

T. NAGAR

Saidapet » West Mambalam » Vadapalani » Porur » Kattupakkam » Irungattukottai » Nungambakkam » Manapakkam » Ashok Nagar » Valasaravakkam
Gerugambakkam » Mangadu » Choolaimedu » Egmore » K K Nagar » Kodambakkam » Virugambakkam » Somangalam » Poonamallee » Chetpet



'MANUFACTURING' A CYCLING MOVEMENT IN MANALI

Kothari Petrochemicals in Manali did not just tell its employees to cycle to work; it enabled them to do so. **P4**



AN INVITATION TO ANOTHER WAVE OF STUDENTS

As RYA Book Bank invites new students to register with it, the window of opportunity open this year till August 31, one cannot help notice what made this long-standing charity a synonym for free college textbooks. **P6**

READERS WRITE

'The wait for a name board continues for Durai Arasan Street'



Greater Chennai Corporation installed a name board in Navaneethammal Street at Kaveri Rangan Nagar in Saligramam during the second week of May. The street was without a name-board for three years. We expected the neighbouring Durai Arasan Street would also get one. It is without a name board for five years; and its wait for a name board continues.

S.N. Rajaram,
Saligramam

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 postal address and contact number.

A road plagued by traffic snarls



Bharathi Salai in Ramapuram
PHOTO:
VELANKANNI RAJ B

The road from Arasamaram junction in Ramapuram to Lakshmi Nagar in Porur witnesses heavy traffic. The different sections of the road which is close to two kilometres long is known variously, as Bharathi Salai, Naidu

Street, Kambar Street and Anna Salai. And, this road's "workload" has increased in recent times on account of metro rail work on Arcot Road and Poonamallee High Road.

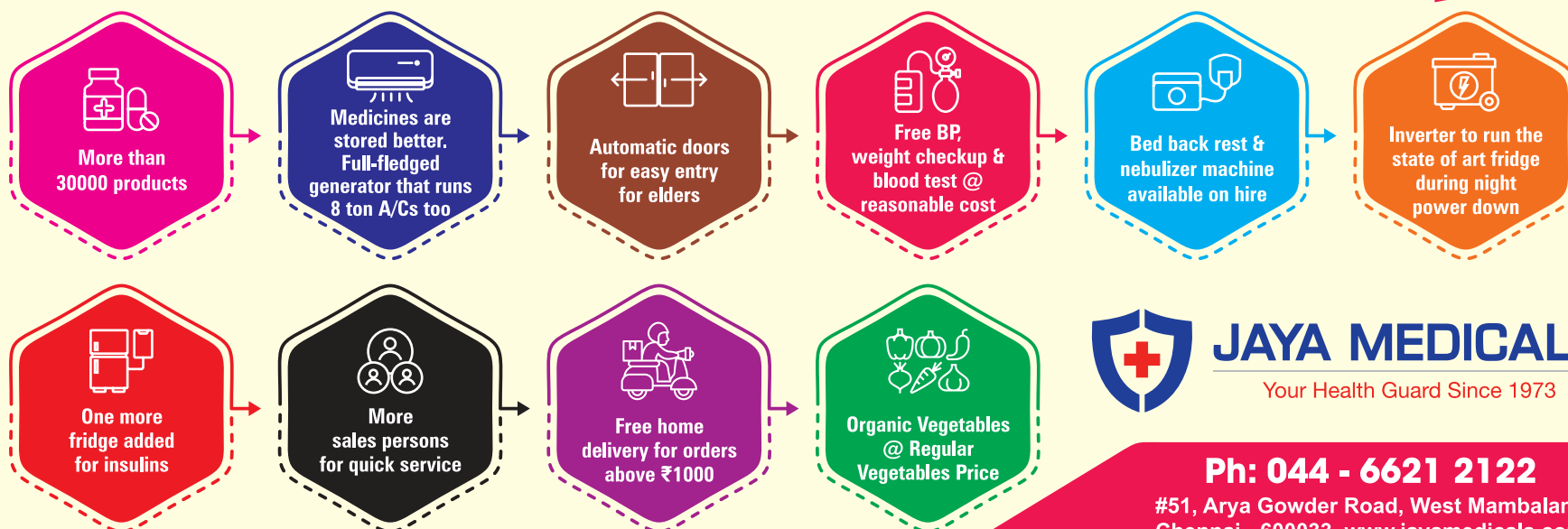
"Haphazard parking of vehicles and encroachments along the road

are the main causes. MTC buses also pass through this road. Appropriate measures need to be taken to decongest the stretch," says K. Subramanian, president, Ramapuram Makkal Nala Urimai Sangam, a residents welfare association in Ramapuram.

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Makeshift shelter sports a textile roof



On the sidelines of Metro Rail work, a plethora of innovative makeshift bus shelter solutions have cropped up. But this one on Arcot Road in Virugambakkam beats the rest by a long chalk, actually a long yard of glitzy fabric.

The roofing material for this shelter at what is called Virugambakkam bus stop seems to have been transferred from a carnival. While

one might allow this roofing solution a response that lies somewhere in the midst of curiosity, mild amusement and even appreciation (for the fact that they bothered to put up a roof for commuters), close on the heels of these combined emotions trot a question: will this fabric roof hold up against incessant rains and windy conditions. Tensile fabric roofing, as durable as it is aesthetic, exists and is hugely patronised. But this

textile solution comes nowhere near the tautness and sturdiness provided by tensile fabric roofing.

The entire bus shelter seems to be standing on the feet of ad-hocism. A sparse skeletal frame has "forelegs" that seem to be resting on the ground, not pegged into holes, let alone secured with grommets. The colourful textile material has been tied to the frame with ropes. CMRL boards serve as a wall and

given the vantage point provided by the bus stop, advertisers of an upcoming, much-awaited film have pounced on the opportunity, turned this "wall" into a billboard. The images were taken on May 27, 2025.

If you come across any off-kilter, makeshift bus shelters, write to The Hindu Downtown at downtownfeedback@thehindu.co.in

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



'Children's park in Saligramam being misused to play cricket'

L. KANTHIMATHI

State Bank Staff Colony Saligramam Residents Welfare Association has made a representation to the R-5 Virugambakkam Police Station and the Office of Zone 10 - Kodambakkam of Greater Chennai Corporation last week about the misuse of a children's park at SBI Colony First Street in Saligramam.

The park is at Ward 129 in Zone 10 - Kodambakkam.

"To have an obstruction-free field to play cricket, a group of youngsters have torn down all the play equipment meant for children. Next, they play till the wee hours of the morning and also celebrate birthdays at midnight. Their screams and shouts disturb the sleep of nearby residents. The installation of flood lights by Greater Chennai Corporation, a few

months ago, has only worsened the problem," says the association's president S. Shyamsundar.

Residents are also irked by the damage caused to property during these games – broken window panes in homes and vehicles have become common.

"The latest incident happened at the house of an octogenarian couple. At half past nine at night, their window was shattered. The association called in the police.

The police confiscated the bats and balls and handed them over to the senior couple and asked the boys to collect from them once they fix the broken window. The next morning when the boys approached the elderly seeking their belongings, the association, considering the safety of the couple, advised the couple to return even if their window had not been fixed. Besides, the park is littered with alcohol bottles and cigarette stubs. CCTV footage shows that after playing till 2 a.m., these boys take a walk around our colony, which is unsettling for us," adds Shyamsundar.

Additionally, residents feel the park has been neglected by GCC.

"GCC renovated other parks of



The park in Saligramam and (below) police confronting the youngsters following a complaint from the residents' association.

PHOTOS: VELANKANNI RAJ B & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ward 129 and they were reopened recently. They include Majestic Colony, Velayudham Colony, Parameshwar Vihar, and Jains Swarnakamal Colony. Despite repeated complaints, our park was dropped from the refurbishment exercise," says K. Chandrasekhar, the association's assistant secretary.

Tree near Saidapet Metro subway crashes, traffic police personnel swing into action



Chennai City Traffic Police personnel were clearing a massive Sterculia tree near the Saidapet Metro Rail subway on Anna Salai on May 27, 2025. It was a major crash, the tree having fallen on a few bikes. Fortunately, no one was injured. To avoid a rush-hour logjam, the traffic police personnel waded into the scene close to 5 p.m. with chainsaws and started cutting the fallen tree into easily portable logs. They made the work easier for Corporation workers who arrived on the scene later, a JCB in tow. This incident highlights the need to check the strength of trees in public places to avoid untoward incidents. PHOTOS: R. RAVINDRAN.



PRIYA DARSHINI TARAKKAD ARJUNAN

Ensuring the safety of *cyclists*

Ahead of International Bicycle Day, an appeal by a cyclist on steps that need to be taken to keep the roads safe for their tribe

A year ago, a young life was snuffed out on GST Road due to an accident involving a car and a cycle. Hit by the car, the young cyclist was thrown off the saddle. Earlier, a couple of years ago, another cyclist was fatally knocked down by a vehicle that was proceeding on the wrong side of the road.

Early this year, a young woman was hit by a speeding car near MEPZ Oragadam. Despite being rushed to the hospital, her memo-

ry and cognitive power diminished due to the head injuries she sustained. And it has taken a full four months for her to come back to

normality.

Likewise, two girls cycling to school on Theosophical Society Road in Besant Nagar met with an

accident due to a pothole, and were hit by a minibus. One of the girls lost her life, and the other sustained serious injuries.

Every other day, we come across such instances of cyclists being hit by speeding cars, bikes, lorries and buses in Chennai. While some of these incidents have been recorded by the police, many go undocumented.

These incidents illustrate that despite following safety rules such as wearing safety gear, reflective clothes, having headlights and tail-lights and using hand signals, cyclists are vulnerable on our roads.

While International Bicycling Day (June 3) is more about advocating cycling for its positive impact, we want road safety to be the overarching message.

Many cities are making major changes to their infrastructure, urban development plans and policies to protect the interests of cyclists and other non-motorised transport users. Chennai must also take a leaf out of their books.

Currently, many of the city's roads are in a shambles due to Chennai Metro work. Owing to this and other reasons, the number of cyclists in Chennai has also dwindled.

Even on roads such as the ECR, GST Road and OMR where some demarcation was created for cyclists, these lines have disappeared with time.

The Greater Chennai Traffic Police ran a campaign "Zero is Good" appealing to people to be safe on roads to ensure there are zero accidents. However, its life and effects were short-lived.

We need many such initiatives, particularly those promoting a cul-

ture of safe bicycling, to be run on a regular basis.

Our demands

- Every road in the city – arterial or otherwise – must have a lane for slow-moving traffic such as bicycles and be maintained well. Other motorists encroaching upon the lane should be penalised.
- Wrong side driving violations must be handled with an iron hand as these are big threats to cyclists.
- Safe parking spots must be made available for cyclists as most people avoid taking the cycle for short distance commutes for fear of losing their bicycle despite having it locked.
- A stronger enforcement of road rules and speed limits is needed, especially during the hours when school and college students need to use the road, so that children can take to the saddle safely.
- All roads that are not children-friendly must be explicitly marked.
- Provide better lighting.
- Stricter laws that treat the cyclist and pedestrian on par with other road users must be proposed to safeguard the interests of cyclists.
- Schools should inculcate a sense of vehicular equity in the minds of children so they learn and practise on-road etiquette early on.
- The Government must come forward for collaborative efforts with passionate organisations that are making concerted efforts to make people take up cycling and other non-motorised transportation forms.
- Bicycle tourism in the city could be promoted.

(Priya Darshini Tarakkad Arjunan is a member of Chennai Cyclists)

Revisiting two initiatives that are aimed at encouraging people to cycle to work

LIFFY THOMAS

Kothari Petrochemicals in Manali did not just tell its employees to cycle to work; it enabled them to do so.

It gifted Hercules cycles to over 140 employees on its rolls on National Safety Day in March 2022. The management's request to its staff: pedal to work at least once a week. Incentives nudging employees to take the eco-friendly route followed.

And that "route" is well-travelled. In addition, the company has been taking other routes to energy conservation and pollution control. All these efforts have resulted in a plethora of recognitions for Kothari Petrochemicals including the National Award for Excellence in Energy Management 2024 by the Confederation of Indian Industries. The biggest encouragement however comes from the fact that neighbouring companies in Manali emulate its example by gifting bicycles to their employees.

"Once a month, usually on the fourth Saturday, we observe 'No Bike Day' encouraging employees

'Manufacturing' a cycling movement in Manali



Employees of Kothari Petrochemicals take part in an awareness rally.

to pedal to work or use public transport," says Premapiriyam P., vice-president, Kothari Petrochemicals.

Next, the company switched to vehicles running on liquefied natural gas (LNG) for employee transportation. Two electrical cars were added to the fleet, and a fork lift was converted from diesel to electrical.

Employees who bicycle to work the maximum number of days in a month are incentivised with cash awards and carbon offset certificates.



Carbon dioxide emission has been reduced by 650 kilos on account of employees commuting by

bicycle, says data shared by the company.

With a good number of em-



ployees living within a five to seven km radius of the plant, the management had a solid reason to push for a bicycle commute.

Once an employee pedals to work for a minimum of 10 days, a carbon dioxide math is done and certificates and gifts are given accordingly.

M. Rajavel, whole time director, Kothari Petrochemicals, says currently 20-25% of employees bicycle to work on a regular basis and they want to raise this percentage by another 50% this year.

"It is also important to understand the bottlenecks that employees face while cycling, which could be due to bad roads or chaotic traffic in the city, so I have asked the team to study the reasons. If their concerns can be addressed by the company then we will take it up or we can represent it to the Corporation," says Rajavel.

The management will be purchasing another round of bicycles to be given to employees who have joined the organisation in the recent years.

A feeder service between a Metro station and a college

When the new academic year kicks off at M.O.P. Vaishnav College in June, the students and staff will have the advantage of taking a feeder service from the closest Metro Rail station to the college campus on Nungambakkam.

Chennai Metro Rail Limited is offering this service to support the college's "No Vehicle Day" launched in August 2024.

"CMRL authorities got in touch with us and wanted a schedule in advance for them to arrange a service for the benefit of students, which we plan to take up from June," says Archana Prasad, principal, M.O.P. Vaishnav College for Women.

Currently, DMS or Thousand Lights are the closest metro stations accessed by a majority of the students. The shuttle

service, if implemented well, would encourage more students to ditch their vehicles on other days of the week as well to rely on public transport - which was also the larger goal of keeping vehicles off the campus every last Thursday of the month, later changed to any one day in the month, based on students' feedback.

The principal notes that students' comfort level had to take precedence: if No Vehicle Day fell on an exam day, students

would be handicapped by not using their own vehicle. There could be delay in reaching the college. So, the date and day of No Vehicle Day have been kept flexible.

The initiative runs on the steam of flash mobs and messages on social media earlier on. No campaigns are needed today: just an announcement a day before No Vehicle Day.

Archana says the initial two months the departments tried not to schedule visitors on the campus on the D-Day but now guests are also asked to switch to public transport.

The agenda for the coming academic year is to encourage students to pedal to college and also to get students and staff to switch to e-vehicles, says the principal, adding "on No Vehicle day, e-vehicles are allowed."





Connecting the dots

Ahead of World Environment Day, here are two stories from Chennai that serve as a reminder that the circular economy thrives when organic linkages between stakeholders are noticed and then strengthened

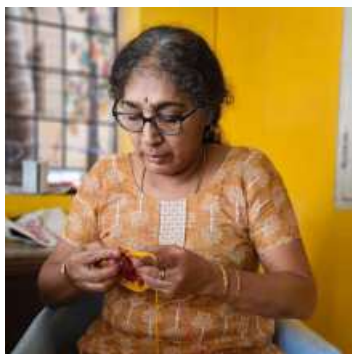
SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Sometimes, one discovers with amused wonder that someone integral to one's landscape and therefore inconspicuous, is pitted in the same battlefield as an ally by default. And the discovery extends to the fact that what they do can be a helpful tie-in to one's own work.

Kavitha Sivakumar, a resident of a gated community in Medavakkam, recently added this truth to her worldview, thanks to a casual conversation with a neighbourhood kabadiwallah, Suryagandhi Kumar. She found out he welcomes sirattai – coconut shell – into his storing house in Pallikaranai, and when a substantial amount of it is aggregated, sells the pile.

Kavitha works with Namma Ooru Foundation (NOF), and she realised straightaway that Suryagandhi and his ilk could further a NOF initiative.

Ever since the team at NOF realised coconut shells go into the making of activated charcoal, useful in water purification, and that there are entities looking for sirattai for the same purpose, Sustainable Sirattai Campaign was born, its details spelt out by NOF founder Nararajan.



Recently, NOF notched up 150 kg of coconut shells, having aggregated it for a while, notes Kavitha. The source of coconut shells is currently “responsible citizens and green events”. Kavitha now advocates empowering local scrap dealers as aggregators of coconut shells, educating residents on cleaning and storing the shells, and

tapping into apartments for them.

“The biggest hurdle is connecting the dots between households, collectors and buyers. Without proper segregation, most shells end up in dumping grounds.”

Hygiene concerns such as mould and pests also deter scrap dealers from collecting shells, she adds. Collecting sirattai, Suryagandhi comes across as an outlier. He buys them at Rs 10 per kilogram and selling at a small profit. “Sirattai is used to make activated charcoal, which helps in melting gold,” he explains. Though only a few households contribute regularly, the numbers are growing.

Every piece of fabric matters

A massive part of humanity would give the thumbs up to this observation. College education of the first

Fabric jewellery created by Vijayalakshmi; Suryagandhi Kumar at his scrap collection shop; and Vijayalakshmi at work.

adept in beaded jewellery, paper quilling, crochet, and finally fabric accessories, particularly fabric jewellery.

People who know Vijayalakshmi would use an epithet to describe her – “creative”.

Fabric jewellery is closer to her heart as it is the ne plus ultra of creativity. Besides, it takes care of the smallest pieces of leftover fabric.

Enter Ganga Sridhar, a resident of Mandaveli, a sustainability campaigner and a connoisseur of upcycling-based fashion.

An aficionada of Vijayalakshmi's delicate fabric accessories, Ganga was impressed with Vijayalakshmi's ability to turn small-sized fabric pieces into

stunning fabric jewellery. Giving her leftover fabric pieces from cloth that went into making customised kurtis, Ganga urged her, “Can you turn these into earrings or bangles?” During COVID, matching masks became the norm, and Ganga took it a notch higher. She would keep sending fabric to Vijayalakshmi to create accessories that perfectly matched her outfits (and of course, masks too). Making fabric jewellery for the last seven years, Vijayalakshmi now has a full accessory line – earrings, necklaces and bangles – all lightweight, affordable, and eco-friendly. “It is exciting to get exactly what you want by recycling fabric instead of settling for store-bought accessories,” Ganga says. “I have recommended Viji's work to many. It is a simple idea with a big impact.”

After years into it, Vijayalakshmi passes her verdict on fabric jewellery: “easy to make, profitable and loved by customers.”



water and a remarkable career need not put one on the path to finding what they are born to do. The boat might have to change tack to find suitable moorings. Vijayalakshmi is a trained economist, landing a prestigious job early on, one that allowed her to operate in the foreign exchange department of an acclaimed company. It requires some prodding to get her to talk about her stellar education and an enviable early career, but none at all about her current work profile – maker of multifarious artisanal items, including fabric jewellery. Following marriage, she decided to give up on her career only to find it in an unlikely field. Her leisure consumed by self-learning, she would soon announce her arrival as a self-taught artisan, one



▼ An annual books distribution event by RYA Book Bank in the past . FILE PHOTO

As RYA Book Bank invites new students to register with it, the window of opportunity open this year till August 31, one cannot help notice what made this long-standing charity a synonym for free college textbooks in the Chennai Metropolitan Area — digitalisation of its processes

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

If you popped by ryabook-bank.com now, you would notice the home-page header has relinquished its top slot, offering it magnanimously to a tangerine-coloured panel. It is the season (one returning every year) when this transfer of power happens. Ensconced at the top, the panel “hollers” at you: “RYA Book Registration Open. New Application Registration Open from 12-05-2025.”

An invitation to another wave of students

The announcement ends with a blinking imperative, one demanding a click of the mouse: the hyperlink leads you to a page where old members can check in with their credentials, and to-be members start the registration process with the Rajasthan Youth Association (RYA) Book Bank.

The student can check off the course and the year for which registrations are open. Proceeding in-field, the student has to provide a wide range of details, the highlights being Aadhar card and 12th mark certificate and college details to establish the registrant is a *bona fide* college student seeking textbooks on loan. By the time they wrap up the process — either registering a new member or an old member looking for new textbooks — they have an inkling of what made RYA Book Bank a synonym for cost-free lending of college textbooks in the Chennai Metropolitan Area. Beyond the Rajasthani communi-

ty’s commitment to social responsibility and the dedication of the book bank team, there is a clear and undeniable element — digitalisation of mundane processes.

Technology has reduced the workload on the team at RYA Book Bank, which largely consists of volunteers whose time is a freewill gift, and cannot be coaxed out of them, even less demanded.

Casting his mind back to the time when a truckload of processes were carried out manually, Raj Kumar Dugar, past chairman of RYA Book Bank, presents the contrast ushered in by technology: “Students’ records are now better maintained, and caution deposit payments (just ₹ 500) have become more convenient. Earlier, payments were made in cash at the office, which was difficult when staff were unavailable. Now, all transactions are processed smoothly through banking channels, eliminating cash handling.”

Non-profits struggle with marshalling human resources, and RYA Book bank has demonstrated how technology brings a shedload of invisible hands to the deck. Interactions between the staff and students happen more online than at Atkinson Street in Vepery, where RYA Book Bank is located.

RYA Book bank has impressive numbers to bear this out — be it the number of colleges, beneficiary-students or the textbooks distributed — and much of it was racked up in the last 10-12 years through digital processes.

On the e-registration form, the dropbox for colleges seems to list every college in the Greater Chennai, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu districts, displaying RYA Book Bank’s immense reach.

The years behind RYA Book Bank, born in 1963 — do the math and know the distance of this charity run. At any given time, more than 9,000 students are in possession of books provided by the project, says Raj Kumar. He continues: more than 1.45 lakh students have benefited from the project since its

inception, and each year, over 1,500 sets of books are distributed.

Initially, the book bank built the girth of its books inventory by collecting old textbooks from outgoing students, and as this approach was riddled with “if’s” (the major “if” having to do with the willingness of the students who have bought textbooks from the market to part with them), the switch was made to purchasing new textbooks under various disciplines and loaning, collecting and reloaning them till the book displays the effects of age and sustained use and, of course, slips out of the curriculum on account of a syllabus rethink.

Donors are encouraged to support the initiative in any of two ways: Gyan Deep (a donation of ₹11,000 to cover the textbook costs for the entire course of a student in the arts, science and commerce streams) and Vidya Deep (a donation of ₹21,000 for a deserving engineering student for the entire eighth semester).

On the future trajectory of this RYA Book Bank, Raj Kumar notes the project is considering the integration of e-books into its offerings. He is quick to qualify it: “However, it presents certain challenges, especially since students still prefer reading from physical books. The effectiveness of building a robust e-book section is yet to be determined.”

For this year, RYA Book Bank registrations close on August 31, 2025.



Students’ records are now better maintained, and caution deposit payments have become more convenient

No laser light, please!

Police issue advisory to RWAs and hall owners functioning around the airport after a recent incident sparked a debate about the safety of pilots manoeuvring aircraft



A. Murali, Assistant Commissioner of Police, and V. Balan, Inspector, St. Thomas Mount Police, chaired the meeting with residents.

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

On May 26, St. Thomas Mount Police Station convened an urgent meeting with representatives of residents' welfare associations and hall owners in Nanganallur and surrounding areas regarding the use of laser beams at stage events and celebrations.

The meeting follows an incident on May 25, where a green laser beam was inadvertently directed at

a flight from Dubai that landed at the Chennai airport. The laser beam was pointed at the cockpit, making it difficult for the pilots to manoeuvre the plane.

The police personnel urged the public to be vigilant and comply with aviation safety norms while organising functions.

V. Rama Rao, a social activist and a long-time resident of Nanganallur, who took part in the meet, says that according to aviation protocols, the use of laser beams is strictly prohibited within a five-kilometre radius of any airport due to the risk it poses to pilots during critical phases of flight.

The police advised residents to avoid using laser lights at events, especially in open spaces or on rooftops. Residents were asked to alert the police in case of suspicious activity involving lasers or other hazardous items.

"When used near the airport zone it is a criminal offence and endangers hundreds of lives," police told the residents and owners during the meeting.

S. Chandrabose, president, Federation of Nanganallur Welfare Associations; G. Ravindran, secretary, Lakshmi Nagar Welfare Association, Nanganallur; and S. Kothandaraman, secretary, AGS Colony Residents Welfare Association, Nanganallur; and V. Latha, organising secretary, Senior Citizens Forum, Nanganallur, were among those who took part.

Advisory by airport

The Airports Authority of India and Chennai International Airport is-

sued an advisory to the public on May 27 regarding the incident. It states that every safe landing begins with responsible behaviour on the ground.

Laser lights, hot air balloons, tethered balloons, gliders and other light-emitting or flying objects near Chennai Airport pose a serious threat to aviation safety. These can impair a pilot's vision, especially during the landing, and endanger lives in the air and on the ground. AAI has declared the use of these objects on rooftops, streets, houses, buildings, playgrounds or during events held at farmhouses, banquet halls, hotels, and restaurants as strictly prohibited.

Active enforcement checks are currently under way to maintain a safe and laser-free flight zone. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), acting under the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, has officially declared such activities a punishable offence.

Citizens are encouraged to report any such activity (within a five-kilometre radius of the airport) to the nearest police station.

Dry waste collection drive today

Athulya Senior Care dry waste collection drive is taking place on June 1, 2025 (the timings: from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Pallavaram, Neelankarai and Maduravoyal at Athulya Senior Care centres located there).

Categories include all plastics, textiles/ fabrics and paper.

Items will be further segregated and sent for donation/ upcycling/ reselling or recycling, says a press release. For details, WhatsApp India Wasted at 97517 55522 or visit the Instagram page @india-wasted

Sustainability fair at Ampa Mall

On June 7 and 8, Ampa Skyone Mall will host Sustainability Fair 2025, an initiative of the Rotary Club of Madras and the Institute for Climate and Environment (ICE) with focus on energy, water, waste and forests/agriculture.

The fair will be a platform to check on how citizens, entrepreneurs and children are responding to the climate crisis with creativity, care, and community, said a release.

Live art and slogan competition for children and a waste management workshop are a few activities that will be conducted. Ten changemakers will be showcasing their eco-friendly products at the event that will be held from 11 a.m. onwards.

This initiative started in January at a Pongal get-together hosted by Rotarians, where sustainability was the heart of the traditional celebration.

Later in March, ICE took the idea to SDNB Vaishnav College, where two workshops—one on sustainable practices and the other on water management—drew students from Rotaract colleges.

Pickle-making workshop

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting culinary workshops on June 4 and 5. The sessions focus on preparation of chaat-based items and pickles respectively.

According to a press release, the chat items include pavbhaji, kachoris, panipoori, sevpoori, samosas and bhelpoori.

In the other workshop, pickles will be made from tomatoes, mint, coriander, ginger and a few more.

Also, another workshop on organic farming of vegetable crops will be held on June 6.

The session will focus on chemical-free ways of pest management and soil nourishment.

All the sessions will be held at the centre's premises at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy.

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Recognition for two referees from North Chennai

K. KEERTHIVASAN

Football referees R. Venkatesh and P. Vairamuthu are trusted friends, having toured various parts of India for several national tournaments together.

Residents of Perambur and Pulianthope respectively, the two friends made Chennai proud when they received the “best male referee award” from the All-India Football Federation at its awards function held in Bhubaneswar in early May. Venkatesh won the best referee award while Vairamuthu bagged the best assistant referee award.

In fact, their refereeing journey started together. Both became Tamil Nadu referees in 2009 and Na-



tional referees in 2014. In 2018, Venkatesh became an International referee and Vairamuthu achieved the distinction a year later.

“It feels great to receive the AIFF award for the second successive year. It was because of my consistency and solid decision-making abilities,” says Venkatesh.

Venkatesh has this to say about Vairamuthu – “he knows when to

interfere and when not to interfere with the referee’s decision. He has played a supportive role.”

And Vairamuthu has this to say about Venkatesh – “he takes control of the situation on the field and is very good in his decisions.”

Assistant referee Vairamuthu, who got the award in 2019, was happy to receive it again. “Of course, It feels great,” he said.

The two are keen on participating in many international tournaments and are of the view that if VAR (video assistant referee is a match official in football, who assists the referee by reviewing decisions using video footage and providing advice to the on-field referee based on those reviews) is introduced in India, referees’ growth will be faster.

New academy for Heyball



Former international cue sports player Neena Praveen has always dreamt of producing many world class players from her state of Tamil Nadu.

The 42-year-old made the first step recently by starting an academy called ‘Chennai 147 Sports Academy’ in Velachery.

A total of seven tables have been constructed in 3,000 square feet, including three standard tables, two Heyball (a hybrid of snooker & pool) tables and two American pool tables.

In a press release, Neena said that this is the first place in Tamil Nadu where a table is being set up and training given for the game of Heyball, which is rapidly becoming

popular all over the world, attracting many players and offering a lot of prize money.

Neena further said that her goal is to have someone from Tamil Nadu win a medal in the Heyball game, which is expected to be included in the Olympics.

J. Meghanatha Reddy, Member Secretary of Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu, said: “It is very rare that sportspersons who excel in sports and achieve achievements work in a way that helps the sports sector again. In that regard, it is commendable that Neena Praveen, who excels in the game of snooker, has started this academy to train this sport and produce excellent players.”

MTC introduces a new route number

Metropolitan Transport Corporation has introduced a new route number: 51C - travelling via Saidapet, Velachery, Pudupakkam and Vandalur Koot Road.

From Saidapet, the route number will leave at 05.05, 05.55, 06.30, 06.55, and 11.50 a.m., and 12.55, 13.20, and 13.55 p.m..

From Velachery, the route number will leave at 08.25, 09.20, 09.55, and 10.20 a.m., 15.10, 15.55, 16.30, 17.05, 18, 18.45, 19.15, and 19.50 p.m..

From Pudupakkam and Vandalur Koot Road, the route number will leave at 07, 07.50, 08.25, 08.50, 10, 10.50, 11.20, and 11.55 a.m., and 13.45, 14.30, 15.05, 15.40, 16.35, 17.20, 17.55, 18.30, 19.30, 20.15, 20.50, and 21.15 p.m..

Yadesh Babu to participate in World University Games



M.S. Yadesh Babu from Chennai has been selected to participate in the World University Games set to be held in Berlin, Germany, from July 14 to 24. The 21-year-old has been a trainee of the SDAT-Dolphin Swimming Academy in Mogappair since 2016. Earlier this year, Yadesh won two silver medals in the 38th National Games 2025 held in Uttarakhand in the men’s 50 metre breaststroke and 4x100 freestyle relay. He also won a silver medal in the senior nationals in the 50m breaststroke and a bronze in the relay. At the All India inter-university event, he won a gold medal (100m breaststroke) and two silvers (50m breaststroke and relay).

IYA get its first woman secretary

Anita Suresh Kochar has been appointed as the first woman to hold the post of secretary of the Indian Youth Association (IYA).

She becomes the 60th secretary of the Association founded in 1965 to foster unity, community service, and youth engagement among Rajasthani migrants living in Chennai, said a press release. Uttam Kankaria was appointed as president of IYA.

The oath-taking ceremony was conducted by Praveen Kumar Tatia, member of the Tamil Nadu State Minorities Commission. Other key executive members appointments include: J. Dilip Bokadia as treasurer; Rajkumar Dugar as managing trustee; and D. Lalithkumar Baghmar as trustee treasurer. The Indian Youth Charitable Trust, affiliated with IYA, has been providing scholarships to underprivileged students.

Changes in the pattern of train services

As part of the ongoing Engineering Work, a line and signal block has been permitted in the Chennai Central - Gudur section between Kavaraipettai and Gummidipoondi yard on June 2, between 11.15 a.m. and 15.15 p.m.

Consequently, the following are the changes in the pattern of Electrical Multiple Units (EMU)

Complete cancellation of EMU services

Train Numbers: 42601, Chennai Beach - Gummidipoondi at 09.40 a.m., 42413, Moore Market Complex - Sullurpetta at 10.15 a.m., 42013, and 42015, Moore Market Complex - Gummidipoondi at 10.30 a.m. and 11.35 a.m..

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

Jhafferkhanpet federation forms Tamil club

Federation of Residential Welfare Associations, West Jhafferkhanpet recently formed a Tamil club.

“The club’s activities include reading and storytelling sessions, competitions, games and cultural events. No fee will be charged. The club will meet every second Sunday in a month. All including children can become members. No fee will be charged,” says the federation’s secretary, P. Sudhakar.

The club can be reached at 81240 14741.

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