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Vol. 25, No. 49

1409th Issue: April 25 - May 1, 2020

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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

4-day total lockdown in Chennai from April 26

By Our Staff Reporter

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19, the government of Tamilnadu has announced stricter lockdown measures in Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, Salem and Tirupur from April 26.

Chennai Corporation will enforce a total shutdown for four days starting at 6 a.m on Sunday, April 26 to 9 p.m on Wednesday, April 29.

Though a statewide lockdown is already in place till May 3, this announcement of tighter restrictions in the five corporations means that apart from extremely essential services, there will be a blanket ban on all other work.

A Corporation official told *Mambalam Times* that since April 20, many were not following the lockdown rules and were going out in vehicles under the pretext of shopping for groceries and other essentials without following social distancing norms.

With new stringent rules, the government hopes that in the last few days of this lockdown, they can ensure people stay indoors.

The following are the activities that will be allowed during the stricter lockdown period:

1. Medical services like hospitals, laboratories, pharmacies, ambulances and hearse services will be allowed to function.
2. Essential service departments of the state government like the Secretariat, health and family welfare, police, revenue and disaster management, electricity, Aavin milk, local administrative bodies and water distribution will function.
3. Thirtythree percent of employees in central government offices and banks can carry out the essential work.
4. Amma canteens and ATMs can function.
5. Restaurants which accept orders through phone and deliver food at home are allowed to function.
6. Permission will be granted to those helping the elders, the destitute and persons with disabilities.
7. Community kitchens set up by the government departments and local bodies will be permitted to function.
8. Volunteer organisations helping the poor and needy will be allowed to function with necessary permission.
9. Wholesale vegetable markets like Koyambedu will function abiding by the norms. Movable shops (like pushcarts selling groceries, vegetables and fruits) will be allowed to operate. Other shops which were permitted to operate till date will not be allowed to function during the stricter ban period.

Till now Chennai has reported 400 COVID-19 cases while the state has recorded 1,683.

3 kids hurt in balcony collapse in Kodambakkam

By Our Staff Reporter

Three children suffered serious injuries when the balcony of a 2nd floor flat collapsed in a Housing Board complex in Pulliyur Main Road (Trustpuram, Kodambakkam).

They were identified as Kavirayan (9), his brother Pavithran (6) and their friend Jeeva (13).

According to the police, the balcony collapsed and the three children fell on the landing on the first floor, which also collapsed and fell on the ground.

The children are undergoing treatment in Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and their condition is stated to be critical.

Ashok Nagar police are investigating the incident.

Police exempt personnel above 55 from lockdown duty

After some policemen on duty were affected by coronavirus, policemen aged more than 55 were told not to report for duty and remain at home.

A.K. Viswanathan (Commissioner) further ordered that policemen aged between 50 and 55 should look after work in police stations and not be deployed outside as a precautionary measure.

COVID-19 STATISTICS AT 3 P.M ON APRIL 24

For live updates click the link below
<https://gis.ndma.gov.in/arccgis/apps/sites/#/data>

Area	Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
Worldwide	27,21,354	7,45,605	1,91,231
India	23,077	4,749	718
Tamilnadu	1,683	752	20
Chennai	400	37	4

Amma canteens to provide free food till May 3

The Corporation will provide free food in all the 407 Amma canteens in the city till May 3.

An official spokesperson of the civic body said that food could be provided free of cost in the Amma canteens thanks to donations.

“The cost of running Amma canteens is Rs. 17 lakhs a day. We have enough donations to give free food till May 3,” the spokesperson added.

The canteens serve idli, variety rice, pongal with sambar and chappati with dal.

Free online yoga classes

By Our Staff Reporter

The Life Vision Academy Yoga and Wellness Center (T. Nagar) is conducting free online yoga classes with special focus on boosting immunity and strengthening the respiratory system.

Those who wish to join may call 70108 05058.

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by CA K Saravanan

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Sculptures with masks to spread COVID-19 awareness



By Our Staff Reporter

Big sculptures of a camel, an elephant and two idols with their faces covered with masks have been placed in front of a barricade on P.T. Rajan Salai (K. K. Nagar) to create awareness on coronavirus.

Barricades prevent 4-wheelers on Arya Gowda Road



By Our Staff Reporter

Traffic police have placed barricades to provide way only for two-wheelers on Arya Gowda Road (West Mambalam), near Srinivasa Street junction.

Corporation disinfects residential area



By Our Staff Reporter

Corporation workers sprayed pesticide outside residential complexes and other buildings on Railway Border Road in West Mambalam on April 22.

An official said that it is part of Corporation's ongoing measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Rashes on feet, hands could be sign of COVID-19

By Our Staff Reporter

As India is grappling with asymptomatic cases, doctors are now keeping an eye out for possible symptoms of novel coronavirus infection, after reports that in some patients, the disease can affect the skin.

Doctors call the phenomenon 'COVID toes' or 'COVID hands'.

Quoting results from an Italian study that said one in five patients had a skin issue - most commonly a red rash or a hives-like eruption - infectious diseases experts are now asking dermatologists to think of COVID-19 when they see such rashes.

It has also been observed that children are more likely to develop rashes as the result of viral infections than adults.

The painful red bumps tend to occur at the tips of the toes or on the top of the feet, sometimes even on the hands - something similar to frostbite.

T. NAGAR & MAMBALAM BAZAAR

This column is intended to help small businesses to have a cost-effective advertisement medium. Advertisement in this section will be in standard panel sizes of 4 cm. x 1 column (costing only Rs. 1000) and 4 cm. x 2 column (costing Rs. 2000)

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Avenue tree topples over in K. K. Nagar



By Our Staff Reporter

A huge tree fell across A. P. Patro Salai in K. K. Nagar last week. There was no untoward incident. Corporation workers axed the tree within a few hours.

RMD Trust provides groceries for conservancy workers

By Our Staff Reporter

RMD Pain and Palliative Care Trust(T. Nagar) distributed groceries among 100 conservancy workers in T. Nagar on April 22.



Groceries given to 50 women



By Our Staff Reporter

Apoorva Women's Association (T. Nagar) and Jaimaa Trust (Vadapalani) distributed groceries among 50 underprivileged women on April 23.

They are daily wage workers and have lost their sustenance since the lockdown.

Readers of Mambalam Times wishing to support the projects of the NGOs may call 98841 95197.

Vegetable vendors crowd Ellaiamman Koil Street



By Our Staff Reporter

A number of vendors have been selling vegetables and fruits on the pavement of Ellaiamman Koil Street in West Mambalam since April 20.

A number of residents were seen patronising these vendors oblivious to social distancing norms.

They also included a number of senior citizens.

Velammal School celebrates 'World Book Day' online

By Our Staff Reporter

World Book Day is an annual event organized by UNESCO to promote reading and publishing.

To celebrate the event, Velammal School encouraged its students to commemorate the day with the theme 'Drop Everything And Read' on April 23.

On account of the school being closed owing to the lockdown, it organised an online reading session for its students from 1.30 p.m to 2 p.m.

The students celebrated the occasion not only by staying safe at home and but also reading.

27 employees of news channel test positive for COVID-19

By Our Staff Reporter

27 staffers, including journalists, working for a Tamil news television channel tested positive for coronavirus on April 21.

They have been quarantined and are undergoing treatment in Government Medical College (Omadurar).

The development comes days after two journalists from the channel first tested positive. Following this, 90 other employees who had come near the two journalists were tested for the contagion.

Aavin opens temporary parlours

By Our Staff Reporter

To ensure supply of its products to all, Aavin has set up temporary parlours in 11 locations in the city and two mobile parlours.

While the mobile parlours sell milk, buttermilk and butter, the others have milk-based products including flavoured milk, ghee and sweetened khoa.

Vehicles seized from lockdown violators



By Our Staff Reporter

Traffic police seized vehicles from several persons found roaming without valid reason on Usman Road (T. Nagar) on April 23.

12 special inspectors check domestic abuse

By Our Staff Reporter

After the women's helpline received 22 calls in the first two weeks of the month, the Crime Against Women and Children (CWC) wing of the Chennai police appointed 12 women inspectors to inspect these complaints.

According to H. Jayalakshmi (Deputy Commissioner of Police), most of the disputes were sorted out when the inspectors visited the homes and discussed the issues.

"The inspectors from the all-woman police stations in T. Nagar, Triplicane, Vepery, Mylapore, Guindy, St. Thomas Mount, High Court, Washermenpet, Ennore, Villivakkam, MKB Nagar and Avadi are the nodal officers who will monitor the situation in their jurisdiction," she said.

Toll plazas resume user fee collection

By Our Staff Reporter

45 toll plazas in Tamilnadu started collecting user fee on April 20.

"With the lockdown extended, no public transport vehicles and a limited number of private vehicles cross the plaza. It is mainly trucks, government vehicles, ambulances and vehicles with special passes that cross the plaza," said a toll operator.

However, the State Lorry Owners Federation has petitioned the State and Central governments asking them to suspend fee collection.

The toll rates in 26 plazas were increased with effect from April 1.

Centre freezes new DA, DR rates till July 2021

The Centre has frozen Employees' Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) in view of COVID-19. Until then, the existing levels of DA and DR will be paid.

The government has also said that the additional instalments of DA and DR due from July 1 to January 1, 2021 will not be paid.

As and when the decision to pay them is taken, they would be restored prospectively from July 1, 2021 and no arrears will be paid.

The Central and state governments are expected to save Rs 1.20 lakh crores from the move.

The government has notified that it is not going to pay the DA hike that was due from January 1. Earlier, a hike of 400 bps in DA was approved.

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Cattle enjoy freedom on empty road



By Our Staff Reporter

Cows were seen squatting in the middle of the road in front of a barricade on Madley Road (T. Nagar) on April 22.

COVID-19 victims buried secretly

By Our Staff Reporter

After the incident of rioting at the burial of Dr. Simon Hercules in Anna Nagar on April 20, health officials in Chennai are conducting the burial of coronavirus victims secretly.

When a 56-year-old man died in a private hospital in Vanagaram on April 20, his body was taken all the way to Tambaram for burial. The entire process was shrouded in secrecy.

"We barricaded the place and finished the cremation within half an hour," an official said. The family members were picked up in government vehicles to attend the funeral and dropped back later.

He added that similar steps for burial will be taken in the future till the wrong beliefs about the burial of a COVID-19 victims decrease.

CM relief fund receives Rs. 161 crores

By Our Staff Reporter

The Tamilnadu government on April 22 said that members of the public, philanthropists and corporates have together contributed Rs. 160.93 crores to help the state in its fight against COVID-19.

The contribution to the CM's Public Relief Fund is fully exempt from income tax under Section 80(G) of Income Tax Act.

The Union government has already clarified that all contributions to the state disaster management authority for COVID-19 will qualify as admissible CSR expenditure.

Contributions may be made online by visiting the website <http://ereceipt.tn.gov.in/cmprf/cmprf.html> or by electronic transfer to SB Account No:11720 10000 00070 with Indian Overseas Bank, IFSC Code: IOBA0001172.

RMD Trust donates essentials to 100 poor families



By Our Staff Reporter

Dr. Dasn Dutturao Prasad Charitable Trust (Adyar) and RMD Trust (T. Nagar) jointly donated groceries to the residents of Ambarambedu and Pilayambakkam village in Sriperambathur on April 20.

Chandra Prasad (Founder, Pathway) said that more than 100 families benefited.

Airlines refuse refunds, offer credit shell

By Our Staff Reporter

Despite the government advisory, most airlines have refused refunds to customers for flight cancellations owing to the lockdown and have, instead, offered credit shell which can be used by the customers for travel on any date after the lockdown ends, but at the prevailing prices at that time.

Though the lockdown from March 25 to April 14 was sudden, the airlines continued to book tickets for travel from April 15 without instructions from the DGCA or ministry that flights would be resumed.

But as the shutdown was extended, these tickets too have now been converted into credit shell.

Many passengers have now taken to Twitter asking airlines for refunds citing the ministry's guidelines.

In response, airlines have said that they are still "reviewing" the directives by DGCA and have not clarified whether money will be returned.

Local Ham Radio Club helps outstation cancer patients return

By Our Staff Reporter

Thanks to Ham Radio Club members in the city, 38 cancer patients from West Bengal and 3 from Assam, who had come to Chennai for treatment and had got stranded due to the lockdown, were transported back to their homes in a convoy of 35 ambulances last week.

The Club members arranged for financial support and got in touch with ambulance service providers and some local NGOs to assist in their safe return after obtaining permission for inter-state transport.

Anna University, IIT to conduct COVID-19 app contest

By Our Staff Reporter

Anna University will join hands with IIT-Bombay, Madras School of Social Work and Climate Smart Technologies (CST) to organise a national-level COVID-19 bioinformatics online contest from April 27.

In this contest, each participant has to publish a working app in Google Play Store and web application online.

25 topics have been identified covering issues like stranded migrant labour tracking, labour shelter mapping, volunteers' registration and assigning work, public healthcare locations for COVID-19, medical stores, health workers assigning, patient input data on fever, symptoms, doctor online appointment etc.

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All zones in Chennai now on corona map

By Our Staff Reporter

After remaining safe from coronavirus infection since the outbreak was first reported, Ambattur and Manali zones of Chennai Corporation reported a case each on April 21.

One of the 27 employees of a private news channel, who were confirmed positive, is a resident of Collector Nagar (Mogappair) which falls under Ambattur zone.

A cleaner working in Egmore railway station, a resident of PRK Sharma Street (Manali), also tested positive.

The total number of cases in Chennai as on April 24 stood at 400.

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All you need to know about containment zones

By Aruna Natarajan

Chennai is among the top 10 cities in the country in terms of COVID-19 positive cases. The spread of the pandemic has affected all the zones in the city.

Most cases are in Royapuram, followed by Thiru-Vi-Ka Nagar and Teynampet.

What are containment zones?

Containment zones/hotspots have been formed by the Corporation across the city to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The zones are demarcated based on the identification of positive cases in a certain location. The streets adjoining these spots are deemed containment zones. The area covered by them is divided into blocks of 100+ houses each.

How many such zones are there?

With 400 cases across the city as on April 24, there are now 120 containment zones with 91 streets across the city.

Roughly, how many people are in such zones?

According to the latest available data from the Corporation, there were 11,18,946 houses and 20,33,673 households under the containment zones across the city where daily monitoring by health officials is going on. About 12,000 officials have been appointed to carry out the monitoring.

What are the restrictions/precautions in containment zones?

In a containment zone, the streets are completely barricaded and entry and exit is restricted. Residents are not to leave the street. Essentials are delivered at their doorstep by the staff engaged by the Corporation. Any delivery orders placed by those in containment hotspots are delivered at the barricades and collected by the residents.



The containment zones are frequently disinfected by Corporation workers. Larger zones are monitored by drones to ensure that the containment plan is being adhered to. Anyone who has come into contact with an infected individual or is showing symptoms of COVID-19 is immediately tested for the illness.



How to locate containment zones?

In order to know if there are containment restrictions in your area or anywhere nearby, you may check the containment map in the website set up by the Corporation or download the 'GCC Corona Monitoring' app.

When will the restrictions be lifted in containment zones?

While there is no official confirmation of any relaxation of restrictions across the state, the stringent guidelines on daily movement in the containment zones could last longer than in the rest of the zones as a preventive measure. Containment restrictions may be lifted if there are no COVID-19 positive cases from within the zone for 28 days.

Crime rate in city down by 71%

The threat of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown has led to a dip in the crime rate by 71% in the city.

Since the lockdown began, five murders were reported. No cases of major theft or burglary were reported.

Thefts have also come down and only 7 seven chain snatching incidents were reported as against a daily average of 8 before the lockdown.

The accident rate too has come down considerably in the city.

Police block links to main roads to curb lockdown violation



By Our Staff Reporter

Caught unawares by several persons coming on to main roads defying prohibitory orders and escaping through inner lanes, police are identifying and blocking these 'short cuts'.

This, the law enforcers believe, will force motorists and others to take main roads where they can be stopped and booked if the reason for stepping out of their homes is found to be frivolous.

After a detailed study, a number of such streets were identified in areas like T. Nagar, Anna Nagar, Thirumangalam, Egmore, Royapettah, Cholaimedu and Porur, and sealed.

Many shops open and close by noon on April 20

By Our Staff Reporter

A large number of shops, including coffee shops, hardware stores and salons opened for business on April 20 as confusion reigned over easing of the lockdown.

This came about in the absence of a state government announcement that lockdown curbs will not be relaxed and will remain to be strict.

The Union government had issued guidelines indicating relaxation of lockdown for certain shops. Senior government officials were clueless on April 19 night when asked if the lockdown would continue under Corporation limits.

When, by afternoon, it became clear that the lockdown would be extended till May 3, most shops closed.

Stranded fishermen take sea route to return home

By Our Staff Reporter

27 fishermen stranded in Chennai purchased an old boat for Rs. 1.73 lakh and took a perilous 5-day journey by sea on April 15 to return to their homes in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.

The fishermen worked for trawler owners in Chennai.

When fishing was banned on March 15 following coronavirus outbreak, the fishermen were left with no work.

Before they could decide on returning home, the nationwide lockdown was imposed.

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Home Guards render service during lockdown



By Our Staff Reporter

1,700 Home Guards are on duty in the city to ensure physical distancing in ration shops and markets.

They also assist the police in other services like distribution of food and grains to the stranded and needy.

In addition, Home Guards are also involved in campaigns for spreading awareness about the pandemic.

In association with Guru Nanak Educational Society, they are providing food and shelter to 382 migrant workers from Odisha.

The Koyambedu Vegetable Market is manned by 50 Home Guards.

Dedicated shelters opened for outstation workers



By Our Staff Reporter

For students, workers and daily wage labourers from the north-eastern states who have been stranded in the city due to the ongoing lockdown, four dedicated relief centers have been opened by North East India Welfare Association.

"A number of persons employed in salons, spas and restaurants in the city who have run out of money, outstation students and patients who have come to the city for medical treatment are being provided relief in these shelters," said an association member.

The number of persons from the northeast who are in need of assistance has been increasing through April since some of them who initially had accommodation, have now run out of money and essentials.

Rs.2.68 crores collected for violation of curfew

By Our Staff Reporter

The total amount collected as fine from violators of prohibitory orders crossed Rs. 2.68 crores as the lockdown entered its 30th day on April 23.

As on that date, 2,45,951 violations had been reported.

The violators were booked for offences punishable under Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). They were fined and their vehicles were also seized.

In Chennai, the city police booked over 27,893 cases and seized more than 28,000 vehicles between March 24 and April 19.

Law college starts online sessions

Dr. Ambedkar Government Law College (Chennai) has started virtual classrooms due to the lockdown.

Now, the college has virtual learning platforms and YouTube channels to connect with its nearly 1,500 students from across the state.

The lectures are made available through apps like Google Classroom and a few other virtual learning platforms.

Food distribution banned within 2-km. radius of hotspots

By Our Staff Reporter

The Corporation has banned the distribution of food by NGOs, associations and individuals within a 2-km. radius of containment zones, Corporation hospitals, COVID-19 testing centers, government tertiary care hospitals and designated private hospitals as directed by the Madras High Court.

They have been asked to hand over the food to Corporation officials who will distribute the packets.

The zonal officers should also be informed 48 hours in advance in other places and the food should be distributed only after the food safety department permits the venue.

Metro trains run for maintenance

By Our Staff Reporter

As part of maintenance, Chennai Metro is running its trains daily on a rotation basis.

Two trains take a run daily.

"This is part of maintenance activity to ensure that the trains are in good condition and operate well when commercial operations resume," said an official.

The overhead cables too are tested periodically.

The 42 rakes which run on Phase-1 are cleaned and the stations are also fumigated regularly.

"We will ensure the safety of our commuters when the trains start running again," the official said.

Face masks to be compulsory in MTC buses

By Our Staff Reporter

Passengers without masks will not be allowed to board MTC buses when they start running when lockdown is lifted.

Regular MTC services were suspended on March 24 and only 200 buses are being operated for the benefit of workers in essential services.

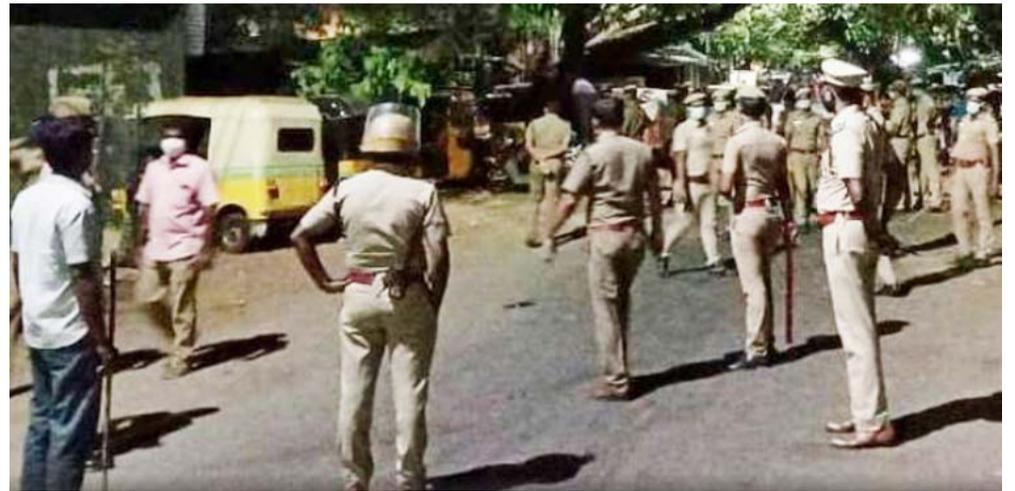
It has also asked all its employees to compulsorily wear face masks and wash hands using soap every hour.

In the depots, all the buses will be cleaned and disinfected before starting the trips.

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90 persons booked for rioting at funeral of doctor

By Our Staff Reporter



Police used lathi charge to disperse the crowd



21 protestors were arrested and taken to Anna Nagar police station

Anna Nagar police have so far arrested 90 persons for rioting while opposing the burial of neurosurgeon Dr. Simon Hercules in Velangadu crematorium (New Avadi Road, East Anna Nagar) on April 19.

Dr. Simon (Managing Director, New Hope Indian Hospital, Kilpauk) had succumbed to COVID-19 infection.

They had attacked and injured Corporation employees, the ambulance crew and some family members who had accompanied the body to the crematorium.

During the rioting, 21 persons including a woman were booked.

They were charged with attacking Kalaiyarasan (Asst. Executive Engineer) and Senthil Kumar (Executive Engineer) of the Corporation and the ambulance crew members Anand and Damodaran.

After obtaining additional CCTV footage, 69 more persons were booked on April 23.

When the body was brought to the Kilpauk Cemetery for burial, about 200 residents from T.P. Chatram gathered and opposed the burial.

The civic authorities then decided to shift the body to Velankadu crematorium located nearby. By the time the body reached Velankadu, another group of residents from Gandhi Nagar gathered, started protesting and opposed the burial.

When the crowd turned violent and started pelting stones, the police resorted to lathi-charge and chased away the crowd.

Policemen, led by Anna Nagar Deputy Commissioner Muthusamy, reached the spot and nabbed some of those who threw stones.

This incident comes barely ten days after another when a doctor from Nellore tested positive and died in a private hospital in Chennai. His burial too was stopped when locals in Ambattur objected saying the burial would cause the virus to spread in the vicinity. The body had to be taken back to the hospital before alternative arrangements were made.



Kalaiyarasan and Senthil Kumar

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A salute to journalists

Sir, As an avid reader of newspapers, I write this to express my gratitude to all journalists.

Like any other avocation, the job of reporters is arduous. In pursuit of gathering information, they often encounter many a problem. Besides providing information without any bias, newspapers function as a bridge between the government and public. While they never fail to highlight the good work of the government, they don't shirk responsibility but whiplash the rulers for anything amiss.

Even considering that the reporters get paid for the job, it becomes extremely difficult during calamities like the present coronavirus crisis.

While reporting at a time when the virus is at its peak, it is amazing that many have made the media proud by discharging their duty with unflinching loyalty.

I bow my head and salute the brave hearts for their courage, grit, determination, dedication, diligence and devotion to duty.

I request all of you to take precautions so that you are safe. Please remember that you have a family waiting for your safe and secure return every day. **V. S. Jayaraman, 31 Motilal Street, T. Nagar**

Power consumption bills

Sir, Owing to the lockdown extension till May 3, Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) has extended the payment date till May 6 for domestic consumers.

Further, as meter reading could not be taken owing to the lockdown, Tangedco has stated that the consumers can pay the amount that was paid for the previous period.

While this advisory appears mutually beneficial, it could affect the consumers badly.

The next meter reading, if taken, will come up with the figures for 4 months at a stretch. Doubts arise as to how the billing will be done as 100 free units are to be provided for each 2-month period.

Instead, the consumers could have been asked to note the number of units consumed till the first week of April, and the figure taken as the consumption for March-April.

I am of the view that Tangedco should adjust the amount being retained in excess of what is required under the head 'Additional Security Deposit' (ASD) in respect of various consumers.

As many underprivileged consumers are monetarily affected by the lockdown, Tangedco must adjust the power charges against the security deposit which it collects every two years from its consumers and recover the said amount once normalcy is restored. **V. S. Jayaraman, 31 Motilal Street, T. Nagar**

Company offers catering, medicare to senior citizens

By Our Staff Reporter

Alserv is helping senior citizens by delivering what they need at their doorstep through a technology-powered platform and a call-center help desk.

Its assisted living services are cost-effective, transparent, and fully customisable.

The facilities provided include 24/7 medical care for the elderly, personalised food and cooking services, safety and security products, and housekeeping services.

It has now partnered with verified vendors across the city to ease the burden of lockdown on them.

The company is delivering home cooked meals in most localities of Chennai including Nandanam, T. Nagar, West Mambalam, Ashok Nagar, K. K. Nagar and Kodambakkam.

Alserv currently offers a single subscription plan of Rs. 1,000 per month which has been waived during the lockdown period in order to reach as many people as possible.

For more details visit the website <https://alserv.in/> or call 4666 4888 or 73974 44888.

Police, civic staff help residents of hotspots

By Our Staff Reporter

In containment zones earmarked by the Corporation, support from police and civic staff is helping residents.

On April 20, Ananth Ram Bhaskar (a resident of Kodambakkam) said he had noticed Corporation workers disinfecting the area before barricades were put up to seal the street he lives on, which is now a containment zone.

"After positive cases were detected on our street, the police stopped allowing domestic workers and delivery persons into the area. We have been asked to go to the barricade and pick up our food delivery parcels there," he said.

In several containment zones, Corporation officials have ensured that pushcart vendors selling vegetables are available near the barricades for the benefit of residents.

Families in his area, he said, had been advised to remain indoors as much as possible.

**DONATE BLOOD
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In lockdown, families get together

By Our Staff Reporter

Roopa Mohandas is eagerly waiting for the lockdown to end. For then she can finally check on her apartment in Kilpauk, which she left more than a month ago.

"When I came to visit my daughter in T. Nagar, I thought it would be for a few days. But then the national lockdown was announced," said the 75-year-old, adding that she had brought only clothes for the short visit.

Her daughter, Preethi Inder, is glad that her mother is safe with her. "She visits us every week but since she lives on her own, it is best she stays with us through the lockdown period," said Preethi. "We now cook together. And she gets to spend time with her grandsons; they usually play cards till late in the night."

The lockdown has caused inconvenience, but it also has, in a strange way, brought back the great Indian joint family reality. Many families have got their parents to live with them or have moved back to family homes so the elderly are not alone.

Sreenivasan, who lives in West Mambalam, drove to his father's house in Teynampet when the lockdown was announced.

"He is 90, and I didn't want him to be on his own," said Sreenivasan.

Suresh Prabhu (a resident of South Boag Road), who works for an MNC, said that his brother's family had a stroke of luck, or it would have been stuck in Delhi during the lockdown.

The family had come down from Madurai on March 5 and was to go on a week's holiday to Delhi on March 23. "They cancelled the trip as my nephew fell ill. Since then we have all been staying together for such a long period for the first time in the last 2 decades," he said.

Many robbed of regular income sell vegetables, masks



By Our Staff Reporter

The lockdown has left many roadside vendors and daily wage workers without income. Some of them are selling essentials to tide over the crisis.

N. Paranthaman, who sells pots on the pavement of Arya Gowda Road (West Mambalam), hired a pushcart to sell vegetables in his locality.

"I initially purchased from the local market which was set up in the playground on Venkatanarayana Road but after it was shut down by the Corporation, I have been buying vegetables from Koyambedu. I earn Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 a day," he said.

Ramesh of Saidapet who earns a living by driving cabs, has switched to selling bananas, onions and potatoes from his house.

Delhi Babu (a resident of Jaffer Khanpet) has been selling masks since the lockdown began. He worked as a cleaner on daily wages in a factory in Ambattur.

MGR Medical University identifies vaccine candidate

By Our Staff Reporter

Tamil Nadu Dr MGR Medical University announced a potential vaccine candidate against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus causing COVID-19.

According to Dr. Sudha Seshayyan (Vice-Chancellor), the Department of Immunology, along with Senior Professors, has identified a synthetic polypeptide that prevents the virus from entering the human cell or reproducing within cells.

"These compounds were able to bind the epitope of the viral gene. This means the compound is able to stop the specific piece of the antigen to which an antibody binds, offering protection against the virus," she said.

The University is now looking for collaboration to start laboratory experiments.

It will take at least a few more weeks for the scientists to do larger experiments in the laboratory before it is taken for animal studies and clinical trials. "The vaccine is at least a year away. What we are seeing now is the first step in that long journey," she said.

Percentage of positive cases falling in Tamilnadu

By Our Staff Reporter

Though 56 positive cases were reported in Tamilnadu on April 23 taking the total to 1,685, the government said there is a steady decline in the percentage of those testing positive.

"There is a 10 percentage point decline from April 7," said a senior epidemiologist at the COVID-19 control room. On April 7, when the state recorded 621 cases, it announced that nearly 13% of the 5,015 samples it had tested were positive. By April 22, 53,072 people had been tested and 3% were found to be infected.

Two things made this happen, said health secretary Beela Rajesh. "First, the lockdown ensured that people stayed home preventing a rapid spread. Second, the state's decision to ramp up testing across all districts helped," she said.

In the past two weeks, Tamilnadu has tested at least 50,000 more samples.

Chennai continued to report the maximum number of cases in the state reaching 400.

Post lockdown, city's rivers less polluted

The city's water bodies including the Adyar, the Cooum and the Buckingham Canal are much less polluted than they were earlier, with no industrial effluents flowing in from closed factories.

However, PWD officials said that domestic sewage flowing through illegal inlets continues to sully the water bodies.

The Adyar, which flows 42.5km. from Thiruneermalai to the Bay of Bengal, is now free of effluents from tanneries and industrial units in Chromepet, Tirumudivakkam and Madras Export Processing Zone (MEPZ) that are all shut.

The river now carries 70 cusecs of relatively clean water and no froth is being noticed anywhere along the course due to the absence of chemicals.

Railways mark 167th anniversary sans passenger trains

By Our Staff Reporter

After 167 years, Railways, the national carrier, has come to a standstill with no passenger trains plying on its network for the first time in its history, thanks to the lockdown to check the spread of coronavirus.

At 3.35 p.m on April 16, 1853 amid a 21-gun salute, three locomotives - Sahib, Sindh and Sultan - chugged off on their maiden trip pulling 14 carriages and ferrying 400 guests from Bori Bunder (now Mumbai) to Thane becoming the first passenger train run by the Central Railways, then known as the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.

The three locomotives covered 34 km. scripting history on the day that the Indian Railways celebrates its anniversary.

The Railways runs nearly 14,000 passenger trains ferrying 23 million passengers daily.

Since the lockdown, the Railways has operated only freight and parcel trains for supplying essential cargo.

Rs. 50 lakhs, job for kin of frontline staff who die of COVID-19

By Our Staff Reporter

Chief minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on April 22 announced a solatium of Rs. 50 lakhs and a job to the kin of frontline staff who die in battle against COVID-19.

This comes amid huge outrage among doctors over denial of dignity in death to healthcare professionals.

The Chief Minister also interacted with the doctors, nurses and COVID-19 patients who were to be discharged from Rajiv Gandhi General Hospital and Coimbatore Medical College and Hospital through video conference.

Stating that it was the duty of the state government to show gratitude to deceased staff, Palaniswami said that the government would take action to bury the body in a safe and dignified manner. The state government will confer the highest award and certificate to honour the service of private and public staff, including doctors, nurses and health workers, who lose their lives while engaged in coronavirus preventive work, he said.

3 zones account for 60% of COVID-19 cases

By Our Staff Reporter

Of all the 15 zones in the city where positive coronavirus cases have been reported, Royapuram, Tondiarpet and Thiru-Vi-Ka Nagar together account for 60 percent.

Out of the 400 positive cases reported as on April 24, 240 cases have come from these 3 zones.

These 3 zones are also situated close to one another.

Royapuram leads with 116 cases.

Urban local bodies get Rs. 25 crores to fight COVID-19

By Our Staff Reporter

The state government has sanctioned Rs. 25 crores to continue disinfection activities to control COVID-19 in 14 corporations and 121 municipalities in the state.

This follows commissioner of municipal administration (CMA) telling the government that urban local bodies face severe financial crunch to meet the requirements for the containment of COVID-19 during the extended lockdown period and requested Rs. 47.33 crores.

The state government also sanctioned Rs. 8.59 crores for the labour department to procure dry ration kits through the Civil Supplies Corporation for 1.34 lakh migrant workers. That apart, Rs. 5.31 crore was sanctioned to differently-abled department to provide s and medical kits for beneficiaries based on calls received on helpline.

Disinfection activities are being carried out in 168 containment zones covering 43,401 persons in home quarantine in these local bodies. At least 64,668 sanitary workers are involved in disinfection activities.

Tokens for free ration at doorstep

By Our Staff Reporter

The Tamilnadu government has started distributing tokens among ration cardholders at their doorstep for procuring free commodities at PDS shops in May.

An official press release said that the move was aimed at reducing crowds at ration shops to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The tokens bear details like the date and time as to when the goods will be provided.

The cardholders will be provided with one kg of sugar, one kg of dal, and edible oil, besides rice.

Plasma of asymptomatic donors may not help

By Our Staff Reporter

With many states showing intent to test plasma therapy, medical experts say the procedure may be a shot in the dark for treating COVID-19 patients as plasma from asymptomatic donors and people with mild infection may not have enough antibodies to treat an infected person.

Virologists say as the therapy is given based only on the assumption that the plasma from a person who has recovered from COVID-19 has neutralising antibodies, storing and testing plasma samples when antibody tests are available, and pooling of plasma are ways to approach the issue.

The views come at a time when Indian Council of Medical Research said that 80% of the COVID-19 cases remain asymptomatic.

In convalescent plasma therapy, plasma with antibodies obtained from the blood of patients cured of the disease is transfused to COVID-19 patients. Upon transfusion, the antibodies bind to specific antigens, recognised by the body as alien, and destroy them.

Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and Delhi have sought the Centre's nod and Kerala has received permission to conduct trials.

ICMR is likely to begin a randomised control study to assess the efficacy of the therapy for COVID-19.

Opposing burial of COVID-19 victims will attract Goondas Act

By Our Staff Reporter

A day after a group of around 200 persons resorted to a violent protest against the burial of a COVID-19 victim in Velangadu crematorium, Police Commissioner A. K. Viswanathan warned that those indulging in such acts will be detained under the Goondas Act.

"The inhumane act is condemnable and those indulging in such acts will be detained under Goondas Act," Commissioner said.

The Commissioner added that the funeral was done by Health and Corporation officials as per WHO guidelines.

Terraces, corridors turn into walking tracks

By Our Staff Reporter

Marathoner Vijay Sudhakar of T. Nagar has been practising running in the basement car parking area of his apartment complex since the lockdown.

"I walk and sometimes do sprints in the corridor of our apartment complex," said Nitesh, another regular runner from the neighbourhood.

For R. Varadan, a senior citizen living in Jubilee Road (West Mambalam), an hour's walk from 6 a.m on the terrace has become a norm, followed by checking the news in his ipad with a cup of coffee.

"I used to visit Panagal Park regularly before the curfew began. I do miss my morning friends and the banter," he said.

R. Hariharan of Lake View Road is used to group yoga sessions in the park daily.

"I have been missing that, but do my yoga exercises now at home. I follow it up with mild exercises and walk on the terrace for an hour in the evening," he said.

Government extends relief to unorganised workers

By Our Staff Reporter

Minister for labour and employment Nilofer Kafeel on April 22 said that the Tamilnadu government has distributed relief and financial aid among 5.47 lakh unorganised labourers.

The government has also distributed kits containing dry rations among 1.10 lakh migrant labourers in the state.

The government announced Rs 1,000 financial aid along with kits - each containing 15 kg. of rice, 1 kg. dhal and 1 kg. cooking oil - to the registered members of the 17 welfare boards of unorganised sectors under the labour department.

"The government sanctioned Rs 129.73 crores to extend the relief to 12,97,382 registered members of construction labourers and drivers. As many as 5,47,427 of them have benefited till April 20," said the minister in a statement.

Similarly, the government has sanctioned Rs 140.71 crores to disburse financial aid of Rs. 1,000 to each of the 14.07 lakh registered members of 14 other welfare boards.

The money has been deposited in the bank accounts of each member.

"The government has also announced aid of Rs 1,000 for the second round of disbursement to the labourers of the unorganised sectors," said the minister.

Transgenders assist Sale of in door-to-door survey paracetamol in groceries questioned

By Our Staff Reporter

The Corporation has engaged transgenders to help conduct door-to-door survey.

They will be paid on a monthly basis for three months.

They have been provided with masks and given training on how to conduct the survey.

A sample trial conducted in Thiruvannamipur was successful, said an official.

He appealed to the authorities to track and educate the retailers and take appropriate action against violators.

If anything interesting is happening in your neighbourhood please inform Mambalam Times.

Solid waste down by 35 percent

By Our Staff Reporter

Though Chennai's Municipal Solid Waste has reduced by almost 35 percent, waste segregation has become zero in the past one month, putting a halt to the Corporation's ambitious zero-waste initiative.

As per the latest Corporation data, eight Corporation zones have recorded 'zero' waste segregation while the rest have done very minimal segregation

Corporation officials said that the waste segregation centers are closed as all the ground staff are in door-to-door screening and disinfectant activities.

Totally, 163 tonnes of wet waste and 128 tonnes of dry waste have been segregated since the lockdown.

Totally, 3622 tonnes of waste has been collected from across the city, against the overall average of 5,000 tonnes.

3331 tonnes of unsegregated waste has gone to the landfill.

The Koyambedu market generated 159 tonnes of waste as of April 15.

The mask task

By Our Staff Reporter

Giving tailors a source of livelihood during lockdown, entrepreneur Latha Chandramouli has engaged women to make reusable cloth masks

She is the Founder of The Light Up Store, and has created a network of 38 tailors to stitch reusable masks to cater to the demand.

The initiative began just after the lockdown as a fundraiser to sponsor masks for delivery persons, policemen, street vendors, homeless people and other members of the society in dire need of masks.

"It was also something the tailors I work with were looking for. During the lockdown, their daily wage has been cut off. Many continue to reach out to me to provide service to earn a little," she said.

Being an entrepreneur, who designs and supplies gifts and tokens for corporate organisations, Latha is familiar with delivery options such as the Link app, which she is now also using to deliver the material to her tailors' homes.

She sources the material at the retail price from different vendors in Parry's Corner and from shops like Nalli.

Her contact number is 95000 26111.