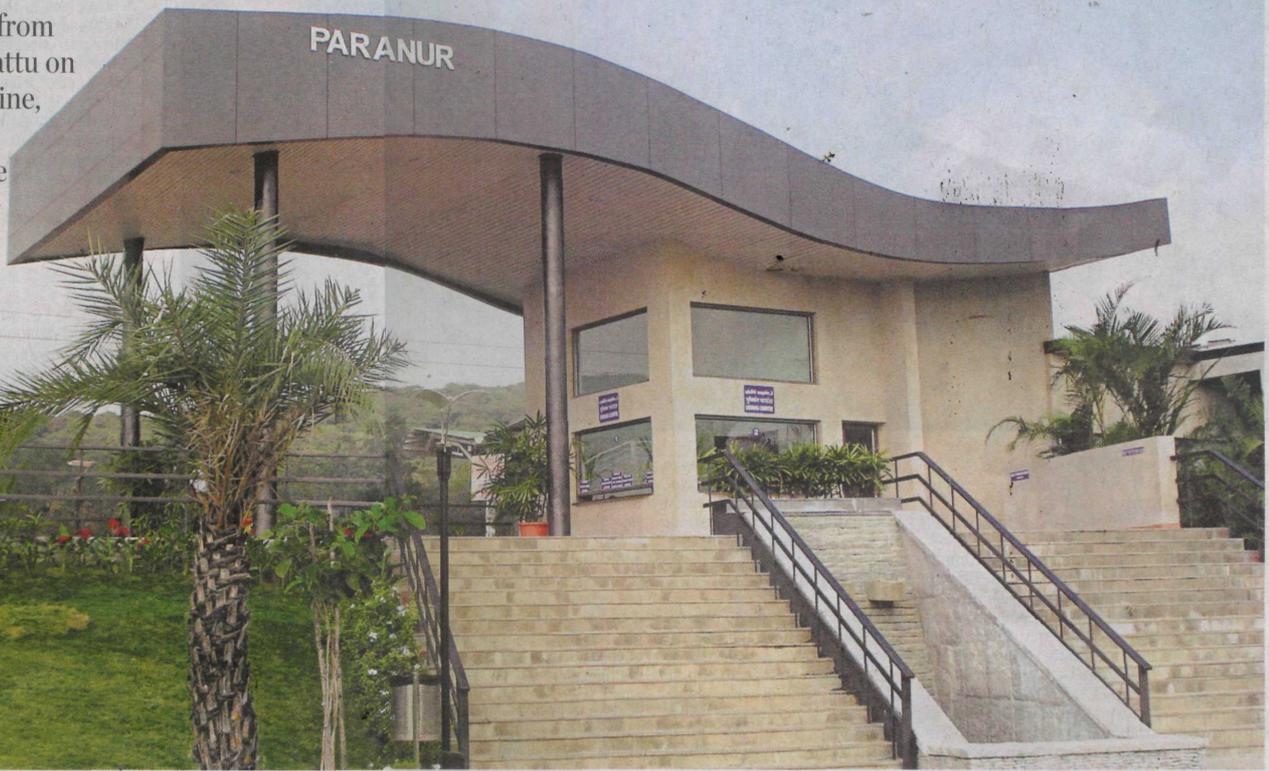


On the right track

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# On the right track

**OFFBEAT** Travelling from Chennai to Chengalpattu on the suburban South Line, PRINCE FREDERICK stumbles on a surprise



MODEL STATION Paranur Railway Station adjoining Mahindra World City

A tiny railway station on the Chennai suburban line that services around 20,000 commuters -that's Paranur.

So exactly why is it worth writing about? Because it has managed to do stuff that's completely alien to train travel in our country. It's clean (yes, the toilets too), it's colourful, landscaped and well maintained.

The magic is the result of an impressive public-private partnership, reportedly the first of its kind in the country. Mahindra World City Developers (MWCD) joined hands with Indian Rail-

ways to give the dreary station a makeover, after Mahindra World City, an integrated business zone, came up here.

**Money well spent**

MWCD has spent Rs. 1.5 crore on the project and also meets the recurring expenditure of maintaining and protecting the facility. Considering that the station is the gateway to Mahindra World City and used by 40 per cent of its workforce, it is obviously money well spent for the company. And a windfall for the neighbourhood.

As the suburban train slides into the station, the scene shifts from dreariness to vibrant colour. A shock of well-tended greenery lines the main structure that contains the ticket counter, the waiting room and toilets. Fountains add drama to the view. Stretches of land near the tracks are landscaped, and the platform and foot over-bridge look slick, with their overlay of tiles. The surprise continues all the way to the toilets, immaculately kept and with a special facility for the differently-abled. Spittoons and high-velocity lighting complete the 'satisfying picture' of modernity and

sophistication.

"As the station abuts our city, we wanted to give it an ambience and amenities that will benefit the employees of MWC and others," says Sangeetha Pra-sad, CEO, MWCD. Five years on, the station is set to become a beacon for similar partnerships elsewhere.

"A delegation from the Ministry of Commerce visited the station to see how the model works," says Prasad.

Paranur is a trendsetter in how private companies can be roped into public infrastructure projects. May their tribe

**Some highlights**

- \*Round-the-clock security
- \*Well-tended garden with fountains and flower beds
- \*High-velocity lighting
- \*Spacious ticket counter
- \*Waiting room with toilets, including one for the differently-abled
- \*Steel benches and spittoons

For a video go to <http://thne.ws/prince-paranurstation>