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Sri Kapali Temple to be closed till March 31: Panguni utsavam cancelled

By Our Staff Reporter

Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple has been shut down for devotees from Friday morning. The annual Panguni utsavam stands cancelled.

As per a Government directive issued late evening Thursday, daily poojas will take place as per schedule but devotees will not be allowed inside.

On Friday morning, the gates were firmly closed. Devotees who came by, stopped to pray and moved on. A few flower sellers were in business though.

The directive from the state which will be in effect till at least March 31 has meant the cancellation of the annual Panguni brahmotsavam that draws thousands of people.

The utsavam was scheduled to start on March 28.



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**Marina morning in the time of virus**

Walkers and exercise-seekers seen on the service road of the Marina Beach on Friday morning. Though the corona virus advisory asks people to avoid large gatherings and to keep a distance from people, the stream of people who frequent the beachside every morning continues. Others say that this practice must be curbed immediately and the state health secretary has been alerted.

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For details contact the school at 24981006, 6383910942.

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Ph: 9841047984,
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Ph: 42100564, 24618473.

● At Sir Sivasami Kalalaya Higher Secondary School, admissions are open for classes LKG to VIII and XI. The school has shifted its location.

For details regarding admission contact them at 26A, East Mada Street,

Mylapore. Ph: 24957950,
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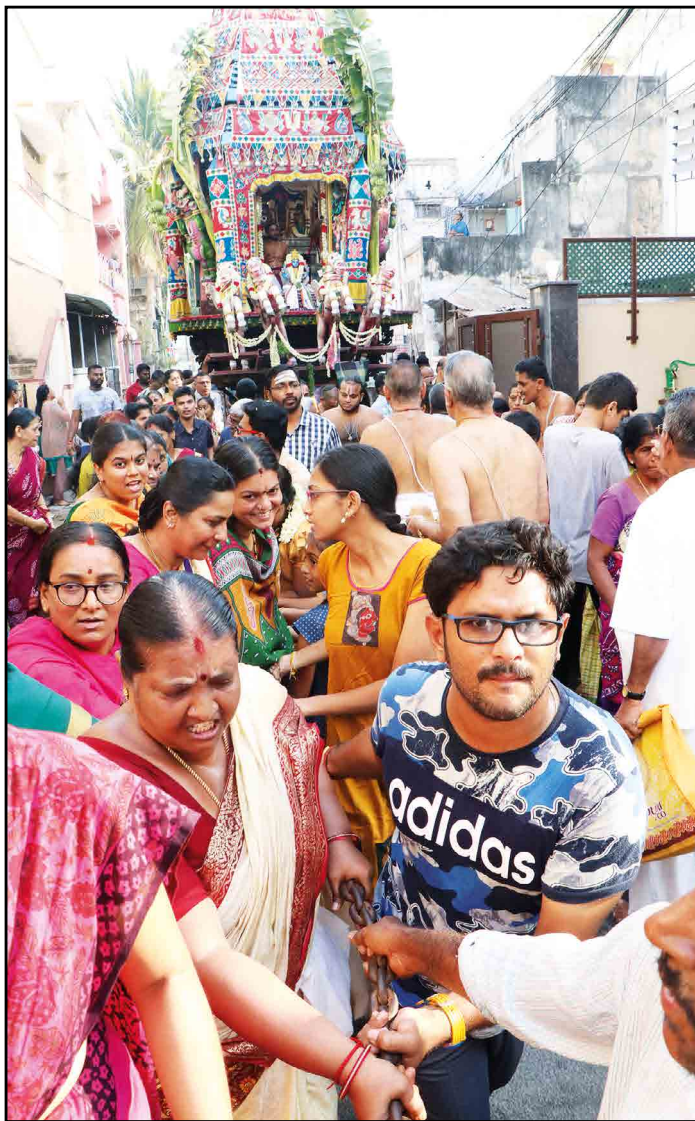
Brahmotsavam at Sri Adi Kesava Perumal Temple

Several hundred devotees assembled at Sri Adi Kesava Perumal Temple, Mylapore on March 18 morning to watch the ther make its rounds of the neighbourhood. The celebration, which was held as part of the annual brahmotsavam festival at the temple, will end on Saturday, March 21.

Middle-aged women, children and seniors took turns to pull the beautifully-decorated ther. The ther made regular stops where devotees handed over coconuts, flowers and other pooja items as an offering to the deity.

On Mar.18, N. C. Sridhar, the chairman of the temple Trust says, "Like every year, we had artistes playing on the raja molam, panchavadyam (an orchestra of five instruments) and nadaswaram. There were several devotees reciting the Divya prabandham and Vedas too".

He continues, "On the last day, 33 alvars and acharyas will be taken out in a procession along with the deity around the mada streets in the evening".



Seniors welcome electric golf carts on mada streets

By Our Staff Reporter

Electric golf carts started ferrying senior Mylaporeans from in and around Mada streets to Sri Kapaleeswarar temple, Mylapore the day after their launch last week.

On March 12, Chennai headquartered non-banking finance company, Sundaram Finance donated two battery-operated electric golf carts to Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple.

The service was launched mainly to help devotees, especially seniors and physically-challenged persons to access the temple easily.

Said a senior who was travelling on the electric cart, "This is a very useful service for people like us. The ride is very comfortable."

The battery carts pick up devotees from a point near Mylapore tank bus stand and ferry them to the eastern entrance of Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple. They also pick up devotees from this entrance and drop them at their preferred location on the Mada streets.

The service will be available from 6.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

However, with the temple closed till March 31 because of the corona virus issue, the carts will not have runs to do.



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Mylapore in the time of the virus

1. The premises of the Mylapore Club on Luz Church Road wears a deserted look after the management shut it down earlier this week.

2. A salesperson at a Mylapore snacks store wears a mask at work. Many such stores are getting staff to be protected.

3. The community of Muslims, mostly women who were on a sit-in protest against the CAA and NRC issues in a plot alongside the Jumma Masjid have suspended their stir because of the virus issue. This place is on Kutchery Road.

4. The empty, private bar close to a TASMAL liquor sales store near Thirumayilai MRTS station. All such spaces have been shut down.

5. Mylapore policemen posted at Luz Circle are sensitising motorists to precautions to follow by handing them leaflets on the issue.

6. Nageswara Rao Park in Luz was closed earlier this week. So are all other parks that fall under the umbrella of Chennai Corporation.

► Photos: M. Madhan Kumar, S. Prabhu

► **WATCH VIDEO** covering the virus affected life in Mylapore. Go to www.youtube.com/mylaporetv

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Masks and hand sanitisers continue to be in demand

By Our Staff Reporter

Following the outbreak of Coronavirus in India, masks and hand sanitisers continue to be in demand at local medical shops in Mylapore.



Medical shop owners say that both two-ply face masks (green coloured masks) and hand sanitisers have been in demand since the past few weeks.

Said Jayanti, a medical shop owner in Mandaveli, "The demand for masks started increasing soon after the virus outbreak began in India. Since this past week, hand sanitisers

are also in demand. However, both are out of stock now."

"The supply of these items has also been scarce," she said.

Three other medical shop owners in South Mada Street, Mylapore also said that the demand for these items is high.

Surgical masks and N-95 masks, used for protection against the virus is available at Apollo pharmacy on South Mada Street.

However, hand sanitisers are out of stock here too. While the surgical masks are priced approximately at Rs. 30 the N 95 masks are priced at Rs. 180. at this shop.

Said a staff here, "The hand sanitisers and masks are getting sold immediately after the stocks arrive. This is happening as every customer is buying five or six hand sanitisers as a precautionary measure to stock up for the future."

The price of 100 ml of hand sanitiser, he says is Rs. 100. "However, as they are unavailable people have started buying Dettol handwash and soaps to maintain hygiene," he said.

- Picture courtesy: shopee.com.my

CHURCHES CANCEL MASSES BUT WILL BE OPEN FOR PRAYER

By Our Staff Reporter

To prevent the Corona virus spread, priests at San Thome Cathedral have canceled all official functions or Masses here till the end of this month.

Said Rev. Fr. G. J. Anthonysamy, Rector and Parish priest of San Thome Cathedral, "To avoid the Corona virus spread, no official functions or Mass will be held at our church till March 31. We have taken the decision following the advice of Rev. Dr. George Antonyswamy, Archbishop of Madras – Mylapore. We have also announced the same to the public."

However, the Church will be kept open for people who may want to come and pray, he says.

Masses though will be beamed online on San Thome TV and Madha TV.

A church volunteer at Our Lady of Guidance Church, Lazarus Church Road confirmed that Masses have been suspended till the end of this month.

Mosque to hold snappy Friday prayer

Jumma Masjid at Kutchery Road, Mylapore has planned to shorten the duration of the Friday prayers in view of Corona virus spread.

Said Syed Masood Jamali, Chief Imam, Jumma Masjid, Kutchery Road told Mylapore Times, "As per the guidelines of the Islamic Scholars Association – 'Jamathul Ulama', that governs the religious activities of all mosques in Tamil Nadu, we have reduced the duration of Friday special prayers from one hour fifteen minutes to just twenty-five minutes. This will be followed for three weeks starting from tomorrow."

The Friday prayer is now scheduled to take place from 1.15 p.m. to 1.40 p.m.

Usually, he says at least 700-800 members of the nearby Muslim community attend this prayer.

However, now only those who come for prayer within the stipulated time of twenty – five minutes will be able to attend it, he says.

"The decision has been taken following the Tamil Nadu government's advisory to avoid public gatherings in the wake of Coronavirus spread."

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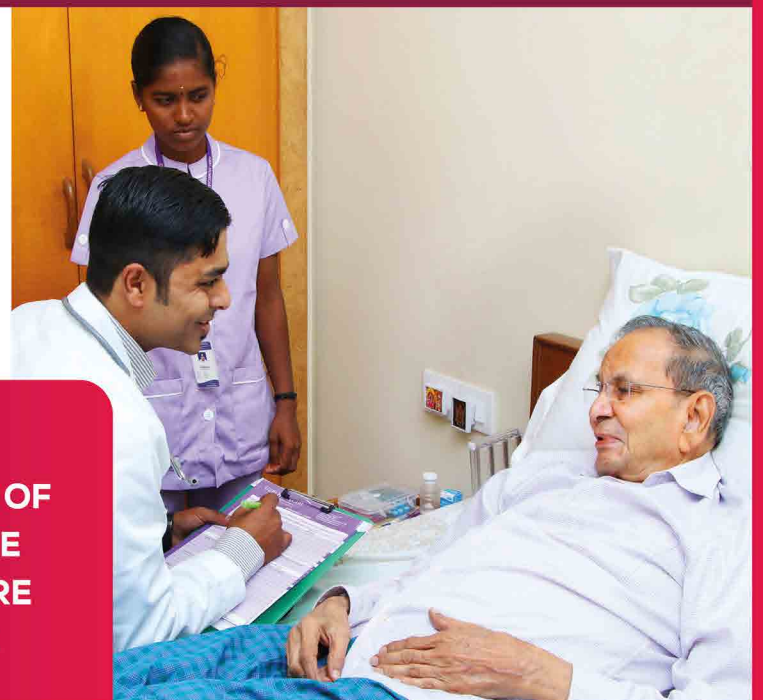
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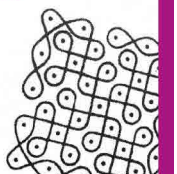
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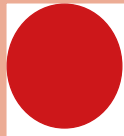
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Jottings

VINCENT D'SOUZA

I was at my school earlier this week. It is that time of the year when some of us, alumni restart the conversation on funding some school children who need help from outside.

My alumni batch had warmed up to the idea of raising some funds. The connect on social media had drawn lots of 'old' boys and girls and the idea gained traction.

The school's Correspondent, a nun and the Headmistress were prepared with their stories. First up, were those of seven to eight children of single parents, mothers who were struggling in life but wanted their kids to be educated.

Then there were five / seven Anglo-Indian children in junior classes who also needed funding. Their basic education was free, this being a A-I school but there were other bills to be met and nowadays, these bills aren't small.

As we moved away from the needs and wants, I asked the nun of new ideas she and her team had rolled out this year. And she told me about the Students' Parliament.

Students from each neighbourhood were grouped. Some 18 groups, juniors and seniors. They chose their PM, CM and cabinet and met once a week. Issues to discuss were prompted by the teachers but the kids were free to discuss things that affected them too.

"Often, children from the same street know each other briefly though they live close-by and this new project has not only brought them closer but they also get to know issues better," the Presentation Sisters nun told me.

Pudupet's 1st, 2nd and 3rd Streets. The immediate neighbourhood where the school is located.

Later that day, I kept reading online people's comments on local issues related to the corona virus. How would seniors living alone manage this new situation? asked one. Maybe stores can have a morning hour reserved for shopping by seniors?, suggested another.

As news of temples being asked to close and large, a/c stores following suit, there were other comments that got my attention.

What would be life be for the poo-kari, the narikurava beads and chains seller, the jackfruit hawker?, asked one.

The homeless queue up outside churches and temples and now that these are closed, where will they get some food?, said another.

Dramatic changes are happening in our neighbourhoods as the virus takes effect around us. There are people on the floor above you who are already paranoid and tense. There are people across the wall who wonder if the sole vegetable hawker they depend on will turn up this weekend.

We will need to look beyond the sanitisers, the masks and the thermometers.

LETTERS to the editor

MYLAPORE TIMES, Shop No. 27, II Floor, 77, C.P. Ramaswamy Road, Alwarpet, Chennai-18.

Letters to the Editor, whether sent by ordinary post, email or courier, must carry the complete postal address of the correspondent

Mada Streets: Walk Only zones? One Way zone?

● On the Mada Streets, there is too much of traffic and no walking space for the pedestrians.

We must have a Walk Only zone here.

- Ramesh

● Though the heart of Mylapore attracts a large number of tourists both domestic and foreign besides its use by local people, the traffic conditions along the Mada Streets is chaotic and pathetic, the main reason being large encroachments on the streets and the unregulated traffic flow.

(Now it is a joke)

The streets / roads do not belong to hawkers. Let the hawkers sell at specific hours but they must take away their goods. Free the sidewalks.

Flower hawker stalls on one street were demolished by GCC. But the hawkers are back with temporary roofs.

- S. Ramamani

● The One Way traffic rule is not observed. The encroachments on pavements must be removed and a vigilant

squad posted to prevent them from coming back. Stores which use pavement must be checked.

All push carts and vegetable vendors on pavements should be removed.

Seasonal shops like those for Navarathri dolls sales should also be prevented from occupying the pavements.

Parking should be one side only and strictly enforced by the

traffic police.

On Pradhosham days the North, South and East Mada Streets should be cleared of all vehicles and the roads should be used only by pedestrians from 4 pm to 8 pm

All this cannot be achieved unless the government, Corporation and the police make a concerted effort. In Madurai, the roads around Meenakshi Temple had been successfully made into pedestrian zones.

- Sujatha Vijayaraghavan

● Restrictions to remove Mada Street hawkers will be challenged always but pedestrians are never given any facility. Two-Way vehicular movement on all the Mada Streets must be withdrawn at least during peak hours and the police shall be present on the corners of the Mada Streets during this period to ensure adherence to this rule.

Car owners/drivers may be advised to use spaces around Mylapore MRTS station.

- R. K. Sundaram



Recently the platforms were relaid for pedestrians but the same have been occupied by the vendors. They have now started to encroach on the roads.

The One Way traffic rule is not observed. It has to be strictly enforced through the day, not only along the Mada Streets but also along the streets adjacent to them.

Stray cattle menace is severe here. It is better to have the area reserved for pedestrians only.

- S. Gowrisankar, San Thome

● Encroachment of platforms by vendors in South Mada Street has now extended to the road. Some shoppers park their cars here. I appeal to the Asst. Commissioner of Police, Mylapore to post his men and fine the violators.

- R. Chandrasekaran, Mandaveli

● One Way traffic rule should be ENFORCED strictly throughout the day.



Temple zone streets with uncleared garbage

In Mylapore Sri Adikesava Perumal Temple brahmotsavam is being celebrated from March 12. But when the thiruther utsavam (chariot) was held this week, there were heaps of garbage on the temple street; it was not cleared in the morning.

Devotees had tough time in pulling the ther that morning. Local civic officials must keep such streets clean.

- Sudha, Mylapore



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PRECAUTIONS AT TEMPLES

Several temples in the neighbourhood are doing their best to prevent the spread of the virus.

At Sri Adi Kesava Perumal Temple, the chairman of the temple trust, N. C. Sridhar on Wednesday, Mar. 18, says, "We have been asking the devotees to wash their legs and hands before entering the temple. We have also made sure that soaps and other cleaning materials are accessible to the devotees at all times." He says announcements on precautions are being made at the temple premises periodically.

Meanwhile, the hugely busy Sai Baba Temple has been closed to people. A large notice says so on its gate. On Thursday, which draws a huge stream of devotees, people who came by in the morning returned after saying a prayer on the pavement.

Roadside shops are open here.

ANTI-CAA PROTEST SUSPENDED

The anti-CAA protest at Kutchery Road has been suspended till the end of this month.

Since March 6, the Muslim community, mostly women held a sit-in protest near Jumma Masjid to protest against the CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act), NPR (National Population Register) and NRC (National Register for Citizens). Now, the gates of the protest area have been closed. The posters featuring 'No CAA, NRC and NPR' and other anti CAA slogans are seen outside the gate.

Said Habeeb, a shopkeeper on Kutchery Road, who was a part of the protest, "To prevent the spread of the virus, we have suspended our protest till March end."

MYLAPORE CLUB SHUT

Mylapore Club has shut its doors from Tuesday till the

LIFE IN THE TIME OF A VIRUS

Snapshots of life in the Mylapore neighbourhood this past fortnight as the community takes steps to address the Corona virus pandemic



end of the month to comply with the state governments' order in the wake of the corona virus. Communication has gone out to its members too. Last weekend, the secretary of the Mylapore Club, Suresh Sampath, had sent a communication to all members that read, 'Keeping in mind the welfare of our members, spouses, children and senior citizens using our club, the members and their guests who have symptoms of cough, cold and fever are requested to avoid coming to the club and using the facilities of the club.' But following the state's new order, the club decided to close till the end of the month.

PUBLIC PARKS CLOSED

Public spaces manned by government agencies are temporarily closed in view of the corona virus. Hundreds of people who walk, exercise, play and wander around the popular Nageswara Rao Park in Luz have been returning home disappointed – the gates are locked and notices on the gates say it all.

Regulars said that they chose to walk on the four streets that run around the park like Luz Avenue and warm up and warm down in quiet nooks. Parks in CIT Colony, Mandavelipakkam,

R. A. Puram and elsewhere have been closed.

MATH TEMPLE REMAINS OPEN

The monks and volunteers at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore have started taking steps to prevent the spread of corona virus. On Friday, March 20 morning, the head PRO of the Math, Swami Naravarananda says, "We have cancelled all public functions till the end of the month. The temple will stay open for devotees who would like to meditate. We are discouraging public from gathering in large numbers. We have also provided sufficient cleaning materials and water for devotees to wash their hands and legs". Devotees can contact the Math at 24621110.

BANKS, RESTAURANTS FOLLOW ADVISORY

Restaurants, banks and big shops in Mylapore have started taking precautionary measures. All the staff of hotel Nitya Amirtham on North Mada Street have been given masks. Says the manager, "We also clean the entire hotel and check the temperature of our staff every day."

Hotel Saravana Bhavan on the same street has shut its

120-seater AC dining hall till March 31st. Its non-AC dining area is functioning.

The Corporation Bank on East Mada Street has made hand sanitising compulsory for all its customers.

SABHAS CANCEL EVENTS

All sabhas in Mylapore have suspended their programmes for March and will take a call on April 1. Some had taken this call over a week ago, some decided soon after the state sent out an advisory that gatherings and cultural meets be avoided.

Harishankar of Narada Gana Sabha said that his team decided to cancel concerts, dramas and lec-dems a week ago. It also cancelled a discourse series to be held in memory of the sabha founder.

Plays that were to be staged to mark World Theatre Day stand cancelled. Ramnath of Kartik Fine Arts confirmed that the sabha's events for March stood cancelled. R. R. Sabha and Arkay Centre have cancelled their events as have many others.

AT SRI KAPALI TEMPLE: SCREENING WAS A MUST

On Monday, March 16, Sri Kapali Temple staff observed

the corona virus advisory sent by the HR&CE Department. Tips for the devotees were printed on banners and displayed at many places in the premises. Sanitary work staff wore masks and were asked to wash their hands properly after phases of work. The staff offering devotees prasadam were also seen wearing masks and refrained from body contact. All devotees were screened at the gates. Many Mylaporeans expressed their views on how the temple could address the virus issue. Some wanted prasadam distribution to be stopped for some time, others said foreign tourists were not checked at the gates, a few others said spaces which were used frequently must be sanitised.

A VIOLINIST'S PRAYER

The Marungapuri Gopalakrishna Iyer violin festival was held at Raga Sudha Hall, Luz, from March 12 to 15. Solo violin performances by several leading violin artists were held. Last Friday evening, it was senior vidwan R. K. Shriram Kumar on stage for his concert alongside mridangam vidwan Arun Prakash. And his first song was a Dikshitar kriti; after he played it Kumar told the audience that the kriti seeks the Ambal's blessings for a healthy, safe life.

Kumar said that he chose to play this as a prayer in a time when the corona virus has turned into a pandemic.

DRINKS AS USUAL

TASMAL liquor vending shops have been allowed to do business. So the busiest in the area, near Thirumayilai MRTS station is abuzz. But the bar close to it has been shut down. All bars and social spaces have been asked to remain shut.

WATCH VIDEO covering the virus affected life in Mylapore. Go to www.youtube.com/mylaporetv

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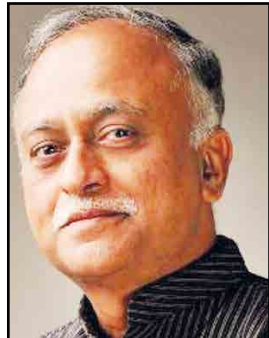
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Evenings with Isaikkavi Ramanan big draw at R. R. Sabha. Virus situation causes show suspension

By Our Staff Reporter



Isaikkavi-uddan or Inniya Malai; is the theme of a series of words and singing programme that Rasika Ranjani Sabha in Mylapore has been hosting every month.

The hugely popular and multi-faceted Isaikkavi Ramanan holds forth on stage, with a judicious mix of theme-based excerpts from the epics and the Kural, from Bharathi's verses leading to personal anecdotes of his own journeys, lacing this with vintage Thamizh songs he sings solo and full-throated on stage.

On the evening on March 15, the show drew a full house in Hall No.2 at the sabha premises as Ramanan glided through God and Man, Man and God, early school experiences and those with sants and dipped into Bharathiyar and film songs,

and touched on the corona virus.

He is much a story-teller who is informal, indicating to colleagues in the audience and picking anecdotes of his time with them, be it on *elai sappad* or on a '*paraiyan*' episode.

As Ramanan wound down that evening, he also had to tell the audience that the April session stands suspended due to the advisory to avoid community gatherings and if all was well, the series will continue in May.

Raised walkway for pedestrians proposed at Luz Circle

By Our Staff Reporter

Chennai Corporation proposes to build a pedestrian bridge/walkway at the Luz Circle junction across Luz Church Road.

This project is included in a plan that lists similar walkways at extremely busy traffic junctions.

Four busy roads intersect at Luz Circle,

from all four sides. Besides, there is a busy stream of people who take the trains at the Thirumaiyilai MRTS station. There are also a few bus stops in this zone.

However, with plans also being drawn by Chennai Metro to build rail lines that will intersect at the same Circle, it is not clear if the civic body has taken this major development into account.

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