

ANNA NAGAR

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'Traffic crawls at Padi junction'

Traffic congestion near Padi junction on CTH Road.

PHOTO: B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

C.BALASUBRAMANIAN

The section of CTH Road, that is from Padi junction to Korattur junction (near Padavattaman temple), is known for heavy traffic congestion. Traffic moves at a snail's pace during peak hours on any day.

A renowned mall is at Padi junc-

tion. Now, another renowned store was inaugurated at the junction recently. It is going to be miserable for the daily commuters and a daunting task for the traffic police. The authorities concerned are requested to explore ways and means to decongest this section of the road.

C. Balasubramanian, Padi

**'MTC buses skip TI Cycle bus stop'****T. GUNASEELAN**

Most of the MTC buses skip the Uzhavar Sandhai bus stop (also known as TI Cycle bus stop) on CTH Road in Ambattur.

Commuters have to walk up to either Canara Bank bus stop or Ambattur OT bus stop; both are located at a distance. Here, one finds a post office, TI Cycle factory and Rail Vihar, a residential colony. Hence, Metropolitan Transport Corporation should ensure all its buses halt at this stop.

T. Gunaseelan is a resident of Ambattur



Uzhavar Sandhai bus stop (above) is meant for buses towards Padi and (below) the one meant for buses towards Avadi.
PHOTOS: UMESH KUMAR.V

'Sewage discharged into SWD on Karukku Main Road'**S. SEKARAN**

Ever since it got occupied seven years ago, a multi-storey apartment on Karukku Main Road in Korattur has been discharging sewage into stormwater drain.

From time to time, Korattur Aerri Padhukappu Makkal Iyakkam (KAMPI) has been raising this issue with the Greater Chennai Corporation and Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board (CMWSSB), but to no avail.

This stormwater drain has an outlet at the Korattur lake which is located nearby; therefore, sewage generated from the apartment pollutes the waterbody and by extension, the groundwater in this region. If this issue is not addressed, KAMPI will take it up with the National Green Tribunal.

S. Sekaran is the secretary of Korattur Aerri Padhukappu Makkal Iyakkam, a citizens group dedicated to the protection of Korattur lake.



The illegal pipe connection that discharges sewage into stormwater drain.

PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Worms in CMWSSB's water'

PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

BALRAJ C. R.

The photo shows worms in the water supplied by Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board in Anna Nagar West Extension. This issue has been persisting for the last three months, posing a serious health hazard. Remedial measures need to be taken promptly. Failure to do so would increase the possibility of a disease outbreak; it can prove as tragic as what is now unfolding in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. It is just a question of time.

Balraj C. R. is a resident of Anna Nagar West Extension

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.

'Overflowing bins at Limekline Street'**P. JAYANT**

Garbage bins at Limekline Street in Aminjikarai are overflowing, to be precise, the ones beside Selvi Supermarket. Waste is scattered around these bins and the public relieve themselves in the pile of garbage; the spot exudes a nauseating stench. This a residential area, hence I request Greater Chennai Corporation to relocate the bins.

P. Jayant is a resident of Aminjikarai



The garbage bins at Limekline Street in Aminjikarai. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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Not what it is 'cracked' up to be



The tower at the Anna Nagar Tower Park remains closed for visitors. This photo was taken on January 16. PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

GCC official notes the reason the tower at the Anna Nagar Tower Park stays locked is the presence of three minor structural cracks, and not "lovebirds" hogging the space

PRINCE FREDERICK

The tare of misinformation grows wild in fallow land, left untilled and uncultivated by reliable official communication.

The ascent up the winding staircase of the iconic tower at the Anna Nagar Tower Park is blocked, but not for the reason most residents in the vicinity and visitors from elsewhere assume it is.

Before going over the reason hanging mid-air without footings planted in official facts, here is the reason the tower remains untrodden for around a month now, as provided by Greater Chennai Corporation.

According to a Greater Chennai Corporation official from Zone VIII familiar with the developments pertaining to the park, there are three minor cracks, specifically on the second floor of the tower, that need to be fixed. Tender for carrying out the repairs had been floated, and the redemptive work would be carried out in the next ten to 15 days and the tower opened for use again. The tower was kept closed as the last 30 days or so were marked by festivals and resultant holidays and GCC did not want to

risk further damage to the cracked spots on account of greater footfall, the official explained. Now, the purported reason, as vehemently believed by many residents and park users, for denial of access to the tower.

It has to do with the "lovey-dovey" section of the population, the mainstay at a majority of parks. The argument goes, based on thoughts distilled from interviews with some residents of spaces outside the park, that "lovebirds" had been tarrying for all eternity in the park, leading many habitues to tut-tut their disapproval to GCC. And that the closure of the tower was the official response. The GCC official notes the park is vast and mushy couples can find any space to share a private moment, not just the tower. And if there is no rule forbidding those who have paired up to visit the park (or any park for that matter); and why would they be restrained from entering the tower? The official notes that as a matter of regular park governance, any indecent behaviour would be checked and bad actors brought to book. There are security personnel at the park to go on rounds, including the climb up the tower, to prevent such acts, the official clarified.

'Park in Annanur needs to be spruced up'

The children's park near Annanur railway station needs to be made verdant. The facility has enough play equipment, but hardly any greenery. The ground at the park is uneven; stones stick out of the ground. Children can sustain injuries in the event of a fall. Further, cattle enter the park as only one side of the facility is fenced. Avadi Corporation should spruce up the park.

Text by L. Kanthimathi



The park at Annanur. PHOTOS: UMESH KUMAR. V



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Unkempt footpath



The stretch of ootpath near VR Mall (where traffic flow is towards Koyambedu) on Jawaharlal Nehru Main Road is in a state of neglect. To be precise, from the metro rail pillar number 331 to 337. On this stretch, the pavement is unkempt and the tiles are broken. A garbage bin near VR Mall bus stop (meant for buses toward Koyambedu) adds to the problem. Regular users want it removed, for good reason. The images were taken on January 13, 2026. PHOTOS: UMESH KUMAR. V

A time for gratitude



The Tamil Nadu State Commission for SC&ST celebrated Pongal with a special function held at its office premises. The event was marked by a special Pongal offering, symbolising gratitude for the bountiful harvest, says a press release. K.S Kandaswamy, member secretary; author Imaiyan, vice chairperson; and members and employees participated enthusiastically. The celebration fostered a sense of unity and festivity.



Honesty honoured

Conservancy worker S. Padma receives appreciation from business groups



S. Padma the conservancy worker with Ur-baser Sumeet (Zone X, Ward 133) is the latest face of honesty in these parts. And given the nature of that honesty, it would be a considerably long time before that face fades away from our collective memory.

To recall the sequence of events that has thrust her into the limelight, while about her work in the T. Nagar area, Padma noticed a bag with 45 sovereigns of gold jewellery, informed her superiors about it and through them, the police.

The bag of jewellery was returned to the owner. Accolades began to pour in, the most significant of them all being the one from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin. In appreciation, the CM handed over a cheque for ₹1 lakh to Padma.

Padma continues to be in the spotlight. Lalithaa Jewellery Chairman M. Kiran Kumar recently honoured Padma. He invited her with family to his home in Chennai and felicitated her. "It is people like this who are the role models for our society and it is our duty to honour and celebrate them," he said while giving a silver plate as a gift, a mark of his appreciation.

"It takes a lot of moral courage to act like this in today's time and age, particularly when one is



hailing from the lower income group. We, as a brand, stand for honesty and I feel personally privileged to come across and be associated with noble characters like this" he added.

Gesture by Challani Group
Jayanthilal Challani, Chairman of Challani Group of Companies, awarded a sum of ₹10,000 to Padma for her honesty and sincerity.

'Renovation of Kumaran Nagar bus terminus is making slow progress'

N. KOTHANDAN

Renovation of Kumaran Nagar bus terminus on Thanikachalam Nagar 80 Feet Road in Kolathur began around eight months ago. But to this day, the work remains incomplete. This is a small terminus but the work is unduly de-

layed. There was no sign of work for three months following the demolition of the earlier structure. Bus services from this terminus are far from sufficient. The frequency of the services is also not up to the mark. Commuters, especially senior citizens, find it difficult waiting for a long time. Temporary arrangements such as seats and shelter are in place.

N. Kothandan is a resident of Kolathur

Kumaran Nagar bus terminus on January 12, 2026.

ENVIRONMENT

Greater Chennai Corporation tightens the 'noose' around those abusing trees in public spaces

LIFFY THOMAS

Less than a week since Greater Chennai Corporation opened an online mechanism for the public to seek permission for cutting and pruning of trees at public places, the platform has received a huge response. As on January 13, 2026, GCC's website and Namma Chennai mobile app had received close to 27 applications.

Both public and private institutions and residents can submit a request with valid documents such as picture of a branch that needs to be cut or damage caused (or likely to be caused) by a tree, clearly stating the reason why it is a hindrance.

In the earlier system, applications were submitted through the Forest department and then forwarded to GCC. The new system promises to reduce time, bring in greater transparency and would serve useful for documentation.

"In the earlier process, many applied to the Forest Department, some to the Collector and even to the Police Department. Now, all applications would land at one platform for the Green Committee to start scrutinising. Once we get a request, inspection would be taken up and a report submitted for the committee to take a final call on it," says S. Nireshkumar, superintendent of Parks, GCC, adding that the Green Committee comprises offi-



A tree that had fallen during cyclone Vardah in Besant Nagar.
FILE PHOTO: S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Three cheers to GCC's online space for tree talk

How to register complaints about tree abuse

- Download the Namma Chennai App/ Go to Grievance/ Register the complaint with a photo. Make sure the correct location is given
- Call 1913 and register a complaint when you see a tree being abused

cials from GCC, Forest Department and representatives from two NGOs. The opinion of every mem-

ber in the committee has to be taken into consideration before permission is granted to remove a tree in a manner that is scientific.

The team assesses certain aspects of the tree before taking a decision on the request. GCC has reiterated that anything that hampers growth of trees would invite a fine as it comes under tree abuse, which includes concrete chocking tree, nailing of trees and placing decorative lights.

"Cement blocking trees harms it

by cutting off water, oxygen and nutrients ultimately weakening the roots. Likewise, hanging electric lights affect the photosynthesis process that plants need for its food," says Nireshkumar. Citizen groups have welcomed this step by GCC and also want the civic body to periodically give an update on the number of permissions given and the reasons for granting them. They also want this initiative to be promoted on social media.

How to apply

- Go to <https://gccservices.in/greencommittee> or download the Namma Chennai App and share details of the tree or branch that is in question
- **Penalty:** Unauthorised cutting of branches, fixing advertisement boards by driving nails into trees, installing decorative lighting around trees - ₹ 15,000
- Illegal cutting of trees - ₹ 1 lakh

Zone X tops requests for doorstep collection of waste

GCC's Saturday drive for collecting old sofas, clothes and other unwanted items is 14 editions old and still going strong

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Greater Chennai Corporation's Saturday drive of collecting old sofas, beds and furniture is 14 editions old, as on January 10, 2026. The collections are carried out on the basis of requests made by the public on the helpline

number 1913.

According to an official from the Solid Waste Department of GCC, they have received 1,078 requests from the public since the drive was launched on October 11, with maximum requests for doorstep pickup of waste coming from Zone X (236).

"Close to 665 metric tonnes of the afore-mentioned waste was processed by the incinerator in Kodungaiyur," says the official.

The public can make a request through the GCC helpline number, through the Namma Chennai app or through WhatsApp number 9445061913, mentioning details of the items they have kept ready for disposal.

The request is passed on to the respective conservancy inspector

of the zone who coordinates on the time for the doorstep pick-up. Once collected, the items will be taken to GCC's incinerator in Kodungaiyur.

Allotting a fixed day of the week for the drive helped impart good recall value to it; in other words, it was difficult for residents to forget and ignore it. Regular updates on GCC's social media pages helped spread the word about the drive.

The drive will continue. Officials however want to dispel one misconception: that doorstep does not mean entering one's home to collect the items. The official explains: "The things to be collected must be kept outside the door just before the team is expected to come."



PHOTO: RAGU R

Pongal restored to ‘factory settings’

In urbania, Pongal is often a mere holiday providing respite from the everyday grind. At some corporate houses, usually one day in advance, the marbled aisle between banks of cubicles would sport the boiling rice pot and host traditional games that go link-armed with the harvest festival. For the 9to5ers, this is an act of symbolism, one designed to strengthen their bonds with teammates. Here are two corporate professionals from Chennai who decided to go in for the real McCoy — having all of these festivities in its original settings, on the earthen path with stubbles of grass separating paddy fields. For them, this is an act of gratitude, one that renews their bond with the land where they grow their own food. Treading separate paths, these two represent a growing tribe among the urbane that seeks greater purpose by pausing the bustle, if not muting it entirely



At Chennai-based tech consultant Kiruba Shankar's Vaksana Farms in Rettanai village, Tindivanam.

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Only a toehold in Chennai

Parameswaran Natarajan has exchanged the fast lane for a pace of living best described as a leisurely lumber. There is a literality to what was just said. From being an auto journalist with reputed publications who test-drove cars that pretend to possess the speed of light, almost convincingly, he settled on a form of existence where pauses for ‘just being’ are as pronounced as bursts of activity.

Welcome to Lazy Grasshopper Farm set in a parcel of land (a two-hour drive from Chennai, at Ozhavetti village near Madurakam) that he and his wife Ayesha Chandy purchased a few years ago. Residents of Pudupakkam, where the bustle from the nearby IT Corridor (aka Old Mahabalipuram Road) is only barely muted, the two have created the option of cutting out the noise entirely when they choose to.

The farm is a demanding entity with fields of paddy seeking care, cows bellowing for their share of attention and farmhands needing supervision.

Parameswaran and Ayesha,

who is a chartered accountant, grow organic paddy on a limited scale, primarily for friends and family and then for the larger world (check out thelazygrasshopperfarm.com). Guests are accommodated at the farm. Growing their own rice has altered Parameswaran’s understanding of the harvest festival. “You are not just boiling over some Pongal at home. Out here, you are part of the land. You are part of what the celebration is.” Parameswaran’s switch to a lower gear was expected, having been marinated in J Krishnamurthy’s philosophy organically through education in a KFI school in Chennai. Seeking the same educational anchor for their son keeps Parameswaran and Ayesha still tethered to Chennai, Ayesha more so than Parameswaran. Parameswaran comes into Chennai only when he absolutely has to. “Very occasionally,” is how he would like to put it. The primary reason for having a toehold in Chennai is his son Armaan’s education. The boy is in Class XI at a KFI school in Thazhambur. For now, Parameswaran lives mostly on the farm, while his wife spends most of her time in the city. When his presence is required Chennai, the arrangement is reversed; Ayesha holds the fort at Ozhavetti.



The tech consultant is also the farmer

When Virugambakkam-based tech entrepreneur Kiruba Shankar is at his 13-acre organic permaculture farm (vaksanafarms.in) in Rettanai, a village in Tindivanam that is a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Chennai, he is not seeking an escape from urban life, not entirely.

This is how Kiruba, who runs a digital consulting firm in Virugambakkam, views farming:

“I consider this my second profession.”

He alternates between Virugambakkam and Rettanai, one week here and the next there.

There is therefore an earthiness to how Pongal is observed in Kiruba’s household; an expansiveness to the festive spread.

At 2.30 a.m., the household is already awake with Kiruba’s wife, mother, daughters, and Kiruba himself preparing a feast that is both abundant and grounded. Sixteen vegetable dishes are cooked, using produce grown on the farm or sourced from neighbouring fields.

The land itself shapes the celebration. The farm grows rice, pulses, greens, coconuts, and over a dozen varieties of vegetables. Its orchards hold nine varieties of mango, multiple varieties of guavas and bananas, not to mention citrus fruits such as lime and sweet lime.

For Pongal, the farmstay run by his parents is booked months in advance. Guests are mostly urban professionals who grew up in villages or watched their parents and grandparents celebrate Pongal close to the soil. They do not come to observe, but to participate. They wake early, dress in veshti and saris, cut vegetables, stir pots, and stand close by when the Pongal boils over. As evening settles, the celebration moves beyond the farm. Guests travel by tractor trailer and bullock carts to the centre of Rettanai, where the village gathers. Dressed in saris, and veshti, villagers welcome city visitors even foreign guests without ceremony. They join the games, the conversations, and the shared pulse of a village neck deep in festivities.

Farming has profoundly changed Kiruba’s relationship with food. Growing rice takes nearly 95 days from seed to plate, involving backbreaking labour, uncertainty and persistence. “When you know that journey,” he says, “you develop deep respect for food.”

The smog and the rush



At the Koyambedu market on January 13 and the Basin bridge flyover, Vyasarpadi after Bhogi on January 14.
PHOTOS: B. VELANKANNI RAJ AND B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Nazareth Group of Institutions turns 50



The Nazareth Group of Institutions celebrated its golden jubilee on January 10, 2026 with great enthusiasm. The event marked five decades of excellence and

commitment in the field of education, says a press release.

The celebration was graced by Parveen Sultana, Tamil orator, writer, educationist, motivational

speaker, and debater. She was the chief guest.

In her address, she highlighted Tamil Nadu as a forward-thinking state in education and emphasised

Three-day 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 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.editn.in

For details, call 8668102600

the significant role of teachers in shaping a student's life. She advised students to be obedient, disciplined and progressive in their personal and academic journeys.

She also stressed the responsibility of parents in nurturing values and guiding children, and urged everyone to strive towards leading a liberated and purposeful life. The felicitation addresses were delivered by Sethukumaran, Chairman, Sethu Baskaran Group of Institutions, who spoke about being inspired by Chandra David, Founder of Nazareth Group of Institutions, to establish a school. Samuel Mathew, CEO, 7 Miles Per Second, shared his memorable experiences and the lasting influence Nazareth had on his life.

Kirtanya Krishnamurthy, CEO, Mindfresh, highlighted the institution's community engagement initiatives, especially "Idhu Namma Avadi."

Training session on baking

Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute is organising a workshop on making bakery products from millets from January 27 to 30 at its premises EDII Office Road, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ekkattuthangal. Time: From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

According to a press release, participants will learn to make cakes, cookies, bread, and pizza from millets such as Varagu, Samai, Kuthiraivali, Kambu, Cholam, and Thinai. Butter cream frosting will also be demonstrated. The session will also delve on aspects relating to packaging, labelling and marketing.

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 website www.editn.in. For details, call 8668102600



Talent hunt for children with special needs

DSW Trust is conducting a talent hunt for children with special needs and persons with disabilities.

Children of all capabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities, are invited to express their skills in a safe, inclusive and encouraging environment. As part of the selection process, auditions are conducted every Saturday and

Sunday at Guru Vidhyashram Special School centres across Chennai, ensuring accessibility and comfort for participating children and their families.

The talent hunt features music, dance, art and other creative forms. Prior registration is a must to take part in the event.

Parents, guardians, and institutions supporting children with special needs can register through the official link:

[https://dswtrust.org/
events/talent-hunt-2026](https://dswtrust.org/events/talent-hunt-2026)

For further details, call 90434 07150 / 98408 94264.



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A view from the upper deck once again

The newly introduced double-decker bus service in Chennai does not trace a commuting route, but packs enough nostalgia to conjure up those that did

LIFFY THOMAS

A double-decker electric bus that was recently introduced on Chennai's roads ahead of Pongal is likely to evoke nostalgia among long-time residents of the city. First seen on the roads of Madras in the early 1970s, these iconic two-storied buses were gradually withdrawn only to be reintroduced in January 1997, 28 years ago during Pongal time. After another run lasting around a decade, they would be taken off the roads again. They

have made a comeback yet again, but on a "different track".

Inspired by Bombay's BEST, these two-level buses caught the fancy of commuters in Madras when they first hit city roads for the sheer number of people they could accommodate, the comfort they offered and of course, for the view from the upper deck.

Prior to their run in the city, these double-decker buses were operating on the Madras-Tiruchy and Madras-Madurai routes only to be taken off the roads by the Tamil Nadu State Transport Department within two years as commuters

found them uncomfortable for long-distance travel.

The ones that made trips within the city received good patronage.

Increased capacity

As the double-decker buses covered more ground, the technology that drove their manufacture did too.

According to *The Hindu Archives*, double decker buses began to accommodate more passengers when Ashok Leyland's 'Comet' tractor with a Mahindra Owen trailer chassis and body built by Bombay-based Jayanand Khira went into their making. The capacity of this double-decker bus was 100 seats as against 80 in a conventional double-decker.

The larger capacity was possible because the total load was distributed on three axles instead of two. The makers had accounted for any

The EV double-decker; and the buses that were on the roads of Madras in 1997 and 1970.
PHOTOS: R. RAGU AND THE HINDU ARCHIVES

buses plying on the A18 route were taken off the roads as they had "grown very old" and "were difficult for drivers to manoeuvre through heavy traffic".

But they did make a comeback in 1997. During the Assembly session then Transport Minister K. Ponmudi announced that double-decker services would be reintroduced to 'avoid overcrowding' of regular buses operated by PTC and DATC.

PTC placed orders for 20 double-decker bus chassis with Ashok Leyland, and were keen that the makers of the buses hand over at least one service to coincide with PTC's silver jubilee. It was finally launched on Bhogi day in January 1997.

To facilitate the movement of double-deckers, trees were felled and overhead wires of trams had to be removed. One cannot but wonder what modifications have been made for the new EV double-deckers to ply on select routes.



Inter-school oratorical competition

Society For Protection of Unborn Child, an association with Lions Clubs International District 3241C, is conducting an inter-school oratorical competition on 'Save girl child with education and health'. The National Girl Child Day is observed on January 24. The event will be conducted in English, Tamil and Hindi at Shree Kanayalal Agarwal Bal Niketan School, Chinna Naicker Street, Mint.

For details, call Lion R. Murali at 9444037084.

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