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A MESSAGE ON SOURCE SEGREGATION THROUGH DANCE

The Republic Day celebration at Mantri Synergy in Padur was led by the housekeeping team **P2**



BY THEIR CHOICE OF VENUE, THESE AREA SABHA MEETINGS DREW MANY EYEBALLS

From street corners to neighbourhood parks, these meet-ups found a variety of spaces where people are likely to congregate in good numbers. **P3**

A transient disruption of Srinivasa Avenue's biorhythm

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Srinivasa Avenue is among neighbourhoods in the RA Puram-Mandaveli-Mylapore region whose biorhythm has been altered on account of Metro Rail work.

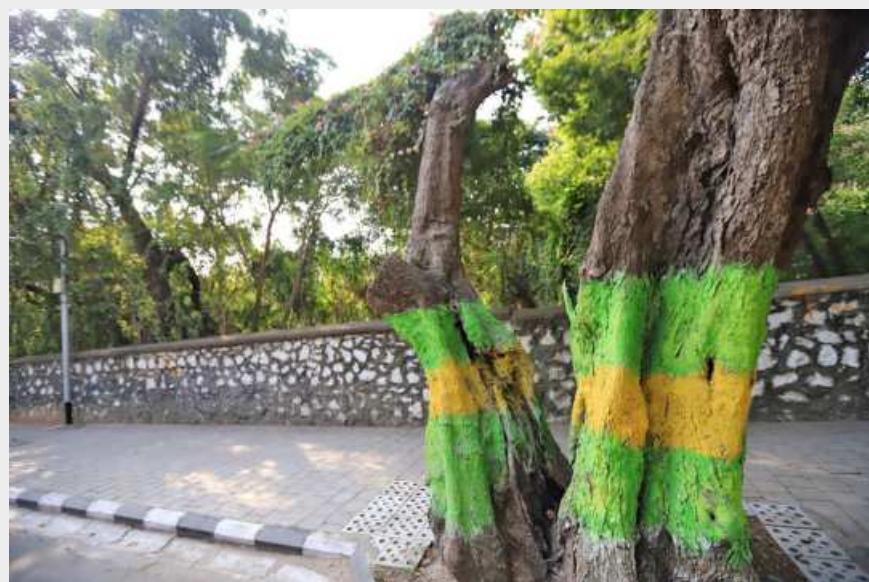
With traffic diversions, these neighbourhoods have been learning how to "walk" differently. For its part, Srinivasa Avenue learnt to follow a unidirectional course, letting vehicles into RK Mutt Road and not taking any from it. Apart from the one-way traffic movement, it has a temporary bus stop at its junction with R.K. Mutt Road.

And on the morning February 3, there was a time-bound change within this temporary arrangement. With CMWSSB laying a pipeline at the junction Srinivasa Avenue-RK Mutt Road junction, the bus stop was pronounced out of action for a short while.



CMWSSB work at Srinivasa Avenue-RK Mutt Road junction on February 3, 2024. PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

An optical illusion: this tree is in distress



A tamarind tree on Besant Avenue Road provides an optical illusion, helped by fluorescent-coloured paint. Struck by disease, the tree has suffered a splinter right in the middle. And by having the splintered part painted, the managers of the road (it is under Greater Chennai Corporation's watch) have inadvertently created the impression that there are two trees. The truth: just one tree out there on its own battling what is probably a gnawing disease in its core, as is evident from how its buttress looks. The gap between the tree and its splintered part wide enough for anyone to walk through. Leaving the tree as it is, without any arboriculture-based intervention is not good for the tree and those who walk and drive past. This thoroughfare doubles as a "Health Walk Tract" and draws many fitness enthusiasts during the weekend. The images were taken on February 3, 2024. Photos: Prince Frederick

A message on source segregation through dance

The Republic Day celebration at Mantri Synergy in Padur was led by the housekeeping team



Apart from customary events for Republic Day, which include the unfurling of the National flag and the march-past by the security staff, the short entertainment programme at Mantri Synergy in Padur was anchored by the housekeeping staff and pre-school students.

Members of the housekeeping team sang a Tamil song praising the tricolour and what the different colours of the flag symbolise. They also danced to a Tamil song from the movie "Nammavar" which

talks about keeping the surroundings clean. They enacted scenes of sweeping, whitewashing, collecting waste materials and how they need to be segregated into green waste, recyclable waste and other wastes, said a release. The pre-school students enacted a parade displaying information about "identity elements of India", which are intrinsic to our identity and heritage. They carried placards and pictures of the National song, Anthem, animal, game and flower. This was followed with a quiz for the children in the audience.

Air veterans organise second reunion in Chennai

Seventy Air Veteran Ground Training Instructors (GTI) had a three-day reunion meet in the city on January 30. This is the second such reunion meet of GTI professionals, a majority of them in their 70s. They are from various parts of India including Punjab, Delhi and Maharashtra. According to a press release, GTI tradesmen carry out instructional duties in the Air Force such as imparting foot drill, arms drill, weapon training, physical training, conducting various sports and games for different ranks. We play a key role in moulding the

young raw recruits to multi-talented combatant soldiers and continue to train them to keep them fit throughout their service, says the note shared by N.Narayanasamy, chief coordinator, GTIs Air Veterans Group. A dinner at a resort in Mahabalipuram and a trip to Puducherry were part of the itinerary. "In Chennai, Avadi and Tambaram are two places where we are stationed apart from Belgaum and Bengaluru," says Narayanasamy, adding that the group was formed in 2019. He says the previous reunion meet was held at Belgaum.



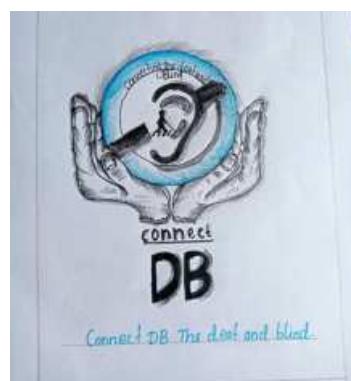
Student of St. Louis College for Deaf wins accolades at logo design event

Students from nine colleges took part in the inter-collegiate competitions organised by the Centre for Student Development (Entrepreneurship Development Cell and Institution's Innovation Council) of Chevalier T. Thomas Elizabeth College for Women.

S. Jayabharath from St. Louis College for the Deaf won a prize in the Logo Designing competition. According to a release, Jayabharath's design not only displayed



aesthetic brilliance but also conveyed profound messages through art. The judges were captivated by its ability to communicate a powerful narrative without words, added the release.



Inter-school basketball tourney remembers teachers

The Sri Rama Boys Inter School Basketball Rolling Trophy was held on January 27 and 28 at Hindu Higher Secondary School in Triplicane. The event was a collaborative effort of The Hindu Higher Secondary School Alumni Association, Victory Sports Foundation and Sixers Basketball Club. In honour of the school's physical education teacher, Kothandaraman, the alumni instituted the runner-up trophy. The third place trophy was dedicated to the memory of Sixers

Club stalwart Babu, said a release. During this two-day knockout basketball tournament, 12 teams from various areas of Chennai participated. Santhome Higher Secondary School won the trophy and Velammal International School, Ponneri got the runner-up position. Don Bosco Higher Secondary School in Peravalur came third. Participants were presented with other awards to inspire them and encourage further participation in the future, added the release.



Ma. Subramanian, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare, presiding over the meeting at Nanmangalam.
PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Gram sabha meetings dwell on bad roads

Fifteen village panchayats under St. Thomas Mount Panchayat Union heard grievances from public

Many issues were raised by residents at the grama sabha meetings held on January 26.

Fifteen village panchayats under St. Thomas Mount Panchayat Union and Chengalpattu District Collectorate conducted grama sabha meetings they include Thiruvancheri, Agaramthen, Medavakkam, Perumbakkam, Tirusulam, Moovarasampet, Madurambakkam, Ottiyambakkam, Sithalapakkam, Vengaivasal, Kovilambakkam, Cowl Bazaar, Pozhichalur, Mudichur and Nanmangalam.

At the meeting held in Mudichur, the residents requested the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority to lay an approach road as promised earlier.

The CMDA is constructing an omnibus terminus along the 400-Feet Outer Ring Road. "Behind the terminus, for an area of 70 to 80 acres, people practice agriculture. There is no proper approach road to access the Outer Ring Road.

The CMDA should lay a proper approach road," said P. Damodaran, a Mudichur resident who participated in the meeting.

A resolution was passed at the

meeting, and a petition was sent to Chengalpattu District Collectorate, Tambaram MLA S. R. Raja and Sriperumbudur MP T. R. Baalu.

At Nanmangalam Village Panchayat, Ma. Subramanian, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare, presided over the meeting. A. R. Rahul Nadh, former Collector, Chengalpattu District (S. Arunraj, Collector, Chengalpattu District), and R. Anamika Ramesh, Collector (Development), Chengalpattu District, took part.

Text: T.S. Atul Swaminathan

Why did Chennai get flooded?



A flooded region in Perumbakkam on December 5, 2023. PHOTO: R. RAVINDRAN

Kelu Chennai Kelu (Ask, Chennai Ask), an event organised by Arappor Iyakkam, will be held on February 4 from 9.30 a.m. onwards at Valluvar Kottam. People from across Chennai will be coming to share their grievances on how floods affected them and the other issues they continue to face in their neighbourhoods.

The meeting will also have people sharing their views about management of waterbodies and what they want the Government to do in this regard.

This is the third such meeting organised by the group. The first was held after the 2015 Chennai Floods and the second in 2019 following the water crisis in the city.

For details, call 72000 20099.

Second edition of Gita Mela today



From a previous edition

Egmore Samskrta School is conducting the second annual 'Gita Mela' on February 4 at Seth P.D. Hinduja Sindhi Model Senior Secondary School in Kellys. The organisers welcome all to this event.

Last year's 'Gita Mela', a carnival-style festival dedicated to the Bhagavad Gita drew more than 800 participants, ranging from small children to Sanskrit experts. The event succeeded in fostering a sense of community amongst Gita learners and enthusiasts, said a press release.

This time, the event will feature talent showcases by prizewinners, game booths with hands-on activities and talks by keynote speakers, the release added.

An Antakshari contest, modelled after the popular movie-song based game, has seen 50 teams registering for it within the first 48 hours of promotion. Twelve

teams will compete in the finals today.

The non-profit school, which teaches Sanskrit and Gita, was founded in the 1940s by professor P.A. Subrahmanyam Iyer and popularised by his son, the late P. S. Ramamurti.

On January 6, the school organised its 67th annual Gita competitions. More than 2500 participants from 17 countries, with participants ranging from 3 to 75 years of age recited memorised portions of the Bhagavad Gita to test months of hard work and learning. More than 60 volunteers and 50 judges also played their part to make the events seamless, said a release.

"Gita chanting, like any learning, must adapt to the times. At ESS, we strive to innovate and adapt to the learning styles of the current generation," says Meera in the press release. For more details, visit www.egmoresamskrtschool.com.

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Playground at St. Mary's Road fills a void

Ever since the playground at the RK Mutt Road-DGS Dinakaran Salai junction was shut down for Metro Rail work, this space has been on the ascendancy



Corporation playground at St. Mary's Road under floodlights on January 31, 2024. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Splitting the workweek in the middle, Wednesday has arrived presenting faint but heartening contours of the approaching weekend. At the Corporation Ground on St. Mary's Road though, the workweek is in suspended animation and the weekend well and truly enthroned in its place.

The dateline is January 31 which is now crackling in the crematori-

um of time. The hour hand is hovering around ten. The playground is doused in floodlights. And it is divided among two ball games: two cricket and two football matches are under way, differentiated by varying levels of intensity. A good number for the middle of the week, and certainly around that hour. The balls cross paths causing temporary disruption, but nobody is complaining. The ball returned to the rightful patch, the game resumes.

Patronage for this Corporation playground swelled ever since the one at the RK Mutt Road-DGS Dinakaran Salai junction was taken over by Metro Rail work.

Both playgrounds were cut out of the same cloth. Besides a shared pin code (Chennai – 600028), they came with floodlights. Anyone with an observant eye would recall the similarities. Both came with metal-wire guards mounted on the compound walls to keep the tennis balls thumped hard and high by

the bat from straying on to the roads. This playground slots into a pocket of land created by the interlocking arms of RA Puram First Main Road and St. Mary's Road as neatly as the tray with the wooden splints would into the cover of a matchbox.

It draws cricket and football enthusiasts from a wider geography. On the day of *The Hindu Downtown's* visit, a team composed of residents from a neighbourhood near Luz Corner was in action. A

trivia: This playground has a mascot – a mongrel 'Vellai', named after the white colour of his coat. However, he carries patches of ochre, having rolled in the patch on the western side of the playground, characterised by chemman (red sand). Vellai draws widespread love, but remains uncapped, waiting for his debut in cricket and football. He however does not let the disappointment get to him: he plays fetch with a reserve tennis ball brought by a cricket team..

A tour of the Gopalapuram playground at nightfall



The hour hand on the clock has just glanced past 10, and reportedly, around 30 minutes have elapsed since the floodlights were switched off. One pole with multiple lights is lit. Except for a handful of youngsters leaning on their motorcycles, likely back from work and catching up for their customary late-evening klatsch, the playground is deserted. And it is Friday night (February 2). In one corner, a giant metal board keeps the construction of a boxing arena from casual eyes. The evidence of the intense work behind the view-cutter is the mound of earth piled up parallel to the board. The patch leading to the work site bears a crisscross of tyre marks, left behind by vehicles delivering materials or transferring debris. One lone spot has a scatter of wooden boards readily associated with construction activity. The rest of the playground continues to serve habitues, but it is difficult not to draw it into comparisons with lunar surfaces. For those familiar with every sand particle in the playground, it is actually an improved version. Until a few months ago, earth excavated in stormwater drain work on Conran Smith Road was heaped up at the playground. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

By their choice of venue, these area sabha meetings drew many eyeballs

From street corners to neighbourhood parks, these meet-ups found a variety of spaces where people are likely to congregate in good numbers

LIFFY THOMAS

An area sabha meeting at a street corner with chairs rented from a shop down the road. Another at a park tucked inside a neighbourhood. Another area sabha meeting on the premises of a temple.

On the face of it, these meetings on January 25 would come across as having been given a step-motherly treatment. Is there no hall at all that could have been extended to them?

Looking under the surface, one notices that by the choice of the venues, these area sabha meetings drew more eyeballs than they would have otherwise, piquing the curiosity of passers-by.

Given that only a small budget is allocated for organising these meetings and ward offices is usually low, the choice of these venues was commendable.

Area sabhas in municipal corporations, municipal councils and town panchayats are held four times in a year, January 25, April 14, September 15 and December 10 having been inked in as the dates. The meeting scheduled for December 10 did not take place due to Cyclone Michaung.

T.V. Shemmozhi, councillor of Ward 104 in Zone VIII, says he conducted 10 meetings as a precursor to the final one on January 25. The venues included a primary school at T.V. Nagar, the basement of a multi-storey apartment at a slum in NV Nagar Colony, a children's play area at J Block Anna Nagar West, a park in W Block of Anna Nagar, inside Ellaiamman Temple in Nehru Nagar and at two street corners.

K. Kannan, representing Ward 138 in KK Nagar, chose the space belonging to Sapthagiri Residents Welfare Association in Jafferkhanpet. "We were looking for a space that could accommodate more than 200 people and this was centrally-located and with shade from trees. Thirteen resident associations participated in the meeting and we made sure one representative of each association got to speak at the meeting," says Kannan, who is hosting the area sabha meeting for the first time on such a scale.



An area sabha meeting at a street in Palavakkam; (below) at a park in Anna Nagar West J Block and at the office of a residents' association in Jafferkhanpet. PHOTOS: KARUNAKARAN M, VEDHAN M AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

At Ward 183 in Palavakkam, M.K. Stalin Street, a cul-de-sac, played host to the meeting. "We could have held the meeting at the ward office but chose a street for a venue as it would help raise awareness about such meetings. We had some people from the public asking when the meeting will be conducted in their street. This is one step towards going closer to the people and listening to their grievances," says Tamilarasi Somu.

An area outside a temple in Kotturpuram was the venue for a ward under Zone XIII.

At Ward 12 of Zone 1 in Thiruvottiyur, a vacant land used as a dumping ground was cleared to accommodate more than 200 chairs, a projector, lights, a mike and banners to welcome people. Previously, councillor V. Kaviganesan had used an open car parking area for the area sabha meeting and had a folk dance performance outside the venue to drum up excitement for the meet.

Time matters

G.V. Nagavalli, councillor of Ward 88 in Zone 7, has previously held meetings inside Millennium Park in

Anna Nagar and near a mosque. This time, they hosted it at the ward office.

"As an elected representative, I would prefer conducting such meetings where there is a good concentration of people and where word about the meeting will spread easily. But this time we chose the ward office as it was newly opened and we wanted to tell the public that such an office exists and they can come to the office with their grievances," says Nagavalli. For maximum participation, these meetings should be held after 5 p.m., she opines.

Residents say the emphasis should be on creating awareness about these meetings. "The Urbaser Sumeet staff play the music when they come to collect garbage. A week prior to the area meeting these vehicles could also announce the time and venue of these meetings," says Vidyasagar Jagadeesan, a resident of Pallikaranai. He suggests that minutes of the meetings and important resolutions passed during them must be shared with residents, which will motivate more people to participate in these meetings in the future.



One year on, pavement is still seat at bus stop on Adyar Club Gate Road



“Temporary” bus stops created on account of Metro Rail work are seldom “here-today, gone-tomorrow” facilities. In a majority of cases, these so-called “short-term facilities” are rather long-term enough to receive at least half the attention the permanent stops did receive when they were in harness. Reportedly, the temporary MTC bus stop (from 25G and 5C) on Adyar Club Gate Road in R.A. Puram that replaced the one on Chamiers Road in Nandanam is around a year old -- which is hardly suggestive of transience -- but commuters still made do with the pavement as a seat while waiting for their buses. The choice of these temporary bus stops have to be made, factoring in the space at disposal to install a bench or two. Often though, this provision is not made even when space is not a constraint. The image was taken on February 2, 2024.

PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

Neglect and care juxtaposed in Royapettah



A bus stop with a makeshift shelter and another without a shelter on Westcott Road in Royapettah, on January 31, 2024. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

On Westcott Road, two bus stops share a name (Royapettah Hospital Bus Stop) while serving those headed in opposite directions. Bundled off to their current location due to Metro Rail work months ago, they face each other separated by a bustling road – and if one may add, a whole world of caring or the lack of it.

The stop for buses headed towards the Peters Road-Royapettah High Road junction is a picture of politeness, offering commuters a seat and a roof, the overall structure bearing the stamp of frugal innovation.

A massive rectangular concrete planter at a Bharat Petroleum bunk

was co-opted into the creation of the makeshift shelter. A concrete slab made to order being placed on the planter, the “stone-hard sofa” was ready. Corrugated sheets attached to the poles form the “superstructure”.

Despite being rudimental, it has an air of caring, offering an old or ailing commuter the option of waiting at a bus stop with some dignity and a level of comfort. This bus stop’s namesake on the other side is usually the more crowded one. Meant for buses headed towards the Westcott Road-GP Road junction and beyond, it rudely keeps its commuters standing on the pavement.

Neglect stands out in bold relief when it is juxtaposed with caring – and on Westcott Road, it does.

Graduation Day at college



The 21st Graduation Day was held at KCG College of Technology. According to a press release, 958 graduates received their certificates from the Vice-Chancellor of Anna University, R Velraj. In his address, he advised the students to

keep honing their skills. Shri Anand Sundaresan, director, management board of AMMANN India Pvt. Ltd was the guest of honour. On the occasion, rank holders were honoured with medals and cash awards.

Saplings planted



In commemoration of World Wetlands Day, Green Velachery organised a tree plant-

ing drive near Perungudi MRTS railway station. Students from government schools took part. On

the occasion, students were explained about the importance of wetlands.

Volleyball tournament conducted for girls

In commemoration of National Girl Child Day, Guru Nanak Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Velachery, conducted Inter-School Volleyball Tournament for girls recently. Eighteen teams took part in it.

Lady Sivasamy Ayyar Girls Higher Secondary School won the tournament. Rani Meyyammai Higher Secondary School was the runner-up. The third and fourth prizes were secured by Avadi Government Higher Secondary School and Kannagi Nagar Government Higher Secondary School respec-



tively, says a release.

There was no participation fee and conveyance was provided for

government school students. Former national volleyball player G. Dinakaran awarded the winners.

Chinmaya Mission to celebrate founder's 108th Janmostav from February 6 to 11

Chinmaya Mission is celebrating the 108th Janmostav (birth anniversary) of its founder, Swami Chinmayananda, with a special Mahayagna in Chennai.

A press release from Chinmaya Mission notes the Mahayagna will be held from February 6 to 11 at the Chinmaya Heritage Centre at Harrington Road in Chetpet.

Swami Swaroopananda, the current global head of Chinmaya Mission, will speak on the Isavasya Upanishad under the title "ATOM - Absolute Truth 'OM'", the release adds.

The Mahayagna is open to all and admission is free. For details, call 9500142274/ 9940134875

Yoga classes begin today



Photo used for representational purpose only.

Satyana Yoga Centre is conducting a four-week Yoga course from February 4. Classes will be held at No 2, Thiru Veethi Amman Kovil Street in Velachery. Time: From 5.30 a.m. to 7 a.m. According to a press release, no fee will be charged. The centre follows the curriculum of Bihar School of Yoga. Meditation, breathing exercises (Pranayama) and recitation of Mantras are part of the programme. Besides, there will be sessions on food habits. For details, call 7871715152 / 9445051015

Humour club meet today

Besant Nagar Humour Club is organising its meet on February 4 at Sea view Apartments Owner's Welfare Association's hall on First Seaward Road in Thiruvanmiyur. Time: At 5 p.m. According to a press release, A.G. Ramesh, founder, Abhinavas Eye Care, Adyar, will be the chief guest. Participants can present jokes and prizes will be presented to the best ones, adds the release. For details, call 94447 55430

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Lurking danger

Power cables at the junction of Semmozhi Salai and Velachery Tambaran Main Road in Medavakkam on February 1.

PHOTOS: VELANKANNI RAJ B



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Culinary workshop



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Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on preparation of ready-to-cook food items on February 7. According to a press release, the session will focus on items made from millets. They include: health drinks, *idli*, *puttu*, *adai*, and *murukku*. The session will also deal with marketing of these products. A culinary workshop on chat items will be held on February 8. Preparations of *pav bhaji*, *pani poori*, *sev poori*, *bhel poori* and a few more will be taught. Both the sessions will be held at the centre's premises at Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate in Guindy. For details, call 044 - 2953 0048.

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