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Pongal celebration at SV High School

SV High School celebrated the harvest festival Pongal with great enthusiasm, colour, and cultural pride. The campus came alive with festive decorations,

traditional attire and joyful smiles as students and teachers came together to honour Tamil heritage.

The celebration began with a special assembly

highlighting the significance of Pongal and the values of gratitude, unity, and respect for nature. Students dressed in traditional costumes added vi-

brancy to the occasion, reflecting the rich cultural roots of the festival.

A delightful kids' dance performance stole the spotlight, where young learners

showcased graceful and energetic moves to traditional folk songs. Their confidence, coordination, and expressions won the hearts of everyone present.

Adding to the excitement were traditional games, thoughtfully organised to introduce students to age-old recreational activities.

Gas pipeline warning signboards quietly dot Thirumangalam

By N Rathi Chithra

BRIGHT yellow warning signboards cautioning residents about underground high-pressure gas pipelines have been in place for several months now across parts of Thirumangalam and Anna Nagar West, though many residents say they noticed them only recently amid routine civic activity and neighbourhood discussions.

The circular boards, mounted on metal poles along residential streets, pavements and near compound walls, carry messages in Tamil and English warning of "high pressure gas pipelines" beneath the ground. They advise residents and contractors to seek clearance before excavation and display emergency contact numbers for quick response in case of suspected damage or leaks.

Civic officials said the signages were installed by Torrent Gas as part of safety compliance linked to



the City Gas Distribution (CGD) network that has been steadily expanding in Anna Nagar in the north-western parts of Chennai. Underground pipelines were laid earlier to supply piped natural gas (PNG) to households and commercial establishments as a cleaner alternative to conventional fuels.

In Thirumangalam and Anna Nagar West, the boards have been positioned at regular intervals, often close to trees, footpaths and stretches where multiple utilities converge. In several locations, the

markers stand alongside water lines, sewage connections and electrical cables, reflecting the dense underground infrastructure typical of older residential neighbourhoods.

"Initially, many of us did not pay much attention. Over time, as construction and repair works kept happening in nearby streets, people started reading the boards and realising what they signify," said a resident of Thirumangalam. Some residents said the signboards have helped prevent unplanned digging by private contractors, particularly during sewage repairs and cable-laying works.

Urban infrastructure experts point out that such surface markers are a routine safety requirement in cities with underground gas networks. "The purpose is not to alarm residents but to inform anyone undertaking excavation. Even small digging activities can be dangerous if a high-pressure pipeline is

damaged," an expert noted.

Officials of the Greater Chennai Corporation said the boards form part of mandated safety norms under petroleum and natural gas regulations. "They have been in place for

some time and are intended to serve as permanent reminders. As piped gas connections increase, public familiarity with such signages will grow," an official said.

While residents largely view the boards as a neces-

sary safety measure, some have flagged issues related to placement on narrow pavements and near tree trunks. They have urged authorities to ensure that future installations balance visibility with pedestrian convenience.



Nethrodaya celebrations

THE Hon'ble Chief Justice of Madras High Court, Mr. Manindra Mohan Shrivastava, launched 'Free Legal Aid to the Disabled', a unique initiative supported by leading law firms, empowering PWDs with legal access.

The event was graced by Justice R. Subramanian, Former Judge, Madras High Court; Tmt. S. Madumathi, IAS, Secretary, Welfare of Differently Aabled Persons Department, Govt of Tamil Nadu and other dignitar-

ies. Nethrodaya Award of Excellence honored visually impaired achievers: Mr. Govindaraj, Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Govt of India and Ms. Vaikom Vijayalakshmi, renowned playback singer.



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Sri Harini of Velammal Vidyalaya West secured the second place in the 4 x 50m Medley Relay at the 36th South Zone Aquatic Championship, held in Hyderabad.



Velammal Vidyalaya, West KG Campus, kicked off its Pongal celebrations with a hands-on pottery making session. Parents and children participated.

Swift civic action follows citizen's video on stray dogs



By Our Correspondent

PROMPT action by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) brought relief to residents of Mogappair after a video showing a pack of stray dogs roaming a busy residential and school stretch opposite a private school went viral on social media earlier last week.

The video was posted by Mohamed Ashiff, a concerned citizen, who expressed concern over the movement of several stray dogs near the entrance of Spartan School in Mogappair. The footage, shared on social media platforms, showed a pack of dogs congregating on the road, raising fears among parents, pedestrians and motorists, especially during school hours.

Responding swiftly to the

alert, officials of the Greater Chennai Corporation deployed a dog-catching team to the location under Zone 7 limits. Civic staff were seen using nets and other standard equipment to safely capture the animals as part of the Corporation's ongoing animal birth control (ABC) and rabies prevention programme.

According to officials, the operation was carried out at two locations in Mogappair — Bharathi Nagar Street and Thiruvalluvar Salai — both of which fall under West End Colony limits.

"The dogs were humanely captured and sent to the designated shelter for sterilisation and anti-rabies vaccination as per protocol," a Corporation official said, adding that the animals would be released back into the same locality after recovery, in line with

Supreme Court guidelines and animal welfare norms.

Residents in the area welcomed the swift response, stating that the presence of stray dogs in large numbers had been a cause of anxiety, particularly for schoolchildren and elderly residents. "We are not against the dogs, but their sudden aggression and pack behaviour had become a safety issue. The Corporation acted quickly once the issue was highlighted," a local resident said.

GCC officials reiterated that citizens could report issues related to stray animals through helplines, zonal offices or social media channels for faster redressal. They also appealed to residents not to provoke or harm stray animals and to cooperate with civic teams during such operations.

Samathuva Pongal celebrated

A Pongal Vizha celebration was conducted by Tamilnadu Udavikkaram Association for the welfare of differently abled on Jan 10 at Dr. MGR Janaki Matriculation School premises, Saligramam in a great manner.

Dr. Sai Sankara Pan-chapakesan, Founder of Chennai Sai Sankara, Chennai Sai Muruga and Chennai Sai Thunai Matrimonials participated as chief guest and presented Pongal gift

items along with a cash Award of Rs.500/- to all the 300 beneficiaries.

It is to be noted that he is extending free matrimonial services for differently abled (saithunaimatri.com) besides being instrumental for more than 2 lac marriages in 35 years. He appealed for more concern from the society and state for the cause of differently abled.

Mr. Varadakutti, State President of Udavikkaram Association presided, Dr. Aavin K. Gopinath, State General Secretary welcomed, office bearers and dignitaries including Malarvanam Editor Ramki participated. Earlier Novelist, Dr. K.G. Jawahar entertained the audience with Bulbul Dhara. For more details contact (Ph: 98403 30531)





Despite doorstep pick up scheme, open dumping persists

By N Rathi Chithra

MONTHS after the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) launched a dedicated doorstep collection scheme for bulky household waste, open dumping of old furniture and discarded items continues to be a common sight in parts of Mogappair, raising concerns over civic awareness, enforcement and last-mile implementation.

A photograph taken recently in Mogappair shows old sofas, mattresses, broken concrete slabs and mixed waste dumped along a residential street, partially blocking a stormwater drain and spilling on to the

pavement. The debris, discarded beneath trees and near a compound wall, highlights how residents continue to rely on informal dumping spots despite the availability of a free, scheduled collection service.

The GCC had announced the bulky waste removal scheme several months ago to address precisely such issues. Under the programme, residents can dispose of large household items such as old sofas, beds, cupboards, mattresses, clothes and broken furniture by booking a pickup on Saturdays. Requests can be made by calling the civic helpline 1913, sending a WhatsApp message to 9445061913 or



registering through the Namma Chennai App. Once logged, civic staff are alerted and a designated vehicle is sent to collect the items from the doorstep, which are then transported to an incineration facility for safe disposal.

However, residents say that awareness of the scheme remains patchy. "Many people either don't know the service exists or are unsure about how quickly the waste will be picked up. So they leave old furniture outside, hop-

ing it will be cleared during routine conservancy work," said a resident of Mogappair West.

Civic activists point out that bulky waste left in the open not only affects the neighbourhood's appearance but also creates health and safety hazards. "Discarded furniture becomes a dumping ground for smaller waste, attracts rodents and blocks drains. During the monsoon, such obstructions can worsen waterlogging," an activist said.

Officials said that the scheme is operational and that the response have improved in several zones. "We have deployed vehicles exclusively for bulky

waste collection on Saturdays. Residents must use the designated channels instead of dumping items on the roadside," a senior official said, adding that repeated violations could attract penalties under civic bylaws.

Some residents, however, argue that enforcement has been inconsistent. In several streets, informal dumping points have existed for years, and unless regular monitoring and fines are imposed, behaviour is unlikely to change. They have also urged ward officials to put up signboards and conduct door-to-door awareness campaigns on the bulky waste pickup facility.

Positive feedback pours in for Maayabimbam

Maayabimbam, A Love Story is already receiving strong appreciation from the press, media and industry for its layered storytelling, screenplay and performances.

The movie has drawn praise from industry stalwarts including K. Bhagyaraj, Ameer Sultan, Raam and Aghathiyan, while a special press screening held at Prasad Labs on Jan 19, was met with a tremendous response, with widespread positive feedback pouring in.

However, the biggest boost to the film's buzz came from Dr. Ishari K. Ganesh of Vels Film International, who, after watching the film at a special screening, was so impressed that he has offered to produce director KJ Surendar's next film — even before the release of his debut. In an exclusive video, Dr. Ishari K. Ganesh said, "I was quite skeptical before watching the film since it comprises a fresh cast and crew, but as the film progressed, I was completely drawn into it."

Pallichattambi to release on April 9

The makers of Pallichattambi, a big-budget period film directed by Dijo Jose Antony and starring Tovino Thomas in the lead, have unveiled a special birthday poster to mark the actor's birthday. The poster follows the recent release of the film's motion poster, which received an enthusiastic response across social media, drawing strong reach and positive attention. Released in five languages, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Kannada, the birthday poster offers another glimpse into Tovino Thomas's striking new look, one that the makers say is unlike anything audiences have seen before. The film is slated for a worldwide theatrical release on April 9. Produced under the banners of Worldwide Films and C Qube Bros Entertainment, Pallichattambi is produced by Noufal and Brijeeesh. The cast also includes Vijayaraghavan, Sudheer Karamana, Baburaj, Vinod Kadamangalam and Prasanth Alexander. Set in the 1950s-60s, the film has cinematography by Tijo Tomy and music by Jakes Bejoy.

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Gukesh, Arjun share sixth spot In Tata Steel Masters

By R Srinivasa Raghavan

Nodirbek Abdusattorov continued his rich vein of form, jumping into the lead after the sixth round of the Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee, The Netherlands. Securing 4.5 points, the Uzbek No.1 leads by half a point, with seven rounds still remaining. His compatriot Javokhir Sindarov occupies the second spot with four points. Hans Niemann, Vincent Keymer and Vladimir Fedoseev shared the third spot (3.5).

World champion Dommaraju Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi (both 3) were in joint sixth spot along with Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus, Jordan van Foreest and Mathias Bluebaum.

Defending champion

Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa (2) has had a tough tournament so far, going down to Abdusattorov and Arjun. Hopefully, he will bounce back in the second half of the tournament. Vr. Aravindh Chithambaram (2), who is the fourth Indian in the fray, has not had it easy, going down to Niemann and Keymer. Aravindh, who is making his debut (Wimbledon of Chess), will be looking to give a better account of himself in the coming rounds.

Andy Woodward (5) defeated Carissa Yip in the sixth round to forge ahead in the Tata Steel Challengers. It was the 15-year-old's fifth straight victory. Marc Andria Maurizzi and Ayden Suleymanli closely follow the leaders on 4.5

points.

Vedant Panesar (1.5), who is the only Indian in the fray, had one bright moment, prevailing over Eline Roebers.

So emerges blitz champion

Former Fischer Random World champion Wesley So triumphed in the Tata Steel India Blitz at Kolkata. So, who has been a regular to this tournament, won in Kolkata for the first time. The American No.3 (12/18) outdistanced his nearest rivals by one point. There was a two-way tie for the second spot between Nihal Sarin and Arjun Erigaisi (both 11), with Nihal taking the second spot, thanks to a better tie-break. Arjun settled for third place.

So sealed the crown with a + 6 score (eight wins, two losses and eight draws). Gaining 7.8 rating points, he had a performance rating of 2813! So, who had bagged the Sinquefield Cup last year, started 2026 on a positive note. This victory should spur the 32-year-old to perform better in his future tournaments.

Nihal had a successful outing in the City of Joy. After winning the Tata Steel India Rapid title, the 21-year-old also performed exceptionally in the quickest format of the event. Having a rating gain of 17.8 points, Nihal racked up a performance rating of 2777.

Vidit Gujrathi shared the fourth spot with Hans Niemann (both 10), while

R Praggnanandhaa (9.5) took the sixth place.

Five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand (8) had an ordinary tournament, ending in eighth place.

American champion Carissa Yip defeated Vantika Agarwal 1.5-0.5 in the blitz tie-break to capture the Tata Steel India Blitz women's title. Carissa and Vantika (both 10.5/18) tied for the top spot, which resulted in a playoff for the crown. Carissa, who made her first GM norm last year, gained 30.8 points, was the other highlight of her successful campaign.

Women's Grand Swiss winner R Vaishali (9.5) claimed the joint fourth place with Aleksandra Goryachkina. Women's World Cup winner Divya

Deshmukh shared the sixth spot with Lagno and Nana Dzagnidze (all 8.5).

Varshney India's 92nd GM

Aaryan Varshney achieved his GM title, triumphing at the Andranik Margaryan Memorial in the Armenian capital of Yerevan. Scoring seven points in nine rounds, the Indian made his third GM norm, besides clinching the crown. This victory made Varshney India's 92nd GM. The 21-year-old had a rating gain of 15.8 points, besides racking up a performance rating of 2659! Aleksey Goganov (5.5) and Jegor Lashkin (5) took the second and third spots. (The writer of this article is a senior sports correspondent)

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