindu* in March 2022, Greater Chennai Corporation mentioned that X is the most popular social networking service used by citizens for addressing civic issues.

WHAT CITIZENS WANT

QQ Highways is one department that must join social media. Greater Chennai Corporation and Tangedco do a good job engaging with users on social media; the latter for instance responds to our complaint, follows up with the staff on the ground and even updates us. When there is closure to a grievance raised, it is pleasant. MTC is fairly new to this space, but when I recently raised an issue about a non-functional display board in a bus, they rectified it the same day. Answering every query from users might be difficult but they can prioritise those queries and respond accordingly.
Vidyasagar Jagadeesan
resident of Pallikaranai

QQ Although CMDA has a presence on social media, it does not have a grievance redressal mechanism along the lines of the ones supported by other government departments. I appreciate the way Southern Railway responds to complaints posted on X. We also want to see more awareness posts about in-person grievance redressal meetings conducted by various departments.
K. Dayanand
volunteer, Chitlapakkam Rising

QQ I have interacted with the GCC and Chennai Traffic Police via social media and they respond quickly to comments, and are making an effort to share information in a more real time basis and that is great. Civic agencies should focus on responsive and reliable content/ information that answers people's questions. This will improve trust in the agency and make people more amenable to messages on behaviour change which is a common component of social media messaging. And of course, they have to create attractive content in keeping with cultural trends.
Sumana Narayanan
senior researcher, Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group

QQ Social media platforms must also be used by agencies to seek feedback from public on certain policies. Data speaks a lot and Chennai Traffic Police, for example, must have posts that talk about enforcement carried out on the ground. Social media can be a great place to bridge the trust deficit, so there must be engaging posts to get citizens to work closely with agencies. Friends of Police, for example, is a wonderful initiative that must encourage more people to volunteer; and an engaging post can make the difference. Let us get inspired reading more citizen voluntary stories.
V. M. Chinni Krishnan
resident of Shenoy Nagar

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PLAN YOUR SUNDAY

Volunteers with placards carrying awareness messages; a selfie point; and at a puppet show. PHOTOS: SRINATH M

Of music, colours, contests and fun

Today is the last day of the four-day Sundaram Finance Mylapore Festival 2024. Never mind if you could not make it to the event until now: activities are aplenty at the streets, parks, auditoriums and halls on the concluding day as well.

On East Tank Street, between the temple and

the tank, meet teams from women self-help groups selling crafts, accessories and handmade items.

One of the highlights is the Kolam Contest that begins at 3.30 p.m. on North Mada Street. Participants have to showcase their creativity drawing the best puli kolam, says a note on the website.

Pallankuzhi contest be-



gins at 4 p.m. at Lady Sivaswamy Ayyar Girls School. No registration is required but participants have to carry their own

pallankuzhi set.

On Sannidhi Street, an exhibition of all things vintage has been inked in for the evening of January 7.

**SYMA Child Fest concludes today**

Registrations for SYMA Child Fest 2024 are closed. And at the time of this write-up going to print, the two-day event had begun at N.K.T. National College of Education at Dr.

Besant Road in Triplicane. On the first day (January 6) of the event, there was a host of events including quiz, essay writing competition, fancy dress contest and a chess

tourney. On January 7, drawing and group dance competitions will be held. Rolling trophy will be given to the best performing school at the prize distribution function at 6 p.m.

A date with books

The 47th edition of the Chennai Book Fair organised by the Booksellers and Publishers Association of South India (BAPASI) is under way at YMCA grounds in Nandanam. The book fair comes to a close on January 21.

PHOTO : B.JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Meet the entrepreneurs at MOP Bazaar

The 26th edition of MOP Bazaar opened on January 6 at the college premises in Nungambakkam. Organised by Student Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Incubation and Innovation Centre of MOP Vaishnav College for Women, the two-day fair has a range of stalls showcasing the entrepreneurial spirit.

According to a release, more than 70 stalls featuring an array of products (spanning from trendy clothing and accessories to cosmet-

ics, delectable food and beverages, unique gifts and artefacts) promise an immersive experience to visitors of all age groups. The event is a platform for current students, alumni and their mothers, entrepreneurs from marginalised communities and NGOs.

"So it is not just an initiative in entrepreneurship but also in social entrepreneurship where we encourage students to be aware of their responsibilities towards society," said Principal Archna Prasad.



Special guests at the inaugural event. PHOTO: S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Consumer platform helps train passenger find justice

LIFFY THOMAS

Chennai resident K.V. Ramesh's two-year-long battle with the Indian Railways came to a close recently when he received the claim amount of ₹ 30,000.

Ramesh, now 62 years old, had filed a consumer complaint with the Indian Railways - New Delhi, detailing the circumstances that caused him to jump on tracks from Navajeen Express at Ankaleshwar station in Gujarat.

Ramesh had boarded the train from Chennai on December 5, 2021 and was heading to the town to attend a hearing in a court case. When the train came to a halt at Ankaleshwar station, a second-AC and three other coaches had not made it to the platform at the station. The platform was too short for all the coaches to come into alignment with it.

"The train only stops for two

Suffering physical injury on account of an infrastructural shortcoming at a railway station, Perambur resident K.V. Ramesh takes his grievance to consumer court and wins the case

minutes and I had to jump from the train with my luggage. As I did so, I ended up injuring myself," says Ramesh, a resident of Agaram in Perambur, and a retiree from a private firm he had served as purchase manager.

He registered a complaint with the Ankaleshwar station but did not stop with that. After returning to Chennai, he filed a case with the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Chennai (North).

"I could not be on time for the court case as the station master was not ready to give the complaint book," says Ramesh. He fought the case on his own taking help of online platforms and books that he bought for the purpose.

"As per the Railways Act, stations where the platforms are small or when number of coaches are more than the department is supposed to stack sand bags for passengers to alight," he says.

The medical help taken at a government hospital, a copy of complaint made at station, a copy of the train ticket and case slip were among the elements of proof he submitted to the Consumer Court.

The court copy shared with *The Hindu Downtown* reads that "the complainant is entitled to get a sum of ₹25,000 as compensation for deficiency in service hardship and mental agony, and ₹ 5000 towards cost of the complaint."



Representational picture only

Michaung effect lingers on at Adyar river

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Now during low tide, the Adyar river, as seen from the Thiru-Vi-Ka, would likely appear to be "scraping the bottom of the barrel". There is so little water that huge swaths of land appear much like bald patches on a pate.

This picture has been persisting at low-tide hours following Michaung. Deposit of silt and rubble, thanks to Michaung, is interfering with tidal flows, an issue that gets noticeable during low tide.

A WRD official agrees there is silt deposit upstream. Information on launching an exercise to clear the silt is still awaited. The WRD official notes

the water movement gets easier during high tide.

Reportedly, the lingering Michaung effect has led rowers of Boat Club to temporarily discontinue one route, the one that would take them to the broken bridge.

Krishnamohan Ramachandran, a member and rower from Boat Club: "There is a large amount of silt and rubble that has built up west of Thiru Vi Ka bridge. What this means is that we can no longer row from the Boat Club to the Broken bridge and back. A distance of seven kilometres both ways. Once we slip under the old Adyar bridge, it feels like we have entered a different world. As we row past Whale Islands on one side and

the Theosophical society on the other, it is easy to believe that you are in some wild, untouched part of the country. Surrounded by water and mangroves with fish jumping out of the water at you, the pelicans and the painted storks and the occasional fox watching you row by. Once past the Whale Islands, you see the Chettinad Palace and Leela Palace before you come to the broken bridge, one of the most picturesque places in the city. For a little over a 100 years now, rowers from the Boat Club have found their inspiration and motivation to row by taking this path to the Broken Bridge and back. We hope that we can do so again once the silt and the rubble is cleared."



'Arrest water seepage at Nungambakkam subway'

For a few weeks now, the Nungambakkam subway resembles a wet dish rag with water seeping through the cracks in the walls. Motorcyclists frequenting the Nungambakkam subway have requested Zone 9 (Teynampet Zone) of the Greater Chennai Corporation to arrest water seepage and relay the carriageway. The carriageway sports minor potholes which, as motorist K. Rajendran points out, are "filled with the water seeping in through the walls and this poses a threat to the safety of motorcyclists."

Photo & text by T.S. Atul Swaminathan

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Loyola College launches initiative to fund education of economically weak students

Loyola College has launched an initiative 'EAT @ 1925' to support the education of economically disadvantaged students. Led by Loyola Alumni Association, the initiative was launched on January 4 in the presence of Fr. Antony Robinson, Rector; Fr. Louis Arokiaraj, Principal; Fr. Louie Albert, Alumni Director; and Fr. Jeyaraj, Secretary; and Executive Committee Members of Loyola Alumni Association.

M. J. Abdul Rahman Sha is the special convenor responsible for this initiative, said a release.

EAT @ 1925 is established with the primary goal of supporting Fr. Kuriakose Scholarship Fund, created to support students and celebrate the 100th year journey of Loyola College. For every purchase of food products, a portion of the proceeds goes towards supporting the education of deserving students, the release added.

Bun butter jam, chicken bun, chicken samosa, chicken katti roll, paneer break rolls and a range of beverages are in the menu.

Orders can also be placed online by visiting www.eat1925.in.

TNSTC offers course on STEM Robotics

Tamil Nadu Science & Technology Centre is offering a three-month course called Advanced STEM Robotics Programme for students from class six to nine. According to a press release, classes will be held every Sunday from 10.30 am to 1 pm at its premises on Gandhi Mandapam Road. For details, call 044 - 2441 0025

Groceries donated to conservancy workers



Sri Sathy Sai Organisations Vadapalani along with Kaveri Rangan Nagar Narpani Mandram, a residents' association in Vadapalani, donated groceries worth ₹2000 to conservancy workers of Greater Chennai Corporation.

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Workshop on terrace gardening

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on terrace gardening on January 11. Another session on organic farming will be held on January 12. According to a press release, the sessions will focus on pruning of plants, preparation of manure, soil nutrition and chemical-free methods of pest management. For details, call 044 - 2953 0048



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