

TAMBARAM

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An uncomfortable wait

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Bus stops on Pammal Main Road, Pallavaram-Pammal, Kamarajar Salai, Anakaputhur are illustrative of a widespread bane across the southern sections of the city – the bus stops being restricted in dimensions or lacking a roof. Some are so unkempt that commuters prefer standing in the open to using the shelter.

At Pallavaram 'Aatuthotti' stop on the lane towards Pammal, commuters get to stand under a small roof of a small shelter. On the opposite side, there is no shelter or seats.

G. Rajaram Ganeshan, a commuter, says, "There is no shelter at Muthamizh Nagar, Pammal, on the lane towards Pallavaram and Pozhichalur, and there is no signage board, so commuters are confused about where the buses will stop."

The stop at Krishna Nagar in Pammal has no seating facility. So commuters prefer to sit on the staircases leading to establishments.

At Pammal on Teacher Samuel Street and Dr. Ambedkar Salai, commuters take shelter under trees or the sun shades of commercial establishments. The same situation prevails at S6 Shankar Nagar Police Station Booth and Anna Nagar bus stops in Pammal and Anakaputhur: a neem tree serves as a roof.

On Kamarajar Salai in Anakaputhur, the Balaji Nagar haltover is



PALLAVARAM

often seen "entertaining" vehicles. Dr. Ambedkar statue bus stop has shelter, but its premises need to be cleaned and the shelter is torn.

Tree logs are used as seating facilities at Kalaivanar Street haltover. The premise is littered with trash and construction debris.

The Amman Kovil bus stop (on the lane towards Pammal) has a shelter, but lacks seating facilities. Commuters take shelter from the sun using the wall of a building nearby.

At Moogambikai Nagar haltover, there is no shelter.

PAMMAL



ANAKAPUTHUR



ANAKAPUTHUR



What residents want for these two lakes



Both Peerankaranai Eri and Sitheri lake need to be divested of water hyacinth; and the latter needs more work

The Federation of Peerankaranai Residents' Welfare Associations has submitted a petition to the Tambaram City Municipal Corporation seeking the revival of Peerankaranai Eri, near New Perungalathur bus stop along GST Road. The lake is overrun with water hyacinth, and pockmarked with seemai karuvellam. Mahendra Boopathy, president of the Federation notes that last November and December, the civic body "cleared the water hyacinth and strengthened the bunds." With sewage being discharged into the lake with impunity, water hyacinth has returned. A Tambaram Corporation official has said a letter has been submitted to the State government seeking funds to arrest discharge of sewage into Peerankaranai Eri and also carry out other works.

Sitheri lake

Restoration of Sitheri at Kamarajar Salai in Old Perungalathur is under way, but residents are sceptical about its outcome. They have urged the Water Resources Department to ensure sewage discharge into the water body is checked, the sluice gates reconstructed, and inlet and outlet points cleaned.

Text by T.S. Atul Swaminathan



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SCAN TO REGISTER

'Install a traffic signal post in Selaiyur'



Tambaram Police Commissionerate's traffic wing personnel should study and find solutions to the traffic congestion near Dr. Ambedkar Nagar in Selaiyur.

This intersection witnesses the movement of both light and heavy vehicles, leading to chaos, traffic snarls and the risk of acci-

dents. The situation worsens during rush hour.

Installing a traffic signal post will help regulate traffic flows, and providing zebra lines will ensure safe pedestrian movements.

(A. Abiram Sai is a resident of Thiruvanchery)

'Ban production of single-use plastics'

The Government of Tamil Nadu banned single-use plastics five years ago. However, they are still being used in almost all shops and street vending shops in Perumbakkam.

If the ban does not bring the desired result, the State Government can consider banning the production.

Plastic waste clogs waterways and their accumulation contaminates soil and water.

N. K. Raja is a resident of Perumbakkam



Agaramthen Lake inlet channel is clogged with waste and plastics.
PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Thiruneermalai Road riddled with potholes

The 58th annual festival of St. Anthony's Shrine in the Anakaputhur region concludes on June 16. A steady stream of devotees will visit the chapel even after the festival.

The shrine is located on Thiruneermalai High Road, but the stretch from Pammal to Anakaputhur in Kamarajapuram is uneven and pockmarked with potholes.

The section was dug up for an underground drainage system, and the areas where work was carried out have not been closed and patched up properly.

Motorcyclists and auto drivers find it challenging to negotiate the section, and cab operators refuse to accept rides citing the section's condition. It is safe to avoid this road at night.

Many people use the road to



Thiruneermalai Main Road in Pammal. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

go to Pammal, Anakaputhur, Thiruneermalai and Thirumudivakkam.

I request that Tambaram City Municipal Corporation to

spread redmix sand and level the surface for smooth travel on the road.

S. Edward is a resident of Anakaputhur

'Remove this tree'

At Ramachandran Street in Balaji Avenue, Chitlapakkam, where I reside, a tree planted by the Chitlapakkam Panchayat Union more than two decades ago is proving to be source of danger for us and road users.

Its roots have penetrated into the compound wall and ramp of our house.

I have repaired the ramp (outside the house) three times so far, but even now there are many cracks.

As this tree is weak, its branches frequently fall on the road, even during winds of minor intensity. This threatens road users, as nobody can predict when the branches will break and fall.

Children play on the street in the evening without being aware of the danger posed by this tree. In the rainy season and during cyclones, the fear that this tree will



The tree on Ramachandran Street in Balaji Avenue, Chitlapakkam.

be uprooted is strong.

I have represented this matter to the Tambaram City Municipal

Corporation Commissioner.

(P. Thiagarajan is a resident of Chitlapakkam)

You can be our volunteer-writer

Dear readers, you can be our volunteer-writer by writing to us about issues and events in your neighbourhood.

You should send the write-ups to downtownfeedback@thehindu.co.in.

Letters must carry the contact number.

'Medavakkam Main Road needs repairs'



▼ Motorists taking Medavakkam Main Road are waiting for Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) to start work on relaying the battered stretches of the road between Kovilambakkam and Vellakkal. R. Raghavendar, a motorist who drives to his workplace in Sholinganallur, says, "When CMRL takes up relaying work, it should scrap off the surface and lay the battered areas. As this is not being done, the road becomes elevated. Even the U-turn areas between pillars are battered and motorcyclists could suffer a fall."



Shanthi set foot in Ceebros Boulevard at Thoraipakkam as a flower seller and ended up putting down unshakeable roots as a vendor of vegetables and fruits. And she has blended in, residents accepting her as their own, rallying around her in her times of trouble and celebrating her personal victories

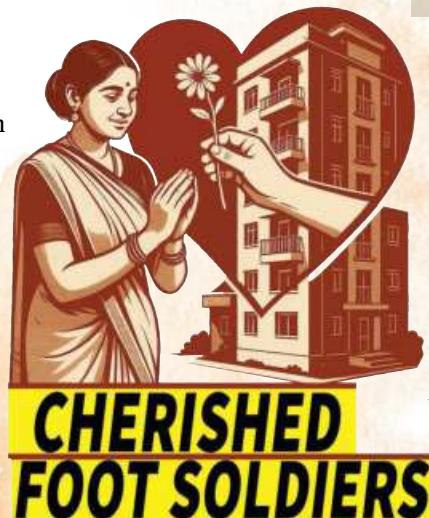
Blooming where she is planted

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

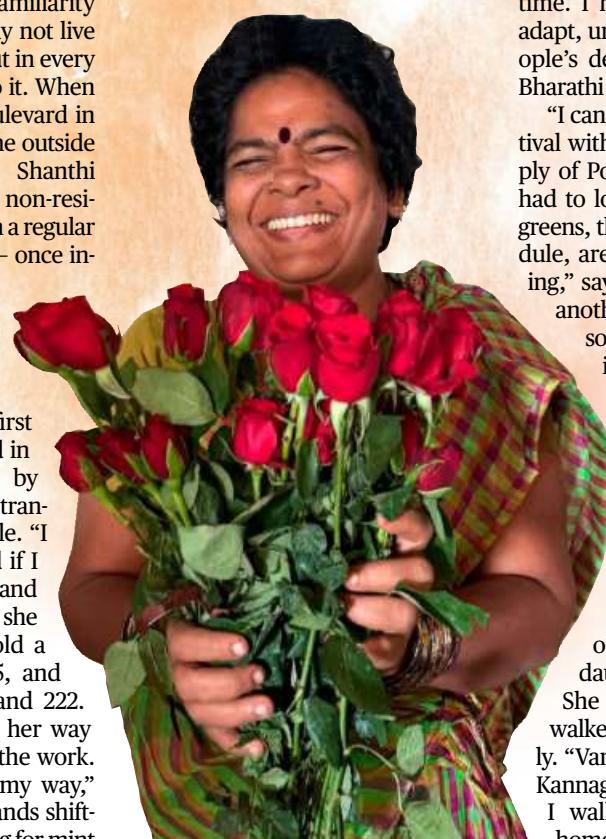
Gated communities operate according to an entrenched pattern. Intrinsic to this pattern are faces that show up at the gates every morning – a flower seller, a vegetable vendor and anyone carting in an essential service. Over time, these local peripatetic traders become clued in, and with an accuracy equalling social-media algorithms, tailor their services to meet individual preferences, carrying the right wares before ringing a calling bell. Residents rely on them.

And the odd one manages a deeper connection. The transaction extends to squeeze in small talk. There is mutual sharing of personal updates. Somewhere between transactions and conversations, a comfortable familiarity builds. These traders may not live inside the community, but in every practical sense, belong to it. When the gates of Ceebros Boulevard in Thoraipakkam open to the outside world every morning, Shanthi walks in as an insider, a non-resident insider. She has been a regular at these gates since 2011 – once inside, she does not have to explain her presence. The residents know. Shanthi has blended in.

The memory of her first day at Ceebros Boulevard in Thoraipakkam, marked by an encouraging string of transactions, remains indelible. "I asked the security guard if I could go in to sell flowers and was directed to Flat 201," she recalls. She knocked, sold a strand of flowers for ₹5, and moved on to Flats 212 and 222. Household chores came her way and she was grateful for the work. "I took whatever came my way," she says. Soon, the demands shifted. Residents began asking for mint



Some are small-time vendors. Some do odd jobs for a living. But they have found an indispensable place in the communities they serve



leaves, coriander, bananas and so on – and Shanthi had a stab at delivering grocery items on demand, still latching on to her other profiles as flower seller and an occasional helper in households. And she would soon ease into being the community's unofficial but only vendor of vegetables, greens, fruits and flowers.

Five years into her Ceebros journey, she added festival essentials to her offerings – sugarcane, turmeric and Pongal pots. "Four days in advance," she notes proudly. For residents, her arrival brought relief – they no longer had to step out or search for what they needed during festive times. Shanthi had them covered.

"For years, Shanthi has been the go-to delivery app for greens and flowers – always reliable and on time. I have personally seen her adapt, understand and cater to people's demands seamlessly," says Bharathi Hariharan, a resident.

"I cannot think of any major festival without Shanthi's timely supply of Pooja items – I have never had to look beyond Ceebros. Her greens, though not on a fixed schedule, are essential to our well-being," says Rajlakshmi Sashikanth, another resident. "And her personal touch – always checking on our well-being – makes her feel like family." When she got started on this journey, Shanthi was a resident of Thiruverkadu. Today, she resides in Kannagi Nagar (a short jog away from Ceebros Boulevard) with her 70-year-old mother and two daughters, aged 22 and 20. She herself is 50 – and has walked a long road, quite literally. "Van drivers do not come into Kannagi Nagar," she explains. "So I walked. Sometimes I came home only at midnight." Carry-



ing huge flower bags filled to the brim, navigating late-night roads, and still appearing the next morning – that was her everyday life.

A long day

Her day begins before sunrise. At 2 a.m., she leaves for Koyambedu market – a three-stop haul for flowers, fruits, greens and vegetables. She hires a mini-truck service along with ten other women (each of them paying ₹300 and carrying their trays of goods). By 7:30 a.m., she is stationed at the Ceebros gates. What follows is a frenetic dance of deliveries – mint leaves, vegetables, fruits and flowers – often done door-to-door. She returns in the evening for another round of commerce, with a new stock of fresh vegetables. Market days give her no breathing space. She boards the 4 a.m. bus to Parrys Corner (for its flower market) and returns just in time for the morning pooja. "At first, I did not even have a pushcart," she shares. "I carried everything in hand." Squirreling away earnings over time, she bought one.

Support from family

Her mother, though elderly, is a pillar of support. "When I am tired, she takes over the vegetable sales."

Another day in office: Shanthi going about her work at the gated community.

The whole family, in fact, works within Ceebros Boulevard. Her mother helps from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., then joins her. During festivals, her daughters lend a hand. Both are now married, but the bond with Ceebros continues.

On a typical day, Shanthi sells flowers to five or six households and vegetables to anywhere between 20 and 30 homes. After paying for the hire of the mini-truck and assistance, she takes home around ₹500. "I never found selling here difficult," she says. "Ceebros has always been good to me."

Shanthi operates without a name board or price tags. If someone wants something specific, they show her a photo – she brings it the next day. From roses and jasmines to vase flowers, she remembers each household's preference. "Sometimes I give flowers for free if someone buys vegetables," she says with a shrug. In fact, she has never sold flowers outside Ceebros. "This is enough," she says simply. "Everything I need is here."

Over the years, her everyday vocabulary has broadened and it is multi-lingual. "Today, tomorrow, I will bring in the evening," she says in English, and chuckles. "When someone speaks to me in Tamil, I reply in English – they all laugh." She has even picked up a few Hindi words such as "palak." While everything seems hunky-dory, there are regrets hidden away from public view by Shanthi's natural cheerfulness. One major regret – time not spent with her daughters. "I was not there much when they were small," she says. "I left early and came back late." But Ceebros, she believes, helped raise them. "They helped with food. With weddings."

When her son passed away, it was the residents who rallied around her. They pooled in money to cover funeral expenses. Later, when she was struggling to arrange her daughter's wedding, the community stepped in. "They told me to be strong. Some gave money. Some gave furniture. They made sure the wedding happened." The community's acceptance of Shanthi seems total, as evidenced by the number of residents she strikes up a conversation with on a typical day. "The moment I enter the main gate, until I leave – everyone talks to me," she says, her face lighting up. Some of those conversations now come from across the seas, from residents who have moved out of the community but stay connected.

For someone who once stepped into this community gingerly, and asked timidly if she could sell a few flowers, Shanthi now walks with ease and purpose – not just as a vendor, but as someone who belongs.



LIFFY THOMAS

In the last seven months as an autorickshaw driver, Pavithra Prakash has learnt some hard lessons about driving an electric vehicle. "Once charged, my auto can run for 160 km and I make it a point not to cross 110 km," says the 29-year-old mother, happy about the financial independence ushered in by her new job. She has "range anxiety" whenever the three-wheeler crosses that mark as it is usually difficult to find an EV charging station nearby. Even if she were to charge at a public charging point, it would require her to wait for a few hours.

"Once I was left with charge for just 30 km and the vehicle started making alarming sounds, I panicked as my house is located near Red Hills and I just wanted the charge to be sufficient for me to reach home," says the autorickshaw driver who charges the vehicle at her home.

Pavithra's husband, who has an auto running on compressed natural gas, encouraged her to opt for an electric vehicle for the ease it would offer the young driver who learnt driving skills from Association of Non-Traditional Employment of Women (ANEW) in Anna Nagar.

"On days when I get many rides I am forced to wind up by 2 p.m. as the vehicle does not have charge. I sometimes refuse long-distance trips fearing the situation that would manifest if I run out of charge," says Pavithra.

Anxious if the battery will drain out, autorickshaw driver R. Shanthalakshmi only takes short trips in and around Palavakkam where she resides. "When I purchased the vehicle from a showroom in Tambaram, they told me there are public charging stations I could use, but in the five months since I have been driving

Driving it 'safe'

With public charging infrastructure in Chennai failing to keep pace with manufacture and sale of electric autorickshaws, drivers are plagued by 'range anxiety' and forced to settle for lower daily earnings. Months into driving e-autos, two women auto drivers share their angst

this vehicle I have not discovered even one, so I charge the vehicle every night at home," says Shanthalakshmi, who is content earning ₹1000 to ₹1500 a day ferrying people. Her income as an auto-driver is supplemented by earnings from petty shops she runs near her home.

Showrooms retailing three-wheelers say the demand for electric vehicles is noticeably greater than what it was last year. In March this year, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin handed over 50 electric autos to women members of urban self-help groups under the Environment and Climate Change Department to empower them to be financially independent while promoting sustainable mobility.

"Unlike public charging stations for two-and-four-wheelers, there is no such facility for autorickshaws. Some showrooms selling the vehicles make provision for charging outside their store," says R. Ashwanth, manager, Rag Motors. He says there are two

Pavithra Prakash and (below) R. Shanthalakshmi.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND PRINCE FREDERICK



A crucial factor

A report by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) on "Regulatory mechanism for three-wheelers" says that apart from regulations, charging infrastructure serves as a crucial factor impeding the growth of electric three-wheelers.

The project "Switching to a sustainable auto-rickshaw system" was a pilot study carried out to gauge the service of electric autos feeder (for first- and last-mile connectivity) in Chennai in collaboration with Chennai Metro Rail Ltd (CMRL) from January 2019. One of the main objectives of the project was to promote a policy and regulatory framework in cities for sustainable mobility.

Though electric autos can have home-based charging infrastructure, dedicated public charging infrastructure needs to be developed to support charging needs of e-autorickshaw drivers, says the report.

Provision of charging points should also be made available at parking spots in places such as office campuses, malls and marketplaces. Pilot initiatives with public transport authorities to promote first- and last-mile connectivity can lead to growth of charging infrastructure.

variants in three-wheelers: one has 125 - 150 km range and the other 200-250 km, a majority go in for the latter and are happy as their everyday travel is usually covered by that range.

Those in the industry say public charging infrastructure should keep pace with electric vehicle sales. Giving subsidy to vendors will also encourage establishment of more facilities.

No standardisation

Ragavendra Ravichandran, co-founder and chief operating officer, Plugzsmart, agrees the charging infrastructure for three-wheelers is yet to pick up. The chargers currently used by electric autos have not been standardised.

"For electric four-wheelers, there is broad standardisation among major brands when it comes to charging interfaces. AC chargers typically use the Type 2

connector, and DC fast chargers commonly use the CCS2 (Combined Charging System) connector. This allows vehicle owners to access public charging infrastructure with a standardised plug wherever they go. However, this level of standardization does not yet exist for electric three-wheelers," says Ragavendra.

Electric autos used for transporting goods go to warehouses for charging; and those used for ferrying people are dependent on public charging stations or homes, he says.

Is it okay to charge an electric vehicle at home? Yes, but it may not be as fast as a public infrastructure point. Many prefer to charge vehicles at home for the convenience it brings. A Tangedo official says so far there is no restriction on charging electric vehicles at home for domestic use, but if a petty shop is offering it at a fee to users then they must have a separate meter with commercial tariff.

Assistance for deserving students

Non-profits offering scholarships seek applications for the coming academic year



Bharti Airtel Scholarship Programme, an initiative by Bharti Airtel Foundation launched in 2024, supports deserving students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, with a focus on girl students, to become future technology leaders. The scholarship programme has been designed for deserving students enrolled in technology-based engineering undergraduate and five-year integrated courses in the top 50 NIRF-ranked (Engineering) universities/institutes as per the latest NIRF ranking. It covers 100% annual fees, including meal and accommodation charges.

Scholarship applications for the year 2025-26 are open.
For details, visit
<https://bhartifoundation.org/bharti-airtel-scholarship/>

Kodambakkam-based Anandham Youth Foundation supports the higher education of underprivileged rural students. A five-step filtration process is followed before selecting deserving students. The selection criteria also includes students with the best marks, and from a poor economic background; orphaned students, those from single-parent households, those who study in Government or Government-aided schools and those who are first generation graduates in their family.

For details, visit
<https://www.anandham.org/>

Dream India E&C Trust is inviting applications from students across Tamil Nadu who completed class X and XII for educational scholarships under the project "Education For All". Students from government schools, rural government schools, private schools with single parent or guardians would be given priority.

Based on the student's performance, the scholarship would be provided for each year of their academic course. Students selected for scholarship would be guided by a mentor. The applications would be analysed by the trustees of Dream India and processed within a time frame of three to four weeks.

Scholarship for higher studies would be in the range of ₹15,000 to ₹25,000.

For details and eligibility criteria visit
www.dreamindia.org/scholarship
WhatsApp 99406 75570



Students on the first day of the new academic year at Presidency Girls Higher Secondary School in Egmore.
PHOTO. RAGU R

Maatram Foundation offers free higher education to deserving students from an economically deprived background. The non-profit has partnered with various educational institutions and supports students with their tuition fees, transportation charges and other expenses. Students who have scored more than 85% but cannot afford to buy even an application form are identified and given quality education, says a note on the website. Students are shortlisted after through scrutiny which includes a visit to their neighbourhood and an in-person interview.

The link to the scholarship application form for 2025 is available on <https://maatramfoundation.com/>

The Foundation does not collect any application fee. In case one receives any such calls, please report it to the helpline number 9551014389.

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Drawing classes in West Tambaram, Selaiyur

SUBRA Institute of Fine Art offers "Grades and Diploma Drawing Teacher Training Courses", both online and offline.

The institute also offers classes in abacus, chess, phonics, and vedic studies. With branches in Chromepet (MIT and Jamin Rayapettah), Selaiyur and West Tambaram, the institute also invites applications for new franchise partnerships to expand its presence.

For details, call 99625 00104.



Handloom exhibition in Chromepet

Jaipur Textiles is conducting an exhibition of handlooms and handicrafts. At Kala Silk Expo, one can shop for Orissa saris, Jaipur churidars, Rajasthan bed-sheets, door curtains, readymade shirts, leather bags, belts, footwear, purses and cotton and silk sarees.

The exhibition is on till June 24 at Sri Ram Ganesh Mahal, Dr Rajendra Prasad Road, Raghava Nagar (Hasthinapuram—Chromepet), from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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Scholarship programme turns 15

Empowering girl students is the main focus of Smt Rajeswari Radhakrishnan Charitable Trust



During the presentation function.

The 15th educational sponsorship programme of Smt Rajeswari Radhakrishnan Charitable Trust, a registered public charitable trust, was held on June 8 at St. Antony's Higher Secondary School in Velachery. The Trust has been sponsoring fees for education of the poor and deserving meritorious college students, specially girls, children of the destitute and widows from rural areas throughout Tamil Nadu for the last 14 years.

In the academic year 2025-2026, the Trust has allocated ₹75

lakh towards educational sponsorship, of which ₹40 lakh has been distributed so far and the balance will be distributed during the second half of the year, said a press release. Eligible students who score over 85 per cent in class 12 (in core subjects) and 75 per cent in college semester exams are considered.

During the function, 82 students, mostly girl students from poor economic background, residing in and around Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts were selected and

scholarship given. Students of other districts will get their sponsorships in the Trust's programme next week, the release added.

Seven students, studying in third year, who were the beneficiaries of our Trust, joined IT companies through campus interview. Managing trustee M. Radhakrishnan thanked the sponsors and well-wishers, and emphasised the need for education of the girl child. Since 2010, the Trust has also supported with feeding the poor, giving medical needs and help during natural calamities.

Changes in the pattern of train services

To prioritize commuters safety and train operations, a line and signal block has been permitted in the Chennai Central - Gudur section between Kavaripettai and Gummidi poondi railway stations on June 16 and 19 from 11.20 a.m. to 15.20 p.m., as part of ongoing engineering work.

Consequently, the following are the EMU / MEMU train service pattern changes.

Full cancellation of EMU / MEMU train services

Train No: 42601, Chennai Beach - Gummidi poondi EMU at 09.40 a.m., 42413, Moore Market Complex - Sullurpetta EMU at 10.15 a.m., 66031, Moore Market Complex - Sullurpetta MEMU at 13.05 p.m., and 66007, Moore Market Complex - Avadi MEMU at 23.40 p.m..

Partial cancellation of EMU train services

Train No: 42501, Chengalpattu - Gummidi poondi EMU at 09.55 a.m., and 42522, Gummidi poondi - Tambaram EMU at 3 p.m. are partially cancelled between Gummidi poondi and Chennai Beach.

For complete details, log on to <https://x.com/DrmChennai>

A sustainability initiative by SRM Institute

SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) has set a record by generating lakhs of kilowatt-hours of clean energy.

As part of its corporate social responsibility, SRMIST had installed a 100 kW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Plant at the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) complex.

Commissioned in February 2015, the plant has generated 9,20,380 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of clean energy over the past 10 years,

says a press release.

The release stated that the project helps TTD reduce electricity expenditure and supports the temple's broader efforts to embrace eco-friendly practices.

The release added that this solar initiative is part of SRMIST's broader sustainability agenda, which includes campus-wide renewable energy deployment, environmental awareness campaigns and green infrastructure development.

Free yoga session on June 21

Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre, Kottivakkam (Off East Coast Road), conducts a free yoga session on June 21 for all age groups.

Besides, an open class for intermediate students will also be held, followed by a free trial class for beginners from 7.30 a.m. to 8.30 a.m..

Five points of yoga (theory) and an open class for intermediate students will be held from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Gentle yoga for senior citizens will be held in the evening between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m..

For details, contact (WhatsApp) 9176106790.



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