

DOWNTOWN

Sunday
January 25, 2026

THE HINDU

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

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Concrete roadside planters at Agaram Main Road are misappropriated for dumping garbage, particularly on the Thiruvanchery section of the road.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



Planters at Agaram Main Road being misused

Residents see them as space for dumping garbage



PRINCE FREDERICK

Everyday life offers a low-slung, packed grab-bag of examples to illustrate the idea of adaptive reuse. Let us pull out three. The amusing one: an exercise bicycle reused as clothes hanger. The smart one: a heritage bungalow restructured as a restaurant. The

apathetic one: concrete roadside planters “reused” as convenient spots to dump garbage.

Obviously, the last one is abuse, not reuse. And the idea of adaptive reuse can be applied in this case only in the garb of extreme euphemism, which would still be ill-fitting. Concrete roadside planters at Agaram Main Road are misappropriated for dumping garbage.

These planters left unused, the void is being filled in an unacceptable manner.

Maintained by the State highways, the wide Agaram Main Road sports these planters on both sides to separate the carriageway from the service lane. Designed to bring colour and visual relief to the road, these planters however impart squalor to it. The planters are



abused in various ways and varying degrees, different varieties of discards being “showcased” in them. The apathy is nowhere as pronounced as at Bhavani Nagar in Thiruvanchery.

This section is just outside the door of Tambaram Municipal Corporation, lying in Thiruvanchery. All decks have reportedly been cleared to have Thiruvanchery subsumed in Tambaram Municipal Corporation; as with most other things, the last loose thread takes time being tied. It is a matter of time before Thiruvanchery and Tambaram are spoken of in one breath.

Back to the planters. A sticky history of heavy garbage dumping clings to the concrete planters along the Bhavani Nagar section of Agaram Main Road. A board undersigned by Thiruvanchery gram panchayat warns of action against litterbugs sullying those planters with garbage, brandishing the

“weapon” of CCTV cameras. It comes across as mere, gassy bluster as those CCTV cameras are not to be found, and garbage dumping continues with impunity.

Garbage dumped by the public is cleared by the local civic body in an unending Sisyphean cycle; their is no end to the dumping.

Following its widening by the state highways department, Agaram Main Road began to be show off these planters and that was an opportunity for shops located right behind them to beautify their immediate space.

Only rarely does one notice shops taking ownership of the planters to raise plants and maintain them. Among these redeeming features is the greenery raised and maintained by the outlet of a well-known eatery chain.

Rather than waiting for shops to take charge of these planters, Tambaram Municipal Corporation and other local civic bodies such as Thiruvanchery panchayat within whose limits this road runs, should ensure these planters serve the purpose they were built for, and not lend themselves to this inglorious form of adaptive reuse. Though Agaram Main Road (known as Tambaram Eastern Bypass) is maintained by the state highways, the local civic bodies could consider maintenance of these planters just for their good. Raising greenery in these planters would spare them the workload of clearing the garbage that accumulates in them from time to time.

TAMBARAM

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An epic attempt by AM Jain College's theatre club

The staff and students would be donning the grease paint for a massive play based on Mahabharata's Karnan today

LIFFY THOMAS

Members of The Theatre Club at Agur-chand Manmull Jain College in Meenambakkam are staging a play at the college auditorium on January 25 (from 5 p.m. onwards). The effort is daunting at two levels. One, "Maaveeran Karnan - The sun that was burnt", as the play is called, is based on the epic of Mahabharata, and it has to do justice to it. That is the challenge the team has had to deal with before stepping on the stage, taking care of the research and script. On the stage on January 25, the challenge is about garnering the confidence to stay unawed by the occasion. It is the first time they are hitting the stage on this scale. The college's theatre club itself is nascent, born in 2024 and has only small-scale theatrical shows to its



credit – and these are a far cry from being a full-fledged production. With an entirely in-house cast and crew, the production seeks to really "stage" the theatrical talent of the staff and students, hitherto playing out only in the rehearsal room.

The play revisits the life of Karnan as not merely a war hero, but a symbol of dignity, a true friend, a loving son and a caring brother. Written and directed by Kavithiran

Kannan, theatre club co-ordinator and assistant professor of the Department of Visual Communication, the play has 80 students and 10 staff donning the greasepaint.

The protagonist Karnan is played by (Muvi) Vignesh Kumar, faculty with the Department of Tamil. Associated with the film industry to quench his love for cinema, Vignesh says he has been living in the skin of the character inside as well as outside the rehearsal room.



During the rehearsal for the play; and the poster.

six songs, a result of in-house composition aided by an AI app.

"For the last four months, we have been having extensive practice in the college to make the play look really epic. For instance, students had to speak old Tamil dialect which necessitated considerable practice. Likewise, I read three books on Karnan to first understand why his story is relevant in today's times, and then communicate it powerfully to the audience. Through the play, we have classical inspiration and contemporary relevance, focusing on identity, exclusion and ethical struggles that resonate even today," says the director, once a part of Therukoothu performances and who has made a few short films.

Subashree from the Department of Visual Communication will be showing her skills as an art director; a 8x9 feet chariot is being designed based on her inputs.

Karthick, Sri Vidya, Swathi Kurian and Pavalan are among the other faculty with characters to enact.

There is no entry fee for the play; all are welcome.

Walkathon on January 31 to protect lakes



Sembakkam lake

Sri Sarvamangala Nagar Residents' Association (SSMNRA), Chitlapakkam, Save Nanmangalam Lake Team, in coordination with the Environmental Awareness and Protection Association and the Chitlapakkam Residents' Association Co-ordination Committee will conduct a walkathon on January 31 seeking restoration and protection of waterbodies.

The walkathon will throw more light on the conditions prevailing in Sembakkam and Nanmangalam lakes.

M. Ravi, secretary of SSMNRA, says that sewage is discharged into the lake through stormwater drain networks in the region (a cut-and-cover drain network that carries excess water from Chitlapakkam

Lake) and from the Pachaimalai water channel, due to inadequate water flow management.

Sewer from an underground drainage network in Haridossapuram, Pallavaram is discharged into a well. From the well, water is pumped out into the channel through an electric motor. The excess water from the lake flows into Nanmangalam Lake.

The walkathon will commence along the western side of Nanmangalam Lake (opposite Zion School) and culminate at Sri Sarvamangala Nagar park. The walkathon will be held from 6.30 to 8 a.m.

For details, call M. Ravi at 98413 22473 and R. Sathya, a volunteer with the Save Nanmangalam Lake Team, at 90038 35423.

Nesamani Nagar RWA to start an initiative for seniors

The annual general council meeting of Nesamani Nagar Residents' Welfare Association in Perumbakkam will be held on February 1 at Home Number 17, First Street, Nesamani Nagar, Perumbakkam; 10 a.m.

R. Rangarajan, president, Perumbakkam Village Panchayat, will be the chief guest.

A new scheme for senior citizens, catering to health and mental care, will be launched

by Dr. Yayathe Subbarayalu.

Dinesh Kumar, art director and a resident of Perumbakkam, whose short film 'Awareness on Drug Addiction' got a certificate of appreciation from the Tamil Nadu Police Department recently, will be felicitated.

B. Saravanan, an emerging young social activist and a resident of Thiruneermalai, will be felicitated.

Students Lakshman Narayan J., Ekishya S., S.A. Shahasana and Shaila Sree M. will receive merit certificate and a cash award of ₹ 2000.

The panchayat electrician, Nagalingam, will receive the best public servant award and a cash prize of ₹ 2000.

For details, call N. K. Raja, the association president at 91764 53025.

Toastmasters meeting in Tambaran

An open meeting of the Coromandel Toastmasters Club will be held on January 31 at Valluvar Gurukulam, GST Road, Tambaran (West) from 5 p.m. onwards.

The meeting is open to the public, offering them an opportunity to experience how Toastmasters operate and how members develop effective communication, public speaking and leadership skills in a supportive environment, said a release.

For details, call Sirisha V H at 9080145713.

A music initiative for persons with special needs

Kalarangam 2025, a music-based initiative for persons with special needs, invites those with a flair for music to send in their works. Organised by The Vocational Training Unit, a joint undertaking of V-Excel Educational Trust and ESVI Sarada Foundation, the event invites young and gifted musicians who are specially abled to showcase their talent. Instrumentalists, vocalists, Harikatha artistes and Villupattu artistes can sign up for the event.

Kalarangam seeks to offer a platform to encourage camaraderie, coordination and collaboration within the neurodivergent community, says a press note.

The last date for receipt of applications is January 31.

Selected artistes will be contacted and supported with training.

WhatsApp 9360087484 with details such as school name, name of participant and name of music pursued.

STATUS REPORT



The Open Space Reservation land in Medavakkam. Photo: Special Arrangement

OSR land in Medavakkam turned into dumping yard

T. S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Residents of Medavakkam have requested the Chengalpattu District Collectorate to issue a directive to the Medavakkam Village Panchayat to resume tree planting on an Open Space Reservation Land in the area.

Located at the end of Thiruvalluvar Street, the five-acre plot is currently used for garbage dumping.

S. Raja Mohammed, Joint Director (retired), Department

of Horticulture, and a resident of the region, says, "On April 21, 2021, Bhoomi Puja was conducted, and a farm pond was created. The Medavakkam Village Panchayat, the Saint Thomas Mount Panchayat Union started work on creating a Miyawaki forest in 2024, but within a few days the planting activity stopped."

From November 2025, Mohammed along with the other environmental organisations sent a series of letters to the Chengalpattu District

Collectorate seeking that the Panchayat resume work.

"Today the plot is a trash yard, attracting mosquitoes and poses a health hazard to residents of Thiruvalluvar Street and nearby areas," he says. Residents say Chennai City District Collectorate gave permission to plant 27 varieties of plants within a short period of time at Pallikaranai Annaai Eri. They hope the Chengalpattu District Collectorate gives the "green nod" at the earliest.

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West Tambaram stop misused as thoroughfare

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Motorcyclists are using West Tambaram bus stop as a thoroughfare. They ride through the bus stop area (along GST Road on the lane towards Irumbuliyur) to enter Tambaram railway station parking lot.

J. Anandh, a commuter, says, riders whiz past and launch into the commuters. "MTC officials should check vehicular traffic on the haltover premises as it poses a risk to commuters," says Anandh.

At the bus stop, there is a mad rush to board buses towards Pattur, Thiruporur, Kovalam, Kelambakkam, Mamallapuram, Maraimalai



Nagar and Chengalpattu. As soon as commuters spot buses headed for these destinations, they run helter skelter.

In the melee, they tend to miss the approaching vehicles. Recently, three commuters narrowly escaped

being hit by motorcycles.

The two-wheeler riders use the stop as a thoroughfare to avoid taking a detour, a left turn or a u-turn at Tambaram (West) and Irumbuliyur signal areas to go to GST Road's western lane and Mudichur Road.

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Greenery needs attention

Kelambakkam Bypass Road makes for a smooth drive. The drive can become a scenic one too if the median gardens and roadside greenery, particularly on the Padur leg of the road, are better maintained

PRINCE FREDERICK

Motorists would like to be treated like guests, not family. Here is why. The family seldom checks itself to be on its best behaviour around you; unless you were born or married into a mutated subspecies of *homo sapiens* that can never put a foot wrong. Never a wet towel on the sofa. Never a morsel of leftover food on the plate. Never a pair of dirty feet on a mopped floor. But real families are guilty of all these improprieties and more, setting your teeth on edge, getting it to chatter in rage every nano second. Government agencies taking care of roads sometimes behave like real families, to motorists. An illustration from the outskirts of south Chennai.

Stretching outwards in an almost parabolic curve from one point (Padur) to another (Thaiyur) on Old Mahabalipuram Road, Kelambakkam Bypass Road helps motorists pass over bottlenecks around Kelambakkam. Constructed and maintained by Tamil Nadu Road Development Company (TNRDC), this bypass makes for a thoroughly smooth drive, and a scenic



one too, particularly on the Padur leg. The scenic element can be improved. On this leg of the bypass, the median garden and roadside greenery need to be walked to the "hairdresser". (No complaints yet about the median garden and roadside greening on the Thaiyur leg, newer than the Padur section and therefore still "a new broom")

On the Padur leg, the median is as unruly as the locks of a freshman who has left hometown for a campus that believes in minimal intervention in its students' lives. Not long ago in its pages, *The Hindu Downtown* displayed

sections of the Kelambakkam Bypass Road with rows of newly planted saplings enclosed by twigs woven deftly into tree guards and neatly draped in green garden cloth.

A good number of these saplings on the Padur stretch are in disarray, bent along with the twiggy tree guards or recumbent. They also stand knee-deep in weeds, which makes them almost blend into the marshy patches lying at a lower level on the sides. They would blend in but for the levels.

Returning to the guests-and-family analogy, motorists on East Coast Road are often treated like guests, workers engaged by TNRDC regularly at work on the median between Akkarai and Mahabalipuram with bush cutter machines and secateurs. Shock of tall grass following the monsoon have been removed from much of median on this stretch of ECR. Work is now under way on giving the median on the Kanathur-Uthandi-Panaiyur-Akkarai leg a crew-cut.

Motorists hitting the Kelambakkam Bypass Road want the same hospitality and thoughtfulness extended to them, being treated like guests.



The Padur leg of Kelambakkam Bypass Road wears a dishevelled look. The images were taken on January 15, 2026.

Workshop on GST e-way billing

Entrepreneurship Development and Innovation Institute, a Department of MSME, is conducting a workshop on GST e-way billing and income tax returns submission from January 28 to 30 at its premises at EDII Office Road, SIDCO Industrial Estate in Ekkattuthangal. Time: From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

According to a press release, the following concepts will be covered in the programme: introduction to GST, GST structure and components, GST registration process, GST invoicing and billing, input tax credit GST audits and assessments, GST compliance and penalties.

The session will also focus

Culinary workshop

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on preparation of ready-to-cook food items on January 29. Another workshop on mushroom cultivation will

on income tax its structure, types and slabs, introduction to ITR forms, deductions and exemptions, TDS (tax deducted at source), process for filing income tax returns, advance tax and self assessment tax, income tax notices and scrutiny, income tax refund process and tax planning strategies.

Those above 18 years of age with a minimum educational qualification of class 10 may apply. Hostel facility is available on first come, first serve basis.

Prior registration is mandatory. To register visit www.edit.in

For details, call 8668102600

Workshop on e-commerce

Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute, a Department of MSME - Tamil Nadu is conducting a training programme on e-commerce from January 28 to 30 at its premises at No: 1, EDII Road, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ekkattuthangal, Guindy. Time: From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

According to a press release, participants will learn about setting up an online store. They will be introduced to types of e-commerce models, designing a store, product management and inventory, setting up payment gateways, social media marketing, pay-per-click advertising, logistics management (shipping and delivery), and financial management in e-commerce.

Those aged 18 years and above with a minimum qualification of class 10 can apply. Basic computer knowledge is required, adds the press release.

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READERS WRITE



'Open an UIDAI centre in Perumbakkam'

N. K. RAJA

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) recently announced that it would open 30 Seva Kendras across the State. I request that the UIDAI open a centre in Perumbakkam, a fast-developing region of Chennai.

The centre will be useful to residents of Perumbakkam, Sholinganallur, Ottiyambakkam, Medavakkam, Sithalapakkam and Pallikaranai regions.

N. K. Raja is the president of Nesamani Nagar Residents' Welfare Association, Perumbakkam

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 downtown-feedback@ thehindu.co.in. Letters must carry the contact number

'An FOB is needed in Chromepet'

V. DEVARAJAN

Ever since the crossing with signals was shifted from Durga Nagar halfto Tambaram Sanatorium GH (general), there is a strong need for a footbridge below the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT) flyover on GST Road, Chromepet.

Pedestrians are having difficulty crossing the lane towards Chromepet halfto. The pedestrians think there is a lull in traffic, but within a fraction of a second, vehicular traffic picks up momentum. Pedestrians run, forcing two-wheeler riders to apply brake.

Earlier, when traffic was stopped at the halfto, pedestrians could cross the road. At times, there is some respite from the traffic. A good number of pedestrians, including students and workforce personnel, cross this section to reach MIT and board buses to reach universities and workplaces.

Even motorists complain that pedestrians emerge from nowhere, forcing them to change lanes. Pedestrians risk their lives despite honking as they cross and halt traffic.

V. Devarajan is a resident of Chromepet

'Allow commuters to board buses near the Post Office'

A. V. NARAYANAN

The crew of the Metropolitan Transport Corporation routes 96, 99, 99A, 51, and V51, plying on Velachery Main Road and originating from the Tambaram (West) terminus drop commuters on GST Road, near the post office.

But they do not allow commuters to board the buses at the point where others alight.

For commuters boarding 96, 99 and 99A, the distance

is not much longer, but for others, the walk involves a good distance.

At times, commuters scramble to board the buses, especially bus number 99, which enjoys strong patronage.

I request the MTC officials to issue a directive to the crew to allow commuters to board buses near the post office, thereby preventing them from having to run or walk long distances.

A. V. Narayanan is a resident of Rajakilpakkam



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Radha Nagar subway would do with some tweaks

The newly inaugurated Radha Nagar vehicular subway in Chromepet has improved access to GST Road, though commuters flag minor bottlenecks

T. ARVIND

The limited-use vehicular subway at Radha Nagar in Chromepet, opened on January 7, 2026, after nearly two decades of delay, has brought much-needed relief to commuters by eliminating long waits at Level Crossing 27 on the Grand Southern Trunk (GST) Road.

Built at a cost of over ₹31 crore, the subway connects neighbourhoods such as Radha Nagar, Neminicherry, Namangalam and Kurinji Nagar on the eastern side to the arterial corridor on the Grand Southern Trunk (GST) Road. Interactions with commuters, residents and traders over the past fortnight suggest broad satisfaction with the facility, though some operational issues remain.



An SUV stuck against the boundary wall while attempting a right turn at Radha Nagar vehicular subway. PHOTO: T. ARVIND

Irritants underlined

Motorists driving slightly bigger cars point to the tight left turn from GST Road into the subway, describing it as a near "reverse U-turn". On the Radha Nagar side, a speed breaker close to the exit has emerged as a choke point, especially during peak hours, when simultaneous U-turns slow down traffic. A recent incident saw an SUV scraping the subway's boundary wall.

Traders in the area have sought realignment and reduction in the height of the speed breaker, citing safety concerns. According to Sheikh, a trader in Radha Nagar, the subway had been a boon for motorists seeking hassle-free access to GST Road, but added that the speed breakers at the Radha Nagar entrance were causing congestion. "Almost every half-hour during peak time, vehicles struggle to

take U-turns along this stretch," he said. He suggested that the speed breaker could have been placed closer to the culvert near the Canara Bank and expressed doubts over whether its height and width conform to Indian Road Congress norms.

Residents, however, say the subway has significantly cut travel time, particularly for early-morning commuters. For Sridevi, a working professional from Radha Nagar, the subway has eased her early-morning routine of dropping her daughter to board a college bus on GST Road. "Earlier, we had to climb nearly 50 steps on the railway overbridge to reach the other side of the Chromepet bus stand. The subway now saves us both time and effort," she said

Officials acknowledged minor seepage inside the subway, adding that pump-

ing arrangements would be activated during heavy rain and traffic regulation would be finetuned after the trial phase. Overall, commuters feel the subway has improved connectivity despite its limitations.

Barring a few minor glitches, most commuters say the subway has proved beneficial for regular users. "Given the limited space available, this is perhaps the best that could be achieved," said Selvi, a flower vendor.

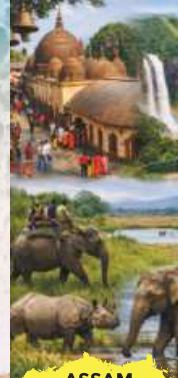
Session on organic soaps

Jothi Madhar Sangam, a women's club is conducting a workshop on making chemical-free soaps and shampoos January 31 at Sukalayam, No. 70/44, Burkitt Road, T. Nagar. Time: From 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. For details, call 98949 37906 / 9841158018.


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Art and devotion



The 31st Margazhi Deiva Thamizh Kalai Vizha held at Shri Natesan Vidyasala in Mannivakkam was a celebration of art, devotion and culture. Students from classes V to VIII presented a skit on 'Azaghu Sundarar' (Hanuman) and 'Alaala Sundarar' (Sundaramoorthy Nayanan). Soulful renditions from Thirupugazh and graceful dance performances on the verses of Thiruppavai, Thiruvempavai and Thevaram were other highlights. The rangoli competition for parents brought families together, showcasing their creativity.



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