

ANNOUNCEMENT

In view of the Coronavirus threat, we are suspending the publication and distribution of the print edition of *Mambalam Times* until further notice. The internet edition will be uploaded as usual - General Manager

Track COVID-19 cases using official dashboard

By Our Staff Reporter

Coronavirus cases are on the rise not only in India but all over the globe. As the number of cases has reached 2,300 in India as on April 3, people are panicking even more.

This is resulting in the sharing of fake news via WhatsApp and other social media platforms.

In order to avoid panic and track credible information, users need to know the correct sources for it.

Other than WHO, which is the most credible source as of now, for India, the COVID-19 dashboard of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) brings plenty of information.

ESRI, a global leader in Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, is now assisting NDMA in maintaining a new dashboard that helps track the number of cases reported in the country. The dashboard details the total number of cases reported in India as well as the world. It also shows the number of cases that resulted in the death of the patients.

The dashboard also lists the numbers city-wise giving a closer look at what's happening in the country.

To keep track, visit the dashboard at <https://gis.ndma.gov.in/arcgis/apps/sites/#/data>

COVID-19 STATISTICS AT 3 P.M ON APRIL 3

Area	Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
Worldwide	10,18,948	2,12,072	53,179
India	2,301	157	56
Tamilnadu	309	6	1
Chennai	26	5	1



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4,240 staying in Corporation shelters



By Our Staff Reporter

4,240 persons have been accommodated in Corporation community halls and shelters after the imposition of the nationwide lockdown.

Corporation commissioner G. Prakash said that 2,444 persons are staying in the civic body's community halls and 1,796 in the shelters run by the Corporation.

Most of the persons provided with shelter are from West Bengal (691) followed by Bihar (186) and Odisha (175).

They have been split across 30 community halls, 52 night shelters, 3 wedding halls and 3 corporation schools, and Guru Nanak College in Velachery, officials said, adding that more wedding halls have been earmarked in case more migrants need to be accommodated.

The Corporation is aided by several NGOs and social welfare groups in providing daily food for these migrants.

With industries shut, residents get 5MLD more water

By Our Staff Reporter

With industrial units in the city under lockdown, the 5 million liters of water a day (MLD) meant for them is being used to supply residents in various areas.

According to a senior Metrowater official, due to the lockdown, the household consumption of water has increased by about 20%.

Since the shutting down of the desalination plant at Nemmeli for repairs, Metrowater has managed to continue the regular water supply by drawing water from Veeranam lake in Cuddalore district.

14.57 lakh working in unorganised sector to get commodity kit

By Our Staff Reporter

The Tamilnadu government has asked the State Labour and Employment Department to procure 14.57 lakh kits each containing 15 kg. rice and 1 kg. each of dhal and oil to be distributed among registered members of welfare boards for workers in the unorganised sector.

The dole will cost the exchequer Rs. 93.21 crores. The commodities will be procured through the State Civil Supplies Corporation.

92,445 pensioners and family pensioners in Tamilnadu construction workers' welfare board and drivers in unorganised sector are among the beneficiaries.

The department has also sought the government's permission to provide aid to 12.79 lakh registered members of 14 other welfare boards like handloom and handloom silk weaving workers, footwear and leather goods manufacturing and tannery workers, goldsmiths, pottery workers, domestic workers, powerloom workers, street vendors and cooks.

App helps Corporation geo-tag fever cases

By Our Staff Reporter

M. P. Azhagu Pandia Raja (Research Fellow in Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs) has developed an app that will enable residents who are suffering from fever or are in home quarantine to take a picture of their house or the isolation sticker and send it to Corporation through an application.

If there are an unusual number of cases of fever in a particular part of the city, the Corporation will immediately be able to start containment measures and stop the community spread of the virus.

"Fever is the primary indicator for coronavirus and we need to know where the virus is spreading," said a health official. Geo-tagging helps in collating data to a location or area much easily, he added.

He revealed that around 1,000 citizens under home quarantine have already installed the app and the data has been collected on the command and control centre (CnC).

Secondly, in case any establishment violates the lockdown, citizens can send a photo through the app for immediate action by the Corporation.

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School friends get together to sponsor food in Amma Unavagams



By Our Staff Reporter

S. Balasubramanian and his five school friends are sponsoring the daily food served in Amma Unavagam in Sivagnanam Road (T. Nagar) and also in Mylapore, R.A Puram and Greenways Road.

The group has allocated Rs. 15,000 a day for the purpose.

The group is also helping the 250 homeless persons sheltered in four community halls in Alwarpet, Mandaveli, Mylapore and Abhiramapuram by providing them with essential supplies that the organisers ask for, Balasubramanian said.

Balasubramanian and his five friends do the field work while behind them is a team of 100 other volunteers who are contributing to the work.

Jayalakshmi, in-charge of Amma Unavagam in Sivagnanam Road, said that the footfall has almost doubled to 240 after word spread that food is available there.

Due to the increase in the crowd, policemen are regulating the customers to ensure they maintain the minimal distance.

"I issue tokens and give Balasubramanian the number. He pays for the customers," she said.

CBSE directs affiliated schools to promote Stds. 1 to 8 students

By Our Staff Reporter

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on April 1 announced that all students of Stds. 1 to 8 may be promoted to the next grade.

This follows an advisory from the HRD Ministry.

The Board advised affiliated schools that have not completed their examination, evaluation and promotion process for Stds. 9 and 11, to promote students based on school-based assessment.

Should there be students who are unable to clear the internal process, the schools may give them the opportunity of appearing for school-based tests, online or offline, and their promotion may be decided, said CBSE.

Centre will decide on extension of lockdown

By Our Staff Reporter

Chief minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on April 1 said that the Union government will take a decision on extending the 21-day lockdown to combat the spread of COVID-19.

Palaniswami was one of the ten chief ministers who took part in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video conference on April 2 on the containment plans for coronavirus.

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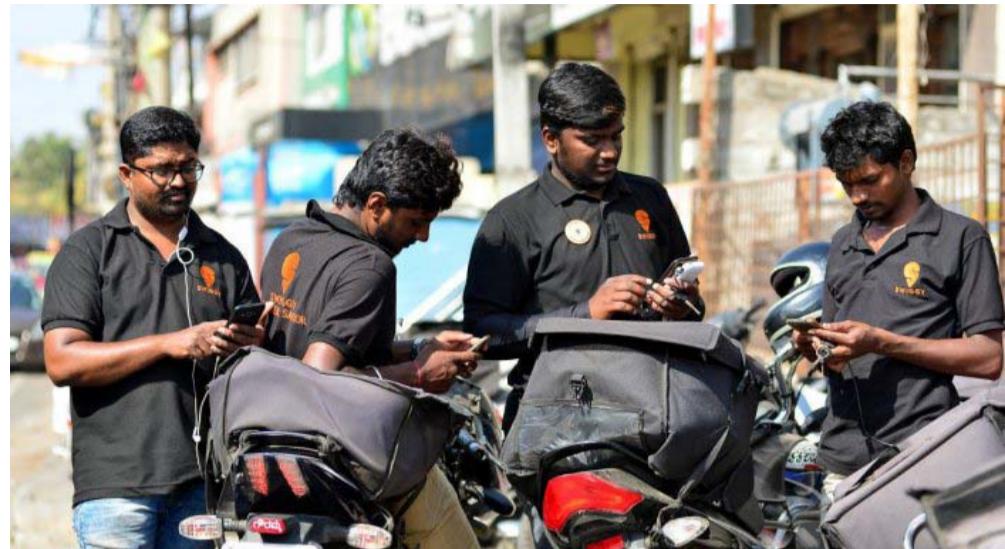
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Govt. permits food aggregators to start door delivery



By Our Staff Reporter

Food aggregators including Zomato and Swiggy have been permitted to resume their operations of delivering food at homes since March 29.

It has brought relief to scores of food delivery agents who had been rendered jobless following the 3-week countrywide lockdown announced on March 24.

Raghу, a resident of Jafferkhanpet, told this reporter that he delivered 10 meals on March 29 though the number is normally 25 to 30.

He said that the demand has come down by almost 70% as many fear to consume outside food.

In many apartment complexes, customers wait at the gate to collect the food as we are not allowed inside, he said.

"I earn an average of Rs. 20 per delivery," he added.

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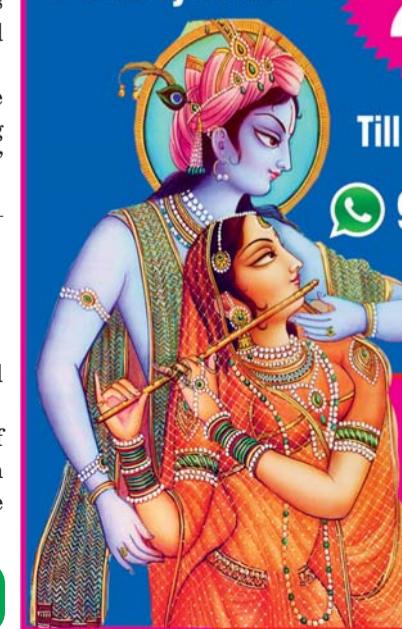
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CavinKare sells 2 ml. sanitiser sachet for a rupee

By Our Staff Reporter

CavinKare has come out with a 2 ml. sanitiser sachet priced at Re. 1.

According to C. K. Ranganathan (CMD), the concept of launching the sanitiser in a sachet and making it available in a typical FMCG kirana outlet is an ideal step to ensure the safety of the people at this crucial time.

GROW MORE TREES

QR coded passes for those in essential services



By Our Staff Reporter

The Chennai police are issuing QR coded passes online for those involved in essential services that are permitted during the lockdown period.

A statement issued on March 29 said that those who need passes can apply online in the website <https://covid19.chennaipolicecitizenservices.com> by filling the relevant form.

Once approved, the applicants will receive a link via SMS to the registered phone number and an e-mail through which they can download a QR code.

They have to show this QR code when stopped at the police checkpoints.

The policemen may scan the QR before permitting the person to proceed.

For any clarification, call 044-23452650.

Door delivery of vegetables to keep residents safe

By Our Staff Reporter

Ahimsa Organic, a farmer producer company, has joined hands with the state-owned Tamil Nadu Supply Chain Management (TNSCM) to door deliver vegetables sourced from farmers in Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri districts.

The vegetables are sorted and cleaned in Palacode under the supervision of officials from the Tamil Nadu agriculture marketing wing.

These are packed in bags, each containing 5 kg. of assorted vegetables, and transported in disinfected mini-trucks for distribution among homes in Chennai and Coimbatore.

Ahimsa has tied up with RISE, an NGO, for distribution in Chennai, besides Sowkha, a private firm that sells vegetables online.

The exercise is being undertaken as a public-private partnership initiative taking necessary precautions on account of COVID-19 threat.

Lockdown violators reprimanded with sit-ups



By Our Staff Reporter

On April 1, Villivakkam police inspector Rajeesh Babu intercepted a few violators of the lockdown on two-wheelers at the Padi flyover.

He made them wear masks that were cut in the shape of the virus, and hung placards around their necks.

They were also made to do 10 sit-ups and take a pledge saying, 'I will not step outside my house'.

Last week, he had worn a virus-helmet to explain the severity of the pandemic, of which pictures and videos had gone viral on social media too.

Hotels provide food for stray dogs



By Our Staff Reporter

As soon as the lockdown was announced on March 24, animal lover and marketing head of GRT Hotels Pooja Parameswaran stocked up on pet food to feed 30 stray dogs in her neighbourhood in the days ahead.

Vikram Cotah (COO of the hotel) took notice and decided to scale up the efforts by having the Radisson Blu kitchen cook meals that could feed at least 100 street dogs a day.

"We were initially cooking for migrant workers sheltered in community halls. When we distributed the meals, we saw scores of street dogs rushing to us for food. We realized that they were all going hungry and decided to fill the gap," says Vikram.

What started as a heartwarming gesture from this hotel, has now grown into a movement of its own, involving more hotels which have come forward to ease the strain on rescuers' pockets by dishing out parcels of food to feed hundreds of street animals across the city at risk of starvation with restaurants and eateries shut down.

The Residency Towers in T. Nagar is feeding close to 120 strays daily.

Every evening, animal rescuer P. Ashwath and his team of volunteers have been picking up food from the hotels and spreading out to feed hundreds of stray animals in Choolaimedu, Purasawakkam, Anna Nagar, Mogappair and Arumbakkam.

Corporation to screen all houses in city

By Our Staff Reporter

The Corporation is likely to begin door-to-door screening for flu-like symptoms across all 200 wards, to break the chain and ensure 'asymptomatic' persons with domestic/international travel history do not infect family members, particularly the elderly, during the lockdown.

It will recruit 10,000 volunteers, including from SHCs, to visit all houses.

They will collect information on international or travel history, ask residents if they have symptoms of cough or fever and counsel them, said a Health Department official.

He said that the enumerators will maintain adequate social distancing to prevent themselves becoming sources of infection.

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Amid lockdown many depend on Amma Canteen for food



By Our Staff Reporter

Amma Canteens are a boon for many persons following the closure of hotels because of the lockdown in force. This photo was taken in Jaffer Khanpet.

Digital board to spread awareness on Coronavirus



By Our Staff Reporter

A tower installed in Panagal Park, T. Nagar recently displays information about Coronavirus and important phone numbers.

Banks take precautions to prevent spread of COVID-19



By Our Staff Reporter

Chairs arranged with the required distance separating them for customers outside a bank on 12th Avenue, Ashok Nagar.

Lockdown makes life difficult for transgenders

By Our Staff Reporter

Transgenders are struggling to make ends meet since the lockdown began.

Many of them who seek alms or engage in sex work to make a living, have been running short of resources in the last few days.

Jaya (Member of NGO Sahodaran) said that though several trusts and philanthropists have come forward to provide support for transgenders, the problems are for those who are HIV positive. Due to deficiency in immunity, it is not safe for them to visit the main government hospital with ARP centres as COVID-19 patients are also being treated there.

Crowd in makeshift vegetable market in playground



By Our Staff Reporter

Corporation workers converted the Corporation playground on Venkatanarayana Road in T. Nagar into a vegetable market as a temporary measure to prevent overcrowding in regular markets.

Most of the vendors in Mambalam market and nearby shops have shifted to the playground.

But here also there is a big crowd of shoppers with a number of vehicles parked outside. The police personnel are allowing only shoppers wearing face masks to enter.

Corporation tests drone for spraying disinfectants



By Our Staff Reporter

The Corporation tested a drone on April 2 for spraying disinfectants in Ripon Building.

The civic body will use four drones, mostly over markets and areas where there is much public activity.

It will be used over resettlement sites and slums where it may be difficult to do manual spraying.

With four drones, 2-lakh sq. feet can be covered in a day, Corporation commissioner G. Prakash told reporters.

He said that the drones are manufactured by Anna University.

Krishnamachari donates Rs. 10 lakhs to PM's relief fund

By Our Staff Reporter

R. P. Krishnamachari (Managing Director, Tex Bioscience Private Limited, Ashok Nagar) donated Rs. 10 lakhs to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund in view of the Coronavirus pandemic.



He contributes regularly to various organizations.

Driving licenses valid till June 30

The Road Transport Ministry on March 30 issued a guideline to all state police and transport departments to treat all documents such as vehicle fitness certificate, driving license and registration certificate, which expired after Feb. 1, as valid till June 30.

It added that 'non-use clause facility' for transport vehicles for suspension of tax liability may be adopted by states to give relief to commercial vehicles such as taxis and buses not operating now due to the lockdown.

In yet another relief to vehicle owners, the insurance regulator, IRDA, has deferred revision of the third party motor insurance premium, which was to come into effect on April 1.

West Mambalam resident tests positive for COVID-19

A 25-year-old West Mambalam resident, who had returned from the USA, tested positive for COVID-19 recently.

He has been admitted to a private hospital and his condition is stable.

Four of his family members, a 15-year-old girl, a 20-year-old man, a 52-year-old woman and a 76-year-old woman are also under observation.

Contribute to the needy

By Our Staff Reporter

With a large part of the population ensconced in the safety of their homes, thousands of homeless continue to take shelter under bridges and at bus stops.

Several NGOs, welfare trusts and concerned citizens have stepped forth to provide for them.

If you want to do your part even being at home, here are your options.

Urban Shelters

"We are collaborating with the Corporation to provide sufficient shelter to the homeless during this lockdown," said Asha Parikarnai (Coordinator, Urban Shelters). Together they have set up 18 shelter homes in function halls around the city. They are also providing dry food supplies, hand wash and face masks for the homeless. For details, call Murugan in 98412 92373

Chennai Task Force

Chennai Task Force and Kindness Foundation have collaborated with the Corporation, NGOs, suppliers, vendors and volunteers to provide assistance to the underprivileged. Contact Ishani Karthik in 73388 12372.

Penguin Sportsmen Welfare Trust

It is helping around 120 homeless families near Parry's, Perumbur bridge and Broadway Street. Contact N. Raghu in 98414 54501

The Corporation has issued a strict list of guidelines to streamline the collection and distribution of rations during the crisis. These are a few of the organisations that are approved to function during the lockdown. Call to contribute in cash or kind.

The Kindness Foundation

Contact Mahima in 93445 02996.

Karunai Ullangal Trust

Contact Arulraj in 98417 76685.

Government Collection Centers

Jaidev Stadium, Kilpauk

Amma Arangam, Anna Nagar

Policemen up to the task of enforcing lockdown



By Our Staff Reporter

At least 4,000 men and women in khaki remain on the roads across the city through the day, some late into the night, ensuring that most of the residents remain safe in their homes.

In the neighbourhood, around 300 policemen are on duty.

D. Ashok Kumar (Deputy Commissioner, T. Nagar) said that since the lockdown on March 24, the workload has increased, with inspectors and assistant commissioners working from 5 a.m to almost 10 p.m.

"There are some in genuine need, but a majority of those out on the streets are out to test our patience. They are unreasonable and we are sometimes forced to confiscate their vehicles," he said.

In between, reports of some of their colleagues across the state falling ill increase the tension, though no cases have been reported among the city police.

Amid all this, 800 personnel above the age of 55 have been asked to remain at home because of the higher risk factor.

Domestic LPG cheaper by Rs. 64.50

By Our Staff Reporter

The price of non-subsidised 14.2 kg. LPG refill has been cut by Rs. 64.50 and is now Rs. 761.50 in Chennai.

The cost of 19 kg. LPG cylinder used by commercial establishments has been reduced by Rs. 1,602 and now costs Rs. 1,402.

Police wear corona-themed helmet to spread awareness



By Our Staff Reporter

In a bid to spread awareness about the severity of coronavirus, an artist, in collaboration with a police official, made a unique corona-themed helmet to dissuade people from coming out on the street during the lockdown.

Gowtham, the artist who designed the helmet, said that many are not treating the COVID-19 situation seriously whereas the police personnel are working round-the-clock to ensure their safety.

"So, I came up with the idea and used a broken helmet and paper to prepare this. I have also prepared many placards displaying slogans and handed them over to the police," he said.

Police Inspector Rajesh Babu, who wears the gear while speaking to those on the street, said that the approach has had a positive effect so far, especially on children who react strongly after seeing it and want to be taken home.

EMI moratorium not beneficial to borrowers

By Our Staff Reporter

The three-month suspension of EMI payments announced by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may not result in significant gains for borrowers as they will be charged interest for the moratorium period.

On March 27, the RBI had announced that all term loans, including retail and crop loans and working capital payments, will be covered by the three-month moratorium.

In a note to customers, the banks have said that interest will continue to accrue on the outstanding portion of the term loan during the moratorium period, and the accrued interest will be collected in the form of additional EMIs from borrowers who opt for the moratorium.

For example, on a home loan

of Rs. 30 lakhs with a remaining maturity of 15 years, the net additional interest will be approximately Rs. 2.34 lakhs or equal to 8 EMIs for borrowers who opt for the moratorium.

Similarly, for an auto loan of Rs. 6 lakhs with a remaining maturity of 54 months the additional interest payable will be Rs. 19,000 (around 1.5 EMI).

Customers who want to defer recovery of EMI where collection of such installment is effected through National Automated Clearing House (NACH), should send an application through e-mail.

With regard to credit card dues, the overdues in the credit card account do not get reported to the credit bureaus for a period of three months. However, interest will be charged by the credit card issuer on the unpaid amount.

Govt warns landlords against evicting labourers, students

By Our Staff Reporter

Following a directive from the Union government, the Tamil Nadu government on March 31 issued an order warning action against landlords forcing labourers and students to vacate their premises during the lockdown period.

In an order to the district collectors, Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam said that if landlords forcibly evict tenants who are workers or students for non-payment of rent, they will be liable for action under the Disaster Management Act.

The order says that landlords of workers, including migrant workers, will have to forgo one month rent taking into consideration the extraordinary situation.

However, the order does not give any exemption to students from paying rent.

Corporation suspends waste segregation due to lockdown

By Our Staff Reporter

Waste segregation in the city has come to a halt as all the Corporation's segregation and composting centers in 162 locations have been closed due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Corporation officials in the Solid Waste Management Department said that since the entire staff is now engaged in disinfection activities, it would be hard to run these facilities simultaneously.

The 64 resource recovery centers and 110 material recovery facilities in which segregated waste collected from households is sent for recycling are also not operating currently.

"Presently, whatever waste is collected by sanitary workers goes directly to the landfills. Once the lockdown is over, the Corporation will begin composting waste as usual," said an official.

As waste segregation is not going to take place till April 14, this will make a huge dent in the progress of the Zero Waste Chennai concept mooted by the Corporation, which aims to bring waste going to landfills to zero.

Additionally, since all Corporation parks are closed, the mulch pits to compost garden waste are without inputs.

"We request all citizens to segregate waste before giving it to sanitary workers," said the official.

Helpline for elderly, differently abled

By Our Staff Reporter

In the first initiative of its kind, the Welfare of the Differently Abled Persons Department has facilitated a toll-free/sign language-enabled helpline to reach out to senior citizens and persons with disabilities following the lockdown.

The department also provides on-call therapeutic services for special children.

The numbers to contact are
For elderly and disabled:
18004 250 111

To communicate in sign language: 97007 99993

On-call therapeutic service:
99408 59017 or 98412 80245

The calls are monitored by a 10-member team of volunteers who are in regular touch with local authorities.

921 booked for violating lockdown

By Our Staff Reporter

In Chennai, as per the data from 6 p.m, March 30 to 6 p.m, March 31, police booked 921 cases against persons for violating prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC.

They seized 528 bikes and 15 autorickshaws.

Police personnel also booked persons for traffic violations during the same period, including four drunken driving cases, 1,019 for helmet rule violation, and 754 other violations.

Police personnel seized 1,357 bikes, nine cars, 57 autorickshaws and one other vehicle for traffic offences.

Drones detect crowding

By Our Staff Reporter

Police are using drones to monitor the movement of people and congestion in places across the city during the lockdown.

They monitor even the interior stretches.

On March 31, drones were deployed in places like Kotturpuram, Secretariat Colony, MGR Nagar, Adyar, Tambaram and Otteri.

This measure was brought in after police kept receiving information that residents were gathering in groups on interior stretches posing a risk greater than that on main roads where there was police deployment.

These gadgets have the ability to fly 24/7 and are fitted with night vision cameras. The recorded footage is passed on to the local police stations and officials on patrol.

Railways to give full refund

In view of cancellation of all passenger trains from March 21 to April 14, the Indian Railways have announced full refund for all tickets for the journey period.

For refund for counter-booked tickets cancelled before March 27, TDR (Ticket Deposit Receipt) must be filed by the passenger with journey details till June 21, for availing of balance refund amount.

GRT serves food to policemen, health workers



By Our Staff Reporter

The city's health workers and police force are being treated to biryani, jeera pulao and egg roast thanks to the philanthropic initiative by GRT Hotels (T. Nagar).

What began as an initiative with 600 food packets a day on March 27, has since grown to over 2,300 meals a day.

The hotel is working alongside the Corporation and Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital to reach as many persons as possible during this lockdown period.

Vikram Cotah (COO) said that a 9-member team handles this operation which includes a head chef, assistant chefs, a driver, manager and housekeeping staff.

The food packets are delivered twice a day, for lunch and dinner, via GRT's transportation vehicles.

The needy can be referred to the number 98407 41379 for a meal.

High-risk security guards in apartment complexes get raw deal

The COVID-19 lockdown has affected security guards in apartment complexes and multi-storied buildings the most.

Many are stuck as they are unable to return to their hometowns and are forced to sleep outside the apartment complexes.

They depend on food and handouts given by the residents.

Many of these workers have not been provided with safety masks.

T. Arumugam (59) has been working round-the-clock in an apartment complex in West Mambalam for the past six days.

"There used to be another guard, but he went home last week and since then I have been working both shifts," he said.

Arumugam lives in Ambattur and has been unable to go home due to the virus threat.

"If I leave, they won't pay me," he said.

Ration card portability put on hold

By Our Staff Reporter

The implementation of ration card portability scheme, which was scheduled to be introduced on April 1 across Tamilnadu, has been put on hold.

"Considering the COVID-19 situation, it was decided to defer the scheme for now as it may create further confusion in the system," said an official.

As part of the 'One Nation One Ration Card' scheme of the Central government, Tamilnadu introduced the scheme in Tirunelveli and Tuticorin districts on a pilot basis. Following its success, the government had announced that intra-state portability of ration cards would come into operation on April 1.

Download manual to make masks at home

By Our Staff Reporter

Referring to research that claims wearing a mask can curb the spread of coronavirus, the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the government issued a detailed manual on March 31 on making reusable masks with household materials.

It can be downloaded from the website <http://164.100.117.97/WriteReadData/userfiles/FINAL%20MASK%20MANUAL.pdf>.

Quoting the World Health Organisation (WHO), the manual emphasised that masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

The manual will help making of masks with materials such as cotton cloth with or without sewing machine.

No penalty for non-payment of power bills till April 14

By Our Staff Reporter

P. Thangamani (Energy Minister) said on March 29 that power connection will not be disconnected till April 14 for non-payment of power bills for all consumers including domestic, commercial and industrial.

Tangedco had a week earlier asked consumers to pay bills as per the previous bimonthly reading as its staff could not visit households for meter reading due to the lockdown.

It had said that post-reading, the balance amount, if any, would be intimated to the consumers. Similarly, any excess payment would be adjusted against future bills.

Metrowater to increase supply to 830 MLD

Metrowater will increase water supply to the normal 830 MLD as soon as the desalination plant in Nemeli starts functioning after maintenance work.

Officials said that the supply in the reservoirs will comfortably last till June as all water-intensive enterprises such as malls, hotels, pools, theaters, industries and offices are closed for now.

The supply from Krishna River has also been steady since September, they added.

MTC pass holders seek refund or extension of validity

By Our Staff Reporter

Tamilnadu government on April 1 directed Collectors to facilitate disbursement of Please (TAYP) passes, issued on the 16th of every month, will 1,000 to the elderly at their doorstep in view of the expire on April 15.

Passengers have not been able to utilize the passes due to the ongoing lockdown which is scheduled to end on April 14.

The State extends monthly pension to 32.45 lakh senior citizens through the revenue refund or extension of the department.

They have appealed for validity to cover the lockdown period.

These monthly passes cost Rs. 1,000.

According to official data, close to 80,000 passengers buy this pass every month.

Old age pension at doorstep

By Our Staff Reporter

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KEEP YOUR SURROUNDINGS CLEAN AND GREEN

Traffic chaos in Padi amid lockdown

By Our Staff Reporter

There was a massive traffic jam on the Padi flyover on April 1.

It turns out that police had decided to tighten vehicle checks after they noticed heavy traffic in the neighbourhood on the earlier two days.

So, they closed all the roads to the flyover except one to funnel traffic to their checkpost.

The fallout was that hundreds including car and 2-wheelers drivers ended up standing next to each other without masks.

There was no social distancing by commuters and police.

It took almost two-and-a-half hours to clear the roads.

Police said that they were able to catch at least 150 persons who had no real reason for leaving their homes.

They made the lockdown violators do sit-ups on the road, jog to the Anna Nagar



Round Tana and take a pledge to wear masks. Most told the police that they were out looking for groceries.

Share auto plies under guise of ferrying groceries

By Our Staff Reporter

On April 2, the police stopped a share auto driver who was ferrying passengers in T. Nagar.

He had kept two big sacks of groceries in the back of the auto and was taking passengers at a high fare.

When policemen stopped him, he said he was taking essentials home.

"Only after looking inside we found the passengers," said a policeman.

Increase in prices of groceries

By Our Staff Reporter

The prices of grocery items have begun to increase, while the wholesale prices of fruits have fallen in Koyambedu.

The retail prices of dry provisions vary from one area to another based on availability, additional cost incurred by shops to source them and fluctuation in demand.

A local retailer told this reporter that there is no shortage of stock, but the cost of procuring the goods has gone up.

He said that prices have not increased much.

In some areas in the neighbourhood, the prices of pulses, rice and oil have gone up by Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per kg.



PM Appeal: Switch off lights, light candles, flash torches at 9 p.m on April 5

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged countrymen to switch off the lights in their homes and light a candle or lamp or flash a torchlight or mobile flashlight for 9 minutes at 9 p.m on April 5 to mark the fight against coronavirus.

He said that though the people are in their homes, "we are not alone". The country's 1.3 billion people are together during this lockdown period. "We have to dispel the darkness spread by the coronavirus and give hope to the poor who are the most impacted by the lockdown".

The appeal came in a video message at 9 a.m on April 3.

The Prime Minister said that the people and authorities have worked together to implement the lockdown restriction. Other countries were inspired by the applause the country offered to its frontline warriors on March 22 during the janata curfew. "It showed that we can fight the coronavirus together", he said.

He called for a staggered exit from the lockdown scheduled to end on April 14.

TenderCuts introduces contact-less transactions for customers

By Our Staff Reporter

In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, TenderCuts, a city-based meat and seafood company, has introduced contact-less retail.

The service is part of the company's initiative to mitigate the ongoing crisis with focus on ensuring safety of its employees and customers.

Under contact-less retail, a customer can download the TenderCuts app, place the order and the company will allot a time slot for the customer to pick up the order from the store.

Tamilnadu 2nd highest in confirmed COVID-19 cases

By Our Staff Reporter

75 more persons tested positive for coronavirus in Tamil Nadu on April 2 and the count rose to 309, the tally being the second highest in the country. Of the 75 cases reported on April 2, 74 were returnees from a recent Tablighi Jamat congregation in Delhi's Nizamuddin West.

To a question, an official said that there was no social transmission of the virus in Tamilnadu and all positive cases were either due to travel or contact with those who had travelled outside of the State.

Those infected are spread across 20 districts.

Steep rise in India's COVID-19 cases

By Our Staff Reporter

There has been an alarming spike in the number of positive COVID-19 cases in India. The first case was detected on Jan. 30, 2020. It took 45 days for that number to reach 100, suggesting a slow spread of the disease.

The more days a country takes to reach a mark, the better. However, the situation began to change.

It took only 9 days for the total number of positive cases to reach 500. And just 5 days later, India crossed the 1000 mark. Furthermore, it took only one day to reach 1200, and just two more to reach 2000.

Prototype of isolation wards made from train coaches

The Perambur Loco Works of Southern Railway has developed a prototype of isolation wards for patients affected with COVID-19 by modifying train coaches.

It has been sent to the Railway Board for approval.

Non-AC sleeper coaches which are 15 to 20 years old have been turned into isolation wards with attached toilet facilities.

These coaches will be deployed in railway stations depending on the requirements, said railway sources.

"Each compartment comprising six berths of a coach has been converted into a ward. One of the lower berths in the compartment will be used as a bed, while the upper berth can be used for stocking luggage. The remaining four berths in the compartment have been removed to create space for medical equipment or a table," said a senior official from Southern Railway.

Each coach can accommodate nine patients and a train comprising 23 coaches can be used as a 200-bed hospital.

As part of the efforts to support the health sector during COVID-19 outbreak, the railways had directed its workshops and production units to develop a prototype model of isolation wards and hands-free flushing in toilets.

Since lockdown, city sees 30% less garbage

As per Corporation's statistics, since the lockdown from March 24, waste generation in the city has decreased by around 30%.

As per official data for March 30, around 540 trips were made by Corporation vehicles to collect waste.

While 1,661 tonnes were collected from zones 1-8, around 1,915 tonnes were collected from zones 9-15.

Apart from this, 356 tonnes of debris was also generated in the city.

The decrease in waste generation is mainly because of shutting down of commercial complexes, hotels and restaurants in the city.

Despite the lockdown, sanitary workers continue to report for duty, with attendance being as high as 90%.

Save water in this period of lockdown



By Our Staff Reporter

With the 21-day lockdown in effect, the household consumption of water is expected to increase threefold.

Metrowater officials have requested residents to be frugal with water consumption and not waste water.

The following simple measures can save a lot of water:

1. Plug all leaks in pipes
2. Avoid using shower but bathe with water filled in a bucket
3. Turn off the water while brushing teeth or shaving or while applying soap to hands while cleaning
4. Accumulate dirty clothes for washing to minimize the number of washing machine cycles per week and use only full loads
5. Avoid using dishwashers or only use full loads. While washing dishes by hand, don't leave the water running for rinsing
6. Don't let the faucet run while cleaning vegetables
7. Implement waste water recycling, especially if you live in apartment complexes
8. Don't run the hose while washing car

Relief as home delivery resumes

By Our Staff Reporter

It was a sigh of relief for many as food aggregators began accepting orders on March 29 after the state government allowed app-driven e-commerce firms to function.

Residents were able to get food, groceries and meat delivered at their doorstep four days after the shutdown kicked in.

A couple of apps selling fresh meat and fish also opened up, but with limited number of delivery staff.

Last week, the state government had suspended operations of app-based food delivery aggregators including Swiggy, Zomato and Uber as part of the lockdown to contain the spread of Coronavirus.

Deliveries are allowed only from 7 a.m to 9.30 a.m, noon to 2.30 p.m and 6 p.m to 9 p.m.

Provision delivery services like BigBasket began delivering goods to its customers who had placed orders before the curfew began.

Special passes for intra-state movement

By Our Staff Reporter

The Corporation has started the process of issuing special passes to individuals who want to move within the city, outside the district or outside the state.

Corporation Commissioner G. Prakash said that requests for movement of vehicles or members of the public would only be granted for marriage ceremonies that have already been fixed, apart from funerals and medical emergencies.

These passes can be provided by individual zonal officers of all the 15 zones of the Corporation.

Permission for special passes will be given only from 11 a.m to 1 p.m and from 4 p.m to 7 p.m daily.

For any movement outside Chennai but within the State, the applicants can approach the following officials:

Deputy Commissioner (Works, Ripon Building); Regional Deputy Commissioner (North), 62, Basin Bridge Road, Old Washermenpet; Regional Deputy Commissioner (Central), 36-B, 2nd Cross Street, Pulla Avenue, Shenoy Nagar, and Regional Deputy Commissioner (South), 115, Dr. Muthulakshmi Road, Adyar.

Permission would be subject to analysis and verification of documents.

TVS offers extension for free service

TVS Motor Company, on March 28, announced that free service and AMC service of vehicles due between March and April will be redeemable till June.

Vehicle warranty expiring in March and April, will also be extended till the end of June.

Toll-free number 18002587111 will continue to function.

Tangedco suffers Rs. 1,260-crores loss because of lockdown

By Our Staff Reporter

Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) has estimated a revenue loss of Rs. 1,260 crores on account of the lockdown as most high-tension consumers have shut shop since March 24.

About 44-lakh industrial and commercial connections in the state are not drawing power at present.

To add to the revenue loss, the government has given grace time till April 14 to consumers to pay their bills.

Private schools seek tax waiver for buses

By Our Staff Reporter

Owners of private schools have urged the State government to waive taxes for school buses for three months, after schools were shut due to the lockdown.

They said that parents refuse to pay bus fees and it has been difficult to pay salary to drivers and attenders.