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Vol. 27, No. 1

1445th Issue: May 23 - 29, 2021

FREE

ANNOUNCEMENT

Until the lockdown is lifted substantially, there will be no print edition of *Mambalam Times*.

No gold rush for Akshaya Tritiya due to lockdown

For the second consecutive year, due to the lockdown, Akshaya Tritiya on May 14 turned a damp squib for jewellers as they had to keep their shops closed. The city's jewellery hub of T. Nagar wore a deserted look as all shops were closed.

In 2019, nearly 35 tonnes of gold worth Rs. 17,000 crores were sold across India on Akshaya Tritiya day, according to industry estimates. Leading jewellers lament that only a fraction of that was sold in 2020 and 2021, a big loss for the industry.

The sale though picked up on online platforms.

The manager of a leading jewellery showroom said that its online business doubled this Akshaya Tritiya after it was permitted to ship to certain cities.

300 persons screened for COVID-19 in mobile camp



By Our Staff Reporter

The Health Department is conducting free COVID-19 screening camps on alternate days from 9 a.m to 2 p.m at the junction of Burkit Road and Usman Road in T. Nagar.

Around 300 persons are tested at each session.

This photo was taken on May 21.

Similar camps are conducted daily at various other locations in T. Nagar and West Mambalam.

Rs. 2000 given as COVID-19 relief



Thamilachi Thangapandian (South Chennai MP), accompanied by J. Karunanidhi (T. Nagar MLA), visited a TUCS ration shop recently to inspect the first phase of distribution of Rs. 2000 cash assistance announced by Chief Minister M. K. Stalin as COVID-19 relief.

Many cardholders waited in a long queue to collect the cash.

Rajan Eye Care seeks donations for oxygen plant

By Our Staff Reporter

Rajan Eye Care Hospital (T. Nagar) and the Rotary Club of Madras T. Nagar have proposed to donate an oxygen generator plant worth Rs. 90 lakh lakhs to the Tamil Nadu Government Multi-Super Specialty Hospital, Omandurar Government Estate.

They have launched Project O2, and in the first phase, provided 300 oxygen cylinders, concentrators and flow meters.

A week back, 100 oxygen flow meters were donated to the Namakkal Government General Hospital. They are also planning to donate to the Stanley Medical College Hospital, the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital

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Containment zones rise faster in North Chennai

By Our Staff Reporter

Containment zones in the northern part of the city are increasing at a faster clip compared to those in central and south Chennai, analysis of Greater Chennai Corporation data shows.

While total number of containment zones (streets with more than 10 cases) increased by 22.8% from May 9 to 17, those in the north (zones 1-5) grew by 61.2%, those in the central region (zones 6-10) by 11.6% and those in the south (zones 11-15) by 28.6%.

The city on May 17 had 890 containment streets with the northern region having 158, the central region 489 and south 243.

In comparison, containment zones in the northern region grew only by 4% in the April 28-May 9 period, while the growth was 113% and 148% in the central and southern regions.

Corporation officials stepped up their focus on these areas in the last week.

Ward 123 in Teynampet and ward 134 in Kodambakkam are the only other locations with more than 20 containment zones.

Local NGO donates COVID-19 relief kit to Corporation



By Our Staff Reporter

Adhi Raksha Welfare Trust (T. Nagar) donated a COVID-19 relief kit worth of Rs.1.5 lakh to Chennai Corporation on May 18. The kit included 2000 face shields, 2000 bottles of hand sanitizer and 1000 pairs of hand gloves.

The Trust is also distributing food packets among homeless persons affected by the lockdown. For more details, call 98844 00422.

Postal Colony a containment zone



By Our Staff Reporter

A number of streets in the neighbourhood have been declared containment zones due to the presence of COVID-19 positive cases.

Corporation workers have installed barricades with banners cautioning residents on Postal Colony 4th Street in West Mambalam and other streets.

Motorists wait outside police station

By Our Staff Reporter

A number of motorists caught by police during the vehicle check following COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were seen standing outside R4 Pandy Bazaar Police Station on May 19 to pay fines and retrieve their vehicles.



E-registration mandatory for travel within police limits

By Our Staff Reporter

Chennai Police has made e-registration compulsory for any kind of travel within the city police limits.

Residents can apply for an e-pass on <https://eregister.tnega.org/#/user/pass>

E-registration is granted for the following three categories:

- Individual/Group travel via road
- Individual/Group coming to the city via flight or train
- Commercial establishments/organisations/traders/financial companies

According to the website, those travelling for funerals, elderly care, and medical emergencies are granted an e-pass.

However, people under quarantine in 181 containment zones are warned against traveling and action will be taken if they break the quarantine, the release said.

All essential products will be delivered to them at their doorstep, it added.

An exemption for e-pass will be provided only in case of emergency medical treatment

and for unavoidable situations, it said.

Members of the public will only be permitted to travel for purchasing essentials between 6 a.m and 10 a.m without an e-pass. Arrangements have also been made within police divisions to facilitate purchasing of vegetables and other essentials, the order said.

Chennai police has deployed its personnel on 205 two-wheeler patrolling vehicles, 309 four-wheeler patrolling vehicles and beat patrolling vehicles at important points.

Dog accompanies trash collector



By Our Staff Reporter

A man was seen combing his dog on the roadside on 1st Avenue (Ashok Nagar) on May 20.

He told this reporter that he earns his livelihood by selling trash collected from garbage bins to scrap dealers.

He said that the dog often accompanies him when he leaves home for work.

12 streets have 50-plus COVID-19 cases

By Our Staff Reporter

As on May 13, there were 983 streets in the city with more than 10 cases with Teynampet (Zone 9) highest with 207 streets with more than 10 active cases.

Of these, there are more than 50 cases in one street.

Teynampet, which for a long time had the highest number of active cases in the city, is now fourth on the list with 3,746 cases.

These 983 streets are identified as containment zones with strict restrictions on movement. Close to 80% of these streets have 10-19 cases each. 136 streets have 20-29 cases and 44 have 30-39 cases.

Six streets have 50-59 cases, three have 60-69 cases, two have 70-79 cases and IMH Street (Kilpauk) alone has 82

cases.

Kodambakkam Zone in Central Chennai has the second highest number of streets with more than 10 cases (120). However, it does not have a single street with more than 50 cases. The majority of its containment zones have only 10-19 cases. Kodambakkam has the second highest number of active cases in the city at 4,214.

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Video of coconut embryo sold in T. Nagar garners 3 million views

By Our Staff Reporter

In a food stall on Lake View Road (T. Nagar), popular YouTube food blogger Peppa Foodie videographed a roadside vendor selling coconut with embryos on May 18.

The video, which went viral on YouTube, garnered over 2.7 million views in just a week.

It also popped up in YouTube's list of trending videos.

The video shows a small coconut being opened with a sickle, and its insides reveal a fleshy and small ball of coconut which is called as coconut 'embryo' (Scientific term Cotyledon).

This phenomenon occurs when coconuts mature and are ready to shoot out green leaves. Thus, a small bud or embryo forms inside the coconut.

The cotyledon is delicious, healthy and nutritious.

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Monkeys trouble residents

Monkeys have been troubling the residents of Nagathamman Koil Street Extension, LIG Colony and nearby streets in Ashok Nagar - West Mambalam border for several weeks.

Residents said that the monkeys destroyed things kept on the terraces of buildings and many entered the kitchen.

Residents said that repeated complaints to the forest department have evoked no response.



Chaos after e-pass made mandatory for city travel

By Our Staff Reporter

In a bid to effectively implement lockdown restrictions, the city police issued orders late night on May 17 making e-registration mandatory for persons travelling from one police station limits to another.

Following this, arterial roads witnessed chaotic scenes the next morning owing to new rules imposed by the police overnight.

There were checkpoints at 13 places in 12 police districts in the city.

The 12 police districts include T. Nagar, Flower Bazaar, Washermenpet, Madhavaram, Pulianthope, Anna Nagar, Ambattur, Kilpauk, Triplicane, Mylapore, St. Thomas Mount and Adyar.

The police station limits have been further divided into 348 sectors and the roads barricaded.

The restrictions are such that members of the public cannot travel from one police limit to another without e-pass.

The late night order led to confusion across several roads in the city, with residents caught unawares as they attempted to cross the police limits without the mandatory e-pass.

Police were seen stopping motorists, with those without e-passes made to return home.

S. Ramachandran, of K. K. Nagar, said, "Most of the motorists on arterial roads like Anna Salai are either travelling for emergency or essential purposes. The police should have implemented it after giving some time. I was supposed to reach the Government Hospital in Omandurar Government Estate to deliver food to my relative. But I was stranded for more than half an hour. The road was opened for traffic after many agitated motorists honked."

Police randomly verified whether the motorists had e-registration or other documents supporting emergency or essential purpose. Again the police closed the road for traffic, which resulted in a chaotic situation. Heated arguments ensued between motorists and police personnel who were on duty in other places as well.

"It is high-handedness of the police to impound my vehicle when I went to buy from a store located 200 meters from my house. I had to wait two-and-a-half hours at the police station to get my vehicle released," said Ramesh Daga, a retired corporate executive.

A senior police officer said, "Around 50% of motorists have e-registration while the remaining do not have it. We stop all and verify the records. If they do not have e-registration or have no valid reason, we immediately impound the vehicles, besides booking cases against them."

Additional Commissioner of Police N. Kannan said, "All restrictions were announced duly before the implementation. In fact, we were conducting campaigns continuously, asking the public not to venture out of their homes without any reason and insisting that they should move on roads only for emergency purposes."

Police found that many motorists were moving with fake 'press', 'hospital' and 'advocate' stickers on their vehicles.

Police seized 4,107 vehicles from motorists without e-registration.

Exempted services

Later in the day, the city police clarified that doctors, health staff, mediapersons, essential service providers, secretariat staff, staff of foreign missions and advocates would be permitted to proceed on the roads on production of their identity cards at vehicle checking points.

They need not have the mandatory e-registration to move from one place to another.

COVID-19 vaccination camp in school

By Our Staff Reporter

Chennai Corporation conducted a COVID-19 vaccine camp in Corporation School on Easwaran Koil Street (West Mambalam) on May 20.

Around 400 persons were vaccinated in the camp.

Such camps are conducted regularly for the benefit of the residents, especially senior citizens in the neighbourhood.



Trees provide shade on Bazullah Road

By Our Staff Reporter

Tall and well-grown avenue trees on both sides of Bazullah Road (T. Nagar) provide shade from the sun for the few road users.

The decades-old trees, planted 10 meters apart, are periodically pruned and well maintained.

With the road deserted due to the lockdown, the green cover gives a pleasant look.

The photo was taken at 3 p.m on May 18.



Corporation begins telemedicine services

Chennai Corporation on May 15 launched telemedicine services for COVID-19 patients in home quarantine in all zones of the city by recruiting 135 doctors. The call center has been set up in Teynampet. The doctors monitor all aspects of home quarantine including medicine, food, isolation, sanitation and emergency support.

The 24x7 service can be availed through the mobile application GCC Vidmed. The app connects the patient to the doctor through video for medical consultation that is free of cost.

Upon consultation done via video, the prescription will be sent as an email to the registered email ID and as a text message to the patient's phone. Patients/relatives can also contact the 24-hour toll-free helpline 1800 1205 55550 in case of emergencies or the COVID-19 symptoms help line 2538 4520 or the helpline 4612 2300 for tele-counseling.

The Corporation also has a Corona Monitoring App through which anyone experiencing symptoms can receive guidance on their health condition.

ITR filing dates extended

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on May 20 extended various income tax return deadlines for the financial year 2020-21 (Assessment Year 2021-22) in view of the COVID-19 pandemic-induced disruptions.

The due date for filing Income Tax Return (ITR) for Assessment Year 2021-22 for individuals has been extended by two months till Sept. 30 and for companies by a month till Nov. 30. The deadline for issuing Form 16 by employers to employees has been extended by a month till July 15.

Slanting tree axed



By Our Staff Reporter

An avenue tree, which was slanting across Thambiah Road in West Mambalam near the TUCS shop, was axed by Corporation workers last week.

Three held for selling liquor illegally

MGR Nagar police busted an illicit liquor racket and arrested three persons including a father-son duo and seized 153 bottles of liquor from them.

Police identified the accused as Kabali and his son Vignesh of Porur, and their associate Deepak of MGR Nagar.

Police said that they had developed their network through supplying packaged drinking water and had tapped the same contacts to sell the liquor which they had purchased and kept ready before the lockdown started. They hoarded alcohol bottles and sold them at higher prices to customers in and around Jafferkanpet. K. K. Nagar and MGR Nagar, police said.

15% of streets have active COVID-19 cases

By Our Staff Reporter

About 1,000 streets, out of 42,000, account for 40% of the active cases

While 196 of the 200 wards in Chennai Corporation had at least one active COVID-19 case, a street-wise analysis showed that the active cases were concentrated in 15% of the roughly 42,000 streets in the city.

The active cases were spread across nearly 6,300 of the 42,000 streets. While the civic body had earlier provided the names of the streets with six or more cases, this is the first time it has released the full list of active cases in every street.

Teynampet had the highest number of streets with active cases. Of the nearly 2,000 streets in the zone, 813 or more than 40% of them had at least one active case. It was followed by Kodambakkam (2,600 streets) and Royapuram (1,600 streets). One in every four streets had active cases in these zones.

Corporation adds 304 oxygen beds in two centres

By Our Staff Reporter

As the number of COVID-19 patients scrambling for oxygen beds in the city is on the rise, Chennai Corporation added two COVID-19 treatment centres with 304 oxygen beds on May 20.

A COVID-19 care centre with 200 oxygen beds was set up in the Government Children's Hospital in Egmore and another with 104 oxygen beds in Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Perambur.

The Corporation has also added 1,590 oxygen concentrators which have been deployed in major government hospitals and COVID-19 care centres.

Of the 837 beds in Egmore hospital, 100 have been allocated for treating children infected with COVID-19.

50 oxygen beds have also been installed in DAV Girls Higher Secondary School (Teynampet).

Hotels accommodate asymptomatic patients

By Our Staff Reporter

Days after Chennai Corporation made an announcement allowing hospitals and hotels to start private COVID-19 care centres, private medical practitioners were also allowed to do the same under the Tamil Nadu Clinical Establishments Act (TNCEA) and by the Directorate of Medical and Rural Health Services (DMS).

Several doctors and hospitals have since joined hands with well-known hotel chains in the state to accommodate asymptomatic patients or those with milder symptoms.

The move comes as an attempt to ease the strain on the demand for ICU beds and oxygen that hospitals across the state are buckling under, with many patients remaining in ambulances.

Dr. Thineshchandar Andiappan (Orthopaedic Surgeon), Dr. Lavanya Rajaraman (Paediatrician) and Dr. Roshan Santosham (Pulmonologist), have signed an MoU with a hotel in T. Nagar to start a COVID-19 care center with 35 beds, and basic facilities for supportive and palliative care for COVID-19 patients.

Food will be provided by the hotel, they said.

Rs. 7.14 lakhs stolen from ration shops

By Our Staff Reporter

Thieves broke into two ration shops in Saidapet and took away Rs. 7.14 lakhs meant for providing COVID-19 relief on May 23.

Police said that the workers of ration shop numbers 24 and 25 in Cauvery Nagar in Saidapet had closed them for the weekend after distributing the cash among cardholders and returned on the morning of May 25.

They found the locks broken and the cash missing.

The Saidapet police registered a case and scrutinised CCTV footage.

EB allows self-billing by low-tension consumers

By Our Staff Reporter

A few days after activists urged TNEB to accept self-assessment done by the low-tension (LT) consumers to calculate electricity usage, the Electricity Board issued orders on May 20 to allow self-assessment by consumers.

Now, the consumers can send the self-assessment through WhatsApp or e-mail.

Based on the self-assessment reading furnished by the consumers, the previous month's billing will be deleted and a new bill for May will be raised and sent back.

As per the order, consumers can make use of internet banking, mobile banking, payment gateway, Bharath Bill Pay System and others for the payment of current consumption charges and other arrears.

During last year's lockdown, TNEB had adopted the previous bi-monthly billing but it became a major issue when the actual reading was taken in the subsequent summer period, resulting in huge bills.

Three held for bid to sell Remdesivir illegally

A special team attached to Adyar Deputy Commissioner of Police arrested three persons on May 16 on the charge of trying to sell Remdesivir for a higher price in Indira Nagar on Sunday.

Following reports about Remdesivir being sold in the black market for a very high price, City Police Commissioner Shankar Jiwal ordered the force to look out for such incidents.

According to the police, members of the special team, including sub-inspector Selvakumar, head constables Venkatesan and Shankar, received information that some people were selling the medicine costing Rs. 800 for Rs. 25,000 to those who contacted them online.

During their vigil, they noticed three persons standing suspiciously in Indira Nagar with two Remdesivir bottles.

They were identified as Adithyan, a medical salesman from K. K. Nagar, Rajkumar who runs a pharmacy in Pattalam and Syed Amjed, who works in a medical shop in Thousand Lights.

Police seized the medicine and Rs. 89,000 in cash from them.

"We suspect that the medicine was routed from Bangladesh through Tripura. We are investigating how they got it. Only a detailed inquiry will reveal this," said V. Vikraman, Deputy Commissioner, Adyar.

Velammal gives Rs. 1.25 crore for COVID-19 relief



M. V. Muthuramalingam (Chairman, Velammal Educational Trust) and Directors M. V. Sriram and M. V. Vivek Anand presented a cheque for Rs. 1.25 crore for the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund to Chief Minister M. K. Stalin in the Secretariat on May 19 towards COVID-19 relief. For more details, contact 80560 63519.

T. Nagar MLA deploys free ambulance



By Our Staff Reporter

J. Karunanidhi (T. Nagar MLA) has deployed a free ambulance for the benefit of the residents in his constituency. To avail the free ambulance service during medical emergencies, call 73974 77777.

Traffic cops check motorists



Traffic policemen were seen checking motorists at Usman Road junction in T. Nagar on May 20 and allowing them through only on production of proper documents.



Subway walls repaired after report in Mambalam Times



By Our Staff Reporter

Following the report 'Water stagnating in Madley Subway' published in *Mambalam Times* two weeks back, Corporation workers plastered the cracks in the walls of Madley subway from which water was seeping and accumulating in the subway.

Corporation to open more screening centers

By Our Staff Reporter

To handle the spike in COVID-19 cases and to avoid crowding and ensure better patient management, Chennai Corporation plans to open 18 more screening centres.

"This means each zone will have two centres", according to a senior official.

Each screening centre has two doctors, two lab technicians, and two x-ray machine operators, besides two paramedical staff to manage crowds.

Biometric verification suspended in PDS shops

After requests from consumers due to risk of COVID-19 infection, the biometric based authentication has been suspended in ration shops by the PDS Department.

Consumers avail monthly rations using smart cards which will be scanned at the shops at the time of purchase.

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