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PROFESSIONALS WITH MORE THAN 37YEARS IN RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION INVITES JV PROPOSAL FROM LANDOWNERS

A man-made 'hillock' at Perumbakkam

A space near the Perumbakkam lake is being used as a garbage transit point

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

At the Perumbakkam lake, a vitalising stroll down a tiled pathway waits for the visitor. Ahead of that experience lies a nose-pinching ordeal the visitor has to hurry past. These pictures taken on May 19, 2025 show a garbage mound on Indira Gandhi Main Road in Perumbakkam that seldom reduces in size, as fresh refuse is shovelled into it day after day, and the clearance hardly keeps pace with the dumping. Lack of clearance is the secondary matter of concern. The garbage mound should not have come up in

this location in the first place, as it lies in the Perumbakkam wetland's buffer zone. The sight of cattle muzzling around in plastic covers is disturbing, when one knows what ingested plastic can do to bovines.

The local civic body is said to be using the space as a garbage transit point. To all appearances, though, it comes across as a dumping ground. The dump overlooks Indira Gandhi Main Road, an important link road between Perumbakkam and Sithalapakkam, and also between Nookampalayam Main Road and Mambakkam-Medavakkam Main Road.



Dumping of garbage near Perumbakkam lake. The images were taken on May 19, 2025.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



A smelly patch in Kelambakkam

▼ A garbage transit point on Kovalam to Kelambakkam Link Road in Kelambakkam. It has been around for quite a while and the only noticeable change is an effort to push the refuse a little afield, a little away from the road, a busy road particularly during weekends. The images were taken on May 23, 2025. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



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HELMET TALK

A BIS standard specifically for bicycle helmets is in place now. Cyclists on what needs to be done next **P2**



THE BATTLE AGAINST CANINE DISTEMPER

This deadly viral disease thrives due to a lack of awareness about it, as also the prohibitive costs of vaccines and immunoglobulin injections needed to combat it. A visit to an unusual ward at BMAD treating infected dogs **P3**

Treat it as dress rehearsal for the monsoon

Gentle, out-of-season showers can be a learning platform. They can open our eyes to problems with our rainwater management system that can prove costly if left unaddressed



Rainwater being cleared off a section of OMR in Sholinganallur on May 24, 2025.

PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

When May 24 dawned, a bunch of workers in Sholinganallur on Rajiv Gandhi Salai (landmark: 32 Dental Clinic) hurriedly left their regular post to man another, temporarily.

Overnight showers had these workers (whose regular tasks have to do Metro Rail construction) scurrying to clear a small "pond" of rainwater that had accumulated

on the carriageway.

As CRML is active on the road, it is the responsibility of the CMRL-L&T team to address such niggles. The stormwater drain refusing to receive the rainwater with open arms, it had to be armtwisted to let the unexpected, unseasonal guest in.

According to the one supervising the effort to clear the rainwater, the inlet channel was blocked. Meandering pipes and a motor were paired to first suck and then regurgitate the rainwater into the drain. Out-of-season rains can

be an irritant due to their unannounced arrival, but a judicious approach would be to view them as a dress rehearsal for the monsoon. They provide an opportunity to identify the holes in the rainwater management system and plug them well ahead of the day of reckoning.

Though the showers were gentle, besides accumulation of rainwater, the water spread by moving tyres colluded with sand to slushy surface, particularly at bus stop, causing commuters to tip toe their way to their buses.



Kazura Garden in Neelankarai following the May 19 downpour.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'SWD and sewage drain works move at a snail's pace'

Eight months on, the works to construct an underground sewage drain and a stormwater drain at Kazura Garden in Neelankarai on East Coast Road are far from reaching their logical end. The roads are battered due to the ongoing, tardy-paced works, First Main Road and Eight Cross Street being the worst affected. Following the May 19 downpour, First Main Road got slushy, 'trapping' a van. The same day, a company within the neighbourhood organised transport for its

staff to reach ECR as the roads could not be navigated by feet.

The residents association of Kazura Garden reiterates a demand it has been placing before Greater Chennai Corporation and Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board since the last North East monsoon: complete your respective works at the earliest possible date.

Srilakshmi Mohan Rao, president, Kazura Garden Welfare Association, Neelankarai

A BIS standard specifically for bicycle helmets is in place now. Cyclists on what needs to be done next

Helmet talk

LIFFY THOMAS

Enjoy riding bicycles? Did you know the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has come up with a specific standard for helmets for cyclists, skate boarders and roller skaters – for the first time, and it is coded “IS 18808”. The move by BIS to nudge all stakeholders to promote ISI-marked helmet is crucial for a country where helmet use for non-powered vehicles is only voluntary (bicycles do not come under Motor Vehicles Act).

G. Bhavani, senior director and head of Chennai branch of Bureau of Indian Standards, says BIS has brought this standard in 2025 exclusively for bicycle riders, skateboarders and roller skaters. In April, the Bureau conducted its first awareness workshop in Chennai and continues to reach stakeholders including cycling groups such as WCCG - Chennai Cyclists, Cycling Yogis and Chennai Runners.

“Through Manak Manthan, a monthly initiative of BIS, we take up a standard that was recently revised or formulated or is under development. We reach out to all stakeholders including consumers, manufactures, regulators and laboratories for suggestions. Manufacturers of this product can apply for BIS certification for this new Indian Standard, for which BIS is in the process of reaching out to the relevant associations for raising awareness,” says Bhavani.

BIS certification gives an assurance of quality of the product to the consumer.

“We certify after the manufacturers meet certain criteria. Later, the



company is allowed to manufacture and market the helmet with an ISI mark,” says Bhavani.

In Chennai, most cycling and running groups promote use of helmets.

“In all our group rides and events, one thing is clear – “no helmet, no ride”, says Sudarsana Rao of Vibrant Velachery.

Rao notes that if there is a rule by the government then use of helmets and its standards will also improve.

“Unlike the helmets worn by motorcyclists, not everybody sells cycle helmets. They are only available in specialised shops and are different from the ones used by motorcyclists,” says Rao, adding that Clubs such as theirs can do a lot to promote helmet use.

Most bicycle helmets are made using PVC, polystyrene and allied material. They are durable, lightweight yet robust and promise reliable performance.

Bicycle retail outlets note a majority of helmets sold by them are im-

ported and come with good safety standards, with prices from ₹3,500 onwards. “Manufacturing helmets for cyclists is a niche market and unless there is good volume there may not be many takers,” says Ashwin G., partner, 5AM Bicycle Studio.

Helmet manufacturing companies point out there will be a market in India as many cities are creating cycling infrastructure and there is greater awareness about the benefits of this eco-friendly mode of transport.

“Today, we are largely dependent on the foreign market for helmet design, which must change,” says Bijoy Bharathan, general manager, Turtle Helmet. The Government must also reduce the GST on safety gears such as helmets so as to encourage more people to buy one, says Bharathan.

Lessons from other parts of the globe

Quality helmets reduce the risk of death by over six times, and reduces the risk of brain injury by up to 74%, says a report by World Health Organisation.

However, availability of affordable helmets is a barrier for some people. In its toolkit on promoting cycling and walking, WHO notes that ensuring effective helmet use requires measures such as developing and passing helmet-use legislation, public education, and active law enforcement.

Many countries have introduced mandatory helmet laws for cyclists, including children. For example, Australia was among the first to introduce nationwide helmet regulations in the early 1990s. Canada and Argentina enforce helmet use for cyclists in certain regions and the Netherlands requires helmet use only for e-bikes that exceed the speed limit of 25 km. These policies are typically part of broader road safety strategies aimed at reducing traffic-related injuries.



A group of cyclists on OMR.
FILE PHOTO

The battle against canine distemper

This deadly viral disease thrives due to a lack of awareness about it, as also the prohibitive costs of vaccines and immunoglobulin injections needed to combat it. A visit to an unusual ward at BMAD treating infected dogs



Two dogs being treated for canine distemper at Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary (BMAD).
PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

PRINCE FREDERICK

Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary (BMAD) runs an isolation ward, alfresco – right outside its premises in Besant Nagar. A blue colour-coated corrugated roofing sheet is fastened on to a metal structure that sits on the compound wall snugly with the support of what approximates to sturdy C clamps. IV fluid packets dangle from hooks that hang from a supporting metal rod in the makeshift roofing. Fluids are being administered to Scar and Rama (canine residents of MRC Nagar and Avadi respectively) that are curled up on a table, their human-relatives standing by their side and watching them attentively.

At first sight, the uninitiated would equate the open-air ward with stepmotherly treatment to these canines. A closer look brings a board into view; and with that, a message which includes imperatives barked out in bold letters.

The message having been read, a clearer picture emerges. Here is the text: “Canine Distemper (CD) is a contagious disease. It spreads among unvaccinated dogs through contact among unvaccinated dogs through contact and air. DO NOT touch other dogs. DO NOT let your dog loiter around this premises.”

Scar and Rama are being treated for canine distemper, and given the contagious nature of the disease, the other dogs visiting BMAD for a consultation need to be kept at a safe distance from them – hence, the alfresco, removed ward.

Canine distemper treatment costs on the higher side due to the prohibitive price of the injections that ought to be administered to infected and at-risk dogs. These dogs are given immunoglobulins through Canglob D injections.

Canglob has a post-exposure dose. It also has a prophylactic dose for dogs feared to have been exposed to this viral disease, says Dr. Josika Navukkarasu, chief vete-

rinarian at BMAD.

“A typical case would be a household with two dogs, one showing signs of canine distemper and the other not showing the signs. The one without signs of CD can be started on the prophylactic dose (in other words, pre-exposure dose),” Dr. Josika explains.

“The thing with canine distemper is that even after you give immunoglobulin, there is a high chance that the dog will not make it,” she notes, elaborating that it is a pan-tropic virus as it affects every system in the body. “My advice is that going for vaccine is the best way to deal with CD. One vaccine will not do: in puppyhood, they would need close to three doses of distemper vaccine.”

Dr. Josika reveals that vaccination and treatment for distemper provided at BMAD are chargeable, but offered at a nominal cost. She adds that the economically disadvantaged can pay whatever they can, “but the vaccine cost itself is so high that unless we have people

or companies sponsoring vaccines it is difficult to do everything for free.”

CD works on the basis of outbreaks: it is highly infectious and contagious, she says and illustrates it: “In one road, if there are 20 dogs, and one of them contracts CD, definitely another five or six will also contract the disease.”

How can the community support the treatment of dogs with CD?

“If donors donate towards Canglob, we can give Canglob at a further subsidised rate, even free for people who cannot afford it,” says Dr. Josika. “If they want to donate specifically towards Canglob, they can make a general donation, and mention through our Instagram page or WhatsApp number that they have donated so much and want it to go towards Canglob.”

BMAD’s Instagram handle is @besantmemorialanimaldispensary and its email ID is bmadts@gmail.com

Bus shelter in Medavakkam not being put to optimal use



▼ The bus shelter near T14 Pallikaranai Police Station in Medavakkam (not far from the junction of Semmozhi Salai and Velachery-Tambaram Main Road) is often not of optimal use to commuters as vehicles are parked in front of it.

Most of these vehicles are those that had been confiscated by the police. Vendors also occupy the space in front of the bus stop, say commuters. Therefore, buses halt away from the shelter, right on the carriageway.

The shelter has been set up by Chennai Metro Rail Limited. This bus stop (meant for buses headed toward Sholinganallur and Tambaram) witnesses good footfall, especially during peak hours. PHOTO AND TEXT: R. RAVINDRAN

READERS WRITE

'Sewage contamination in CMWSSB water'

Residents of Seethapathi Nagar say the water supplied by the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board through pipes is not potable. The water is contaminated with sewage. This has been the case for the last two months and problem has become acute in recent days. Residents of neighbouring

colonies: Annai Indira Nagar, Anna Nagar and Seva Nagar complained of the same issue. Several complaints to CMWSSB have been in vain. The department is unable to locate the source of the sewage contamination.

S. Chandrasekharan, president, Federation of Velachery Residents Welfare Association

'Bus stop at Siruseri IT Park lacks a shelter'



The bus terminus at Siruseri IT park. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Commuters stand exposed to the elements in the absence of a bus shelter at the MTC bus stop on Third Cross Road in Siruseri IT Park. Further, there is no signboard. In less than a kilometre, the bus terminus is located. It also lacks basic facilities such as a roof and public toilets.

L. Vijayadurai,
Siruseri



Pavement blocked

▼ Right where the pavement lunges into Greenways Road (officially, PS Kumarasamy Raja Salai) from Durgabai Deshmukh Road, in an arc, a row of cable drums make it unusable for pedestrians. The image was taken on May 23, 2025. PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

'Direction board in a sorry state'

The direction board near the Camp Road junction towards Velachery is in a pathetic condition. The paint has peeled off.



Such boards are helpful and authentic indicators for road users when Google Maps fails.

I request the Highways authorities to look into the issue immediately.

A. Abhiram Sai is a student of Madras Christian College, Tambaram (East)

'Reintroduce small bus service S90'

Metropolitan Transport Corporation discontinued a small bus route number S90 (Tambaram to Perungalathur Anna Nagar Gundu Medu) a few years ago, citing poor ticket collection.

This route was popular among Captain Sasi Kumar Nagar residents, who are mostly daily wage earners, and students studying in schools in the Perungalathur region.

Commuters had significantly benefited from the S90 service and, in its absence, depend on autorickshaws. I request that MTC reintroduce this service.

V. Pitchumani
New Perungalathur Post

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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 Letters must carry the postal address and contact number.



A wide variety of bags

Leo Bags is a one-stop destination for shoppers of bags. Established in 1980, the bag store is one of South India's largest chain of stores for bags and luggage, said a press release.

Its five stores in the city are in Chrompet, Pallikaranai, Palavakkam, Nanganallur and Tambaram.

The stores house brands such as Samsonite, American Tourister, Skybags, Safari, and Wildcraft, offering a wide selection at affordable prices.



Montessori teacher training programme

The Indian Montessori Training Courses, Chennai, will be starting its 54th regular batch in Montessori teacher training.

The training will commence on July 9 and lasts for 10 months. It will be held from Monday to Thursday, 9.30 a.m. to 2.15 p.m., and Friday - 9.30 a.m. to 12.45

p.m., with online classes on Monday and Friday.

Successful candidates will be awarded a diploma by the Indian Montessori Centre, Bangalore, said a press release.

The course is a unique career opportunity to learn, understand and make a difference in a child's life, the release adds.

For details, call 9444936263, 04424614301. Email: admissions.imtcc@gmail.com

Yoga programme at Velachery and Nanganallur

Satyam Yoga Trust will conduct a four-week yoga programme from May 30 at Thiruveethi Amman temple on Thiru Veethi Amman Kovil Street in Velachery. The programme will be held from May 31 at Shri Sudarshan Terrace Hall, B-2, Lakshmi Nagar Main Road, Nanganallur. Time: From 5.30 a.m. to 7 a.m. According to a press release, no fee will be charged. The trust follows the curriculum and tradition of Bihar School of Yoga. For details, call 98412 27709 / 94450 51015 (Nanganallur) and 87544 99334 / 94450 51015 (Velachery).

One-minute film competition on disability

Ability Foundation is inviting nominations for the one-minute film competition on disability, "60 Seconds to Fame!". The theme is "Through Your Lens: A Celebration of Disability Inclusion." An esteemed jury of filmmakers will review the entries, and the best three films will be awarded. The shortlisted films will also be showcased during the AbilityFEST: India International Disability Film Festival, which is to take place at Chennai from July 7 to 10, 2025.

For details, visit www.abilityfoundation.org or call 9840055848.

Free yoga therapy for people with Parkinson's

Parivarthan for Parkinson's Foundation is introducing free weekly yoga therapy sessions in Besant Nagar. The Foundation conducts several outreach programmes to raise awareness about the disorder and offers resources. It also runs a supportive care centre that offers free physiotherapy sessions, counselling, and dance and movement therapy.

Parivarthan's yoga therapy sessions will be conducted by trained yoga therapists familiar with Parkinson's, and each session will be tailored to the needs of the participant. These yoga therapy sessions are offered at no cost as a part of Parivarthan's mission to make holistic care accessible to all, said a press release.

Interested participants can call 96000 52531 to book an appointment.

Workshop on beekeeping

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a work-



shop on beekeeping and mushroom cultivation on May 29 and 30 respectively. Both the workshops will be held at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. For details, call 044 - 2953 0048.



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The *nesting Black winged stilts* of Perumbakkam: a sequel



A nest made with piled-up plant material; and (right) a nest made with stones as base. The images were taken on May 23, 2025. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



PRINCE FREDERICK

Last week's showers might not have been forceful enough to break lake bunds, but the fragile nests of Black winged stilts in wetlands are an altogether different matter.

At the onset of summer, Perumbakkam wetland begins to serve as a home as well as a "maternity ward" for Black winged stilts.

These birds build nests on stones, padding them with plant material to make the incubation process easier for themselves (both the male and female Black winged stilt share nesting, incubation and parenting duties).

Some Black winged stilts build their nest from the ground up (avoiding the use of stones as base) by heaping up plant material and creating a mound of a nest.

A recent issue of *The Hindu Down-*

town discussed the resilience of the Black winged stilts, as evidenced by their efforts to build a nest again and again even where a succession of showers had damaged their nests beyond redemption or submerged them.

At Perumbakkam, sometimes, the stones sink on account of rains. This problem does not crop up under regular circumstances, only on account of unexpected and unseasonal summer showers (as the breeding season for this species in these parts is from April to August).

This year, ever since the Black winged stilts started the nesting routine, there were two spells of rain, causing them setbacks.

The latest happened last week, but the "householders" – particularly two pairs, with two different styles of nests, as one can see from the images – emerged unscathed from the crisis.

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