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## With former Minister in the fray, Anna Nagar set for a keen contest



By N Rathi Chithra

THE Anna Nagar Assembly constituency is poised for a high-stakes electoral battle this season, with former Minister Gokula Indira entering the fray as the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) candidate. She faces a strong challenge from N Chitrarasu of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), a prominent figure within the party's Chennai unit.

Gokula Indira is no stranger to the constituency, having represented Anna Nagar after winning the 2011 Assembly election. However, she was

defeated in 2016 by DMK's M K Mohan, who retained the seat again in the 2021 election, consolidating the party's hold over the urban constituency. Her re-entry into the electoral arena has set the stage for a closely watched contest.

Adding a new dimension to the race is actor-turned-politician C Joseph Vijay's fledgling party, the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), which has fielded V.K. Ramkumar as its candidate. Meanwhile, Seeman's Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) has nominated C. Shankar, making it a four-cornered contest in one of Chennai's key constituencies. Contd. on Page 2

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## With former Minister in the fray....

Contd. from Page 1

ANNA Nagar constituency spans several prominent localities including Anna Nagar, Kilpauk, Aminjikarai, ICF South Colony, and parts of Arumbakkam and West Choolaimedu. Key arte-

rial roads such as New Avadi Road, Nelson Manickam Road, E V R Periyar Salai (Poonamallee High Road), and Jawaharlal Nehru Salai (100-foot Road) fall within its limits, underlining its urban and strategic significance.

Despite its prominence, voter turnout in the constituency has historically fluctuated. In the 2001 Assembly election, turnout dropped to a low of 42.59%, among the lowest recorded in the city. This

trend has raised concerns among election observers about voter engagement in urban pockets.

Another crucial factor in the upcoming election is the impact of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The exercise has led to a significant reduction in the electorate, with nearly 35% of voters reportedly removed from the rolls in this constituency. The reasons and implications of this decline are ex-

pected to influence both campaign strategies and voter mobilisation efforts.

With multiple candidates, shifting voter dynamics, and a reduced electorate, Anna Nagar is set to witness a tightly contested battle. Whether voters will turn out in large numbers remains a key question. All eyes will be on polling day, scheduled for April 23, to see how the contest unfolds in this crucial Chennai constituency.

## Auto driver dies as bike hits median

AN autorickshaw driver died after his vehicle overturned on the Vanagaram-Poonamallee highway in Maduravoyal on Wednesday morning. The police identified the deceased as P Alexander (45) of Poonamallee, a flower vendor. He was on the way to the flower market in Koyambedu on March 1 when the accident happened. As he was proceeding towards Koyambedu market, he lost control of the vehicle and hit a median. As a result, Alexander's vehicle toppled. Alexander suffered severe head injuries and was lying unconscious. Passersby rushed him to the nearby hospital, where the doctors declared him dead on arrival. Maduravoyal traffic Police sent the body for post mortem examination.

## Planters on Seethakathi Salai eat into carriageway

By N Rathi Chithra

A row of large ornamental planters placed along the kerb on Seethakathi Salai in Mogappair East has begun to significantly encroach on the usable road space, triggering concerns among motorists and local residents about safety and traffic flow.

The planters, filled with shrubs and flowering plants, have been positioned intermittently along the edge of the carriageway, effectively narrowing the lane available for vehicles. While intended to add greenery and aesthetic value to the neighbourhood, their placement has reduced manoeuvring space on what is otherwise a busy urban stretch.

Two-wheelers, autorickshaws and cars are frequently seen veering closer to the centre of the road to avoid the planters, especially during peak hours. This has led to minor bottlenecks and raised the risk of side-swipes and near misses, residents said.

"The idea of beautifying the street is welcome, but not at the cost of road safety," said a resident of Mogappair East who uses the stretch daily. "At certain points, especially when vehicles are parked on the opposite side, there is barely enough room for two vehicles to pass comfortably."

Visuals from the site show multiple planters placed in a line along the kerb, some surrounded by loose soil, debris and dried



vegetation. In a few spots, maintenance appears to be lacking, with overgrown plants spilling outwards and further reducing the effective width of the road.

Motorists pointed out that the stretch already experiences moderate traffic, including commercial vehicles and share autos. The additional narrowing caused by the planters

forces drivers to slow down abruptly or swerve, increasing the chances of accidents.

"There is also the issue of visibility," said an autorickshaw driver. "When you are trying to overtake or make way for oncoming traffic, these planters suddenly appear close to your vehicle. At night, it can be even more dangerous if they are not clearly visible."

Civic activists have called for a review of the placement, suggesting that greenery initiatives should be implemented without compromising pedestrian and vehicular safety. "Urban greening is important, but it must follow proper planning norms. Planters should ideally be placed within designated

spaces, not on active carriageways," an activist said.

When contacted, a Greater Chennai Corporation official said the issue would be looked into.

For now, commuters navigating Seethakathi Salai continue to exercise caution, as a well-intentioned beautification effort risks turning into a daily hazard on the road.



VKids TSK celebrated Graduation Day on March 29. Young learners marked a special milestone with colourful performances creating happy memories.

## Night service disruptions continue at Egmore Stn.

**T**HE service disruptions will continue at Egmore railway station with a six-hour line and power block being enforced between 11 p.m and 5 a.m till April 7, affecting late-night and early-morning services.

These changes mean that several services will be short-terminated at Tambaram, requiring passengers to plan travel accordingly during the block period.

On April 5, several late-night Beach-Tambaram EMUs at 11 p.m, 11.20 p.m, 11.40 p.m and 11.59 p.m will be cancelled. Corresponding return services from Tambaram, those scheduled at 10.20 p.m, 11 p.m and 11.40 p.m are also cancelled.

In addition, an early morning Beach-Tambaram service departing at 4.15 a.m is cancelled.

Partial cancellations are also enforced on the same day with 3.55 a.m train running between Beach and Chengalpattu to terminate at Tambaram. Late-night services from Tirumalpur and Chengalpattu towards Beach, departing between 8 p.m and 11 p.m, will be operated only up to Tambaram.

On April 4, 6 and 7, late-night Beach-Tambaram services at 11.05 p.m, 11.30 p.m and 11.59 p.m are cancelled. On April 4, 6, 7 and 8, early morning Beach-Chengalpattu services departing at 3.50 a.m and 4.15 a.m will terminate at Tambaram.

## No cash at toll booths from April 10

THE road transport ministry on Thursday notified that no cash transactions for toll payments will be allowed from April 10, aiming to reduce queuing of vehicles at toll gates, often a major irritant for commuters.

In a move to eliminate the practice of commuters flashing identity cards at toll booths seeking user fee exemptions on NHs and expressways, the road transport ministry has reached out to government



entities and offices to either get "Exempted FASTags" for those who fall under the exemption category or buy a FASTag annual pass. Annual pass for private cars costs Rs 3,075 and allows crossing of 200 toll plazas.

This move is expected to put an end to altercations at toll plazas.

As per the notification, in case a vehicle doesn't have a valid FASTag, the driver or vehicle owner can pay the toll charge through UPI, which will be 1.25 times the normal user fee. If they don't opt to pay the fee through UPI, such a vehicle will be dealt with as per Rule 14 of NH Fee Rules, which provides for denying entry or removing the vehicle from the NH section.

The highway authority can also issue an e-notice for a pending toll charge, and failure to make the payment within three days will attract double the charge.

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The Govt job aspirants can get a list of upcoming exams calendar for the year 2026 - 27. The institute was founded by Mr. Raj Sekar, B.Tech from Anna University and MBA from BIM. Banker by himself has trained many students for banking jobs. He has given orientation programme in various colleges and he is the author of civil services books.

They also will be provided free current affairs materials, suitable for all degree holders. The institute has high profile faculty who have cleared the exams in recent times. Contact 6382499361/ 7603999361. Second Floor, Above Canara bank.1427, VOC Street. (landmark) Mangal Eri Park.

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4 <sup>th</sup> Batch	15 <sup>th</sup> May to 31 <sup>st</sup> May
5 <sup>th</sup> Batch	2 <sup>nd</sup> June to 18 <sup>th</sup> June
6 <sup>th</sup> Batch	19 <sup>th</sup> June to 5 <sup>th</sup> July
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Little Hearts' graduation day Health and Literacy Day at Leo Academy

LITTLE Hearts Fun Home and Day Care functioning at Panneer Nagar, Mogappair East, since 2001 celebrated their graduation ceremony in grand manner on March 28.



There was excitement all over and it was a feast for the eyes with the school decorated in a graduation theme. The highlight was the red carpet walk by the kids adorned with graduation costumes to receive the Pre-kindergarten completion certificate.

The kids were honoured for their achievements by Dr.S.Kumaran, Director of

Srinivasa Eye Hospital & Little Hearts Fun home and Day care. He addressed the health hazards due to gadgets. The day's performances included the welcome dance, graduation dance and skit delivering important messages on parenting. Mrs. Anitha Kumaran, correspondent of Little Hearts Fun Home and Day Care proposed the vote of thanks. Admissions are going on. For details view - www.littlehearts-funhome.com or call 9500093113.



LEO Academy of Excellence, Anna Nagar hosted a dual-purpose event focusing on student health and academic enrichment on March 28.

**Dental Screening Camp:** The Department of Public Health Dentistry at Saveetha Dental College, in association with the Lions Club, conducted a comprehensive dental screening for students. This initiative aimed to promote oral hygiene awareness and ensure early detection of dental issues within the school community.

**Elite Books Fair:** Simultaneously, a vibrant book fair organized by Elite Books was held on the campus. The fair provided students with access to a wide range of literature, encouraging a culture of reading and intellectual growth.





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**Sindarov sizzles; Pragg in joint 3rd spot with Giri**

By R Srinivasa Raghavan

**J**AVOKHIR Sindarov is on a song. The Uzbek No.2 posted his third straight victory, outclassing top seed Hikaru Nakamura in the fifth round of the Open section of the Candidates in Pegeia, Cyprus on Friday. The 20-year-old maintained his one-point lead (4.5) with nine rounds still remaining. Fabiano Caruana, who is Sindarov's closest pursuer, inflicted Mathias Bluebaum's first loss in the tournament to stay in second spot, scoring 3.5 points. R Praggnanandhaa shares the third spot with Anish Giri (2.5).

Sindarov has been one of the best players in the last year. It has been the best-ever score in the Candidates in the first five rounds. He has also defeated former Candidates winner Caruana, Praggnanandhaa and Andrei Esipenko, gaining 20.1 rating points. Sindarov has jumped to world No.5 in the live ratings (2765.1). If Sindarov continues his

good form, it will be hard to stop him.

Former World champion Garry Kasparov had this to say on Sindarov's Candidates performance on X: "Incredible result so far! Do not underestimate the boost that confidence plays after a strong start. You trust your instincts more, a positive cycle of intuition and performance. Meanwhile, your opponents doubt themselves against you."

Pragg started the tournament on a positive note, outwitting Dutch No.1 Anish Giri. He suffered a setback in the third round, going down to the tournament leader in a complicated game. Avoiding losses and winning games will be crucial for Pragg to stay in the hunt for the title.

Anna Muzychuk, Kateryna Lagno and Zhu Jiner (all 3/5) were in joint lead after the fifth round of Women's Candidates, which is simultaneously taking place at the same venue. India's Vaishali Rameshbabu and Divya

**CHESS ROUND-UP**

Deshmukh occupy the sixth spot with Tan Zhongyi (all 2). Vaishali and Divya lost to top seed Zhu Jiner. Vaishali and Divya will be looking to bounce back with a win in the sixth round.

**Pranav Triumphs**

Pranav Venkatesh, who won the Open section of World Junior in 2025, triumphed at the KazChess Masters comprehensively in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. Remaining undefeated, the Indian sealed the crown with a +6 score (7.5/9, six wins and three draws). Gaining 16.8 rating points, the 19-year-old had a performance rating of 2795, which were the other highlights of his successful campaign in the closed 10-player round-robin tournament. Shamsiddin Vokhidov of Uzbekistan (6) came second. Hungarian Benjamin



Gledura and Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara of Mexico (both 5) shared the third spot.

Five-time World champion Magnus Carlsen called him 'Buddy Pranav' after the Chennaiite played a big part in Offerspill's World Cup victory in 2023. Pranav posted important victories over Jordan van Foreest and Grigory Oparin, which was crucial in the club's stunning victory. Carlsen played the top board for the team and appreciated Pranav's fantastic show.

Pranav also benefited from competing in a lot of online blitz tournaments. Being one of the best blitz players, he is ranked world No.52 in classical format with a rating of 2652.

Winning the Chennai GM Challengers in 2024 was one of the high points in his chess career.

Good opening preparation, tactical acumen, revel-

ling in dynamic positions is what makes him one of the best players in the world.

**Tabatabaei Unstoppable**

Amin Tabatabaei was simply unstoppable en route to winning the Reykjavik Open in the Icelandic capital of Reykjavik. He had a Caruanaesque start, winning seven straight games before clinching the title with two draws. The Iranian No.2 scored 8 points in nine rounds to outdistance his nearest rival by half a point. Having a rating gain of 14.3 points, Tabatabaei jumped to world No.28 with a rating of 2713.8. He also had a performance rating of 2849!

Zhou Jianchao of USA (7.5) took the second spot, followed by former World Rapid champion Vasyil Ivanchuk (7) in third spot. Former Reykjavik Open winner Abhijeet Gupta (7) was India's best performer, finishing eighth.

(The writer of this article is a senior sports correspondent).

**Vels Varsity takes over MGR Janaki college**

VELS Deemed University has acquired the MGR Janaki College of Arts and Science for Women in Adyar, Chennai, for an undisclosed sum. The university, which already runs a range of institutions, including arts and science colleges, medical colleges, and engineering colleges, will now bring the women's college under its administration. Vels University, which functions as a deemed-to-be university, is expected to bring MGR Janaki College under its direct administration from the coming year. Existing students will continue their studies under the University of Madras curriculum until they complete their courses.

## ₹1.22 crore seized in Mogappair ahead of Assembly polls

By Our Correspondent

In a significant seizure ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections, officials of the Election Commission of India confiscated ₹1.22 crore in unaccounted cash from a youth in the Mogappair neighbourhood last week. The seizure comes as polling in Tamil Nadu is scheduled for April 23, with authorities intensifying surveillance to curb the movement of illicit cash suspected to be intended for voter inducement.

According to officials, a Static Surveillance Team (SST) deployed by the Election Commission was on patrol in the Mogappair area when they noticed a youth carrying a large bag near Golden Colony. On spotting the police, the individual allegedly abandoned the bag and attempted to flee. He was, however, swiftly apprehended by the team.

"Upon inspection, the



bag was found to contain ₹1.22 crore in cash. The individual could not provide any valid documents accounting for the money," a senior election official said. "The amount has been seized in accordance with Election Commission guidelines, and further investigation is under way."

Officials said the seizure is part of a broader effort by the Commission to en-

sure free and fair elections by cracking down on the distribution of cash and other inducements to voters. Flying squads and surveillance teams have been deployed across sensitive locations, with a particular focus on urban pockets where large cash movements are harder to track.

A police officer associated with the operation said the youth is currently being questioned to ascertain the source and intended use of the money. "We are trying to determine whether the cash was meant for distribution during the election. We are also probing possible links to political functionaries or intermediaries," the officer added.

Residents of Mogappair expressed shock over the incident, describing it as unprecedented in the locality. "We have never heard of such a huge amount being seized here," said a

resident of Golden Colony. "It raises concerns about how money is being used during elections."

Another resident noted that the heightened vigilance by authorities was reassuring. "At least now we know that strict checks are in place. It gives some confidence that attempts to influence voters will be monitored," he said.

Election officials reiterated that any movement of large sums of cash without proper documentation would invite strict action. "We urge the public to cooperate and report any suspicious activity," the

official said. The seizure is the largest reported in the Mogappair neighbourhood, underscoring the scale of enforcement measures in place as the State heads into a crucial electoral contest.

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## Toll fees hiked at 68 plazas across State

TOLL fee hikes at 68 plazas across Tamil Nadu came into effect on Wednesday, with charges increased from 3-5% on both National and State Highways. The revision applies to 60 toll plazas on National Highways and 8 on State Highways.

The increase ranges from Rs 5 to Rs 40, and is expected to have a bearing on transport costs and prices of essential commodities. The hike has also been implemented in the suburban areas of Chen-

nai, including Paranur, Vanagaram, Athur, Surapattu, Nallur and Patteri Perumbudur, apart from other locations such as Kappalur, Samayapuram and Nanguneri.

TN has 77 toll plazas on NHs, of which charges have now been revised at 60. The toll fees at the remaining 17 plazas will be increased from September 1. At the Paranur toll plaza in Chengalpattu, the fee for cars remains unchanged at Rs 75. However, charges for other categories have

increased. For light motor vehicles, from Rs 115 to Rs 120, while buses and trucks will now pay Rs 250 instead of Rs 245.

Similarly, the fee for three-axle vehicles has been increased from Rs 270 to Rs 275. Vehicles with more than five axles will be charged Rs 395, up from Rs 385, and those with more than seven axles will now pay Rs 480 compared to the earlier Rs 470. It is said that the annual revision is part of the standard toll adjustment process.

## திடீர் திருப்பங்கள் நிகழ திங்களில் தேன் அபிஷேகம் செய்யுங்கள்

- மாப்பு தேய் மறைய மங்கையர் மாதுளம் கனி தாருங்கள்.
- மகன் பிறக்க மகலி மாதுளம் கனி தாருங்கள்.
- மணாளன் கிடைக்க அமைய மாதுளம் கனியும், மாங்களியும் தாருங்கள்.
- குழந்தை பிறக்க குங்கும் அபிஷேகம் செய்யுங்கள்.
- திடீர் திருப்பங்கள் நிகழ திங்களில் திருமகளை காணுங்கள்.
- கரு உருவாக கரும்புச் சாறு தாருங்கள்.
- ராஜாவை போல் வாறு ராஜா மாலை குடுங்கள்.
- நெய் அபிஷேகம் செய்ய தேய் மறையும்.
- இளமையுடன் இருக்க இனிப்பு தாருங்கள். ஜூங்கி.
- திடீர் திருமணம் முடிய திங்களில் தேன் அபிஷேகம் செய்திடுங்கள்.
- தனம் வர சந்தனம் தாருங்கள், சந்தனம் பெற சந்தனம் தாருங்கள்.
- வளமான வாழ்வு அமைய வளர்நிறையில் செவ்வாழை பழம் வாறுங்கள்.
- மணாளன் அமைய மஞ்சள் மாலை குடுங்கள். (இது 8-வது அபிஷேகம்).



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