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Polls: Early exams for classes 1 to 9

School education department plans early exams for Classes 1 to 9 in view of polls

In view of the assembly elections scheduled for April 23, the School Education Department is set to advance the annual examinations for Classes 1 to 9. As per the academic calendar, the exams were originally planned from April 10 to April 24.

However, as most schools will function as polling stations, the department has decided to complete the exams earlier. Officials indicated that the examinations are likely to begin in the first week of April and conclude by April 17. An official announcement detailing the exam dates is expected shortly.

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Anna University has announced 2026 PhD admissions across diverse disciplines, offering selected scholars a substantial Rs 50,000 monthly stipend, which is one of the highest institutional remunerations at an institution in the country. According to a press release, the available streams include Engineering, Technology, Management, Architecture, Science, and Humanities. A notification from the Centre for Research specifies that eligibility extends to

PG students (final semester candidates included), teaching faculty, and industry professionals.

The registration deadline is March 28, with the last date for hardcopy submissions fixed at April 4, 2026. Full-time meritorious scholars at CEG, MIT, ACTech, and SAP campuses, along with constituent and government engineering colleges, are eligible for the scholarship. For further details, interested candidates can visit <https://cfr.annauniv.edu>.



K. Asaithambi, PGT - Mathematics at Velammal Vidyalaya, Mogappair West, was honoured with the "Inspirational Educator" Award by Shri Krishnaswamy College for Women.



The Kindergarten Annual Day and Convocation of Dayasadan Agarwal Vidyalaya (DSAV) was celebrated with great fervour and pride on March 14 at the school premises. The event marked a significant milestone in the academic journey of the young learners as they graduated from kindergarten and prepared to step into primary education. Ms Vijaylakshmi Seshan, Counseling Psychologist and Co-founder of Phonic Champs and Ms Archana Yedanapalli, Chairperson of Young Indians (Yi) Thalir were the guests of honour. Others present were school President Shri Gopalji Agrawal, Correspondent, Mr B.P. Jhunjhunwala, Cultural Secretary, Ms Shilpa Tulsian and Principal Smt Latha B.

Know all about voter outreach ahead of 2026 Assembly Polls

By Our Correspondent

WITH the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly elections scheduled for April 23, 2026, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has intensified its voter outreach efforts in Chennai district, rolling out multiple digital and offline platforms to streamline voter registration and provide election-related services.

According to an official communication shared by the district administration, voters can now access services through the official websites — voters.eci.gov.in and elections.tn.gov.in — as well as the ECINET mobile application, which is available on major app stores. In addition, a dedicated helpline number, 1950, has been publicised as a free voter assistance service.

The initiative aims to

simplify processes such as new voter registration, correction of entries, tracking application status, and accessing polling station details. Officials have also encouraged citizens to stay updated through verified announcements and to use official channels to avoid misinformation.

Residents in several parts of Mogappair and Anna Nagar have also begun taking note of the campaign, with mixed reactions regarding awareness and accessibility. "I saw the poster and downloaded the ECINET app. It is quite useful to check details and track applications. But more awareness is still needed, especially for elderly voters," said R. Karthik, a resident of Mogappair East.

Another resident from Mogappair pointed out that while digital platforms are helpful, offline assistance remains crucial.

Election Commission Of India
Chennai District

Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly General Election 2026

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"Not everyone is comfortable using apps or websites. The helpline is a good step, but there should also be more local camps to assist people directly," said S. Meenakshi, a homemaker.

In Anna Nagar, resi-

dents echoed similar sentiments, appreciating the move but calling for wider outreach. "The system is becoming more transparent and accessible. But unless people are actively informed, many may not make use of these facili-

ties," said Srinivasan, a senior citizen.

Younger voters, however, appeared more enthusiastic about the digital push. "Having everything on a mobile app is very convenient. You can apply, track, and even check your polling booth without going anywhere," said Aradhana, a first-time voter from Anna Nagar. Election officials say the focus is on ensuring that no eligible voter is left out. The use of

digital platforms is expected to reduce delays and improve accuracy in electoral rolls, while the helpline provides a quick channel for grievance redressal.

The ECI has also highlighted features such as scheduling appointments for services and checking polling station status, which are expected to reduce crowding at electoral offices, especially closer to election dates.



Velammal Vidyalaya West celebrated Ramzan with devotion. The event began with a Quran recitation and a student spoke on its significance. Students offered Fitrana to the school's nurse maid, as a token of generosity.

Open bridge without barricades raises safety concerns

By N Rathi Chithra

THE new bridge connecting Rail Nagar near Mogappair East to the Koyambedu-Maduravoyal Highway, which opened for traffic a few months ago following the closure of the Rail Nagar Bridge, has come under scrutiny for lacking basic safety measures, particularly barricades along its edges.



The bridge was thrown open to facilitate uninterrupted connectivity after the older Rail Nagar Bridge was shut, forcing commuters to rely on alternative routes. Since then, the new stretch has witnessed steady vehicular movement, serving as a crucial link for residents in Mogappair East, Padi Kuppam, Rail Nagar and surrounding localities.

However, commuters are now raising serious concerns over the absence of protective railings or barricades along portions of the bridge. A section of the road runs dangerously

close to an open edge abutting a water body and uneven terrain, with no physical barrier to prevent vehicles from slipping off.

The risk is particularly high for two-wheeler riders, who make up a significant portion of the traffic. With slight curves along the stretch and limited shoulder space, even a minor lapse in judgment could prove dangerous. The problem is compounded during nighttime due to inadequate lighting in parts of the bridge.

Field observations

show in some sections, the carriageway appears narrow, leaving little room for error when vehicles pass each other. Pedestrians, including residents from nearby areas, are also seen walking along the bridge, further increasing vulnerability.

"This bridge is helpful after the old one was closed, but it feels unsafe without barricades. There is always a fear while riding," said a daily commuter.

Road safety experts point out that barricades or parapet walls are a ba-

sic requirement for bridges, especially those running alongside water bodies or at elevated levels. The absence of such features raises questions about whether the bridge was opened before all safety components were fully completed.

Residents have urged authorities to intervene immediately. They have called for the installation of sturdy barricades, proper levelling of road margins, removal of debris, and improved street lighting.

While the bridge has eased connectivity and reduced travel time following the closure of the Rail Nagar Bridge, its current condition has left commuters navigating the stretch with caution. With traffic expected to increase further, residents stress that urgent corrective measures are necessary to prevent potential accidents. Authorities are yet to respond officially to the concerns raised by the public.

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Dhanvitha Malini of Velammal Vidyalaya, Mel Ayanambakkam shot 484 arrows in just 22 minutes and 22 seconds to set a record that was recognised by the World Young Achievers Book of Records.

Photo ID proof mandatory for voting: CEO

CITIZENS who go to vote, must carry one of the 13 photo proofs along with the voter information slip (VIS) as the poll panel has done away with the system of using images on the voter slip, says the chief electoral officer.

The voter information slip (VIS) to be issued for the upcoming Assembly elections will contain only polling station details and will not include a photograph, making it mandatory to carry photo proof along with the slip.

The voter information slip this time will have a QR code, which will enable them to access key information such as the name of their polling station, address, polling station number, voter number in the electoral roll, and the helpline numbers for the state and district.

If a voter does not have a voter information slip and his name is registered in the voter list, then the voter will be able to cast his vote by showing any one of the 13 alternative documents containing a photo. Voters can show any of the 13 proofs.

Middle school teachers as scribes for Board exams

The Directorate of Government Examination (DGE) has ordered the appointment of middle school teachers as scribes for Class 10 board exams. Teachers working in classes 5 to 8, who have subject knowledge, should be appointed as scribes, the directorate instructed.

Earlier, the School Education Department was planning to appoint engineering, and arts and science college students, and Illam Thedi Kalvi (ITK) volunteers as scribes for differently abled students writing the board exams for classes 10, 11, and 12.

Abandoned tractors trigger health and safety concerns

By N Rathi Chithra

TRACTORS that have been parked and left unattended for several months on Ori Salai in Mogappair East are raising serious concerns among residents, who say the vehicles have turned into a source of garbage accumulation and mosquito breeding.

The tractors, stationed along the roadside next to a large apartment complex, appear to have been unused for a prolonged period. With no visible ownership claim or maintenance activity, the vehicles have effectively become dumping spots for waste and debris. Residents allege that the area around the tractors is increasingly unhygienic,

with litter, dry leaves, and stagnant water collecting in and around the machinery.

Local residents say the problem has persisted for months without any intervention from civic authorities. "These tractors have not moved for a very long time. People have started throwing garbage near them, and now it has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes," said a resident of the nearby apartment complex.

The concern is particularly acute given the public health risks associated with mosquito breeding, including diseases such as dengue and chikungunya, which tend to spike in urban areas with poor sanitation and stagnant water sources. The cluttered condition



around the tractors, coupled with irregular waste disposal, has only worsened the situation.

Apart from health hazards, the abandoned vehicles are also causing inconvenience to road users. Ori Salai, though not a major arterial road, sees regular movement of two-wheelers, cars, and small com-

mercial vehicles. The tractors occupy valuable roadside space, narrowing the carriageway and forcing vehicles to manoeuvre carefully, especially during peak hours.

Residents also point out that the presence of the tractors contributes to an overall sense of neglect in the neighbourhood. "This is a residential area with many families. When such things are left unattended for so long, it reflects poorly on civic upkeep," another resident said.

Urban civic experts have often noted that abandoned vehicles in residential areas must be promptly identified and removed or relocated by authorities. If left unchecked, they not only create sanitation issues but

also pose safety risks and can become hubs for pests and illegal dumping.

Residents have urged the Greater Chennai Corporation and local ward officials to take immediate action by clearing the garbage, removing or relocating the tractors, and ensuring regular monitoring to prevent recurrence. They have also called for stricter enforcement against leaving vehicles abandoned on public roads.

Residents claim that no concrete steps have been taken so far. With summer approaching and fears of mosquito-borne diseases rising, they stress that swift action is necessary to prevent the situation from escalating into a public health issue.

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Only Indian to play more than 100 Olympiad Games

By R Srinivasa Raghavan

Krishnan Sasikiran turned back the clock to win the Prague Open in the Czechia capital of Prague. Importantly, the Indian qualified for the 2027 Prague Challengers being the winner of the strong Open tournament. Sasikiran (8/9) sealed the crown in an emphatic fashion, outdistancing his nearest rivals by half a point.

Gaining 14.3 rating points, besides having a performance rating of 2688, were the other highlights of his successful campaign.

Sasikiran was India's No.2 behind five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand for a long time. At one point, the Chennaiite was ranked world No.21 with a peak rating of 2720. With chess becoming fiercely competitive, Sasikiran has slipped down the rankings. However, this title triumph should spur him to perform better for the rest of 2026.

Sasikiran, who has accomplished a lot in his chess career, winning the Asian title, National title, and lots of Open tournaments, had his best-ever moment, when India bagged a historic bronze medal at the 2014 Chess Olympiad in Tromso, Norway. He was one of the standout performers in India's Olympiad success, bagging individual silver on the third board (7.5/10). Sasikiran's victory over Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu helped India defeat Germany in the penultimate round, which put India in contention for a medal.

Being part of the gold medal winning Indian team at the 2006 Asian Games in Doha was one of the joyous moments in Sasikiran's career.

Trained by his father Krishnan (himself a chess player) from a young age, Sasikiran's growth happened at a steady pace. Krishnan's idea of arranging training games for Sasikiran against strong players like Dibyendu Barua and Pravin Thipsay (both former National champions) helped his son evolve as a chess player. Sasikiran worked a lot with Sundararajan Kidambi (coached by Krishnan), which benefited both players in their growth as a chess player.

Former World Championship challenger Nigel Short once called Sasikiran a fearless player. He lived up to that tag fighting to the end in every game. He won a lot of games because of his uncompromising attitude.

Sasikiran, who acted as Anand's second in his World Championship Matches (2013 & 2014) against Magnus Carlsen, had the satisfaction of becoming the first Indian to outwit Anand after he became World champion in a classical game. He defeated Anand in the group stages of World Cup in Hyderabad (2002).

Good opening preparation, striving for the initiative, tactical acumen, taking risks, and fighting spirit are his biggest strengths.

Sasikiran holds a unique record, being the only Indian to play more than 100 Olympiad Games.

(The writer of this article is a Senior Sports Correspondent)



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