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Defunct Water ATMs Across Sri Vijaya Puram Highlight Wastage of Public Funds



Tarun Karthick

**Sri Vijaya Puram,
14 December 2024**

Water ATMs installed across Sri Vijaya Puram under the ambitious Smart City Project have become glaring examples of wasteful expenditure. Installed at significant public expense, many of these units have remained non-functional for an extended period, raising concerns about their procurement, maintenance, and overall utility.

Public frustration over mismanagement of funds in Sri Vijaya Puram is palpable, with many pointing to the defunct Water ATMs as a prime example. While these installations were intended to provide affordable drinking water, residents claim the ATMs worked briefly before falling into disrepair. Since then, they have been reduced to little more than an eyesore, occupying public spaces without serving their intended purpose.

This issue is not new.

Nicobar Times, in a video story published on 1st March 2023, highlighted the widespread dysfunctionality of these Water ATMs. Over 21 months later, the situation remains unchanged.

The installation of these Water ATMs reportedly involved a significant outlay of public funds. Critics argue that the resources spent on this failed project could have been directed towards more impactful initiatives to benefit Sri Vijaya Puram's residents.

Public outrage has also fuelled calls for a comprehensive investigation into the project. Questions have been raised about the quality of the procured Water ATMs, the transparency of the procurement process, and the contracts awarded for their maintenance. Some allege that corruption may have played a role in the selection of substandard equipment.

Experts and residents alike are urging authorities to assess the quality of the Water ATMs and evaluate

whether the funds spent align with the value received. Additionally, there is a growing demand to identify officers responsible for the project's failure and hold them accountable.

The non-functional Water ATMs should either be repaired and made operational or sold to recover some of the public funds before the equipment becomes entirely obsolete.

As the defunct Water ATMs remain a testament to inefficiency, public anger continues to mount. Authorities are being urged to initiate a thorough investigation to uncover the reasons behind the project's collapse, ensure accountability, and prevent similar wasteful expenditures in the future.

Sri Vijaya Puram's residents deserve better governance, and restoring public trust will require decisive action to address this glaring failure.

Better Facilities Needed at Mohanpura Private Bus Stand in Sri Vijaya Puram



Tarun Karthick

**Sri Vijaya Puram,
14 December 2024**

Private buses are a lifeline for thousands of commuters in Sri Vijaya Puram, offering affordable and convenient travel options. They complement the State Transport Services (STS), preventing overcrowding and ensuring passengers have ample choices across various routes. However, a glaring disparity in infrastructure between the STS Bus Terminus and the private bus stand in Mohanpura highlights the need for urgent improvements.

Recent upgrades by the Transport Department have transformed the STS Bus Terminus in Mohanpura into a comfortable and modern hub. The facility boasts an air-conditioned waiting area, a snack shop, an enquiry counter, a public address system for announcements, a dedicated ATR ticket booking counter, and a bus pass issuance office. These amenities provide passengers with a seamless and pleasant experience.

In stark contrast, the private bus stand just a few hundred meters away is in a state of neglect. The only facility available is an open-sided waiting shed, which offers little protection during heavy rains as winds drive water inside. The unpaved surface of the stand, riddled with large potholes, creates significant

inconvenience for passengers and vehicles alike.

While the administration deserves praise for enhancing the STS Bus Terminus, its apparent disregard for the private bus stand reflects a step-motherly treatment of private operators who play a vital role in the public transport ecosystem.

The private bus stand at Mohanpura should be developed to match the standards of the STS Bus Terminus. Modern facilities such as a covered and enclosed air-conditioned waiting area, paved surfaces, and basic passenger amenities are essential to ensure equity and convenience for all commuters.

Private bus operators contribute significantly to public transportation, and their passengers deserve the same level of infrastructure as those using government services. Upgrading the private bus stand in Mohanpura into a model facility would not only benefit commuters but also demonstrate a commitment to fair treatment for all stakeholders in the transportation sector.

The time has come for the administration to address these disparities and provide better facilities at the Mohanpura private bus stand, ensuring a more inclusive and efficient public transport system in Sri Vijaya Puram.

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Newly Constructed Mangrove Walkway Inaugurated at Shoal Bay-19



Tarun Karthick

Sri Vijaya Puram,
14 December 2024

Shoal Bay-19 in the Mannarghat Range of South Andaman Forest Division now boasts a newly constructed Mangrove Walkway, inaugurated on December 13, 2024, by Mr. Sanjay Kumar Sinha, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The ceremony was attended by senior officers of the Forest Department, the Gram Pradhan, Samiti members, and other local PRI representatives.

The 450-meter-long and 1.2-meter-wide walkway links the Shoal Bay-19 Dinghy Ghat to the beach, providing visitors a seamless connection through the scenic mangrove landscape. Constructed entirely from timber and wooden posts, the walkway blends harmoniously with the environment, preserving the area's green profile. Along the route, eco-huts crafted from natural materials such as thatching leaves, teak posts, rattans, and bamboo offer resting spots for visitors.

The project, undertaken by the local community. South Andaman Members of the Forest Division under Panchayati Raj the Eco-Tourism Institutions (PRI) Scheme, replaces the lauded the Forest Department for their earlier cumbersome Department for their mode of dinghy eco-friendly initiatives, transport used to emphasizing the access the beach. The positive impact on the new infrastructure is region's tourism and expected to enhance economic potential. This eco-tourism opportunities in the area, providing visitors developmental effort with a more enjoyable underscores the experience while commitment to boosting commercial sustainable tourism, offering visitors a chance to experience the untouched beauty Shoal Bay-19 is also of the Andaman seen as a significant Islands while fostering opportunities for local generating green livelihoods.

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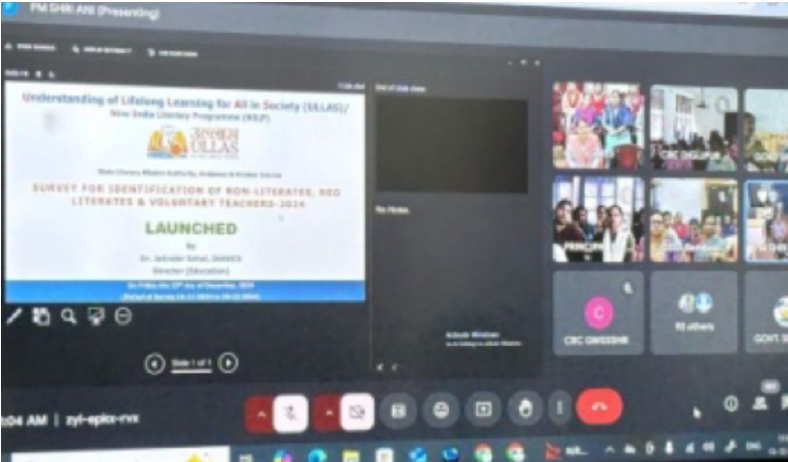
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State Literacy Mission Launches Survey to Boost Literacy in A&N Islands



Tarun Karthick
Sri Vijaya Puram,
14 December 2024

The State Literacy Mission Authority (SLMA) launched a comprehensive survey in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to identify non-literates,

neo-literates, and voluntary teachers. The event was held at Shiksha Sadan and attended virtually by functionaries of the National Literacy Mission Programme (NILP) at various levels, including registered surveyors from District, Block, Cluster, School, and Samajik Chetna Deputy

Kendra (SCK). (Education for All) their literacy. and State Nodal Officer for ULLAS-NILP, welcomed the gathering. He explained that non-literates and neo-literates identified the survey's paperless nature, would be enrolled at their nearest SCK, collected and processed through the ULLAS App. In areas with no teaching-learning connectivity, data will be stored in the app and uploaded later. He reaffirmed the SLMA's commitment to the vision of Literacy & Numeracy 'Sabka Saath-Sabka Assessment Test Vikas,' underscoring the survey's role in promoting inclusive development in the region.



CPI (M) Secretary Writes to CE APWD to Solve Water Shortage Issue in Middle Andaman Villages



islands, the three Gram Panchayats mentioned above receive water only once every three days, creating unnecessary hardship for the local population.

The water supply to these areas comes from a tank at Bakultala, which relies on water transported via an ageing pipeline from Panchawati, laid by the APWD several decades ago. According to Ayyappan, the pipeline, which runs through a forested region, suffers from leaks in multiple places, severely affecting the flow of water. Furthermore, no measures have been taken to protect the pipeline from damage caused by wild animals or miscreants, exacerbating the problem.

Currently, tankers are used to transport water from Panchawati to Bakultala, incurring substantial costs throughout the year. In his letter, Ayyappan criticised the lack of initiative from the authorities in addressing the issue and urged the Chief Engineer to take immediate action.

The CPI (M) Secretary has called for the replacement of the old pipeline with a new one to ensure an adequate and consistent water supply to the residents of Bakultala, Urmilapur, and Kaushalyanagar, alleviating the ongoing hardships faced by the thousands of villagers in these areas.

Rohit Kumar

Sri Vijaya Puram,
14 December 2024

During his recent visit to Middle Andaman, D. Ayyappan, Secretary of the CPI (M) State

Organising Committee, engaged with villagers from Bakultala, Urmilapur, and Kaushalyanagar, who raised concerns about the persistent shortage of drinking water in their areas. The villagers pointed out that the water supply in these regions, part of the

Betapur, Urmilapur, and Kaushalyanagar Gram Panchayats, is significantly delayed compared to other parts of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Ayyappan, upon arriving at Sri

Vijaya Puram, addressed the issue by sending a letter to the Chief Engineer of the Andaman Public Works Department (APWD), bringing attention to the situation. While drinking water is typically supplied to residents on alternate days throughout the

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CIARI Scientist Imparts Training on Tuber Crops Cultivation and Value Addition to Nicobari Tribal Farmers



Chota Enaka, Kakana, Pilpillow, and Hitui villages. He provided insights into tuber crop diversity, conservation practices, and organic cultivation methods. Dr. Jaisankar also introduced regenerative agriculture practices, the preparation of tuber-based feed for piggery, and the development of sweet potato-based products. The training covered essential topics such as planting and agronomic practices, integrated pest and disease management, organic waste management, and the use of CIARI technologies.

A total of 159 farmers from the four villages participated in the program, which included practical sessions and distribution of sweet potato sprouted cuttings and tapioca setts to participants. The program, held under the guidance of Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director of CIARI, was aimed at equipping farmers with the necessary skills to improve their farming practices and add value to their produce.

Tarun Karthick

Sri Vijaya Puram,
14 December 2024

A scientist from the ICAR-Central Island Agricultural

Research Institute (CIARI), focused on “Scientific Tuber Crops Cultivation and its Value Addition,” aimed at enhancing agricultural practices and promoting sustainable farming among local communities.

Dr. I. Jaisankar, Senior Scientist (Agroforestry) and Principal Investigator for the All India Coordinated Research Project on Tuber Crops, led the sessions in



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HRS President Calls for Action to Tackle Rising Vegetable Prices in A&N Islands



vegetable prices in Kolkata are notably lower than those in Chennai, suggesting that importing from Kolkata could be a solution to stabilize local prices.

Lall has appealed to the Administration to assist local businesses by facilitating vegetable imports from Kolkata. He also recommended reviving the practice of selling affordable vegetables through the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Limited (ANIIDCO Ltd.), a system that was previously in place to help reduce prices.

Additionally, Lall highlighted the challenges faced by residents of remote islands, where transportation costs further inflate vegetable prices. He called on the Administration to take measures to ensure that these price hikes do not affect islanders' access to affordable and nutritious food.

Tarun Karthick

Sri Vijaya Puram,
14 December 2024

Rakeshwar Lall, State
President of Hindu Rashtra

Shakti (HRS) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, has urged the Administration to take swift and decisive action to curb the rising prices of vegetables in the region. In an exclusive conversation with Nicobar

Times, Lall expressed growing concerns about the affordability of essential vegetables for lower- and middle-income families, emphasizing that the surge in prices has significantly impacted daily life.

"The current prices are simply unaffordable for most residents, and this is affecting families' ability to meet basic nutritional needs," Lall said. He pointed out that, in comparison,

"We need immediate steps to protect the common man from exploitation. Vegetables must be made affordable for all classes of residents across the Islands," Lall concluded.



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St. Mary's School Mohanpura Recognised as Fit India School 2024



student life. To qualify as a Fit India School, institutions must self-certify the following parameters:

Employ at least one teacher trained in Physical Education (PE), who is both physically fit and active.

2. Have a dedicated playground where at least two or more outdoor games are actively played.

3. Include one PE period in the daily schedule for every section, ensuring participation in physical activities such as sports, yoga, dance, and physical training (PT).

4. Ensure that all students spend at least 60 minutes daily engaged in physical activities.

These criteria aim to make fitness an integral part of students' lives, helping them develop a lifelong habit of staying active. Schools that meet these parameters exemplify the Fit India Movement's mission of making fitness a priority across educational institutions in the country.

By achieving the Fit India School status, St. Mary's School has set a benchmark for other institutions in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Its efforts showcase how schools can play a pivotal role in shaping a healthier, more active generation.

Tarun Karthick

**Sri Vijaya Puram,
14 December 2024**

St. Mary's School, Mohanpura, has been recognised as 'Fit India School 2024' by the Sports Authority

of India (SAI), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. This recognition highlights the school's commitment to fostering a fitness-centric culture among students, teachers, and the larger community.

St. Mary's School organised their

annual athletic meet, INFINITO 2024-25, on Saturday, December 7, 2024, at the Netaji Stadium in Sri Vijaya Puram. The event showcased the school's dedication to promoting physical activity and healthy competition, aligning with the vision of the Fit India Movement.


What Does it Mean to Be a Fit India School?

The Fit India Movement, launched in 2019, encourages educational institutions to prioritize health and fitness as a key component of

This recognition underscores St. Mary's School's ongoing dedication to the holistic development of its students, making fitness an essential part of their academic journey and setting an example for schools nationwide.

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