

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 » Paranur





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Tambaram's approach to speed breaker management: mark some, remove some

The exercise to improve safety around speed breakers by marking them has a secondary aspect to it. The civic body is going to remove some speed breakers that have been “weighed in the scales” and found wanting. From residents' point of view, care should be taken to ensure a helpful speed breaker is not dismantled by mistake



A freshly marked speed breaker in a school zone at Bharatha Matha Street; and two speed breakers being removed in two interior roads. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

PRINCE FREDERICK

In a school zone on Bharatha Matha Street in Selaiyur, two speed breakers appearing with quick succession are elaborately marked. Further down

the road, there is more evidence of an exercise to treat speed breakers to fresh dabs of paint. (On the day of *The Hindu Downtown's* visit (March 14), some speed breakers on the road were not marked. One assumed and hoped they would

be, eventually, as the exercise was yet to run its course). Evidence of exercise continues into Erikarai Street in Selaiyur. It also shows up on speed breakers at junctions where interior streets rush to meet main roads.

These are speed breakers whose place in the safety ecosystem have been cemented. The dust is yet to settle on the exercise and when it does, more speed breakers would have joined this “team”. There is a parallel script to the exercise: according to its dictates, certain speed breakers should not exist. And when the dust settles on the exercise, they would be wiped off the face of the earth.

It is indeed official. According to a Tambaram Municipal Corporation official, the value of persisting with some speed breakers would be reviewed.

The “unnecessary ones” would be removed. In fact, that parallel track is already busy with JCB machines trundling through roads, mostly interior roads, razing down those speed breakers that have been weighed in the scales and found wanting. From Kulasekaran Street in Sundaram Colony and Thirumazhisai Street in Ananda Nagar, there are images of machines going after such speed breakers.



According to the Tambaram Municipal Corporation official, speed breakers in school zone and hospital zone, around places of worship, roads with fast-moving traffic, junctions and main roads would automatically make it to the elite list (not in any particular order), and therefore given safety markings and nurtured.

This pattern is being followed across the zones of Tambaram Municipal Corporation.

On the face of it, removing some speed breakers, those deemed un-

helpful, seems too pat a solution to invite immediate and generous approval. There is the lingering question: will a baby be thrown along with the bath water? It is possible, and given this possibility, residents should be welcome to question a decision to remove a speed breaker.

After all, residents have a ring-side view of the performance of every speed breaker in their neighbourhood. And therefore, they should be allowed to have say in the matter, whenever they want to.

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PIED AVOCETS KEEP THEIR 'PROMISE' AND HOW!

With the Perumbakkam wetland losing water at the rate of knots, there was a sneaking suspicion it would dry up before the pied avocets could fly in. The recent days have proved the fear was unfounded **P4**



SWANK CANNOT COMPENSATE FOR SPARSELY POPULATED BOOK SHELVES

The two-month old knowledge and study centre in Selaiyur packs a punch in terms of aesthetics **P2**

'Escalator needed at Sanatorium FOB'



At Tambaram Sanatorium, an escalator is needed at the FOB connecting platforms 1 and 2 and the area along Station Border Road and the pedestrians underpass.

Commuters and pedestrians have a tough time ascending the flight of steps.

Other concerns

The ticket counter should be relocated as the train commuters from the FOB

have to go back to buy their tickets and use the subway. An additional ticket counter can also be established along the eastern region's FOB.

The existing subway should be reconstructed. Its ceilings and walls have developed cracks and are marked with holes through which rainwater seeps, even in the event of a light downpour.

The underpass lacks a pumping facility.

Southern Railway must

maintain the subway after the required repairs.

The railway should appoint a security guard at the FOB as tippers wander at the FOB area. Besides, trash bins, signage boards and openings along the railway track should be barricaded. Some schoolchildren cross and walk along the tracks to the platforms.

L. Sundararaman

Chitlapakkam

More Readers Write on Pg 3

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Swank cannot compensate for sparsely populated book shelves

The two-month-old knowledge and study centre in Selaiyur packs a punch in terms of aesthetics and facilities. But in terms of resources that can benefit students, it has some work to do



BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

In Selaiyur, the library that doubles as a knowledge and study centre carries swank. It has a plethora of features. Despite that, it also carries a void. And the void has to do with two critical areas: books and manpower.

There is well-appointed infrastructure. Here is a quick count of them. A raft of Internet browsing and reading nooks. Two smart classrooms with giant screens. Free access to Internet and 14 computers neatly kept on tap for visitors. Elegant washrooms. Two lively garden areas, each flanking one side of the building. Two separate parking zones, one for two-wheelers and the other for four-wheelers. Solar lighting to supplement regular power supply. Intelligent sensor-driven lighting in the gardens.

The aesthetics of the facility can be distracting, but not for long. The sparsely populated book shelves catch one's eye sooner than later, as also the fact that the facility is running on empty in terms of



The knowledge and study centre at Selaiyur. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

manpower.

As a knowledge and study centre (opened by Tambaram Municipal Corporation in the first week of January, 2024), it comes with a mandate to help students prepare for competitive exams. It had to be stocked up on such books, besides those of other stripes that would appeal to the general reader.

B. Mahalakshmi, a chartered-accountancy student, is at the centre with her father Balasubramanian and she has found her books, the ones packed with information

meant for competitive exams. For one Mahalakshmi who manages to get the books she has been looking for, there are nine others who don't. They scour the book shelves in vain.

A Tambaram Municipal Corporation official admits it. "Based on feedback from the students, we know we need more books of this kind."

Besides the books the centre had received and purchased through the government machinery, books donated by the general public

adorn the shelves.

"Students have given their books as hand-me-downs. We are in the process of buying and sourcing more books, but we would accept books that anyone would want to donate to the library," the official notes.

In recent days, reportedly, the centre has witnessed visits by the Chengalpattu collector and the Tambaram corporation commissioner.

Efforts to get the shelves filled up are being taken, the Corporation of

official notes. On the manpower front, he reveals that someone with training in library science has been hired and would assume charge soon. At present, a lone Corporation staff is managing the centre. The new hire would take the number to two, and would that be sufficient? The official responds: "Whenever necessary, we will send a Corporation staff or two to assist them in their work."

The centre is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on all days of the week except Friday.



Introduce feeder services from Alandur to Velachery



Chennai Metro Rail Limited should introduce feeder services from the Alandur metro rail station to the Velachery Mass Rapid Transit System station through the Southern Sector Inner Ring Road (SSIRR).

Bus connectivity is poor between Vanuvampet and Velachery regions. Route number 76 and small bus S83 cover a section of Ring Road, Adambakkam and Puzhuthivakkam, but commuters from the metro station have to rely on their own mode of transport to reach their destinations.

MTC can also explore the option of introducing buses from Guindy or Saidapet terminuses to Velachery MRTS station on the line of 18A, a cut service from Guindy to Kilambakkam bus terminus.

R. Vidhya
Nanganallur

Space below Tambaram Sanatorium flyover slips into neglect

Some years ago, the State Highways Department spruced up the area below the Tambaram Sanatorium flyover-cum-grade separator. Lighting, fountains, a raised garden and seating facilities were among the newly added features. Today, this section is in a state of neglect, littered with garbage and construction debris.

The fountain has stagnant rainwater, and plants do not seem to have been watered for months. Creepers have taken over the wall railings. The space has become an open toilet for some people, and a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The rainwater pipes below the carriageway are broken.

A small park for children or even a parking lot for two-wheelers can be established. If the latter facility is offered, more suburban commuters from East Tambaram, Chitlapakkam, Hasthinapuram, Sembakkam and Mahalakshmi Nagar would be drawn to the Tambaram Sanatorium railway station.

Though the State Highways Department has appointed a contractor, who has deputed a team to maintain the park, we are told they have not been paid their wages for months and therefore refuse to maintain the park. Similarly, a section of Chitlapakkam Second Main Road, Tambaram Sanatorium, towards the station, an area



Garden and other waste is yet to be cleared. Photo: Special Arrangement

below the flyover, is overrun with bushes and littered with poultry waste.

The State Highways Department should repair the lights, clean the fountains and appoint a

gardener-cum-security guard to prevent anti-social elements from misusing the facility.

P. Viswanathan, convenor, Chitlapakkam Residents Associations' Coordination Committee



A51 bus is back on Velachery Bypass Road

L. KANTHIMATHI

It is two weeks since Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) resumed operations of A51 on Velachery Bypass Road. According to MTC sources, as per the original route A51 bus was operated via Velachery Bypass Road but on account of the construction of the flyovers at Vijayanagar junction, this service had to be diverted via Old Velachery Main Road and as the flyovers are ready and opened to traffic, MTC restored the earlier route.

The service A51 connects Tambaram West and Broadway via Tambaram East, Selaiyur, Camp Road, Rajakilpakkam, Kamarajapuram, Sembakkam, Santhoshpuram, Vengaivasal junction, Medavakkam Koot Road, Medavakkam junction, Pallikaranai, Kaiveli, Velachery MRTS railway station, Vijayanagar bus terminus, Guindy Race Course, Chinnaimalai, Nandanam, Teynampet, LIC, and Central railway station.

“Some months ago, M70 (Thirvanmiyur - Koyambedu) resumed its operation via Velachery bypass road. Only a few



PHOTO: B VELANKANNI RAJ

services ply via bypass road and most of them are routed through Old Velachery Main Road. Because MTC services witness good patronage on Old Velachery Main Road as Dhandeeshwaram market and a col-

lege are located there. A bus-shelter needs to be set up at the Vijayanagar stop on Velachery bypass road where A51 halts. At present there is not even one signboard indicating the stop. Besides, a stop needs

to be created near Vedhantheeshwari Amman temple which is also located on the bypass road,” says S. Kumararaja, president, Federation of Velachery Residents Welfare Association.

A free health camp for parents at Women's Day celebration in school



Colours Indian School in Melakottaiyur near Tambaram observed Women's Day by organising a free health camp for parents and residents.

The health camp was held as part of the school's fifth annual Women's Day celebration.

A team of doctors and para-medical staff from Tambaram Medical Centre screened participants. Dr. Ria, Consultant, General Medicine and Dr. Krithika, Pulmonologist, spoke about cervical cancer including its possible signs.

Parents, staff and residents also donated blood at a blood donation camp held on the occasion.

Michael James, correspondent, Colours Indian School, and Sumitha Michael, director, inaugurated the camps. Neeta Nityanandam, principal, was also present.

Pied avocets keep their 'promise' and how!

With the Perumbakkam wetland losing water at the rate of knots, there was a sneaking suspicion it would dry up before the pied avocets could fly in. The recent days have proved the fear was unfounded



Pied avocets through the lens on March 10, 14 and 15 at the Perumbakkam wetland. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

PRINCE FREDERICK

There are attention-grabbing beaks and then some. Where two avian species are spitting images of each other and telling them apart is a challenge akin to identifying identical twins, the beak sometimes comes into play. The colour, the thickness and the base of the beak help settle the matter. In these cases, the beaks are markedly different, and not dramatically. This scenario often plays out in the identification of warblers during winter.

Sometimes, the beak is so unique and one does not have to study any other diagnostic feature – just a hazy outline of the beak can have the rest of the bird identified from a



mile away. The pied avocet is an apt illustration. Though its upturned beak is undoubtedly its most striking feature (downside-up and as thin as the lines in an engineering

drawing), the pied avocet sports a whole bunch of other features that enable it to be identified with one eye fully- and the other half-closed. This bird can be easily GISS-ed (GISS is identification by General Impression of Size and Shape). At the time of this article being published, the possibility of the pied avocet being GISS-ed at Perumbakkam was high.

For days now, a flock of pied avocets have been foraging for food at the Perumbakkam wetland, often in the company of black-winged stilts. Anyone who knows the species is "engineered" to show up at the wetland around this time of the year, its presence should now register from a mile away, with one-and-a-half eyes closed and absolutely no

assistance from a pair of binoculars to that half-open eye. Kumaresan Chandrabose has been expecting the species at the wetland, and on the days he visited it expecting to find a flock of them, he could see it from not one, but two miles away. Their numbers were good. Kumaresan's eBird records on March 11 and 13 under Pallikaranai marsh (as Perumbakkam wetland is an organic part of it) mention 24 and 28 pied avocets respectively.

In the early part of the winter-migratory season, Kumaresan was among those who reported a massive flock of pied avocets at the salt pans on Nemmeli-Thiruporur Road. His eBird record for under Nemmeli for September 29 read "450 pied avocets".

The pied avocet is a bird of coas-

tal wetlands, and it cannot but ink in Perumbakkam wetland in its winter itinerary. A fag-ender species, it puts in an appearance at the Perumbakkam wetland when the waters have dipped remarkably and there are enough shallows to settle on.

This time around, the dipping was swifter than before and there was a disconcerting thought that the process might not match the pied avocet's regular timing. That it might be too quick for the bird. The last few days have proved the thinking pleasantly erroneous. In fact, the pied avocets sojourn at the Perumbakkam wetland is turning out to quite a long one.

And then they show up at Perumbakkam wetland too, honouring an annual commitment.



These residents of Chennai have a bee in their bonnet



LIFFY THOMAS

It is story on a loop: a beehive is spotted on a balcony or bees are seen swarming near the play area and residents hit the panic button. In some cases, the hive is relocated or removed by calling a pest control agency.

Aware of the environmental importance of bees, a number of institutions and individuals create an environment for bees to thrive. Some invite apiarists to schools and communities to teach residents on ways to coexist with this tiny, fluffy insect. Following sensitisation, some residents have resisted the idea of remov-

ing bee hives from their community.

Last year, Rajendran Tamilarasan, an IT professional and local bee keeper who does rescues, received a call to remove a bee comb from the branch of a tree that had extended from one apartment community to the neighbouring apartment.

"Whenever I get calls from people, the first thing I do is persuade them to keep the hive as long as the bees are not aggressive," says Rajendran. But that is the most challenging part. "An apartment community in Kundrathur, Shantiniketan Westwoods agreed to this suggestion. They also invited me to conduct a session for the young residents,"



Rajendran Tamilarasan and his family are adept at relocating bee hives

says Rajendran whose wife and two sons are part of his team trained to remove bee hives.

The Medavakkam resident also receives an invitation from educational institutions. "A school in Guindy has invited me to take a session on bee keeping for Class XI students who have agriculture as their main subject," he says.

Last year, NMV Universi-

ty, an agriculture and technology institute located in Poonamallee, invested in four bee boxes at a farm in Aruppukottai, which is maintained periodically by the faculty and students. Under this initiative, the institute also conducts sessions for local villages on the importance of bee keeping.

Marimuthu K., a software professional turned natural farmer, has been invited to Anna Centenary Library and Maharishi Vidya Mandir in Tambaram, the latter had a green club and wanted children to understand the importance of having bees in the backyard.

Some years ago, Satyananda Yoga Centre initiated 'We Need Bees' campaign to increase the bee population by installing bee hives at campuses with a consid-

erable green cover and a good number of parks and farms.

Bee-human conflict

Apiculture experts note bees do not sting unless they are disturbed by external agents, human beings or birds. They say the only way for people to conquer the fear of bees is by understanding the behaviour of bees and knowing their pattern.

"We need to understand that humans have taken over their habitat and that is why we see rock bee or apis dorsata constructing homes at high-rise buildings," says M.R. Srinivasan, professor of entomology, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University in Coimbatore.

He says bees are important in the ecosystem not only for cross pollination but also promoting biodiversity. "But if you find a comb constructed near a window to be disturbing, make sure it is removed in a scientific way by a trained

person without the use of harmful chemicals," says the professor.

Smoking chases away the bees for a while and the tendency to sting is also less but this exercise should be carried out using the right mix of ingredients, he says.

As bees are migratory, the professor says, when a hive is removed, they will nest in some other area.

Marimuthu says when a comb is disturbed, the bees are most aggressive for 20-30 minutes. "Stay indoors until they calm down," he suggest.

TNAU conducts a training programme in bee keeping on the sixth of every month. "One aspect that is covered is how to handle bees without disturbing them," says the professor.

Spring is the busiest season for beekeepers. "It is the time when bees multiply and swarm out to increase their colonies. Make sure to allow the bees to recolonise," the professor adds.



Catch the buzz about urban beekeeping

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

If your terrace garden is managing a high yield, it is likely honeybees are in the picture somewhere in the neighbourhood. They might be helping in pollination. Honeybees help increase yield even if one is not rearing them in one's backyard, say urban farmers.

Thirty-six-year-old S. Venkatesan, who has a farm at Menambedu in Ambattur, points out that as per his calculation the effect of a bee box is felt within a radius of

two kilometres.

Venkatesan attended a workshop conducted by Tamil Nadu Agriculture University before venturing into this field commercially. He has five beehive boxes at his garden and will vouch that the yield of his mango and sapotta trees has increased.

"The size and yield of fruits has multiplied ever since the bee boxes were set up in my garden," says Venkatesan, who runs VIK Organic Farm.

After he gained a diploma in agriculture, 26-year-

old A. Ajith Kumar does bee farming as a profession. He has a small setup with 15 bee boxes at his garden in Mangadu and close to one hundred at his farm in his village.

Both of them say bee keeping is profitable and one need not have a big space to rear them. One can start with one to three boxes and have the joy of harvesting fresh honey from one's backyard.

"Once in 10 days, these boxes need maintenance and one can do it on their own provided they are trained. We connect families to people who will help extract the honey and for other work," says Ajith, who runs Anbu Honey Bee.

With regard to maintenance, Venkatesan says di-

rect sunlight should not enter the box. The wooden boxes also need to be protected from rain and sun. "One important condition to set up a bee box is there should be sufficient plants/trees within a 2.5 km radius," says Venkatesan. He sells more than 25 boxes a month and earns a monthly income of ₹32,000.

The fear of a sting is one reason people shy away from setting up a bee box, which bee keepers say will not be an issue if one does not disturb the hive.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Horticulture Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Tamil Nadu Agriculture University are some institutions that regularly conduct training programmes in bee keeping.



S. Venkatesan flaunts his bee hive box

Help is at hand

* Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services undertakes removal of bee hives based on request. A letter seeking removal of the hive must be sent to the respective district official of the area. Check details on <https://www.tnfrs.tn.gov.in/>
* For an awareness session contact beekeeper Rajendran at 9962591218

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Pallavaram Periya Eri Eco Park opened to public

Pallavaram Periya Eri Eco Park has now been opened to the public. Exnora International foundation (EIF) with the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding of ₹50 lakhs from PayPal completed the Eco Park work and lake rejuvenation project, said a release.

The park has children's play equipment, walkers path and a gym.

The park was opened to public by A.R. Ragul Nadh, Director of Environment and climate change and Alagu Meena, Tambaram Corporation Commissioner.

New store for gadgets at mall

A new showroom called Naya Gadget has been opened at Express Avenue mall recently. According to a press release, the store spread over 2600 sq ft has a wide range of gadgets of various brands. The products include Vertu mobile phones, Sennheiser headphones, Bowers & Wilkins speakers, Devialet bowers, and many



more.

"With an experience of over 30 years in retail business, the store brings the best goods under one roof," says Padam, the promoter

Helping slow learners excel at studies

Samruthaa Vidyashram, a school in Mylapore, focuses on children with learning difficulties. According to a press release, the school admits dropouts, slow learners

and children with dyslexia. "When at ease, a child's full potential is unleashed. Hence, students are made to feel comfortable and taught in a gentle manner. Here we give personalised at-

tention. Also, we have psychologists. Further, students are prepared for board examination following the blueprint," says Vijayalakshmi who runs the school.

The school can be reached at 98846 09696 / 98942 43564.

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