

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



WORDS ROLL OFF THE PAINTBRUSH

Artist Varsha has developed a rare ability to paint with the Tamil alphabet for social transformation and appreciation of all things Chennai **P4**



GATED COMMUNITIES WARMING UP TO PIPED NATURAL GAS

There are examples of this trend in the OMR region and pockets of Anna Nagar and Ambattur **P6**

More eyes now focussed on Chromepet station

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Finally, Chromepet railway station has got electronic eyes to watch over commuters. The busy terminal on the Chennai Beach-Tambaram-Chengalpattu section is equipped with 24X7 CCTV surveillance cameras.

The cameras have been installed on the platforms and FOB walkway.

V. Santhanam, an activist and founder of Chromepet Rail Users Forum, says: "CCTV cameras act as a deterrent against chain-snatching and pick-pocketing."

Last month, a woman lost her handbag that had ₹50,000. Following a complaint by the activist in the railway complaint book, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) took up the issue with the Railway and the safety feature was installed.

Southern Railway had promised to install CCTV cameras in



suburban railway stations following the murder of R. Swathi at the Nungambakkam railway station in June 2016.

A Southern Railway official said: "Temporary lighting has been provided on platform 1A in the shelter areas and on a tree."

The terminal has also been proposed for the next phase of the Amrit Bharat Station scheme. Southern Railway officials said the Railway will make necessary improvements during the redevelopment work at the station.

Why do buses skip this stop?



The Nanganallur Road Metro Station halting point at St. Thomas Mount is equipped with a shelter and seating facilities amidst a green canopy. But the picture is not entirely rosy for commuters. MTC buses skip the stop. Commuters from the metro station have to walk to the Alandur Court halting point on Southern Sector Inner Ring Road to board buses or engage autos from the station to reach their destination. On the lane towards Alandur, the same situation prevails and no stopover exists. PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

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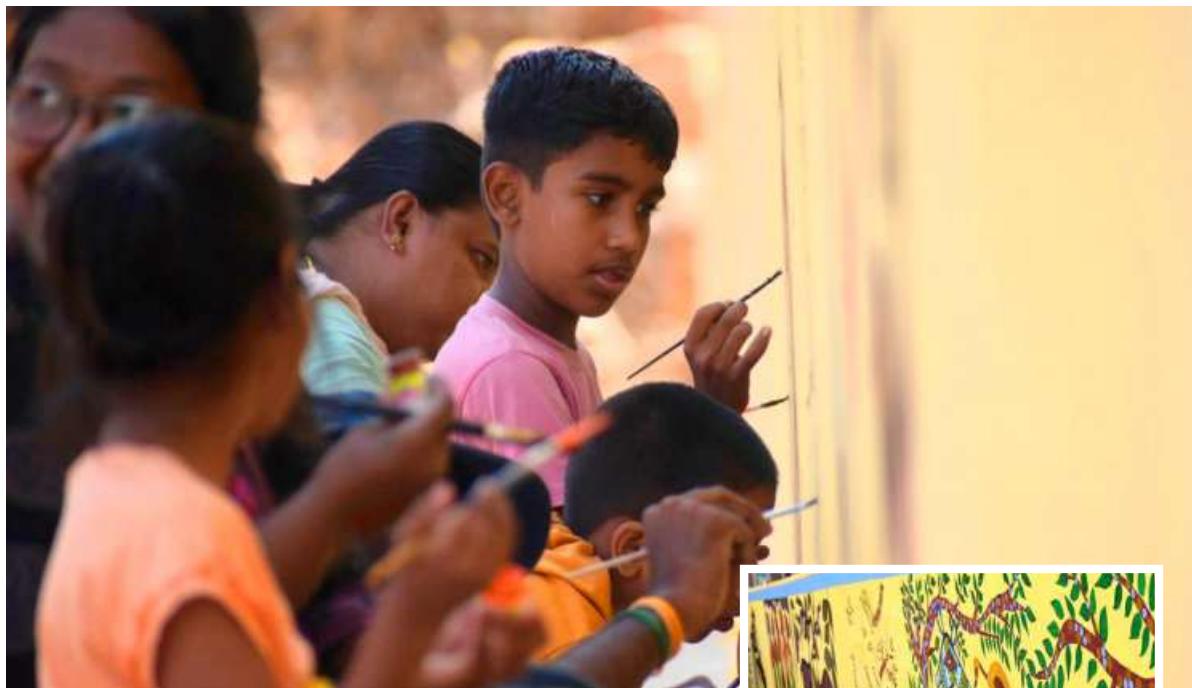
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DEEPAM EYE HOSPITALS: URAPAKKAM | AVADI | THIRUVALLUR

A dash of colour to school walls



▼ Parents, children and artists took part in an exercise to paint the compound walls of a special school at Vandalur in Murugamangalam, run by DSW Trust in Keelkattalai. Themes such as warli, madhubani and gond art were chosen.

More than 50 children with intellectual disabilities will be studying in the school. The facility also has a vocational training and sales unit.



Subway at Tambaram Sanatorium reopened

Commuters can start accessing the subway at Tambaram Sanatorium terminal. Southern Railway reopened this key link for commuters on May 24.

After water stagnated in the subway recently, Southern Railway was forced to down its shutters to facilitate maintenance work including installing sumps to arrest rainwater.

Many commuters use the facility to get to the National Institute of Siddha, Government Hospital for Thoracic Medicine, Government Hospital, Tambaram - Tambaram Taluk (Chromepet GH) and Madras Export Processing Zone.

Commuters have been demanding a lift facility at the foot overbridge.

Trust honours school toppers

Sri Saranagathi Seva Trust in Chromepet honoured students who secured good marks in the Class X and XII Board Examinations.

More than 15 students and staff from its three schools – Hasthinapuram Corporation Higher Secondary School, Sri Aiyaswami Aiyar High School and Jamin Royapettah Government School – were honoured and given cash prizes and shawls.

S. Srimathy, trustee of the trust, honoured the students. Later in the evening, the trustees hosted a dinner for the students, teachers and their families.

Three roads in Pammal wait for bitumen



▼ Some of the bad roads at Pammal Main Road.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

On Pammal Main Road, near S6 Shankar Nagar police booth in Pammal, the carriageway was dug up by the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) to replace underground drainage pipes. Although the work is complete, the road is yet to be relaid.

M. Karthik, a resident, says, "The work was completed more than a fortnight ago, but the High-

ways Department is yet to lay this stretch of the road." The surface is uneven and turns slushy after rains. "It is difficult for ambulances and fire tenders to negotiate this stretch during peak hour," says A.J. Arockiya Jayasamy, another resident.

CMWSSB work

On Kamarajar Salai in Muthamizh Nagar, though CMWSSB has completed a majority of the UGD work, the Tambaram city municipal corporation is yet to relay the road. Many residents are concerned



about this as schools will reopen soon.

On Pammal Nallathambi Street, CMWSSB has carried out digging work on the lane towards Pallavaram. With vehicles parked on one side (towards Pozhichalur) and the network area, it is difficult to navigate this section.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers make temple ponds more inviting

The waterbodies at Pazhandiamman Koil temple and the surrounding area on Nookampalayam Road in Perumbakkam are getting a facelift

For the last two Saturdays, volunteers of Perumbakkam Pasumai Pasarai, in coordination with Exnora International and Perumbakkam Village Panchayat, St. Thomas Mount Panchayat Union, have been cleaning the Pazhandiamman Koil temple ponds and their surrounding area on Nookampalayam Road.

The cleaning activity aims to raise public awareness of the need to keep the Perumbakkam region plastic-free and avoid polluting water bodies.

V. Rama Rao, senator of Exnora International, says: "With the support from Perumbakkam Village Panchayat, boats and earthmover machines were deployed to remove the trash and the water hyacinth in pond outside the temple. We also cleaned the trash in a pond inside the temple premises, and let 10 ducks and golden fish cleanse the pond."

More than 100 volunteers took part in the cleaning drive. K. Sarangadass, president, Federation of Perumbakkam Residents' Welfare Association; Pushpakala, assistant coordinator, Perumbakkam Pasumai Pasarai; V. Subramani, head (water bodies), Exnora International; and V. Seetharaman, area co-ordinator, Exnora Tambaram, took part in the drive.

Text: T.S. Atul Swaminathan

▼
Volunteers cleaning the area around the Pazhandiamman Kovil temple pond in Perumbakkam. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



RWAs at OMR prepare for 360-degree Olympiad

OMR360, as the event is called, would run from June to October, bringing residents of the arterial road in a spirit of healthy competition



HARSHA KODA

The pandemic taught us to share resources and extend a hand to our neighbours, but OMR360 will take it to the next level.

Presented by Dr. Kamakshi Memorial Hospital, OMR360 is the ultimate celebration of unity, talent and

well-being taking place from June through October of 2024 at various societies in OMR.

The event will connect individuals who will showcase their skills and sportively compete so that we may all celebrate the joy and festivity that comes with shared victories. There is something for everyone.

Over 50 extensively-curated contests will be held over the next five months in multiple age and gender categories in art, badminton, basketball, carrom, chess, cricket, dance, fashion, football, gymnastics, kabaddi, music, photography, quadrathlon, silambam, skating, table tennis, tennis, theatre, throwball, volleyball,

ball, short film and short story.

All sports, games and events are focussed on encouraging healthy competition and the unique variations make it more challenging and exciting.

Points are awarded for the top 10 winners of each event and this ultimately determines the winners of the

RWA championship. There is something for every resident of every community in OMR360.

Challenging young minds

There are over 50 schools in and around OMR and we will be tapping into the young minds to find solutions to the basic problems of the area like traffic congestion, air and noise pollution, water conservation, waste management and recycling issues. The students will research, analyse and present their recommendation for a strategic plan to overcome these issues. The contest is called "SOLVE-IT – Simplifying Our Lives Via Effective Innovative Techniques" and is open to high school students. Schools can write to solveit@omr360.in for more details.

Voter awareness

OMR360 will also use the platform as a powerful tool to raise awareness, promote advocacy and drive positive change. The poor voter turnout at the recent election has shown us how important

updating the electoral rolls is among the urban middle class. We will help residents correct this with a team of volunteers.

Environmental awareness

Discussions, presentations and workshops will be organised to improve environmental awareness, especially on the dumping of solid and liquid wastes along the Muttukadu backwaters. Sustainable living initiatives like recycling, upcycling and e-waste collection drives will be conducted at all venues. For more details and registration, log on to www.omr360.in or follow the WhatsApp channel – <https://channel.omr360.in> for regular updates and alerts. OMR 360 is made possible by sponsorship from Dr. Kamakshi Memorial Hospital and in partnership with Decathlon, The Hindu, Marina Mall, WasteWinn and others. The Theme song of OMR360 – Connect! Compete!! Celebrate!!! – captures the spirit of the event.

(Harsha Koda is founder, Federation of OMR Residents Associations)

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Words roll off the paintbrush

Artist Varsha has developed a rare ability to paint with the Tamil alphabet for social transformation and appreciation of all things Chennai

SAHANA MIRA S

Varsha – @uyirmei.jpg on Instagram – paints with words placed at the tip of the brush, not figuratively at all. A Chennai-based landscape architect and graphic designer, she paints with the Tamil alphabet, and by extension, Tamil culture.

Her Kolam-creative, which figured in the 2023 Republic Day parade in Tamil Nadu having made it to information department's Tableau, is just carefully-drawn Tamil letters providing shape and meaning to art.

Her passion for Tamil language and culture bloomed, ironically, when she was transplanted to a place where they were least heard and experienced.

She shares, "Living away from home made me miss what I once took for granted. Hearing random Tamil words in a different city lifted my spirits. I rediscovered the beauty of Tamil language and literature, and I wanted to share it through my artwork," says Varsha.

This transformation now permeates all aspects of her life: it has made Chennai truly home, if not for anything other than the oppor-



Artist Varsha with some of her works. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

have had a profound influence on my art," says Varsha.

After having lived in various parts of South Chennai, Varsha currently lives in Pallikaranai, not too far from the marshland, and having birds as next-door neighbours is the best thing to have happened to her.

"In Pallikaranai I get to admire the marshland, outrage about the wasteland, and be mesmerised and distracted by beautiful migratory birds," she remarks.

Varsha's works when explored deeper reveal a profound social dimension, "I have different sections in my art that address various themes. One section of my art explores Tamil literature, to highlight

the lesser known lines from Sangam Literature that remain relevant today. And other sections of my art are for pop-culture and political ideology, and a lot of my work also captures the female perspective, and overall, love is something that I seek to convey," says Varsha.

Finally, when it comes to how the audience are observing, understanding and responding to the various creative works of theirs, Varsha shares, "Art is partly what the maker creates and partly what the audience consumes. While Instagram visibility depends on audience reactions, I also prioritise authenticity and share what I feel is important, even if it might not become a big hit."



and see Tamil words.

"For 24 out of my 27 years of life, I have called Chennai home. My parents moved here when I was just a year old. Participating in the Madras Inktober series really broadened my perspective on Chennai. Many of my Inktober artworks reflect the essence of the city, like the water lorry piece inspired by Chennai's water scarcity. One of my fondest childhood memories is persuading my parents to take me to the beach for some snacks. All these small moments in Chennai



READERS WRITE

'A 50-metre stretch of Camp Road needs to be relaid'



The relaid stretch of Camp Road and (below) the left-out portion on May 16. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Tambaram Municipal Corporation has relaid Camp Road which was severely battered following the heavy rains during last north-east monsoon. It was relaid a couple of weeks ago. It is a big relief. However, a stretch of 50 metres has not been laid. Tambaram Corporation should attend to this at the earliest.

R.V. Baskaran
Selaiyur



Cattle invade road in Pallikaranai

Stray cattle is a common sight at Pallikaranai on Velachery Tamabaam Main Road. They are found in good numbers at the junction under the flyover near Kamakshi hospital. This poses a risk to other road users. The authorities concerned should curb this problem by slapping a hefty fine on the cattle owners.

K.Satish Karthik, Perumbakkam
Perumbakkam



A health hazard



'GCC's e-toilets in a derelict state'

It is learnt from the dailies that Greater Chennai Corporation is going to construct "modern toilets" at 372 locations. At this juncture, I would like to point out that many makeshift stainless steel public toilets called "e-toilets" that were installed eight years ago with much fanfare are in a derelict state today. It was claimed that those toilets required minimal maintenance and ensured cleanliness. But those toilets are lying abandoned and need to be removed. In Velachery, such toilets could be found at Gandhi Road, Taramani and near Velachery MRTS railway station.

Greater Chennai Corporation again set up new toilets under Singara Chennai 2.0 Scheme in the last two years. Now, it is planning to construct another 372 toilets. From time to time, GCC is spending a huge sum on setting up new toilets but not maintaining the existing ones.

S Kumararaja, Velachery



An e-toilet on Gandhi Road in Velachery. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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

Telugu classes from June 1

World Telugu Federation is conducting Telugu language classes from June 1 at Ankur Plaza, Second Floor, 113, G.N. Road, T. Nagar. According to a press release, no fee will be charged. People from all age groups can enrol for the programme. For details, call 9940368880 / 7305557322 / 9841616465.

Gated communities warming up to piped natural gas

There are examples of this trend in the OMR region and pockets of Anna Nagar and Ambattur

LIFFY THOMAS

In November 2023, when Shibu K.T. moved into his new flat in Padur on Rajiv Gandhi Salai, there was one item he did not have to take along – the LPG cylinder.

At the time of booking, the developer had promised supply of piped natural gas (PNG) and he had made good on that promise by the time of delivery of flats.

"Some residents decided to keep a cylinder as a back-up, but I did not. With a prior idea of how PNG functions, I was confident this will work fine," says Shibu, a resident of Alliance Urbanrise. And it did for Shibu, and just as he expected, it was a saving on space and money and on time too, as he did not have to keep a tab of when to book a refill.

With the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board along with the city's gas distribution agencies running campaigns to promote the adoption of PNG by households, there is considerable buzz in Chennai where PNG infrastructure is coming up.

On CTH Road in Ambattur, work on providing PNG supply to Kochar Panchsheel has reached the entrance of the gated community. The RWA has paid an advance amount to initiate the work inside the community. A few rounds of meetings were organised to explain to residents the benefits of switching to PNG. The Association has also allowed the energy company to use the piped LPG storeroom for any infrastructure work pertaining to PNG. "The room allotted for piped LPG was never put to use, so if there is a need for space then we have it," says Santosh Abraham, a resident.

At a glance

Major PNG players in the city: Torrent Gas and AG&P Pratham

Advantages of PNG: Safer than LPG, pay as per usage and bills are generated monthly

Is the pipeline available near you? Both the gas companies have a section on the website where details need to be keyed in. After documents are verified, a feasibility study is conducted. Following this, equipment is installed.

Initial cost by resident: registration fee and security deposit ranges between ₹ 6000 and ₹ 7000

At Alliance Orchid Springs in Kottur, more than 200 flats have registered for PNG paying ₹ 576 each. The residents welfare association is confident more residents will sign up once pipeline-laying work starts in the neighbourhood.

"Six of us from the society visited Metro Zone in Anna Nagar to study the functioning of its PNG supply system. The only negative feedback we got is that cooking time has increased by some minutes in the new arrangement," says Ganapathy Suresh, president, Orchid Springs Owners Association.

That should not loom large as an issue for the community that has faced challenges in terms of piped LPG supply.

"Every month we order 450 LPG cylinders and additional manpower is deployed to oversee this amenity including ensuring cylinders are replaced on time. There are many other practical issues in this setup including leakage in line where the burden is on the user," says Ganapathy.

During winter time, residents are up against an additional challenge. "As pressure drops, we have to change cylinders more often and there is some 4% gas that remains as residue," he says.

The RWA organised a meeting with senior officials from Torrent Gas clarifying all nagging queries from residents.

"There was some reluctance from tenants as the nozzle of the gas will have to be changed in the new set-up. Tenants are afraid as not all communities have PNG when they shift. The gas company assured them that they would give the old nozzle that can be rectified

by any technician," says Ganapathy. Torrent Gas has completed 60% of the work at Metro Zone in Anna Nagar where the residents welfare association is facilitating this project for phase 1, 2 and 3. Prior to giving consent to the energy company, a committee was formed to study PNG trends in other cities.

Saieeji R., a resident of Metrozone, says many residents have started using PNG since last year. "It is still in the early stages and so far it has been good."



An awareness camp at a gated community in Padur and at Alliance Orchid Springs.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



RWAs on OMR initiate mass registration for PNG

Work on providing PNG connections to 10 gated communities on Rajiv Gandhi Salai is in progress. Twenty other communities on the road are in discussions with a gas company about receiving connections.

Alagurajan Elangoan, assistant general manager - projects, AG&P Pratham, the natural gas supplier for this project in Chennai South and Chengalpattu, says there is greater

awareness at OMR on the benefits of PNG. "We have gated communities paying and registering as a whole. Previously, our marketing team would go door-to-door to get NOC from residents," says Alagurajan. He cites the example of Alliance Urbanrise and Jain Inseli Park where the RWA took up the registration process for all the residents of the community. Weekends are packed for this com-

pany as communities invite them for an awareness session.

"We have many enquiries from independent homes as well as villa houses. We have started providing supply to such entities," he says.

Irrespective of the type of house and number of units, PNG connection are possible. "If people give NOC to run pipes through their walls then infrastructure is our responsibility," he says. Currently, gas is supplied through DC units located at Kelam-

bakkam, Perumbakkam and LCNG station at Semmencherry. Once the company makes greater progress in laying pipelines, giving connections will be faster. How long will AG&P Pratham take care of this infrastructure? "Our agreement with the government is that we will maintain it for the next 25 years, so we are responsible for all forms of maintenance except where physical damage to the infrastructure has happened," says the spokesperson.

Two school dropouts and their vision for Kannagi Nagar children

Uma and Vasudevan run a free tuition centre at the resettlement colony to ensure youngsters take up college education



A. SUBALAKSHMI

Four students who passed the recent Class XII examinations are in the spotlight at KS Welfare Trust in Kannagi Nagar with its core team sparing no efforts to get

the four into arts and science colleges in Chennai.

"Getting a seat under the government-aided stream is not always easy for these students as they either had a break in their schooling or have just scraped through in their Class XII exams. As

they are first-generation college education seekers and economically disadvantaged, we make a plea to the college authorities to accommodate them. Where the college would not agree to concessions in fee, the Trust chips in for the student with the help of donors," says



Uma Maheshwari with children from the tuition centre and (left) a volunteer at work. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

V. Uma Maheshwari.

Uma and Vasudevan D. decided to start B.R. Ambedkar Free Evening Educational Training Centre in Kannagi Nagar in 2006, as the resettlement colony is replete with stories of children abandoning studies midway. The fact that they are school dropouts contributed in no small measure to this decision.

Functioning under the registered non-profit K.S. Welfare Trust, the tuition centre does not stop with teaching school subjects, but organises training in art, music and sports.

The resources to run these initiatives come from donors and a

steadily growing pool of volunteers, which includes those like Vidhya K., a beneficiary who has returned to the NGO as volunteer.

A student of Guru Nanak College in Velachery, Vidhya says: "My parents could not afford an English medium school education for me. Uma ma'am continues to help me financially even today." Vidhya teaches various subjects to children at the tuition centre. The Trust's website (<https://kswelfare-trust.com>) was designed by volunteers. The founders dream of constructing a free school in Kannagi Nagar or Cheyyur. For details, call 9840 484 487.

A survey to map trees, birds and dogs on the streets of Chennai

The Elastic Tree Survey is aimed at mapping the presence or absence of street dogs, cattle, crows, pigeons and sparrows across Chennai.

The questions in the survey would take just five minutes to answer and they can be answered in English or Tamil. They can also be answered as many times one wishes, for different streets and areas, says a press release.

The participant can also share photographs.

The objective of the survey is to cover all parts of Chennai in a few months. The survey is a starting point for any kind of action plan or way forward. The data will be compiled and available for use.

Survey link - <https://survey.zohopublic.in/>

/zs/LsBOnL

Photo album - <https://photos.app.goo.gl/rAA9sf3pPRFbFxj7>

Special buses to Tiruvannamalai

The Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation Limited will operate special buses from Koyambedu to the Tiruvannamalai on Fridays and Saturdays every week and on account of 'Pournami'. These buses would travel through Arcot and Arani, in addition to the existing bus services from the terminus to the city through Kancheepuram and Vandavasi.

Link ticket to Kilambakkam terminus

Upon purchasing long-distance journey tickets in the State Transport Corporation buses, passengers can link tickets to Kalaignar Centenary Bus Terminus (KCBT) in Kilambakkam.

The link tickets allows passengers to travel in MTC buses within four hours of the buses arrival and departure time, said a release.

Currently, close to 1,000 commuters are availing the link tickets travel on a regular basis. The passengers can travel in one or more buses.

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Mermaid Pond being restored

With generous funding from Rotary Club of Madras, YWCA has launched the restoration of the waterbody

PRINCE FREDERICK

Leafing through an old, well-thumbed copy of an old book, *More Grasps To Reach* (1992) by Gladys Ambat, one realises a pond has been the centrepiece of the YWCA campus, though tucked away and hidden from the public glare. Essentially a look back in time that takes in the history of the organisation since its inception in 1892, Ambat's book reserved an entire chapter for the Mermaid Pond (as it is called), thereby underlining its significance to the campus and those associated with it.

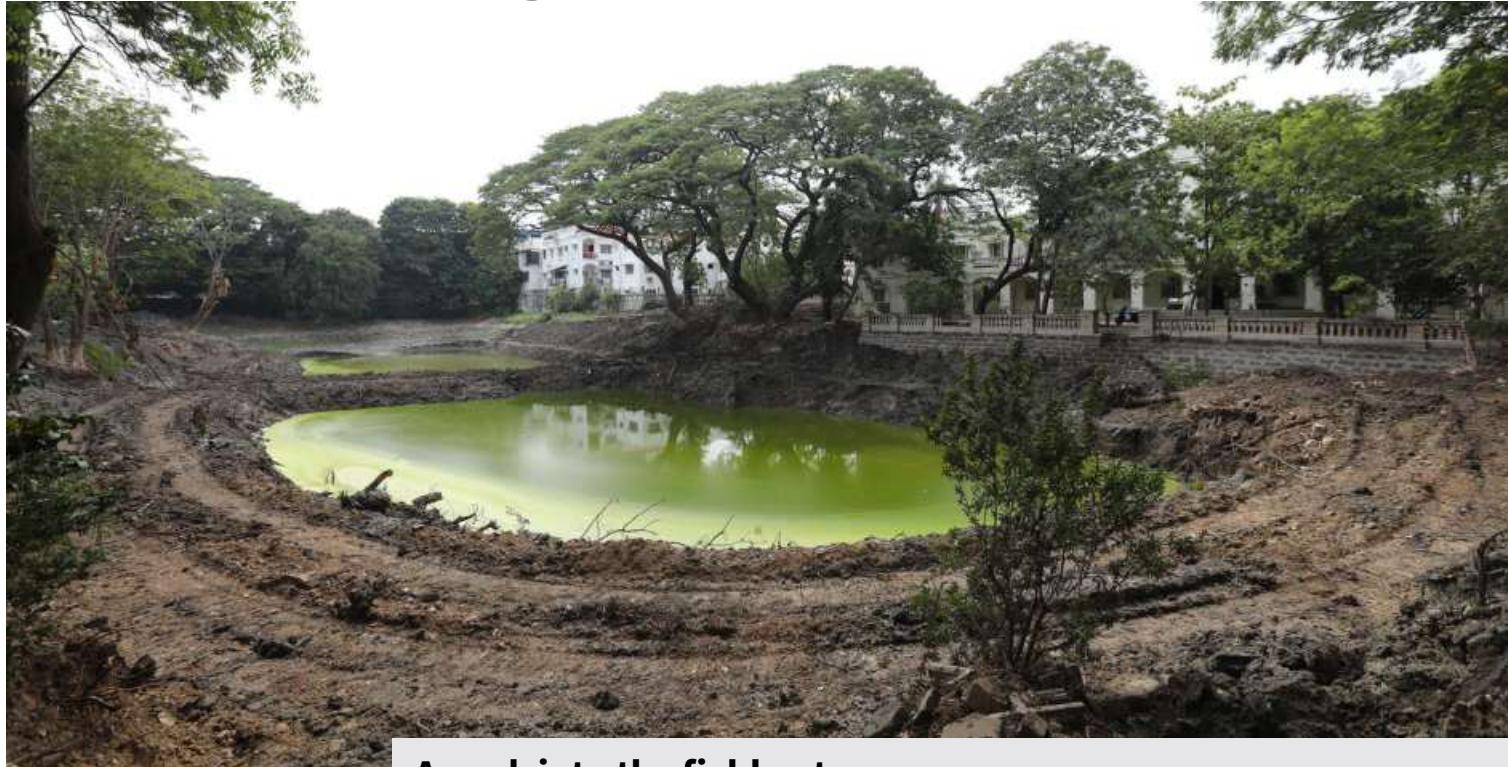
Ambat writes: "Old Annual Reports mention boat rides in the Pond during Carnival time, and the fun young people had, going out in a flat-bottomed boat."

One can justifiably hold on to the assumption that "the back-then" mentioned in the old annual records pertain to a time when the pond was deeper and had greater storage capacity.

At present, efforts are under way to take the pond to "the back-then", not defined by boat rides but a larger storage capacity.

At present, around the pond sit cakes of dark earth, as if a humongous water-titan had emerged from a deep slumber dredging up all the silt while making its thudding way out of the pond.

In truth, machinery have been



Restoration of the pond at YWCA. Valsa Benjamin Cherian, convenor of the pond restoration committee and Vithya Padmini, executive general secretary, YWCA, stand near the pond. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

hard at work since March 11, 2024 carrying out a dredging and de-silting exercise in the pond.

Recently, when *The Hindu Downtown* caught up with Valsa Benjamin Cherian, convenor of YWCA's pond restoration committee, by the side of the pond, she disclosed that effort to have the pond restored actually began exactly a year earlier on March 11, 2023, when the pond restoration committee was consti-

A peek into the field notes

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The 1.5-acre Mermaid Pond on the YWCA campus on EVR Periyar Salai in Egmore is having a revamp. A project by YWCA and Rotary Club of Madras, it is being implemented by Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI).

The salient features of the restoration, as spelt out by EFI founder Arun Krishnamurthy are: increasing the pond's storage capacity, getting a solar-panelled aerator, creating a double embankment and encircling the park with a ring of vegetation.

Arun notes the Mermaid Pond naturally supports rich aquatic life. Its location in the



middle of busy Egmore, opposite the railway station places the Mermaid Pond straightaway in the league of waterbodies that seek to bring some balance to an overwhelmingly concreted environment. In fact, the pond itself thrives amidst buildings.

Says Arun, "This pond retains water through the year due to a good groundswell and also

because the campus by itself is largely earthen. The campus does not have much concrete, and has good green cover. The campus itself is a good sponge. The aquifer can keep supplying water to the pond. Due to all the organic matter that has gone in, the water had become nutrient-rich, which led to algal bloom and in general all the other problems associated with a stagnant waterbody. We dewatered the pond and then started dredging and de-silting it. The beauty of this is organic and rich soil has come out of the dredging and de-silting exercise. It is like gold: anything will grow on this soil. The soil will go into forming the bunds and whatever is left of it can be used elsewhere on the campus to support the vegetation there."

tuted.

As YWCA has 300-plus members, electoral and associate, getting a buy-in from all of them is bound to take some doing, and it did. Following the go-ahead that came with some seed money, a partner who could pour in more resources had to be brought on board. Valsa notes that based on the goodwill generated by its previous associations with YWCA, Rotary Club of Madras entered the picture in September 2023. The Rotarians would provide 80 per cent of the funding and YWCA, the rest.

Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI) would soon be on the scene as the implementation and technical partner. However, the NE Monsoon and Cyclone Michaung put paid to hopes of an early start to the pond restoration programme.

On the salient features of the restoration, Valsa remarks solar panels would be set up on the terrace of THE nearby Margaret's Place to power the lights around the pond. A small deck area is also planned by the pond. From Valsa's account, one could sense the bells and whistles would be kept to the barest minimum, and the larger focus would be on shoring up the ecology of the lake, and enhancing its usefulness to the neighbourhood. She points out that EFI is integrating an island of greenery into the pond. Coupled with the greenery around it, that would be an invitation to birds.

By increasing the pond's storage capacity, she continues, the water table would improve not just for the YWCA campus but the communities around it. With gated communities dotting it, the neighbourhood is densely populated.

At present, around the pond sit cakes of dark earth, as if a humongous water-titan had emerged from a deep slumber dredging up all the silt while making its thudding way out of the pond



INDIAN RAILWAYS
BHARAT GAURAV TOURIST TRAIN
MUKTINATH YATRA





MUKTINATH - MANAKAMANA
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