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(Left) The water ATM on the main road near Velammal MHS school in Mogappair East. The other one is at the Mogappair West bus terminus

Water vending machines installed

THE Metro Water Board HAS planned to open free water ATMs to provide safe drinking water. The project will benefit daily wage workers and people visiting common areas like markets and bus depots.

In the first phase, city will get 50 water vending machines. The project has been widely welcomed by people from all walks of life, however, proper maintenance is essential for the sustainability of the project. The water machines will be installed in locations like beaches, parks,

temples, bus depots and markets across the city.

According to Metro Water Board sources, two to six locations have been identified across each zone by the GCC for installing the ATMs.

Each water purifying machine is connected to a 3,000-litre water tank and features a CCTV camera for monitoring. The water ATMs will offer users two quantity options: 150 ml and 1 litre. Each tank will be connected to the water supply via metro water pipelines, ensuring a continuous supply.

By N Rathi Chithra

A thick carpet of water hyacinth now covers the Cooum River near the Rail Nagar Bridge, raising concerns among residents and environmentalists about the choking state of one of the Mogappair neighbourhood's key waterways. Once a flowing river, this stretch has now been reduced to a stagnant swamp covered with invasive aquatic weeds, posing environmental and public health risks.

The affected area, located behind a cluster of buildings, has become unrecognisable under layers of green growth. Locals say this is not just an eyesore but a breeding ground for mosquitoes, adding to their woes during the rising summer heat.

"This used to be a clean canal when we first came here two decades ago. Now it is more like a dump," said Subramanian, a retired schoolteacher and resident of the Rail Nagar locality. "Children can't even play nearby because of the stench and the fear of disease. We



Cooum choked with water weeds, locals seek action

keep reporting it, but nothing changes," he claimed.

The unchecked growth of water hyacinth is a telltale sign of sewage inflow and stagnant water, both of which have long plagued the Cooum. According to environmentalists, the weeds thrive in nutrient-rich wastewater, which continues to enter the river through untreated drains.

"Water hyacinth spreads rapidly and blocks sunlight and oxygen from reaching the water. This kills aquatic life and causes the water body to die slowly," explained Kavitha Kulkarni, who identified herself as an

urban ecologist. "It also clogs the river's flow and reduces its capacity to carry water, leading to flooding during the monsoon," she added.

The situation is particularly alarming given that this stretch. Cattle were seen grazing amid the weeds, raising further concerns about contamination entering the food chain. Authorities concerned have occasionally undertaken de-weeding operations, but residents say the efforts are sporadic and inadequate. A senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, acknowledged the issue and said a fresh

clean-up drive is being planned.

"We are coordinating with the Water Resources Department and other civic bodies to launch a systematic de-weeding and sewage interception program. This area has been marked for immediate intervention," the official said.

Meanwhile, some residents have begun organising themselves to demand long-term solutions. "We are hoping to form a local committee to raise this issue with the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board as well," said a local resident, who did not want to be quoted.

If you or your neighbours are facing any civic problems such as water logging, stray dogs menace, garbage dump on vacant sites and so on. Don't hesitate to send a photo with a caption to ayanambakkamtimes@gmail.com or alert us at 4269 0063.

Kohli strode like a colossus on the field

By R Srinivasa Raghavan

SACHIN Tendulkar scored 100 international hundreds (51 in Tests, 49 in ODIs), which is a staggering achievement. Virat Kohli, who announced his retirement in Tests, looked like having a shot at Tendulkar's record but his dip in form in Tests since the Pandemic has almost made it impossible for the former India captain to accomplish this feat. After scoring more than 9000 runs, Kohli thought it was the right time to end his career in the longest format of the game. Cricket experts felt he could have played for a few more years because of him being super fit but Kohli thought otherwise. Probably, his below-par performance in the Australia series except for his hundred in the first

Test, hastened his retirement.

Having retired from the T20 format after India triumphed in the T20 World Cup last year, Kohli will be competing only in the ODI format (like Rohit Sharma) from now on. Kohli has scored 82 international centuries (30 in Tests, 51 in ODIs & 1 in T20s) but getting to 100 tons looks improbable with Kohli not getting younger and the one-day format having less number of matches.

He excelled in all three formats of the game, which is what made him a colossus on the cricket field. Kohli scored his first Test hundred against Australia in Adelaide (2012). An interesting piece of trivia was that Kohli scored his 30th and last ton against the same team

KOHLI'S TEST RECORD

MATCHES: 123

INNINGS: 210

NOT OUT: 13

RUNS: 9230

HIGHEST: 254 N.O.

AVERAGE: 46.85

HUNDREDS: 30

in Perth (2024).

India's cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar paid a glowing tribute to Kohli on Twitter: "As you retire from Tests, I'm reminded of your thoughtful gesture 12 years ago, during my last Test. You offered to gift me a thread from your late father. It was something too personal for me to accept, but the gesture was heartwarming and has

stayed with me ever since. While I may not have a thread to offer in return, please know that you carry my deepest admiration and very best wishes. Your true legacy, Virat, lies in inspiring countless young cricketers to pick up the sport. What an incredible Test career you have had! You have given Indian cricket so much more than just runs – you have given it a new generation of passionate fans and players. Congratulations on a very special Test career."

England Test captain Ben Stokes echoed the same: "What India will miss is his fighting spirit on the field, his competitiveness, his desire to win. He's made No.18 his own - we might never see it on the back of another Indian shirt. He's been pure class for such a long time. I

texted him saying it's going to be a shame not playing against him this time. I love playing against Virat. We've always relished the contest because we share the same mindset on the field - it's a battle."

Kohli reserved his best for Australia, hammering four centuries in the 2014-15 series, which included a century in both innings of the first Test in Adelaide (115 & 141). He struggled in his first series in England (2014), especially against Jimmy Anderson in the swinging conditions. However, like all great players, he performed with aplomb in the 2018 England series, hitting two tons.

Being aggressive on the field, he excelled as a captain. Along with coach Ravi Shastri, Kohli wanted to better India's over-

seas record, which improved under his stint. His best moment as a captain came when India defeated Australia 2-1 in the 2018-19 series, which was India's first series victory in Australia.

Kohli made runs in Tests at a reasonably quick pace without taking too many risks. Avoiding aerial shots and playing along the ground is what made him a run machine in all formats. He has scored the most double hundred for India in Tests (7), which is one more than Sachin Tendulkar.

Kohli was the most successful Indian Test captain: 40 wins, 17 losses and 11 draws.

Kohli brought joy to cricket with his exhilarating strokes. Viva Virat! (The writer of this article is a senior sports correspondent)

ON HIS RETIREMENT

Despite notice encroachments persist near TNEB Office



By N Rathi Chithra

A prominently displayed notice board at the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) office in Thirumangalam warns against encroachments and commercial activity near the premises. Issued by the Greater Chennai Corporation, the sign sternly prohibits setting up shops or stalls in the area. However, locals say the enforcement stops short—vendors continue to occupy most of the surrounding footpaths, sparing only the immediate spot in front of the gate.

The blue board reads:

"This place is strictly not to be used for commercial activities. If violated, legal action will be taken by the Chennai Corporation." Yet, a few steps away from this very gate, the rule appears to be openly flouted.

"For some reason, only this tiny stretch in front of the gate it is being enforced," said Kumaravel, a regular bus commuter who boards the 7H from the Thirumangalam bus stop. "Just beyond this board, the entire footpath is lined with stalls—vegetable and fruit sellers, and even small eateries."

The inconsistency in enforcement has left pe-

destrians frustrated, especially those who rely on the footpath to access the bus stop safely. Commuters often find themselves stepping onto the road to navigate past the encroachments, putting them at risk amidst the heavy traffic on the main road. "It's ironic that the board is put up by the authorities right here," said Preethal, a college student from Mogappair. "It's as if they are saying 'no shops here'—but right next to it, the vendors are doing business as usual. What's the point?"

Local residents note that this has been a long-standing issue. Several attempts to clear the footpaths have resulted in only temporary relief. Vendors, many of whom are part of informal street economies,

return soon after civic officials leave.

"We are not against vendors earning a living," said 'Railwaykar' Subramani, a retired railway employee who lives nearby. "But there must be designated zones. What we need is a proper hawkker policy with marked vending spots, not arbitrary evictions or selective enforcement," he said.

When contacted, a Chennai Corporation official from Zone VIII acknowledged the issue. "We have been conducting regular drives, but vendors return shortly after. We are working with the police and planning a coordinated removal and rehabilitation process under the city's street vending plan," the official said.



A massive tree was felled, a lamp post and a police out post removed on the road connecting Poonamallee High Road from the Maduravoyal bridge. This stood as an obstacle to the free flow of traffic and there were traffic jams particularly during peak hours. This has been the case for years together. Thanks to the initiative taken by Mr Jayakaran, Deputy Commissioner, the encroachments have now been removed.



K. Sri Gowri of Velammal Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Mogappair scored 498 out of 500 in SSLC board examinations (2024-25) with centum in 3 subjects (Maths, Science & Social) and 99 marks in Tamil & English.

Pink autos not for men drivers, warn officials

THE state government had launched the 'pink auto' scheme in March with the sole mission of providing employment opportunities for women from economically weaker sections. However, several pink autos are now being driven by men. The Chennai traffic police, along with the department of Social Welfare and Women Empowerment, have been taking stern action against violators. A social welfare department official confirmed that police across the state have been getting hold of violators (men driving pink autos). Under this scheme, eligible women beneficiaries were given a grant of Rs 1 lakh by the government towards the total cost of the CNG/hybrid auto rickshaws. The autos are functional in city railway stations and bus stands, painted pink. Further, these autos are also equipped with GPS and a women's helpline 181. These autos will be constantly under the city police surveillance.

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Can you get up from a chair with no hands?

This "sit-to-stand" test is used often to test your future life quality. If you can't do this, you're not going to

be able to sit on a toilet and get off a toilet or get out of bed or into a car. That means you will be forced to give up independent living. You can rebuild your muscle strength to overcome failure here.

Can you stand on one leg for 10 seconds?

Having good balance as you enter old age is critical. You should be able to stand on one foot and hold the other foot off the ground for a count of 10 or longer without holding onto any-

thing. You might not yet think that tripping is no big deal, but people over 70 are three times more likely to die after a ground level fall than those under 70! Associated with loss of balance is the fact that your fast-twitch muscles, which saved you when you were young, have almost all atrophied by the time you are 60, without specific exercise. You can certainly regain your balance with correct exercise.

Can you get up off the**ground?**

Falls are a major problem for seniors who want to "age in place". Unfortunately it is not uncommon for a senior to fall and be unable to get up afterwards due to a variety of underlying physical problems - even if no serious injury was sustained during the fall. Also, getting down on the floor to role-play and muck around with the grandchildren is great fun, but not if you can't get up again! You should be able

to get up with relative ease. If you struggle, then you are again leaving yourself open to the plight of having to enter care, as no-one wants to risk you falling and being stranded. There are many really good progressive exercises you can do to restore your ability to get up off the floor with ease.

Can you climb a flight of stairs easily?

Running up stairs one step at a time is something that most 70-year olds are still

capable of doing, even if slowly. This not only improves cardiovascular fitness but the exercise and the balance helps activate the neural pathways within the brain and this has been linked to delaying mild cognitive impairment and dementia. Start slowly, gradually, and increase little by little, and you'll be able to progress from faster walking, to walking up stairs to jogging up a few, to eventually running slowly up.



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THE last date to submit online applications for first-year undergraduate admissions in govt arts and science colleges for the 2025-26 academic year is May 27. Applications are being accepted online at www.tngasa.in from May 7 to May 27. Students unable to apply online can visit Admission Facilitation Centres (AFCs) at any govt college for assistance. In Tamil Nadu, tuition fees are waived for all students in govt colleges. Additionally, the 'Pudhumai Penn' and 'Tamil Puthalvan' schemes offer ₹1000/month to eligible students. 'Naan Mudhalvan' provides skill training and job opportunities. Free bus travel and scholarships are also available. The application fee is ₹48 (plus ₹2 registration fee), while SC/ST candidates pay only ₹2. Payment can be made online via debit/credit card, net banking, or UPI. For queries, students can contact the directorate of collegiate education help center at 044-24343106 / 24342911, Monday to Friday, 10:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m



MTC assures for improved bus connectivity between East and West

By Our Correspondent

THE Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) has assured it will examine a request to improve bus connectivity between Mogappair East and West, following a social media appeal by a local resident. The move has renewed hope among residents of the Mogappair neighbourhood, many of whom have long struggled with limited public transport options between the two areas.

The appeal was made via a tweet to the official MTC handle, @MtcChennai. The resident pointed out that currently, only one bus route—70J—connects Mogappair East and West. The tweet suggested extending existing routes like 20A, 48A, and 62B via Eri Scheme Road or introducing new services that would help bridge the gap and improve access through the interior roads of Mogappair. Responding to the tweet, MTC replied:

"Hi, thanks for reaching out to us. Your suggestion is noted, and we will check on this."

Though brief, the response has sparked cautious optimism in the neighbourhood, where residents say the need for better local connectivity has been a long-standing issue.

"There are hundreds of people who commute between Mogappair East and West every day—for work, school, and medical needs," said R. Babu Rajan, a resident of Mogappair East. "It may be a short distance, but without proper bus service, it becomes a big hassle."

A resident said reviving old routes like 20A, which once served the area, and extending other lines through the Eri Scheme Road could significantly ease the travel burden for locals. He also noted that such a move could boost ridership and reduce the area's dependence on private vehicles and shared

autos. "The issue isn't just about inconvenience—it's about accessibility," said Ponvizhi Natarajan, a student who frequently travels across the neighbourhood. "This part of the city has grown so much, but the public transport hasn't kept pace."

Experts agree that better intra-neighbourhood connectivity is vital in growing urban areas like Mogappair. "Feeder routes and short-distance services are essential to strengthen the public transport network and support last-mile connectivity," said a former professor of urban transport. With MTC now formally acknowledging the request, residents are hopeful that the next steps will follow soon, possibly including a survey or pilot initiative to assess demand.

We are encouraged by MTC's response," Babu Rajan said. "Now we are looking forward to real action that will make life easier for so many of us," he added.

Neeraj Finishes Second

By R Srinivasa Raghavan

NEERAJ Chopra, who broke the 90m barrier in the Doha Diamond League for the first time, finished second in the javelin event of the Janusz Kusocinski Memorial in Chorzow, Poland. Neeraj's best throw in the event was 84.14m. Even though it was not his best performance in recent times, it was enough to fetch him the runner-up spot. Julian Weber of Germany finished ahead of Neeraj for the second straight event to clinch the top spot with

a throw of 86.12m. Former World champion Anderson Peters of Granada earned a podium finish with a throw of 83.24m.

Training with former World champion and Czech legend Jan Zelezny has worked well for Neeraj so far. Heaving the javelin above 90m in Doha happened under the guidance of Zelezny. His current performances augur well for his future tournaments this year.

Anahat, Abhay Shine

Anahat Singh and Abhay Singh bagged a double at

the National Doubles Squash Championship here on Friday. Anahat and Joshna Chinappa claimed the women's doubles crown with a victory over Pooja Arthi and S Rathika 11-4, 11-9. Partnering Abhay, Anahat also won the mixed doubles title, defeating Velaivan Senthilkumar and Joshna Chinappa 11-9, 5-11, 11-9.

Teaming up with Velaivan Senthilkumar, Abhay Singh also emerged champion in the men's doubles, overcoming Ravi Dikshit and Guhan Senthilkumar 11-5, 11-4.

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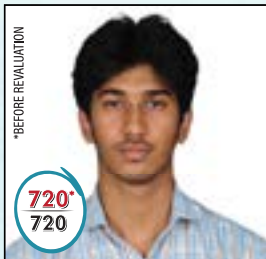
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