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## Parks open now for limited hours. Regular users enjoy their morning walks.

By S. Prabhu

K. Venugopal and S. Surendranath were colleagues once upon a time in a corporate firm but now they are walking mates. The duo used to catch up every morning at the Nageswara Rao Park in Luz.



Last Monday morning, as it was at all other public parks, the gates of this park were thrown open at 6 a.m. and the duo were glad to see each other here. (Limited access to public parks are part of the relaxed pandemic-time regulations)

They said they had been missing the serene atmosphere at the park after it was closed in the fourth week of April.

As they did the rounds of the park, Surendranath's touched on his work experience at the Mettur Plant, near

Salem, where he used to work years ago.

Venugopal, a resident of Mandaveli, has been a regular at the park for 27 years. He says that while he walked on the roads as part of his fitness regime in May and the first fortnight of June, there is a comfort factor inside the park.

In the past, he says he used to do six rounds but now he has cut it down by half. "After one or two rounds, we sit for a few minutes, relax a bit and start our walk again. This morning, being day one, we walked for about 25 minutes. We hope to gradually increase our walk time."

Surendranath, who resides close to the park - on Ramachandra Road, too has been a walker at the Nageswara Rao Park for over two decades.

He says that this morning routine also offers him an opportunity to catch up with friends "We usually discuss public affairs and the state of the economy. A visit to the park helps me catch up with old acquaintances. We have a lot of common friends here at this park."

Monday morning saw many regulars back at the park for their morning walk.

In the sandy space at the rear of the park, a silambam coaching group was warming up.

Sundaram Finance has been maintaining the Nageswara Rao Park for close to two decades.

As per the current restrictions, the park will be open for walkers only from 6am to 9am.

## Minister reviews housing projects off Marina Loop Road

By Our Staff Reporter

State minister T. M. Anbarasan who handles Slum Clearance Board portfolio visited the area off Marina Loop Road in San Thome recently to review the progress of projects in this area. For sometime now, the Board has been building new housing blocks for residents of this area.



The minister inspected the soon-to-be-completed blocks where apartments will be allotted to residents of Nochikuppam and Nochi Nagar and a few from Doomingkuppam.

The project related to housing Doomingkuppam residents is yet to get off the ground.

Mylapore MLA, Dha. Velu who accompanied the minister on this review tour says that the previous state government issued a tender for the development of 14-storeyed blocks to accommodate Doomingkuppam families who now live in the old blocks.

Many people have objected to the high-rise plans, saying that issues like failure of the lifts and blockages in water and sewage and their lifestyle do not fit into plans for high-rise blocks for this community.

The Board will be asked to take a second look at these plans, says the MLA.

Chennai South MP, Thamizhachi Thangapandian was also present during the minister's review tour of this area.

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Dark clouds gather above the Marina sands on June 14 evening. The city has received small amounts of rain, on and off the past seven days.

Photo by Madhan Kumar

## Mylapore MLA office formally opened in Alwarpet

By Our Staff Reporter

The office of the Mylapore MLA has been formally opened though it will take some days for its operations to fall in place.

At a gala event where the campus where the office is located – the Chennai Corporation office space on C. P. Ramaswamy Road in Alwarpet – and the office space were colourfully decorated and the red carpet rolled out for the guests, the office was opened by Udhayanidhi Stalin, MLA in the presence of the MP for Chennai South, Thamizhachi Thangapandian.

The MLA, Dha. Velu says while the office is open from 10 am to 5 pm daily, it will take time for him to put a small team in this place since he now has to be engaged with the oncoming sessions of the legislature when the Assembly meets soon.

Once the operations are in place, the details of the functioning will be made public.

“I am anyway visiting all parts of the constituency now and have covered about 60% of the area,” says Velu.

Velu has redone the office space that was previously used by R. Nataraj, his predecessor.

Meanwhile, you can message the MLA at his WhatsApp contact - 9840422222.



## Civic body focuses on hosting vaccination camps in congested colonies

By Our Staff Reporter

For the past fortnight, Chennai Corporation has focussed on hosting vaccination camps in congested areas and interior colonies where many people may not have taken even the first dose. And these special camps are held morning after morning.



For example, on June 12, five vaccination camps were held by GCC.

Camp 1 was in Srinivasapuram - at the Chennai Corporation community hall. Camp 2 was held at Rani Meiyammai Towers, MRC Nagar, where the priority was for frontline workers including watchmen, maids and local civic workers.

Camp 3 was held in Govindasamy Nagar, (near Sangeetha restaurant, R. A. Puram zone, off the small bridge), Camp 4 was held in Rotary Nagar, near the Light House MRTS railway station and Camp 5 was held inside the congested Lala Thottam, Mylapore.

These camps were open to people in the 18+ and

45+ age group, both for the first and second dose for those who qualified.

Contract health workers are being asked to coax all residents in colonies where each camp is being hosted to head to the venue and this seems to have worked well.

In Lala Thottam, there was a long queue on the morning operations began.

### MYLAPORE TIMES

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Admissions to Class 11 in many schools began on Monday this past week across Mylapore zone. This follows the state government's decision not to hold exams for students of Class 9, 10 and 11 this year due to pandemic conditions.

At Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls School, Mylapore, a team of school staff screened admission forms submitted by students and their guardians or parents. This process is being held in the school's prayer hall.



## Sri Ramakrishna Math presents foodstuff, thermometers to local area civic workers

By Our Staff Reporter

Sri Ramakrishna Math's team in Chennai has been engaged in relief services at pandemic time in various parts of the city from its Mylapore headquarters.

On June 14, the Math distributed a groceries kit and a digital thermometer to civic workers of the Mylapore and Mandaveli areas.

A small function was arranged in the Math premises.

Gagandeep Singh Bedi, Commissioner, Greater Chennai Corporation, retired

Justice Chandru, Madras High Court and Justice Satyamurthy who were guests distributed the kits to beneficiaries.

Swami Gautamanandaji Maharaj, vice-president, worldwide Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission and president of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai and some monks of the Math were also present.

The Math had served around 9000 families in various ways during the period of May-June 2021, says Swami Dharmishthananda, manager of the Math.

## Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple team acts against tenants who have big rent arrears

By S. Prabhu

Following the Madras High Court's direction on the need for more transparency relating to temples' properties across Tamil Nadu, the managers of Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple in Mylapore have begun a drive to collect arrears of rent on the properties that belong to this temple.



Last Monday, one property alongside The Mylapore Club campus was shut down and sealed. A food hawkking business was run from this space. Now, the hawkker has set up shop on the wide pavement outside.

Similar actions were being undertaken through the day.

Talking to the Mylapore Times on Tuesday, the owner of a long-standing cloth store on North Mada Street that has been here for over seven decades said that they had received a rent arrears notice recently.

To bring the rent to a reasonable level from the substantially low rents that the temple had been collecting for several decades, the temple had a few years ago tripled the rent of the properties in and around the Mada Streets.

With a number of court cases cropping up in recent times on temples not paying attention to income from its properties, the officer of Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple sent notices to the shops asking them to pay the rents that were due.

The shop owner said that they did pay some of the increased rent but there were still arrears that they had to pay. "The sudden increase in rent over the last few years created stress and the lockdown and the consequent slowdown in business has further accentuated our financial challenges."

"My grandfather started this shop 70 years ago and then my father continued the business. We feel blessed to be selling sacred vastrams in this historical location and want to continue our ancestral business, though the increase in rent and the drive in collection of arrears coming in a period of lockdown is putting us under severe financial stress."

Most of the shops in and around the Mada Streets have remained shut for well over a month. Even prior to that, with the entry of people into temples having been restricted from the last week of April, the business has been slow and the owners have been feeling the financial pinch.



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A group of devotees of lord Shiva of Sri Kapali Temple recently cleared the vegetation growing in the bed of the temple tank. Men and women volunteered to undertake this task.

The vegetation has been growing wild in parts of the tank where a few pools of water stand.

For some two months now, the tank has been practically dry. The short spells of rain in recent days has increased the spread of water here.

## This spicy home-made *sundal* sells fast at a street corner

By S. Prabhu

This may be pandemic time but for some people, the sort of people who love their favourite food or snack, the virus is just not on their minds.



Photo: S. Prabhu

If you move around some of the busy zones of Mylapore, you may spot a few places where a crowd has gathered. And you can bet your last rupee that those people are trying to grab a snack.

Even small-time snack-sellers draw a big crowd. Take this hawkker who parks himself at the junction of Ponnambala Vadhyar Street and Pitchu Pillai Street.

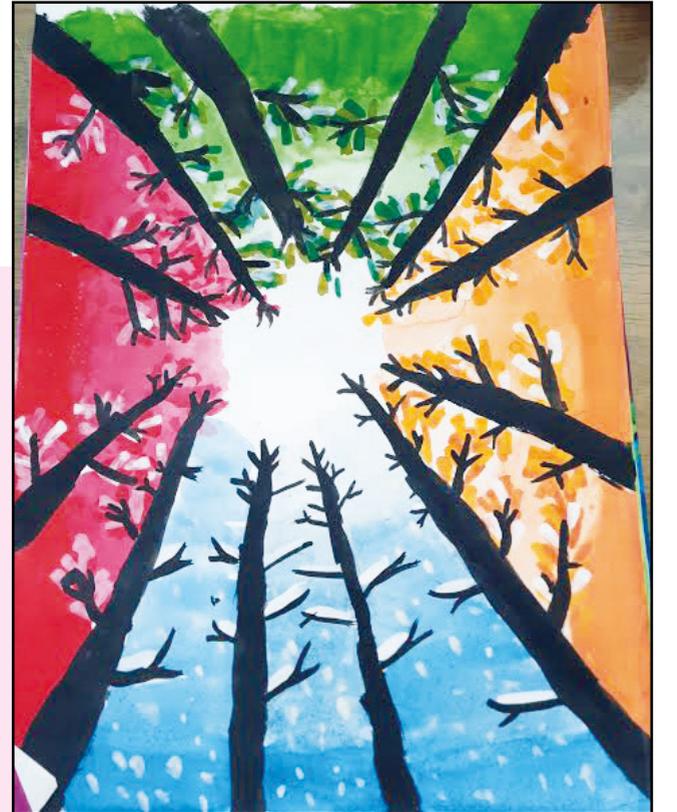
He sells steaming hot and spicy sundal. Home-made. And it vanishes in under an hour.

The sundal is placed on top of the seat of the man's moped and there are people who anticipate his arrival.

He is at this spot at 6 p.m. A pack of spicy sundal costs twenty rupees. The moment the first jar of sundal is sold out, he brings out the second jar. He also has kozhakattai to offer.

This painting is by Roshni R., a Std.5 student at Vidya Mandir, Mylapore. She says she has been learning art from Priya Natarajan (Lil' Studio) for the past three years. This piece of work has been posted online at the Mylapore Times Summer Magazine at [www.mylaporetimes.com](http://www.mylaporetimes.com) along with stories, art, poems and notes from 40 students of the neighbourhood.

Contributions are welcome from school students till the end of June.



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