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Sewage on GST Road in Pallavaram, a stagnating problem

More than a month after the State Human Rights Commission took suo motu cognisance of the stagnation of sewage and effluents on GrandSouthern Trunk (GST) Road in Pallavaram, the problem remains, posing a grave risk to local residents and motorists alike.

On May 25, the full bench of the Commission headed by its chairperson, Justice A S Venkatachalmorthy, had asked the managing director of the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, which currently executes the underground drainage work of Pallavaram municipality, and others, including the managing director of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) and the Kancheepuram collector, to enquire into the matter and send a report to the commission within four weeks. Since then, apart from using sand to to arrest the overflow of sewage on to the road unsuccessfully little effort has been taken to tackle the problem.

The consequences of this delay are being borne by residents,

shop-keepers and motorists daily wading through the stagnated sewage. With nearly half of the road in the area dug up to lay underground electric cables and dump accumulated sand from the pits, pedestrians have been forced to walk on the centre of the road.

GST Road, which is also a national highway (NH 45), is an extremely busy road that is used by hundreds of state-run [buses](#) and other heavy vehicles. "A few minor accidents and traffic congestions have become routine at this particular point every day. It has become really difficult to continue our business in such an environment," said K Sentil kumar, a shopkeeper.

"Some of us have been losing casual customers who avoid our shops because of stagnated sewage in front of our shops. The situation has worsened in the last 15 days. The engineers first dug a long channel for laying underground cables and then abandoned it saying the plan was wrong. Now, they are digging at a spot adjacent to the earlier one. The delay in the completion of the work, compounded by bad planning, is affecting our daily livelihood," said another shopkeeper.

Residents are not against development works. Rather, they are against the inordinate delay in completing them. Besides, the ongoing work on the Road Over Bridge (ROB) by the State Highways Department has resulted in a stretch of nearly 500 metres becoming slushy and a proving risky for the motorists. "Many state agencies such as Chennai Metrowater, Highways Department and the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board are engaged

in their respective projects along this stretch resulting in traffic congestion at this spot. The local body Pallavaram municipality which is incharge of maintaining the stretch remains a mere spectator. The municipality should clean up the drainage channel so that the sewage does not overflow on to the road. It should ensure a stench-free environment,"said S Gopalan, a resident.