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Vol. 27, No. 2

1446th Issue: May 30 - June 5, 2021

FREE

ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Lockdown extended till June 7

By Our Staff Reporter

The state government on May 28 announced extension of total lockdown for another week ending 6 a.m on June 7.

The sale of fruits and vegetables through departments concerned would continue in all districts to meet the daily requirements of the people.

Permission has also been granted to the local provisional stores to sell the commodities in their vehicles or pushcarts with the approval of the local bodies in the neighbourhoods between 7 a.m and 6 p.m.

Provisions can also be bought online during the same time.

A kit of 13 grocery items will be supplied to all rice cardholders from June in ration shops.

Teacher held on charges of sexual harassment

By Our Staff Reporter

G. Rajagopalan (59), a teacher in PSBB School (Ashok Nagar) was arrested on May 25 on charges of sexually harassing girl students, and remanded to judicial custody till July 8.

The arrest followed allegations circulated on social media and a police complaint from a victim.

Allegations of sexual harassment and misconduct against the teacher had circulated on social media on May 23 and soon went viral.

The next day, the teacher was picked up by the city police's special wing for crime against women and children from his residence in

Nanganallur.

A special team, under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner, Crime Against Women and Children, H. Jayalakshmi, and Deputy Commissioner, T. Nagar, D.N. Hari Kiran Prasad interrogated Rajagopalan.

His laptop and mobile phone were seized from his house and scrutinised for electronic evidence.

He was teaching Accountancy and Business Studies for Std. 11 and 12 students.

He had access to the mobile phone numbers of girl students and had shared obscene content, besides asking them to send their pictures and videos to him.

During interrogation, he confessed to his inappropriate behaviour with girl students, the police said.

Rajagopalan was booked under various sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act.

Intense lockdown brings down pollution level

The reduced traffic on roads due to tightening of lockdown restrictions has improved Chennai's air quality compared to the pre-COVID-19 days in 2019, but it was not as good as the air quality measured in May 2020 when there was a stringent nationwide lockdown.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) in Alandur and Velachery Central Pollution Control Board stations on May 26 was 47 and 73 respectively.

Air Quality Index is calculated based on the average concentrations of pollutants like Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Ammonia (NH₃), Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ozone, PM₁₀ and PM₂₅ measured over a standard time interval.

An AQI below 100 is considered satisfactory and above 200 is considered poor with breathing discomfort for most people.

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1 BEDROOMS, hall, kitchen, first floor flat, 540 sqft, Giri Street, West Mambalam. Contact 81977 67110 after 7 pm

Animal Welfare Board appeals for donations

By Our Staff Reporter

Tamilnadu Animal Welfare Board (TNAWB) has appealed for donations to raise funds to feed stray animals affected by the lockdown.

Contributions may be sent online to Current Account No. 00010123 6907 in ICICI bank, IFSC Code ICIC0000001.

Volunteers who want to help animals in distress can obtain special e-passes by sending email to tnawb2019@gmail.com.

Rs. 10 lakhs aid for kin of journalists who died due to COVID-19

By Our Staff Reporter

Chief Minister M. K. Stalin has increased the compensation given to the families of journalists who died due to COVID-19 from Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 10 lakhs.

The Chief Minister has also hiked the incentive given to journalists who have been reporting on COVID-19 from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 5,000.

In a statement, Stalin said, "Journalists are playing an important role in bringing important news and information to the people and creating awareness during the pandemic despite hurdles.

"So, to encourage them, all registered journalists and photographers/videographers working with print, television and magazines across districts will receive an increased incentive amount."

By Our Staff Reporter
Following closure of all shops including those selling essentials and groceries to enforce the intense lockdown, the State Government has allowed sale of essentials to residents through pushcarts and minivans.

Photo shows fruits being sold from a pushcart on Lake View Road (West Mambalam) and vegetables/fruits from a minivan on Burkit Road (T. Nagar).

Essentials sold through pushcarts, minivans



Low lying cable blocks way for road users



By Our Staff Reporter

A low lying cable is cutting across the road at the junction of Thiruvengadam Street and Arya Gowda in West Mambalam.

It is causing hindrance to motorists and pedestrians crossing the junction. The photo shows a 2-wheeler rider bending his neck to avoid the cable and a pedestrian trying to raise it to cross the road.

It also poses a grave danger for motorists, especially at night due to poor visibility.

Corporation conducts mass cleaning drive

By Our Staff Reporter

Chennai Corporation is conducting mass cleaning drives during the lockdown.

On May 26, the drive was conducted in Karnan Street (T. Nagar).

The civic body appointed an executive engineer and zonal official to monitor the entire process and the officers focus on one ward every day.

The areas where there is illegal dumping of garbage and construction debris, and streets around housing board and slum clearance board tenements are covered under the drive. The city streets will also be cleaned.

About 1,300 conservancy workers, 500 street sweepers, 37 compactor vehicles, 75 tipper lorries, 60 earthmovers, 180 battery-operated vehicles and 65 tricycles have been deployed. Though cleaning is done periodically, the civic body has now taken it up on priority for the next ten days.

The corporation aims at clearing about 1,300 tonnes of garbage and 5,000 tonnes of construction debris from the streets during the 10-day drive.

Private contractors Urbaser-Sumeet and Ramky Enviro Engineers are in charge of clearing garbage in their allotted zones. The Corporation will take charge of Anna Nagar, Ambattur, Tondiarpet, Royapuram and Thiru Vi Ka Nagar Zones.

Vaccination camp conducted in Pitti Thyagaraya Hall



By Our Staff Reporter

A COVID-19 vaccination camp for those in the 18-45 years group was organised by Chennai Corporation on May 24 in Sir Pitti Thyagaraya Hall (G. N. Chetty Road, T. Nagar).

Around 400 persons were vaccinated in the camp.

Juvenile held under POCSO Act

By Our Staff Reporter

The police arrested three persons from three different places, including a juvenile, under the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for allegedly raping minor girls.

A 17-year-old girl living in T. Nagar police district limits had been missing since May 24.

The All-Woman Police, Vadapalani, began investigation following a complaint from her mother and found the girl with a classmate. The police rescued them.

The boy lured the girl with promises of marriage and allegedly sexually assaulted her. The police initiated proceedings against the boy under the POCSO Act.

Sweeping machine for cleaning roads



By Our Staff Reporter

Dust, gravel and other debris were removed from 4th Avenue, Ashok Nagar by Chennai Corporation workers using an automatic road sweeping machine on May 28.

Narikuravar families get food packets from Udavum Karangal

By Our Staff Reporter

To commemorate World Hunger Day on May 28, Udavum Karangal (41, Kannadasan Street, T. Nagar), an NGO providing care for destitutes in its home in Thiruverkadu, distributed breakfast packets among 150 families from the Narikuravar community residing in Amma Nagar (Poonamallee).

The families have been struggling due to the lockdown. The Tahsildar facilitated the program.

SRM launches 200-bed COVID-19 Care Center

A 200-bed COVID-19 Care Center has been established in SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre in Kattankulathur. While 100 beds will be allocated for allopathic treatment, the rest will be used for treatment through Ayurveda.

As per government and AIIMS guidelines, only patients with moderately severe disease are admitted to the hospital.

The Ayurveda Covid Care Center has been established with the support of Lions Club of T. Nagar Charitable Trust.

The Trust has been running an Ayurveda hospital for over 23 years.

Ayurveda treatment will be provided as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Ayush.

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Cops place poles for signal post to 'rest'



By Our Staff Reporter

A traffic signal post at the junction of Mettupalayam Road and Govindan Road, West Mambalam toppled over recently. Traffic police have erected a structure with poles on which it is resting.

Police innovate to create barricades



70 Feet Road, West CIT Nagar



Lakshmi Street Lane, West Mambalam

By Our Staff Reporter

With shortage of barricades, police have been forced to use other items like sandbags, garbage bins, streetlight posts and hoardings to block several road junctions to prevent the movement of vehicles and enforce the lockdown. These photos show junction of 70 Feet Road and North Road (West CIT Nagar) and Lakshmi Street Lane in West Mambalam barricaded.

Homeless persons housed in night shelters



By Our Staff Reporter

As the full lockdown with stringent restrictions came into effect on May 24, Chennai Corporation started rescuing homeless persons.

According to a Corporation official, the rescue drive was started after reports of homeless persons remaining on the streets and struggling for essential needs.

"On May 25, 14 homeless persons were rescued from in and around T. Nagar and sent to night shelters managed by the Corporation," said the official.

The Corporation maintains 55 night shelters across the city in which more than 1,700 homeless persons reside.

Meanwhile, the civic body has taken steps to vaccinate all the residents in the shelters despite several of them not possessing Aadhaar cards.

Medical student starts online blood donation initiative

By Our Staff Reporter

Riya Gupta (a 3rd-year MBBS student in Chettinad Academy of Research and Education) started 'Blood Donor Connect', an Instagram group which directs donors to patients in need of blood.

When the second COVID-19 wave hit the city, 20-year-old Riya decided to do her bit to

help. She directed scores of bed and oxygen cylinder requests to volunteers and NGOs through Tinder, Instagram and WhatsApp and helped amplify demand for medicines.

But she hit a roadblock with requests for blood infusion for non-COVID-19 patients in accident cases, transfusion patients and even for two-month-old babies with Thalassemia and blood cancer.

Riya called up blood banks and big hospital chains, and all of them confirmed that their usual pool of donors did not give blood owing to fear of COVID-19.

She tried to fix this problem by utilising her network. She first put out feelers on her family and friend groups and also spread awareness that there was no risk as the infusion was for non-COVID-19 patients.

She soon started identifying donors and connecting specific patients with them.

In a month, she has networked with more than 100 donors and she is helped by 15 friends and volunteers, most of whom are medical students.

The group focuses on donating blood to children with Thalassemia and blood cancer, who regularly need blood. The group has so far helped 275 patients receive blood in the city.

Register at linktr.ee/Blooddonorconnect if you want to be a donor with Blood Donor Connect.

Police check motorists for e-registration



By Our Staff Reporter

To enforce the lockdown, police were seen checking motorists for e-registration before allowing them to proceed on Govindan Road in West Mambalam. Those without valid permission were not allowed to pass. Police seized 2-wheelers whose riders were found roaming without reason.

Work to begin on part of Metro Rail phase 2

By Our Staff Reporter

A majority of the city's infrastructure projects have been hit by the second COVID-19 wave and labour shortage, but the Phase-2 project of metro rail has picked up pace with Chennai Metro floating a tender to lay tracks to link city's core localities like T. Nagar and Vadapalani with the IT hub in Porur and Poonamallee bypass.

These locations are part of the 26.1km corridor from Light House in the east to Poonamallee and pre-construction work on the 15.8km stretch in this corridor is likely to begin in a month as two companies were awarded contracts recently.

After floating several tenders to construct the 118.9km phase, Chennai Metro has started looking for a firm that can supply, install, test and commission the track in the underground and elevated sections of corridor-4 from Light House to Poonamallee bypass as well as Poonamallee depot.

The 26.1km line includes a 16km elevated corridor with 18 stations and 10.1km underground section with 12 stations.

Earlier, officials said that they may opt for ballasted tracks for the depot to cut cost and ballastless tracks for operation of trains on the mainline.

An official said that work on phase-2 had slowed down due to COVID-19-induced nationwide lockdown last year and the state assembly elections this year.

Corridor-4 links many of the city's core localities like Marina Beach, Mylapore, Nandanam, T. Nagar, Kodambakkam, Vadapalani and Saligramam with the IT hub in Porur and west Chennai localities like Chennai bypass crossing, Iyyappanthangal bus depot, Katuipakkam, Karayan Chavadi and Poonamallee, which are otherwise poorly connected by public transport.

Residents to be penalised for buying Metrowater without booking

Residents who are buying Metrowater without online booking are liable for punishment.

Metrowater has now added a new clause in its contract stating that the consumer who buys water without booking will face action along with the owner and driver of the vehicle that delivered the water. Metrowater has announced that if any water tanker is found engaged in unauthorized supply a minimum fine of Rs. 20,000 will be levied and all trips of that day will be cancelled. The owner and driver of the vehicle will also be booked under IPC Section 379. The house owner or consumer who buys the Metrowater without availing of any booking will be charged with theft of water. If the unauthorized supply of water is identified through the GPS, the smart card issued will be automatically blocked and no further trip will be allowed for that tanker and the vehicle will be stopped immediately.

Daily COVID-19 cases fall below 3,000

Offering respite to the city reeling under the second wave of COVID-19, the number of active cases has gone down thanks to fewer new cases reported daily. The daily number of new cases also dropped by almost 50% from 6,073 on May 23 to 2,779 on May 27. The number of active cases has seen a steady decline from May 24. According to Chennai Corporation data, the city had 46,624 active cases on May 26, 929 less than on May 25 (47,553 cases) and 1,527 less than May 24 (48,151 cases).

The city had 49,236 active cases on May 23, a day before intense lockdown was enforced. A Corporation official attributed the fall to the declining number of daily new cases and the increased number of recoveries. "While the lockdown restrictions helped in containing the spread, measures taken by the Corporation, including triaging at home and stricter home quarantine norms contributed to the fall," said the official. Anna Nagar Zone at 4,955 had the highest active cases as on May 26 followed by Ambattur (4,759), Kodambakkam (4,491) and Adyar (4,420).

Mother, daughter provide food for PHC workers

Vasumathy Rangarajan and her daughter Sukanya Rangarajan (residents of Mylapore) have started an initiative to provide food for healthcare workers in Public Health Care Centers.

"It all started in the first week of May when my mother witnessed the plight of the health care workers tirelessly attending to vaccination, testing and other COVID-19-related work in a local public health care center", Sukanya said.

A nurse stationed there told my mother that she often does not get time to even eat her lunch. This triggered Vasumathy to sponsor coffee and snacks for the seven workers in the PHC. What began as a one-day sponsorship initiative, soon snowballed into sponsoring meals for eight PHC centers in the city including the one in T. Nagar.

When she shared the experience on WhatsApp, it spiralled and help started pouring in from several quarters to sponsor for meals, snacks and coffee for the eight PHCs until the 2nd week of June.

To join the initiative, contact Vasumathy in 98400 15071.

City comes to a halt under intense lockdown

A deserted, otherwise busy Usman Road and Pandy Bazaar in T. Nagar presented a deserted look as a total lockdown was clamped for a week in the city from May 24.

Police blocked several peripheral roads and bridges in the city to contain vehicular movement, and streets looked deserted with only those working for essential services seen on roads.

Pavement dwellers, security personnel of private complexes and volunteers were the ones outside. However, incidents of violation were reported. Hundreds of vehicles were seized as police issued challans to motorists driving without proper reasons.

Several motorists staged a protest at Teynampet signal on May 25 demanding that the police release their bikes. They left after being assured that they would be returned by evening.

Test positive rate falls to lowest in almost 50 days

By Our Staff Reporter

After rising at an alarming pace, the test positivity rate (TPR) in Chennai has fallen by more than half to around 12 percent, the lowest in about 50 days.

While the number of samples being tested every day remains the same over the past few weeks, new cases went below 4,000.

According to Chennai Corporation data, the TPR on May 26 was 12.1 per cent.

After recording 13.9 percent and 13.4 percent TPR on April 10 and April 11 respectively, it began a steady rise to reach 23.8 percent on April 20.

It remained stagnant till May 9, but shot up to 26.6 percent on May 10, the highest since April 1.

The fall in TPR and daily new cases in the last few days has brought down the number of active cases in the city.

Cabs converted into ambulances

By Our Staff Reporter

The Tamilnadu Independent Rental Vehicle Owners Association has joined hands with SWOTT-Covid relief force to transport COVID-19 patients to hospital.

If the government agrees to the services, the association said that it is ready to provide more than 1300 car ambulances across Tamilnadu.

A few rental taxi drivers have already converted some of their vehicles into ambulances by changing the seats into beds with oxygen availability to help patients in distress.

Jade Mathew (General Secretary of the association) said that they it is running around 25 ambulances with oxygen to help patients reach hospital.

To avail of the service, call 90929 96999 or 93622 22786.

Beware of middlemen at burial grounds

By Our Staff Reporter

Chennai Corporation has launched helpline numbers 2538 4520 and 94983 46900 (WhatsApp) to help families register complaints if brokers and middlemen are charging them at crematoriums.

The Corporation has cautioned families of COVID-19 victims against brokers and middlemen who charge them for conducting funerals.

This comes after the civic body received several complaints where touts and middlemen pose as family members of persons who died due to COVID-19, ask crematoriums for slots that are free of charge, and later "sell" these slots to families for prices ranging from Rs.10,000 to Rs. 15,000.

The Corporation is also providing a free hearse vehicle for families. For availing the service, call 155377.

MLA felicitates local resident for helping needy



By Our Staff Reporter

N. Kalyanasundaram, popularly known as 'Sundal Mama', was felicitated by J. Karunanidhi (T. Nagar MLA) last week for providing free

lunch and dinner for the needy during the lockdown.

He has been selling sundal, bhajji and other snacks from his roadside eatery on Bakthavatchalam Street (West



Mambalam) for several years. Since the lockdown, he shut his shop and has been using his pushcart to provide free lunch and dinner daily for more than 200 homeless persons in and

around the neighbourhood. His wife Padamavathy helps him in the endeavour to prepare the food which includes sambar rice and pulliyathoorai for lunch and tiffin items for

dinner. He has fixed a board on his pushcart mentioning the time the food is available for lunch and dinner and that anyone can pick up the free food packets.

Car ambulance service for COVID-19 patients

By Our Staff Reporter

A new system in the city is helping COVID-19 patients receive quick access to transportation to health centres.

The Chennai Corporation's 'Car Ambulance Service' is available to COVID-19 patients in home quarantine who send an SOS to zonal-level volunteers, after which the next free vehicle is rushed to them.

The patient is then shifted to



Udavum Karangal appeals for donations to help the needy



Last year, Udavum Karangal (NGO with office in 460, 25th street, NSK Nagar, between Shanthi Colony and Anna Arch, Arumbakkam) had helped more than 3,000 families whose livelihood had been affected by the lockdown.

This year too, it has started to extend help to such families who have been similarly affected.

S. Vidyaakar (Founder) told *Anna Nagar Times*, "We need to safeguard the health and safety of more than 1,000 of our inmates who include infants, children, patients, caregivers, social workers, staff and volunteers at our units in Thiruverkadu (Chennai), Coimbatore, Madurai and Tiruvannamalai. In addition, we also have the responsibility of helping about 2,000 families of migrant workers and daily wage earners in and around Thiruverkadu suffering without jobs or income", Vidyaakar said.

Vidyaakar said that, since the lockdown, the NGO has started distributing essentials to affected families which costs Rs.2,500 per kit including a month's groceries and immune-boosting medical supplements. Each kit consists of 25 kgs rice, 50 provision items, 4 reusable masks, 1 sanitizer bottle, 2 soaps and a jute bag.

He added that the NGO will spend about Rs. 65 lakhs to procure 3,000 kits for its inmates and the affected families.

It is also providing lunch to more than 200 homeless persons daily since the lockdown started. He has appealed to the readers of *Anna Nagar Times* for donations in cash or kind to help this cause. Donations can be sent online by visiting the webpage www.myhelpinghands.org/donate/

For more details, donors can call Vidyaakar in 99401 88011 or send email to udavumkarangal@gmail.com.

the Corporation's screening centers for a health examination and sent to COVID-19 care centers or Government Hospitals depending on their condition.

The Corporation has so far organized 250 such vehicles to help transport patients covering all the 15 Corporation Zones.

As on May 26, around 8,107 patients have benefited from the service.

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1000 food delivery persons vaccinated in special camp



By Our Staff Reporter

Chennai Corporation vaccinated more than 1000 delivery personnel engaged by Swiggy food aggregator in a vaccination camp in Fab Hotel (Lake View Park, Lake View Road, West Mambalam) last week.

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எண்.2/1, தம்பையா சாலை, மேற்கு மாம்பலம், (SRM Hospital எதிரில்).
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