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'Passageway under rail overbridge: GCC to firm up plans by mid-August'

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Not long ago, Commissioner of Greater Chennai Corporation J. Kumaragurubaran with a posse of officials from GCC's Bridges Division and Egmore MLA I. Paranthamen were studying the precincts of a brick-and-mortar stairway that is linked to Dr. Guruswami road overbridge. They were considering a possibility, which on fruition would make the stairway redundant for pedestrians seeking to get to the Chetpet railway station, or to neighbourhoods on the other side.

This visit gave Chetpet residents a glimmer of hope, as it was a sign that a decades-long request of theirs could be met. The request is a passageway under the ROB. It would spare residents on the Harrington road and McNichols Road side, particularly students of the half a dozen schools there, the need to cross Dr. Guruswami bridge to reach the Chetpet railway station.

Kripa Sagar Janardhanan, one of the residents avidly pursuing this matter, reported that the dusty, macadam approach road to the stairway had been cleaned, and small blue metal stones laid on it. Bitumen-topping is said to be round the corner. Hope deepened, and he noted that communication from the Egmore MLA's office had it that GCC's Bridges Division would have a firm plan in hand by mid-August.

When *The Hindu Downtown* contacted him, Egmore MLA I. Paranthamen revealed that in the last week of July, he heard from



The approach road to the stairway of Dr. Guruswami Road overbridge being readied for bitumen-topping.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

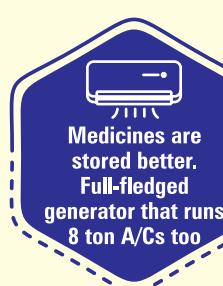
GCC's Bridges Division. According to the MLA, GCC officials from the Bridges Division informed him that expert opinion from structural engineers in MIT and Anna University about constructing a passageway under the road overbridge was being sought and those engineers would present the report in around two weeks – which would be in the August 10-15 time frame. The MLA further said that the GCC officials told him they are also in talks with railway contractors who are best qualified to take up this kind of work.

There is likelihood of the passageway being created with precast blocks.

Paranthamen said he had asked the GCC Bridges Division engineers to complete this work before N-E monsoon; he added that this passageway would be a boon to the students studying in half-a-dozen schools in this region who commute by train.

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'It is time to relay these roads'

First Cross Street at VGN Nagar in Iyyappanthangal on July 25, 2025.
PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

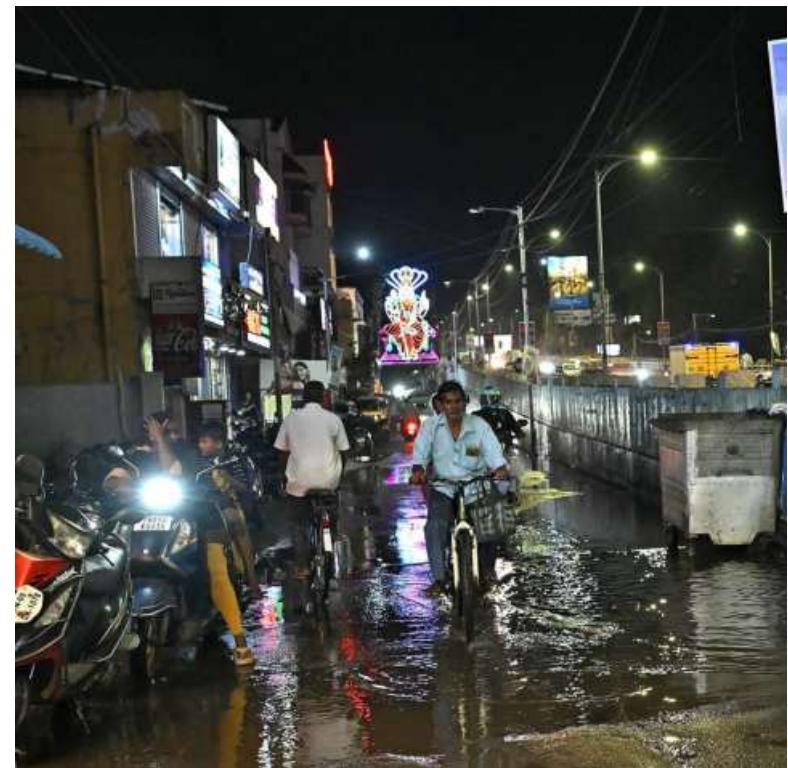
Iyyappanthangal Village Panchayat is requested to relay First Cross Street (behind the office of the Panchayat) and Fourth Main Road. Both are cement roads and decades-old. Today, these roads are battered and prone to water stagnation during rains. Panchayat officials and elected representatives should do the needful.

*P. Senthil Kumar,
Iyyappanthangal*

'Service lane waits for mending exercise'

The service lane under Kodambakkam flyover on Kodambakkam High Road is marked by potholes and prone to water stagnation during rains. Motorists and pedestrians find it difficult to use the lane.

*N. Ravikkumar,
Nungambakkam*



The service lane under the flyover on Kodambakkam High Road.
PHOTOS: VELANKANNI RAJ B & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Pedestrian space usurped

The footpaths on Rangarajapuram Main Road are unfriendly to pedestrians. All kinds of shops are encroached upon them. Vehicles including MTC buses are diverted through this road. Besides, a Greater Chennai Corporation school is located on this road. PHOTOS: AKHILA EASWARAN

'Space within fenced transformers is unkempt'

Electricity junction boxes and transformers on the footpaths of K.K. Nagar have been fenced. It is a welcome move one aimed at public safety. But all kinds of rubbish, such as cables and debris are found inside.

*Captain S.
Nandakumar
K.K.Nagar*

**'Clogs in SWD'**

Debris and all kinds of trash are found in the stormwater drain located at the junction of Ramamoorthi Street in Valasarawakkam and Kannammal Street in Ramapuram.

Greater Chennai Corporation reconstructed the drain recently with an aim to provide a widened facility and thereby enhance the water flow.

But the drain has been covered without clearing those clogs. Also sewage was found stagnant in the drain. This defeats the purpose of widening the drain. It should be noted this spot is known for water stagnation.

*N. Subramanian,
Ramapuram*

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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](mailto:downtownfeedback@thehindu.co.in). Letters must carry the contact number.



SUSTAINABILITY

Solar energy: get the billing right

LIFFY THOMAS

The bi-monthly common area electricity bill has not brought residents of Geeyam Kalyan, a 10-unit apartment community at Thiruvengadam Street in RA Puram, any cheer in these two years. In fact, it has been a disappointment. When residents moved in to this new apartment, solar panels were already installed on the terrace to power common utilities like lifts, lights and motor - an amenity residents were proud about and hoping to see considerable reduction in their bill.

However, every cycle, the bills looked unreasonably high. "We were not clear how consumption is charged and there wasn't anybody to guide us properly," says Geetha Venkataraman, secretary of Geeyam Kalyan Residents Association.

An awareness meeting organised by Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG) in the colony came in as an eye-opener.

Residents realised that the solar panels in the apartment was connected to 'net feed-in' instead of opting for 'net metering'. Both net metering and net feed-in tariffs are methods for compensating households and organisations for the energy they produce, and the rates vary.

Calculation by CAG showed that the community's total energy consumption for common services bi-monthly as 1250 kWh. The energy bill through net feed in billing came between ₹9,000 and ₹10,000. The same through net metering billing would be ₹



A rooftop solar photovoltaic plant at an apartment.

5,000.

"Once we learnt that we are connected to net feed-in solar billing mechanism, we contacted our solar vendor who applied to TANGEDCO, paid a fee to convert to net metering," says Geetha that their next billing is expected in the first week of September where they are hoping to see a difference.

And if the electricity bill drops then the association would think of extending solar grids to cover lights and fans of individual flats, adds Geetha.

Complicated billing

The initial experience with solar for residents of Vrikshah Gurukulam in C.P. Ramaswamy Street in Abirampuram was also not sweet. The 10-unit apartment complex had

Here is how two apartment associations in Chennai found their faith in solar power as a cost-effective option, restored

Net metering vs Net feed-in

In net metering, if the solar energy produced by the consumer exceeds the consumption level, the surplus energy will automatically be exported to the TANGEDCO's distribution network (the grid). The consumer pays only for the net energy consumed (that is, import - export).

When the solar energy produced is lower than the consumption level, the shortfall is drawn from the grid and controlled by a bi-directional meter. In net metering, excess energy will be adjusted in the next billing cycle when the exported energy is more than the imported. Net metering is available for the domestic category.



A domestic consumer billed under net feed-in mechanism has the option of migrating to a net metering mechanism.

The solar energy for net billing or net feed-in mechanism is available to all electricity consumer categories (except huts and agriculture) irrespective of tariff and voltage levels. The feed-in tariff is decided by the regulator and depends on geography, capital cost and installed capacity.

Source: CAG

their common amenities powered by solar panels with an installed capacity of 9720 W.

Their first bill came as a shocker that the resident association even thought they would have been better off without this environment-friendly amenity provided by the builder. "The billing system was so complicated that it was difficult for us to understand," says K. Sundararaman who from a big proponent of solar became a naysayer.

One big learning from the CAG team was that the capacity of the solar has to optimised to its best. The optimal solar PV system capacity recommended for the community by CAG team now is 5 kW to 7 kW.

"Now, I have a better idea of the billing and how subsidy is capped," he says.

Gain clarity

Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group invites resident groups to express any nagging questions about renewable energy adoption they might have and get them clarified

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

From submitting an application to deciphering the billing system, processes towards adoption of the solar option are hardly straightforward.

Tamil Nadu Combined Development and Building Rules 2019 mandates that at least one third of terrace space be reserved for placement of solar photovoltaic panels to get a completion certificate from CMDA. From conversations, one learns that residents in many new apartment complexes struggle to understand the nitty-gritty of rooftop solar installation and along the way, some even decide to give up on the green energy option.

"We have seen in many cases the developer or vendor has half-baked knowledge and is unable to explain the functioning including how the bill is generated to the resident. In some cases, the handover is not done properly," says K. Vishnu Mohan Rao,

programme lead, Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG).

The Chennai-based non-profit, which shows up at RWA meetings to create awareness on rooftop solar systems, says many potential consumers would think twice about investing in solar energy when they come across such negative feedback from communities that have already invested in it.

Economic feasibility and help in identifying a vendor are among questions bothering prospective consumers.

"For people who have already installed (prosumers), they fail to understand financial aspects such as calculation of CUF (capacity utilisation factor) and network charges by TNPCL," says Vishnu. He says not counting self-consumption is another common concern they have encountered in their meetings.

As part of a two-year project to understand Tamil Nadu's journey in energy awareness, a team from CAG is conducting awareness programmes that are free.

The NGO is also working with various stakeholders including TNPCL, banks and vendors to push for renewable energy.

"We have technical experts such as an energy auditor, engineers who have graduated in renewable energy and can clarify queries," says Subramani M., researcher with CAG.

Tangedco's five zones have also been conducting grievance meetings to address solar-related concerns from the public.

For details, call Subramani of CAG at 88072 14008





Glimpses of the first two editions of Walk Along.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and new partners – including folk artists and a Kolam artist working with neurodivergent children.

The event is expected to be graced by Ma. Subramanian, Minister for Health and Family Welfare, as the chief guest.

Among the general public attending the event, there would be around 150 members of Young Indians; and also representatives from CII member companies.

Registrations will close by August 5 or 6, or upon reaching the cap of 1,000 participants. Each individual, including caregivers, must register separately. Institutional entries are capped to ensure diversity.

"Walk Along 3.0 is not just an event. It is a reflection of the values we stand for at Yi Chennai," says Varan Mittal, Chair, Yi Chennai. "As

Matching Strides

Walk Along 3.0 by Young Indians Chennai will have the able-bodied walking alongside the differently abled at Elliots Beach on August 10. On the sidelines, stalls will showcase a world accessible at multiple levels that persons with disabilities should be able to claim as a right

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Inclusion can arrive in an air of condescension. It is the idea of the able-bodied "including" the differently abled in "their world". It is true that the differently abled need to be included in this monstrous world that shut them out in the first place, but it has to be done in a manner that upholds their dignity.

By choosing one preposition over another, Walk Along 3.0 has silently condemned this unconscious, nevertheless odious conceitedness, and asserted the place in the world the differently abled should enjoy as a right, not as a dole. Young Indians (Yi) Chennai's annual flagship accessibility event, Walk Along 3.0 does not term itself a walk for persons with disabilities (PWDs), but a walk with them. The walk has one able-bodied person matching strides with one differently abled person. "It is about presence, not performance," say organisers. "You do not walk ahead or behind. You walk together."

And the event having walked the talk, it has done three editions on the trot, growing in stature from edition to edition.

In normal circumstances, the past is the best predictor of the future. Hence a peek into the first two editions to know what to expect of the third, whose approaching footsteps can be heard. Walk Along 3.0 would arrive on August 10, 2025 at Elliots Beach in Besant Nagar.

In 2023, the first edition of Walk Along played out in a closed space at Olympia Tech Park, Guindy, bringing key disability organisations and the public in a structured, accessible environment. Yi partnered with institutions that have been working in the accessibility space for decades, aiming to



design a walk that was not performative, but made space for genuine conversations and connectedness. Walk Along 1.0 featured experiential stalls, including a demo zone for assistive technology by the National Centre for Assistive Health Technology (NCAHT), backed by ICMR. Visitors could try out Indian-made wheelchairs with



stair-climbing capability and upright support. Inclusive cafés such as Winners Bakery, run by individuals with Down syndrome and acid attack survivors, brought warmth and flavour to the event. Able Aura brought adaptive sports to the table. Yi's Yuva student chapters put up awareness stalls.

In 2024, the event – Walk Along



2.0 – moved into a public space, being conducted at a Greater Chennai Corporation park in Adyar maintained by Bharat Matrimony under Namma Chennai 2.0. With increased visibility and participation from over 25 institutions, the event welcomed more than 800 people. Walk Along 2.0 repeated the features of the first edition, and enhanced it with additions such as art circles; tailoring stalls by Vidya Sagar; and accessible products made by trainees. Participants received framed certificates. "Our planning focused on ensuring dignity, visibility and a joyful experience for every participant," says Tobin Jose, Co-chair, Yi Chennai. "The execution is a result of incredible collaboration – from schools and NGOs to government bodies and our own young volunteers."

The upcoming edition

For Walk Along 3.0, at Elliots Beach Road on August 10, 2025, a 500-700 metre stretch will be closed to traffic, made fully accessible with ramps, and lined with stalls, performances, and sensory-friendly games. Eleven colleges will volunteer this year, with both returning



EVENTS

CMRL to enforce cleanliness norms strictly

Taking into account the increasing public complaints regarding the use of chewable tobacco products and the resulting spitting and littering on Metro trains and premises, the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) is stepping up enforcement measures to maintain cleanliness and hygiene.

CMRL will intensify patrols during non-peak hours and implement random physical checks at all metro stations, as chewable tobacco products cannot be detected through metal detectors, a release stated.

Platform security personnel will closely monitor commuters' activity. Commuters found violating cleanliness norms will be fined under the Metro Railways (Operation and Maintenance) Act, 2002, and Metro Railways Carriage and Ticket Rules, 2014.

The CMRL urges commuters to cooperate in ensuring a clean, safe and pleasant travel, added the release.



PHOTO: SHIVARAJ S

Apollo Tyres wins SMCA Champions Trophy



South Madras Cricket Academy (SMCA) recently conducted the 40th edition of the SMCA Champions Trophy tournament. Apollo Tyres won the tournament, beating MSN Containers by eight runs in the final.

The champions were formally crowned at the 40th annual day function held on July 12. The function was attended by former Tamil Nadu cricketers S. Sureshkumar, M. Sanjay and renowned coach T.S. Mohan. V. Vasudevan, organising secretary of SMCA, delivered the vote of thanks.

Malayalam literary festival in Chennai on August 10

To be held at Vivekananda House Campus, the event will feature a day-long lecture series and four micro plays. The highlight will be the conferring of the literary award for 2025 on Karivellur Murali

Aasrayam, which has an active cultural presence among Malayalees in Chennai, is holding the Kavalam Narayana Panicker Literary Festival on August 10, 2025, at Vivekananda House Campus, opposite Marina Beach.

The highlight of the literary festival will be the conferring of the annual literary award for 2025 on renowned playwright and poet Karivellur Murali. Actress and theatre activist Rohini will present the award to the playwright-poet at the inaugural ceremony of the literary festival, says a press release.

The literary festival will feature a day-long lecture series focusing on the literary legacy of Kavalam Narayana Panicker. Topics include "Malayalam Theatre Movement and Kavalam Narayana Panicker" and "Malayalam Drama: Changing Imaginaries", with talks by Raja Warrier (theatre practitioner) and V. Hikmathulla (faculty, Unity Women's College, Manjeri). Other speakers and

participants include P.M. Girish, Shyama Jayaprakash, Dr. C.G. Rajendrababu, and A.V. Anoop.

The event will also feature four micro plays presented by Chennai-based theatre groups led by Abhilash Parameswaran, Jophin Manimala, Gireesh Karmael, and Sreeranjini.

Additional attractions include a photo exhibition, a musical tribute (Gaananjali) with select songs of Kavalam, Nattilekkoru Vandi youth group will present an anti-drug awareness programme promoting the message "Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Knowledge".

A massive contribution

With over fifty plays to his credit, the award recognises his lifelong contribution to Malayalam theatre. A multifaceted personality – actor, playwright, director, lyricist and public speaker – he currently serves as the Secretary of Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy. His acclaimed plays include Che Guevara, Abubakkari Umma Parayunnu, Kuruthippadam, and Agrayaanam, among over 60 notable works. He is a recipient of several prestigious awards, including the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award, says the press release.

A jury consisting of literary critic and orator P.K. Rajasekharan, former Dooradarshan Director Baiju Chandran, Bindu Venugopal, K.D. Santhosh Kumar, P.A. Suresh Kumar, and P.K. Ramachandran selected him for the award. The award includes a cash prize of ₹25,000, a sculpture designed by Joshi Perambra, and a citation.

Inter-school literary fest

Kathai Karnival Season 2, an inter-school literary festival organised by Vedanta Academy Senior w School in Vanagaram, will be held on August 8 and 9.

The two-day fest celebrates the power of language, creativity and expression, providing students a platform to showcase their literary talents and engage them in healthy

competition. There is no registration fee.

This year, the organiser has curated a series of exciting events designed to challenge and inspire young minds in the fields of literature, public speaking, creative writing and performing arts, said a release.

For details, call 8778596182.

College Road is now Jaishankar Salai

College Road in Nungambakkam will henceforth be known as Jaishankar Salai. A resolution was recently passed in the Council Meeting of the Greater Chennai Corporation to this effect. The road has been now been named after yesteryear actor Jaishankar.

College Road does not take its name from Women's Christian College or other institutions on

that road, if you thought so. The College of Fort St. George once functioned from the campus of Directorate of Public Instructions (DPI).

As per reports in *The Hindu*, the college was constructed to teach "Indian-ness". The British wanted to create a reservoir of information for the deputies who would then be able to rule India better.

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Contest to celebrate Madras Day

Super Chennai, a citizen-powered urban initiative has launched 'Namma Stories', a short film contest inviting citizens to capture the lives, streets, memories, and everyday magic that define the city. Launched as a run-up to Madras Day, the contest seeks to honour Chennai through the lens of its people - celebrating its unscripted soul, the beauty, the chaos, the charm, and the ever-evolving change that makes

the city timeless, said a release.

Namma Stories invites filmmakers, students, professionals, residents and everyday storytellers to showcase the beauty of Chennai from their lens to the world. There is no age limits, no technical barriers – just a powerful story that brings the city to life.

Entries are open till August 15, and the winner will be announced on August 22 on the occasion of Madras Day. One standout short film will take

home a cash prize of ₹1,00,000. This is more than a contest – it's an open invitation to tell Chennai's story, in your voice, to the world.

Each short film can have a duration of up to 5 minutes, and must spotlight Chennai in a meaningful way - whether through a personal memory, a powerful social message, a fictional narrative set in the city, or a documentary-style portrayal of its neighborhoods and people.



Drama festival from August 9



Madras South Lions Charitable Trust (MSLC Trust), a unit of Lions Club of South Madras, is organising its 13th drama festival from August 9 to August 17 at Bapalal Bhavan, Valmiki Nagar and Thiruvanmiyur.

The line-up of the plays: Satya Sai Creations's Mapillai Ganesh in 'Killadi Mapple' by Ezhichur Aravindhan (August 9); Ponniyin Selvan and Friends's divine documentary 'Aranganayakam' by Bombay Kannan (August 10); Stage Creations's Kathadi Ramamurthy in 'Pillaiyar Pidikka' by SL Naanu (Aug 11); PMG Mayurapriya's 'Ennadi penne' by P.Muthukumaran (August 12); Fab's theatre's Fathima Babu in 'Un Kannil Neer Vazhindhal' by T. V. Radhakrishnan (August 13); Koothapiran Navabharath Theatres's 'Leela Vinodham' by R.Vignesh(August 14); Dummies Drama's 'Kaanal Neero' by Sridhar Ramaswami(August 15); SRMG Creations 's Saneeeswaran pugazh Gopalakrishnan in 'Irandu Kannal Pesum Mozhiyil'(Aug 16th); and Dummies Drama's 'Kapidhwaja' by Sreevathson V (Aug 17th).

The inaugural function is scheduled on August 9 at 6.15pm. Past District Governor, Lions Club International Dist.324 IC PMJF Lion L.Shanthakumar will be guest of honour at the inaugural function on August 9 at 6.15 p.m.

Admission is free and all plays are scheduled at 6.30 p.m.

Listen to monsoon ragas

The 24th edition of Barkha Ritu will be presented today at Narada Gana Sabha

Banyan Tree Events, a premier cultural organisation, presents the Chennai edition of its iconic music festival Barkha Ritu on August 3 at Narada Gana Sabha (from 5.30 p.m. onwards).

In its 24th year now, Barkha Ritu is the country's longest-running thematic music festival celebrating the spirit of the monsoons through classical music, said a press release. This year's Chennai concert promises a rich and immersive experience of monsoon ragas – deeply evocative compositions that capture the moods, emotions, and essence of the rainy season. The evening's line-up features two enthralling performances: Pt. Rahul Shivkumar Sharma (Santoor); and Sandeep Narayan and Pt. Jayateerth Mevundi (Carnatic and Hindustani vocal duet)

These renowned artistes will



present a unique musical confluence that bridges Hindustani and Carnatic traditions, offering audiences an unforgettable evening steeped in melody, heritage and atmosphere.

Tickets for the event are available on BookMyShow.

Yoga championship held



Padmam Yoga & Natural Living Development Trust along with Tamil Nadu Sports Yogasana Association and Indian Yoga Association - Tamil Nadu Chapter conducted its 13th South India Yogasana Championship-2025 recently at Infosys Hall on North Usman Road in T Nagar. The event which was held in various age categories received a good response.

Two-day workshop on App development using AI

Entrepreneurship Development Innovation Institute, a Department of MSME, is conducting a workshop on App development using AI on August 5 and 6 at its premises at SIDCO Industrial Estate, EDII Office Road, Guindy. Time: From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Those above 18 years of age can apply.

According to a press release, prior knowledge of

coding is not required. The session will focus on AI tools used by leading start-ups, real-time prototyping using popular platforms like: ChatGPT, Gemini Pro, and NotebookLM.

The centre is also conducting another workshop on Chat GPT on August 9.

Prior registration is required. For details, call 9543773337 / 9360221280.

Workshop on entrepreneurial opportunities in solar energy sector

Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute, Department of MSME, is conducting a training programme on installation of solar power system from August 11 to 13 at its premises in SIDCO Industrial Estate, EDII Office Road, Guindy. Time: From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

According to a press release, the following concepts will be covered: introduction to solar energy, entrepreneurial opportunities in solar energy sector, business models in this sector, relevant computer software, financial planning,



regulations and subsidy schemes.

Those above 18 years of age and who have completed class 10 can take part. The institute offers hostel facility for the participants on first come, first serve basis.

For details, call 8668102600 / 8072914694.

Pickle making workshop

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on making pickles and pastes on August 7 at its premises at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. Prior registration is required. For details, call 044-2953 0048.



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