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July 12 - 18, 2026

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Priest held for stealing ornaments from dance teacher's home

By Our Correspondent

A 35-year-old priest, who had been conducting daily pujas at the residence of a Bharatanatyam teacher in Mogappair East, was arrested by the JJ Nagar police for allegedly stealing gold jewellery and silver articles worth around ₹40 lakh over several months.

The police recovered 32 sovereigns of gold jewellery and 4.374 kg of silver articles from the accused, who was later remanded in judicial custody.

According to the police, the complainant, Aniruddha, 46, a Bharatanatyam

artiste and resident of JJ Nagar in Mogappair East, had set up a prayer room with several idols at her residence, where she also conducted Bharatanatyam classes. To perform daily rituals, she had engaged Priyadharshan, a resident of Villivakkam, who had been visiting the house every morning and evening since January this year.

Police said the accused had gained the family's confidence through his regular visits before allegedly carrying out the thefts.

The incident came to light on the morning of July 2, when Aniruddha



noticed that a gold serpent ornament was missing. Suspecting foul play, she checked the locker where valuables were kept and found that it had been opened and several gold and silver articles were missing.

The stolen property included gold ornaments such as a Perumal kava-cham, gold coins, gold chains and a gold sacred thread. Several silver ritual articles, including a silver plate, a rose-water sprinkler, a silver necklace, a

silver serpent idol, a silver bar, a coin garland and a silver wrist ornament, were also found to be missing.

Based on the complaint, the Crime Wing of the JJ Nagar Police Station registered a case and launched an investigation. A special team inspected the crime scene, collected evidence and analysed CCTV footage from the area to trace the suspect.

The investigation led the police to Priyadharshan, who was taken into custody for questioning. During interrogation, police found that he had allegedly been stealing the valuables in small quanti-

ties during his routine visits to the house over the past several months, believing the thefts would go unnoticed.

Subsequently, the police recovered 32 sovereigns of gold jewellery and 4.374 kg of silver articles, collectively valued at around ₹40 lakh, from his possession.

Police officials said the recovery included most of the stolen ornaments and ritual articles reported missing by the complainant.

Following his arrest, Priyadharshan was produced before a magistrate's court and remanded in judicial custody.

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MFPs distributed to Corpn schools

Greater Chennai Corporation distributed high-tech multi-functional printers (MFPs) to 100 Chennai schools, at a cost of Rs 22.12 lakh. Symbolising this launch, she handed over printers to five headmasters at the Ripon Building. As per the mayor's announcement in the 2026-27 budget, 35 higher secondary, 46

high, and 19 other primary and regional schools under the corporation's jurisdiction were to be provided with the MFPs. These devices combine printing, copying, and scanning into a single unit, saving time and costs while upgrading technological infrastructure to support digital education.



S. Magesh of Velammal Vidyalaya West secured a silver medal in the 60-63 kg category at the Tamil Nadu State Invitation & Anti-Drug Awareness Boxing Championship held at Corporation Ground, Injambakkam.

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WhatsApp chatbot launched to book OP appointments

NalamAI, a WhatsApp chatbot has been launched that allows people to complete hospital registration and book outpatient (OP) appointments through their mobile phones. This is part of the TN government's efforts to improve access to healthcare services.

The service was launched on Wednesday. In the first phase, the service will be available in many districts, including Chennai.

This enables users to complete a one-time self-registration and book OP appointments without visiting the hospital.

People can access the service by sending a "Hi"

message to 96192 22999 on WhatsApp and follow the instructions to register and schedule their appointments.

By using this, people can book appointments without having to wait in queues. If one does not have a smartphone or WhatsApp, she/he can get help from anyone in the family, neighbour, or

seek the assistance from e-Seva centres to book the appointment.

The service has been introduced on a pilot basis at the Department of Respiratory Medicine at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital in Chennai from July 8.

The initiative is aimed at making government healthcare services easier

to access through digital technology. People can now complete their registration and book OP appointments from their homes using WhatsApp.

This project would be monitored before the service is expanded to other departments and government hospitals across the State.

Free Two-Day Training on Pranahuti Aided Meditation

A free two-day training programme on Pranahuti Aided Meditation will be conducted by Institute of Sri Ramchandra Consciousness at Valasaravakkam, Chennai. Course will be held on 11-Jul-2026 (Saturday) and 12-Jul-2026 (Sunday) between 9:00AM – 5:00PM. Venue: No:42, Rajagopalan Street, Valasaravakkam, Chennai – 87.

The key topics scheduled to be covered in the training programme include Goal of Human Life, Way of Living, Meditation Practices, Concentration and Control of Mind, Pranahuti (Yogic Transmission) and Stages of Spiritual Progress. The programme includes 4 practical sessions of Meditation. Institute will conduct the programme in English at free of cost.

Only 10 people between the age group of 18 and 58 will be allowed to participate. Registration confirmation by phone only. Please contact Ph: 99400 90838, 92822 15682 www.sriramchandra.in



Jeshwanth K of Velammal Vidyalaya, Ayana-varam finished runner-up in the U-11 boys singles category at the Badminton Warriors SPL State Open Junior & Sub Junior Badminton Tournament.



SV High School's investiture ceremony

SV High School solemnised its investiture ceremony for the academic year 2026–27 on June 25, in an atmosphere imbued with pride, dignity and aspiration. The occasion marked the formal investiture of the newly elected student council, symbolising the entrustment of

leadership and responsibility to the young torchbearers of the institution.

The ceremony was graced by the esteemed Chief Guest, Mr. MS. Bhaskar, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Virugambakkam Range, who ceremoniously bestowed badges and sashes upon



the student leaders. In his enlightening address, he sensitised students to the importance of women's and child safety, emphasising vigilance, responsibility, and civic awareness.

The "Singa Penne" awareness segment was exceptionally showcased, effectively highlighting

emergency police contact services and fostering a sense of security among students. The event stood as a testament to the school's unwavering commitment to nurturing principled leaders equipped to serve with dedication, accountability and excellence.

CHESS ROUND UP

Firouzja champion; Pragm joint third

By R Srinivasa Raghavan

ALIREZA Firouzja triumphed at the Super Rapid and Blitz in the Croatian capital of Zagreb. The French No.1 prevailed in an Armageddon (one-game shootout) to seal the crown in the third leg of the 2026 Grand Chess Tour. There was a two-way tie for the top spot between Firouzja and Nodirbek Abdusattorov (both 23.5), which resulted in a playoff for the title. Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa continued his good form to share the third spot

with former World Blitz champion Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (both 21.5).

World champion Dommaraju Gukesh had a decent tournament (18.5; 10 in rapid, 8.5 in blitz), finishing sixth.

Firouzja, who is one of the best players in shorter time controls, started the tournament well, finishing joint first with Pragm in the rapid (both 12), which was the first phase of the tournament. The key to Firouzja's tournament success was his stunning show in the first day of blitz, securing eight points in nine

rounds. Despite his struggles on the second day of blitz (3.5/9), he managed to tie for first place, thanks to his victory over Gukesh in the penultimate round.

Despite coming up short in the title clash, Abdusattorov had a great tournament, topping the blitz section (12.5). The Uzbek No.1 shared the third spot (both 11) with Vachier-Lagrave in the rapid.

Pragm's best performance came in the rapid, tying for first place with a hat-trick of victories over Ivan Saric, Bogdan-Daniel Deac and Anish Giri. For-

mer Velammal student gained 10.8 rating points, besides having the best performance rating in the rapid (2782). Pragm (9.5) performed well on the second day of blitz (6/9) to ensure a podium finish.

Aswath India's 98th GM

S Aswath became India's 98th GM, making his third and final GM norm at the Pune International GM Round Robin Tournament in Pune on Wednesday. Faced with a difficult task of winning his last three games to achieve the GM title, Aswath hit a purple patch, winning his last three games against Alexei Alexandrov, Akshay Borgonkar and Kannan Vaid-

yanathan to make it a memorable event.

Totalling seven points in nine rounds, the Chennaiite ended in second place with a + 5 score (six wins, one loss and two draws). Gaining 13.8 points, Aswath had a performance rating of 2644, which were the other highlights of his successful campaign.

Abhijeet Gupta (7.5), who has won many Open tournaments, was the comprehensive winner of the 10-player round-robin event. The Indian had a rating gain of 15.7 points, besides having a rating performance of 2695!

Third place was taken by Mohan Kushagra (6.5).

Young Amit Agarwal Advik created an impact,

making his first IM norm. The Indian scored five points to claim the fourth spot.

Faustino Oro Shines

Faustino Oro, who became the second youngest-ever GM, outwitted higher-ranked Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara in a six-game match (rapid and blitz), winning 4-2 in Lima, capital of Peru. After the rapid games ended in a 1-1 tie, the 12-year-old clinched the match, prevailing 3-1 in four blitz games, with two victories and two draws. The Argentine, who is dubbed as the Messi of Chess, keeps improving with every tournament.

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



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Retention wall expected to strengthen flood protection

By N Rathi Chithra

CONSTRUCTION of a reinforced retention wall along the banks of the Cooum River near Rail Nagar is progressing steadily, offering hope to residents that the long-pending measure will strengthen the riverbank, prevent erosion and reduce the risk of flooding during the northeast monsoon.

The work is being carried out along a stretch of the river near Rail Nagar, where exposed embankments have remained vulnerable for several years. Workers have erected steel reinforcement cages that will form the foundation of the concrete retaining wall, which is expected to provide structural stability to the riverbank.



Residents say the project is a welcome development, as the Cooum has overflowed during periods of heavy rainfall, causing inundation in low-lying neighbourhoods. They believe the retaining wall will help protect nearby residential areas while sup-

porting broader river restoration efforts.

A visit to the site showed reinforcement bars laid out over a considerable stretch of the riverbank, indicating that the civil works are progressing in phases. Once completed, the concrete structure is expected

to prevent soil erosion, strengthen the embankment and improve the durability of the river's edge.

"During the monsoon, we always worry about the condition of the riverbank. The retaining wall will provide much-needed protection and prevent further

erosion," said a resident of Rail Nagar.

Another resident welcomed the initiative but urged authorities to complete the project before the onset of the northeast monsoon. "People living close to the river have faced flooding in the past. Timely completion of the work is essential so that residents can benefit during the coming rainy season," she said.

Commuters using the nearby roads also said the project would improve safety in the long term. "A strengthened riverbank will reduce the possibility of embankment damage during heavy rains. We hope the authorities will also improve the roads and drainage in the surrounding areas once this work is completed," said Prakash,

a motorist. Retaining walls play an important role in protecting riverbanks from erosion caused by flowing water. Besides safeguarding adjoining infrastructure, such structures also help maintain the stability of embankments and support flood mitigation measures when combined with regular desilting and storm-water management.

Residents have also appealed to the authorities to ensure that construction debris is cleared promptly and that the work is carried out with minimal inconvenience to the public. They further called for continued maintenance of the Cooum, including removal of encroachments, periodic desilting and prevention of sewage discharge into the river.

'Playing loud music on Chennai Metro can land you in trouble'

Beware of listening to music or playing videos without headphones while travelling on the metro? If negligent, then be prepared to pay a fine of Rs 2,500. Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL)

has announced that passengers indulging in such behaviour inside metro trains and station premises will face a hefty fine under a recent amendment to the Metro Railways Act.

In a press release, the CMRL has said it will levy a fine of up to Rs 2,500, a five-fold increase from the earlier fine of Rs 500, if passengers are found speaking loudly on phone calls.

Authorised officials can also remove such passengers from metro premises for violating the rules.

Under the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026, the penalty under Section 59 of

the Metro Railways (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2002, for causing nuisance or discomfort to fellow passengers has been increased to Rs 2,500.

The revised penalty was notified by the Ministry of

Housing and Urban Affairs on June 19.

The metro operator has advised commuters to use headphones, avoid loud conversations and keep speaker mode switched off while travelling.

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DSAV ANNUAL DAY CELEBRATED

DAYASADAN Agarwal Vidyalaya celebrated its 11th annual day at Kamarajar Arangam, Teynampet with great zest and fervour on July 10. The programme commenced with a warm welcome of the dignitaries, followed by a soulful prayer

of divinity. Mr. P. Dilip Krishna, Founder and CEO – Carpe Diem and Director of 'Born to Win Learning Services Pvt. Ltd.' and Mr. K. Hemakumar, Vice President of Bharat Scouts and Guides, Chennai CBSE District were the guests of

honour. Smt. Latha Balu, Principal presented the annual report, highlighting the significant milestones of the year. An introduction to the theme of the annual day 'Invisible threads' reflected the vision and values of the institution.



Special trains for Onam Festival

THE Southern Railway has announced special trains from Central station to Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram North to Mangaluru junction for Onam festival. The services will operate between Aug 12 and Sept 6, for which advance reservation has already opened.

According to a press release, the Central-Kollam bi-weekly special will leave Chennai at 11.50 p m on Aug 13, 15, 20, 22, 27 and 29, and Sept 3 and 5, reaching Kollam at 4.20 pm the following day. In the return direction, the train will depart Kollam at 6.45 p m on Aug 14, 16, 21, 23, 28 and 30, and Sept 4 and 6, arriving in Chennai at 11.35 am the next day.

The train will stop at Perambur, Tiruvallur, Arakkonam, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem, Erode, Tirupur and Podanur before entering Kerala. Southern Railway will also operate a weekly special between Thiruvananthapuram North and Mangaluru Junction. The train will leave Thiruvananthapuram North at 9 a m on Aug 12, 19 and 26, and Sept 2, reaching Mangaluru at 9 p m the same day. The return service will depart Mangaluru at 3.15 p m on Aug 13, 20 and 27, and Sept 3, reaching Thiruvananthapuram Central at 5.30 a m the next day.



Velammal Vidyalaya West athletes won 17 gold, 10 silver and 6 bronze medals at the 3rd State Level Sub-Junior Athletic Meet. organized by SBPMS Bro Sports Academy at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Chennai.



VKids, TS Krishnanagar little uniform service bunnies taking the pledge during weekly activity.



July 9 அன்று 92 வது வார்டு கவுன்சிலர், K.V. திலகர் அவர்கள் பாரதிதாசன் சாலை, இளங்கோ சாலையில் நடைபெற்று வரும் மழைநீர் வடிகால் பணிகள், மற்றும் EB பூங்காவில் அமைக்கப்படும் மகளிர் உடற் பயிற்சி கூடம், வெள்ளாளர் தெருவில் புதிதாக கட்டப்பட்டு வரும் ரேஷன் கடை போன்ற வார்டு முன்னேற்றம் அடைய கவுன்சிலர் அவர்களின் முயற்சியால் கொண்டு வரப்பட்ட அனைத்து பணிகளையும் நேரில் சென்று ஆய்வு மேற்கொண்டார்.

Two arrested for duping job aspirants

THE Central Crime Branch (CCB) police have arrested two men for allegedly cheating more than 100 job seekers of nearly Rs 2 crore by promising jobs in leading multinational companies. The accused, K Silambarasan of Tiruvannamalai and S Prabhu of Maduravoyal, were arrested and remanded in judicial custody. The case was registered on a complaint by R Pradeepraja (27), an MSc graduate from Perungudi, who alleged that the accused, operating through Sharaa Info Developers Private Ltd in Maduravoyal, promised him a high-paying job and took Rs 2.69 lakh from him. However, he never got the promised job or a refund. The police have seized their mobile phones and are investigating.

Traffic signal hidden behind pole at busy junction raises concerns

By N Rathi Chithra

MOTORISTS using the busy Thirumangalam-Mogappair Road have raised concerns over poor visibility of the traffic signal at the Park Road-Padikuppam Junction, where a street light pole partially obstructs the signal, making it difficult for road users to notice the change in lights in time.

The junction, one of the key intersections connecting Thirumangalam, Mogappair, Anna Nagar West Extension and surrounding residential areas, witnesses heavy traffic throughout the day, including Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) buses, school vehicles, trucks, auto-rickshaws and two-wheelers.

A visit to the junction revealed that the primary traffic signal for motorists approaching from the Thirumangalam side is positioned directly behind a street light pole. From several metres away, especially during peak traffic



hours, the signal is not clearly visible until motorists come much closer to the stop line.

Commuters say the poor placement creates confusion, forcing drivers to brake abruptly after noticing the red light at the last moment. They fear this increases the risk of rear-end collisions and other accidents.

"I use this stretch every day to travel between Mogappair and Anna Nagar. Many times, the pole blocks the signal from my line of sight. By the time I realise that the signal has turned red, I have to brake suddenly," said Karthik, a software



professional who commutes on a two-wheeler.

Another motorist, Philip, said unfamiliar road users are likely to face greater difficulty. "Regular commuters know that the signal is hidden behind the pole, but first-time visitors may not expect it. During busy hours, when buses and other vehicles are around, the visibility becomes even worse," he said.

An auto-rickshaw driver pointed out that the problem becomes more pronounced during cloudy weather or rain. "The signal is not easy to spot from a distance. The authorities should either

relocate the signal or shift the street light pole so that motorists get a clear view," he said.

Residents and commuters said the issue could be resolved by repositioning the signal head, installing an additional overhead signal, or relocating the obstructing pole. They noted that such corrective measures would significantly improve visibility and enhance road safety at the intersection.

Road safety experts say traffic signals should be placed in locations that are clearly visible to approaching motorists well in advance, without obstruction from utility poles, trees or signboards. Clear visibility enables drivers to react safely and reduces the chances of sudden braking and signal violations.

Motorists have urged the Greater Chennai Traffic Police to inspect the junction and take immediate corrective action before the visibility issue contributes to a serious accident.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Public Safety Alert – Immediate Action Requested

Sir,

On July 6th evening, a woman riding a two-wheeler was attacked by a free-roaming cow on Vellalar Street, Mogappair West. The incident has been captured on CCTV. This is not an isolated incident. Cattle are frequently allowed to roam and graze on this public road, creating a serious hazard for two-wheelers, pedestrians, school children, senior citizens, and motorists. The attack could easily have resulted in severe injury or loss of life. I request Greater Chennai Corporation and Greater Chennai Traffic Police to take immediate action by:

Removing the roaming cattle from the public road.

Preventing repeated grazing on public roads in this area.

Taking appropriate action to ensure the safety of road users.

Location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/uxgcaXSsnX-wrLgD96>

This is a matter of public safety. I hope the concerned authorities will act promptly before the inevitable happens.

Emmanuel Donald, Mogappair

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