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Photo: S. Prabhu



Nagalingam flowers bloom in Nageswara Rao Park. Maintained by Sundaram Finance, workers are at their tasks here every day

By S. Prabhu

On a very hot Tuesday morning, 10 service personnel are sweating it out, clearing the constantly-falling leaves at the Sundaram Finance-maintained Nageswara Rao Park.

Service personnel arrive early, at 5.30am and for the next six and a half hours are engaged in sweeping, cleaning and mopping up operations.

V. Vidya who heads the team of service personnel says that the work is all the more challenging in summer with leaves falling all the time all over this sprawling verdant park.

She says that the free food distributed by a community group outside the east end of the park has led to a lot of food wastes being dumped into the park from outside. This has made the cleaning efforts even more arduous.

Summer is the time for the blooming of Nagalingam flowers, one that is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Every morning, at the south end of the park you see a bunch of these flowers atop the tall trees.

One man who waters the garden. It is his persistent efforts that have led to the blooming of several other varieties of



flowers such as Bougainvillea, Hibiscus, Arali, Plumeria and Plumba.

After the first lockdown last year, the park had re-opened for walkers in September - with restricted timings. However, with the current lockdown restrictions, the park has remained closed since the middle of April.

Interestingly, there are some permanent residents inside the park. Cats.

Sundaram Finance has been maintaining the park for close to two decades. Says

Rajiv Lochan, MD, Sundaram Finance Ltd., "We are committed to continuing our support towards the maintenance of Nageswara Rao Park, an iconic landmark of Chennai. Right through the lockdown, we have ensured that the park remains spic and span.

"While the walkers are not able to use the park currently given the lockdown restrictions, we look forward to people savouring the early morning musical rendering of the birds inside the park as and when lockdown eases and activity resumes."

Credit for the maintenance must go to the service personnel who are at their tasks even in this torrid summer and at pandemic time.

Popular food joint Mami Tiffen Stall is in slow mode now

By S. Prabhu

The popular food joint, Mami Tiffen Stall in Mylapore's Pitchu Pillai is witnessing challenging times with business dropping drastically during the lockdown.

Over the last 12 months, Mami Tiffen has been running only at 50% capacity compared to the pre COVID times.



Photo: S. Prabhu

Talking to the Mylapore Times, owner G .Balasubramanian said that since the lockdown restrictions came into force, only coffee and samosa have been selling fast.

Even their trademark popular items like dosai, bonda and bhajji have registered only minimal sales.

He says that the biggest reason for this slowdown in sales has been the shutting down of local temples.

"When people visit the Kapaleeswarar Temple for pradosham and pournami, we see a spike in sales. But with the restriction on devotees' entry into temples in the last week of April, we have seen a big fall in the last 45 days."

"Senior citizens are an integral part of our customer base but with the shutting down of temples for devotees, they are not with us now. They would visit us for evening tiffin and coffee after having darshan at the temple," says Balasubramanian.

Plus, in ordinary times, the throbbing life in this temple zone drives traffic to this food joint but that is down now.

Only take-aways are allowed at restaurants and so it is at Mami's Tiffen.

**footloose
in Chennai**

PODCAST BY VINCENT D'SOUZA

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June 7, Monday was the day of prodosham and at Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple in Mylapore, there were small groups of people outside the gates of the temple. They were here to get a darshan of the lord during the procession inside the temple premises. That evening, even as the sun set in the west, clouds gathered quickly and it rained later.

Photo by Madhan Kumar



Abiramapuram church community digs deep to support poor families

By Our Staff Reporter

When you count some 150-odd families in a community who need support as the pandemic wears them down, you get dizzy. For you start to wonder how to raise funds to provide for the families who need help at this hour.

This was the challenge that the community at a Catholic church in Abiramapuram faced some weeks ago.

Then, the St. Vincent de Paul Society unit of this church - Our Lady of Visitation Church on St. Mary's Road, got to work. The members reached out first to the well-off in the parish zone and then tapped well-wishers outside, even non-Christians.

Today, the families who have been badly hit by the pandemic get their monthly ration of rice, dhall, oil, sugar and some spices - this may not be enough to keep them going all of 30 days but many appreciate the donation. "Ours is a poor parish," says Mangalraj, a prominent church leader and De Paul member who runs an automobile workshop close-by. "But somehow we have managed to raise funds to support the families."

Besides, the church pays the medicines bill of the poor, which may average as much as Rs.30,000 a month.

"We have a parish priest who saves up money and does not like wasteful expenses and so we are able to support the poor," says Mangalraj.

✉ **SHARE YOUR STORY** of community groups in your area who support people, affected by the pandemic. Mail a short note to - mytimesedit@gmail.com

Banganapalle mangoes on sale



Would you like to order hand-picked Banganapalle mangoes grown in the orchards of Andhra, just across the Tamil Nadu border?

Then turn to Agnes in Mandaveli who arranges the supply through her contacts, at this time of the year.

We are told that ripening agents are not used and these fruits are from natural yields in large orchards. A 5 kgs pack costs Rs.550 and delivery is made by Dunzo. Call 9884928273

Temple priests given cash, foodstuff. Part of state's support during pandemic.

By Our Staff Reporter

MLA Udayanidhi Stalin and HR & CE state minister P. Sekar Babu handed over Rs. 4000 in. cash, a rice bag and a grocery kit each to dozens of priests who serve at

temples across the state, in line with the order issued by chief minister M. K. Stalin.

The three hereditary priests of Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple in Mylapore were among the beneficiaries.

The event was held on June 9 morning at the Kapaleeswarar Kalyana Mandapam on Greenways Road in R. A. Puram.

Mylapore MLA Dha. Velu and Chennai South member of parliament, Thamizhachi Thangapandian were also present at this event.

The priests of Munda-gakanni Amman Temple and Karaneeswarar Temple were also handed out this support.

Priests serving in certain category of temples have not been included in this scheme.



Sri Srinivasa Perumal brahmotsavam at Vedantha Desikar Temple to start on June 11

By S. Prabhu

The ten-day annual brahmotsavam at Sri Vedantha Desikar Srinivasa Perumal temple will start on June 11. With restrictions on street processions in place, all the processions will take place inside the temple.

Ahead of the Brahmotsavam, a three-day atonement event for not conducting last year's Brahmotsavam is being organised which will conclude on Wednesday evening. This will also include recital of the 4000 sacred verses of the Azhvaars. Last month, the temple had organised a small one day prokshanam ahead of this year's Vaikasi Brahmotsavam which was scheduled to start on May 14. However with the lockdown restrictions that came into effect, that was called off and postponed to a later date.

The authorities have now decided to conduct the ten day utsavam from this Friday that will run through till June 20, with processions only inside the temple. Currently, devotees are not allowed inside the temple.

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Teynampet postman Badrinathan delivers medicine-parcels, works in Corona hot spots

By S. Prabhu

K. Badrinathan did his M. Sc in mathematics and when he looked for a job, had many offers including from a bank. But his mind was elsewhere, not far from his family.



Photo: S. Prabhu

Today, many people in the Alwarpet zone will be familiar with his face. For, he is a postman serving at the Teynampet Post Office on TTK Road. Serving in these pandemic times.

So how did the India Post connect happen?

His father had served at rural post offices in Thiruvannamalai district for four decades including as the Head of a Post Office.

"His were days when there were no

phones. Appa would go from home to home to locate the address and hand over the letters and parcels. He found great happiness in timely delivery of posts and enjoyed the delight on the face of the recipients when they saw the postal letters or parcels from relatives or friends located far away.'

Badrinathan 's dad was keen to see his son follow in his steps. And the son simply did this.

Badrinathan has been with the Teynampet Post Office for just under a decade. Over the last 12 months of the pandemic time, he has been delivering all kinds of posts – ordinary, Registered, Speed and even large parcels.

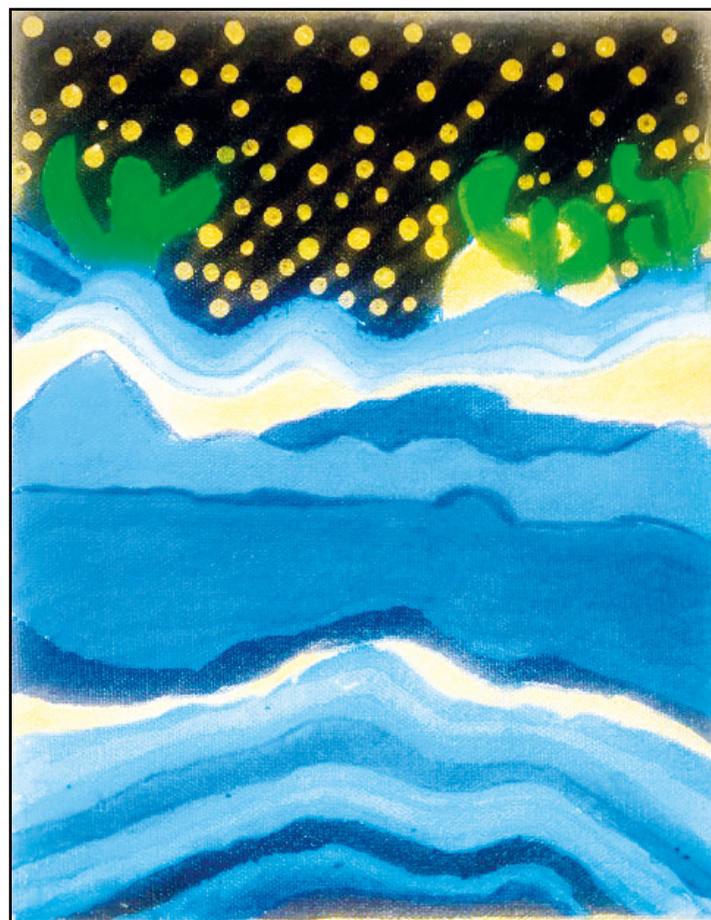
The Post Office has provided him with branded masks. He also wears gloves and moves around in his cycle to deliver the posts each day. There are occasions when he has to deliver mail to families who are home quarantined and in Corona hot spots.

He says he takes much joy in these tough times period from the timely delivery of medicines (non Covid type) to residents of Teynampet, Abiramapuram and around.

"We get a lot of medical parcels and the moment we hand these over, residents bless us deep from their heart. That's something I will always cherish - the happiness that I have been able to give them during the pandemic."

He has also been helping residents with opening India Post accounts and helped many who have lost their near and dear ones with redemption of money that falls due to the deceased account holder.

"I have worked non-stop over the last one year and I wonder how this has come to be," he says.



This work of art is by A. Neha, studying in 5th Std. in Vidya Mandir, Mylapore. It is featured in the Mylapore Times Summer Magazine which is on at www.mylaporetimes.com

There are over 40 contributions here.

The Magazine accepts artworks, poems, essays and writing on current themes from school students of Mylapore. Mail your query to - mytimesedit@gmail.com if you wish to contribute.

Mylapore crematorium re-fitted, ready for cremations

By Our Staff Reporter

The Mylapore crematorium which was fitted with new equipment for cremation is ready to be used. It was formally opened to the public this week.



The workers here are ready to receive dead bodies for cremation.

For the new facility, LPG gas is being used to burn the bodies. The workers here say that the process will take some 100 minutes for each body.

If you wish to get details of the cremation availability, you can call co-ordinator Velu at 9840595019. The service is offered free.

There are however a few more key needs to be met - replace the unreliable power back-up generator, do up the washrooms which are now in not good condition and provide more lighting on campus.

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This artistes' body has its hands full. It supports colleagues who have been out of work for over 14 months

By Our Staff Reporter

With the second wave of the pandemic becoming severe, a larger number of members of the performing arts community have been scraping their purses and wanting help. Just rations that can keep their families going.

And this has got one body going again - Association of Bharatanatyam Artistes (ABHAI) which has its operations out of the Narada Gana Sabha complex in Alwarpet, has been up and about.

Recently, with the generous sponsorship from a senior ABHAI member - musician, nattuvangam artiste and dancer Neela Sukhanya, ABHAI's team says it distributed grocery kits to 31 deserving artistes, lighting technicians, make-up artists, costume tailors, Bharatanatyam teachers, mridangam and veena repairers and even ushers.

Says Roja Kannan, dancer and teacher and ABHAI's head, "We have had to reach out to artistes not only in Chennai but also outside and this includes even folk artistes."

Roja, who has her dance academy in Alwarpet says that many artistes needing help do not approach for it directly for obvious reasons and their cases or situation is reported to ABHAI via their colleagues or peers.

Last year, ABHAI collected over Rs.30 lakhs in donations, much of it coming from across India and some from abroad and Roja says the need for donations now is immense because the pandemic has remained and artistes have been out of work for over 14 months.

ABHAI has not approached the TN government yet to represent the case of hundreds of artistes but is in the process of writing to the department that oversees the arts and of getting an audience with chief minister M. K. Stalin.

"Screening the petitions, cross checking, communicating and arranging the money or grocery bags calls for spending lots of time and is challenging. We are doing our best," says Roja Kannan.

ABHAI contacts - Ph: +91 44 4332 7797 / Mob: +91-8903717751



Obituary

Ramola Ramachandran passed away on June 6 at the age of 69. She was a resident of Mylapore for the last 60 years.



A retired teacher from Chellammal Bala Vidyalaya School in Mylapore where she joined in 1976, she was later, the centre head at IPA Abacus at its local centre.

Ramola attended St Anthony's Girls School on Madha Church Road and then completed her under-grad studies in economics at Queen Mary's College,

Mylapore.

Her life revolved around activities of imparting knowledge to children and experiencing life in Mylapore, her family said.

Contacts: Anandhi Kumar - 9840411922 / Aarthi - 9841023896. Address - 24/8, 7th Main Road, R. A. Puram



Another priest of the Catholic diocese of Madras-Mylapore passed away due to Covid. **Fr. Y. J. Prasad Ignatius**, 61 years old, passed away early on June 10 at a private hospital where he was being treated for Covid.

He was part of the team that worked under the archbishop at the Bishop's House in San Thome, handling property affairs of the diocese.

Fr. Ignatius was best known for his sermons and preaching and for building a new, impressive church in Anna Nagar when he was parish priest there.

The priest's funeral Mass was held at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre in San Thome on June 10 and the burial was at the cemetery for diocesan priests in Luz, adjoining the campus of Our Lady of Light Church in Luz.

Recently, a retired and senior priest of the diocese, Fr. S. J. Antonyswamy passed away after being ill for some time. He was once the Vicar-general of the diocese, an important post of the local church.



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Inviting Children to Contribute Creatively

MYLAPORE TIMES is launching on its website this summer season (www.mylaporetimes.com) a magazine to feature contributions from school students - Std.5 and above.

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- **Short stories** - max - 300 words.
- **Poems** - max. 15 lines
- **Photo Features** - choose a subject (a terrace garden, evening games in colony, etc); shoot 3/4 great, different photos; write 7 lines on the subject
- **Middles** - light, local notes - on a community's Covid effort, fun Sunday lunch at home, Hangout experience, etc. - 100 words.
- **Art** - painting, drawing, sketches.

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If you want ideas to start from, you too can e-mail the Ed.