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Jainithine S of Velammal Vidyalaya, Mel Ayanambakkam won a silver in kick light and bronze medals in two other categories at the national championship.

TN to resume issuance of ration cards

THE State government will resume the issuance of new ration cards, after a nearly seven-month suspension owing to the Assembly election. The government has since received nearly six lakh applications, of which three lakh have been identified for the first phase of distribution.

The ration card distribution will commence simultaneously across the State and eligible applicants will receive their family cards in phases.

While about 21,000 applications received till March have been rejected,

verification of the remaining applications has yet to begin.

More beneficiaries added

The State government has decided to expand the Chief Minister's Thayumanavar Scheme by extending doorstep delivery of essential ration commodities to senior citizens aged 60 years and above, persons with disability (PwDs) and widows.

At present, around 19 lakh beneficiaries, comprising senior citizens aged above 65 years and PwDs,

receive essential commodities at their doorsteps under the scheme.

With the expansion, the minimum age for eligibility among senior citizens will be reduced from 65 years to 60 years.

Widows will also be brought under the scheme, substantially increasing its coverage across the State, officials in the department said.

The scheme was launched by the previous government. The present government has decided to retain the scheme and widen its coverage.



Kaviya Dharshini of Velammal Vidyalaya West, won first place under-17 girls' table tennis championship held at Sudharsanam Vidyashram.



S. Devan of Velammal Vidyalaya, Ayanavaram won three gold medals in the 25m Freestyle, 25m Butterfly and 100m Individual Medley (IM) events, besides securing two bronze medals in a swimming championship held recently. He was also adjudged the individual champion.



Celebration of leadership and responsibility

The Leo Academy of Excellence Senior Secondary School conducted the Investiture Ceremony on June 29 at the school premises. Mr Uthaman Chukkaseri Chief General Manager, ONGC was the guest of honour. He is a person with 35 years of experience in Oil and Natural Gas exploration, whose presence gave importance to the Investiture Ceremony. The elected council members felt honoured to receive their badges from the chief guest. His motivational speech insisted on determination, dedication and hard work by the council members.

The ceremony concluded with the National Anthem, inspiring everyone to work together for a better tomorrow.

Commuters seek halt for Chennai-Podanur Special Express at Ambattur Station

By N Rathii Chithra

THE Ambattur Rail Commuters Welfare Association has appealed to the Southern Railway to provide a brief halt at Ambattur Railway Station for the newly introduced Chennai-Podanur Tri-Weekly Express Special, saying the move would benefit thousands of passengers from the rapidly growing suburb.

The appeal comes after the Southern Railway announced the operation of a special train between Podanur, near Coimbatore, and Dr. MGR Chennai Central Railway Station to clear the additional passenger rush during the travel season.

According to the rail-

way announcement, the special service will operate from July 3 to August 2, 2026, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Advance reservation for the train commenced on the evening of July 2.

Welcoming the introduction of the special train, the Ambattur Rail Commuters Welfare Association thanked the Southern Railway for augmenting services between Chennai and western Tamil Nadu. However, the association urged the railway administration to consider stopping the train at Ambattur Railway Station for a few minutes to improve accessibility for passengers residing in Ambattur and neighbouring localities.

Local residents said

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Ambattur has emerged as one of Chennai's most densely populated residential and industrial hubs, with thousands of commuters relying on the sub-

urban railway network every day. A halt for the special train, locals said, would eliminate the need for many passengers to travel to Dr. MGR Chen-

nai Central to board the service.

Residents from Ambattur, Korattur, Pattaravakkam, Mogappair, Thirumullaivoyal and adjoining areas frequently travel to Coimbatore, Podanur, Tiruppur, Erode and other destinations in western Tamil Nadu for business, employment, education and personal visits. A stop at Ambattur would save commuters considerable travel time and reduce congestion at Chennai Central.

The Ambattur Railway Station already handles a substantial volume of suburban rail passengers and possesses the infrastructure to accommodate the brief halt of an express special service without signifi-

cantly affecting operational schedules.

"The Southern Railway's kind consideration will be greatly appreciated," the association said in its appeal, expressing confidence that the request would receive favourable attention.

Rail commuters have, over the years, consistently sought halts for several long-distance and special trains at Ambattur, citing the suburb's growing population and its importance as a major residential, commercial and industrial centre. They argue that providing additional stoppages at strategically located suburban stations would improve passenger convenience while reducing crowding at Chennai Central.

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Dayasadan Agarwal Vidyalyaya successfully conducted the flagging off ceremony of uniformed services, clubs & skill courses on June 29 at the school premises. The programme commenced with the Vande Mataram song, prayer and lighting of the lamp. The National Flag and Uniformed Services flags were hoisted. The event was graced by the chief guest, Mr. Shankar M, Assistant Secretary, ALT Scouts, who addressed the gathering and felicitated the badge holders.

Long awaited relief for Jaswant Nagar residents

By N Rathie Chithra

A section of residents of Jaswant Nagar in Mogappair West have welcomed the closure of a Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) liquor outlet in their neighbourhood, describing it as a long-awaited relief for the residential locality. Representatives of the residents recently met Maduravoyal MLA Rhevanth Charan to thank him for his role in facilitating the closure of the outlet.

The residents visited the legislator at his office and felicitated him for the closure of TASMAL Outlet No. 8774, which had been functioning in Jaswant Nagar. According to the residents, the closure has addressed a longstanding concern over the presence of the liquor shop in close proximity to homes and public spaces.

Sharing a video of the interaction on social media, the MLA said the appreciation shown by the residents strengthened his commitment to creating safer and more peaceful neighbourhoods. "Their appreciation reinforces our commitment to creating safer and more peaceful neighbourhoods that reflect the aspirations of the people," he said.

The Jaswant Nagar outlet was among the 717 TASMAL liquor shops across Tamil Nadu that were ordered to be shut down.

The government had announced that all TASMAL outlets located within a 500-metre radius of educational institutions and places of worship would be closed as part of its commitment to reducing the social impact of liquor sales and ensuring compliance with the prescribed distance norms.

The closure of the Jaswant Nagar shop has been welcomed by several residents, who had for years voiced concerns over public nuisance, congestion and safety issues associated with the outlet. Residents said the absence of the liquor shop has brought greater peace to the locality and improved the overall environment, particularly for women, children and senior citizens. Local residents said they hoped the government would continue to relocate or close liquor outlets that affect residential neighbourhoods and ensure that public concerns are addressed promptly. Residents who met the MLA said the decision had restored confidence that civic concerns raised by local communities would receive attention.

Special camp to collect property tax

THE Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) will conduct special camps across the city to collect outstanding property tax from property owners. The special camps will be conducted till July 17.

According to a press release, the camps will be set up across all of its zonal and ward offices from 8 am to 6 pm for easy payment of property tax. The civic body highlighted that property tax serves as its primary source of revenue. This income is crucial for funding and maintaining essential civic infrastructure and public services in the city including waste management, street lighting, parks, road maintenance and public health initiatives, the release added.

GCC urged property owners to utilise this opportunity to clear their pending dues promptly and avoid legal action and penalty.

Vehicles removed from roads, owners list on GCC site

THE Greater Chennai Corporation has published details of 717 abandoned vehicles recently removed from roadsides on its official website. Action was taken by the city police across Triplicane and Taramani police station limits to clear

major obstructions to public safety and traffic flow. A press note on Tuesday said that the list was available on the GCC website. The impounded vehicles are being parked within their respective police station premises. Authorities have

asked owners to approach Triplicane or Taramani police stations within 15 days of this notice to claim their property. Failure to do so will result in legal action and vehicles will be disposed of via auction, says a note.

Free dhoti, saree for Pongal: biometric authentication must

THE Tamil Nadu government has accorded administrative sanction for the production and procurement of free dhotis and sarees to be distributed to eligible rice ration card holders ahead of the ensuing Pongal festival.

A Government Order (GO) issued by the Handlooms, Handicrafts and Textiles Department, the government has sanctioned Rs 300 crore as the first instalment for the annual welfare scheme.

The GO said dhotis and sarees would primarily be procured from



cooperative handloom weavers' societies to support the traditional handloom sector.

The remaining requirement, if any, will be met through cooperative powerloom societies.

After production, the dhotis and

sarees will be transported to the warehouses of the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation for distribution. The government has also mandated biometric authentication during distribution at fair price shops to ensure that the benefits reach the right people.

For elderly beneficiaries and others who are unable to authenticate using fingerprints, iris authentication or other approved biometric methods will be used wherever necessary, the government order added.



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Mollywood in spotlight at Stuttgart Indian Film Festival

THE 23rd edition of the Stuttgart Indian Film Festival in Germany will shine the spotlight on Malayalam cinema with a line-up of more than 70 feature films, documentaries and short films exploring themes of identity, tradition, politics and social change, the organisers have announced.

The festival, Europe's largest showcase of Indian cinema, will be held from July 23 to 26 in Stuttgart.

This year's edition will open with filmmaker Dinjith Ayyathan's Malayalam thriller "Eko: From the Infinite Chronicles of Kuri-achan", which follows the search for a mysterious dog breeder in central Kerala.

According to the organisers, the festival's focus on Malayalam cinema aims to highlight the industry's growing reputation for inventive storytelling and socially relevant narratives.

The programme will feature films spanning mul-

tiple Indian languages, including Malayalam, Hindi, Bengali and Karbi, alongside documentaries and short films addressing issues such as gender equality, LGBTQ rights, caste discrimination, environmental conservation, ageing, indigenous communities and cultural heritage.

Among the Malayalam titles are Dominic Arun's superhero film "Lokah - Chapter 1: Chandra", starring Kalyani Priyadarshan as Malayalam cinema's

first female superhero; Khalid Rahman's boxing comedy "Alappuzha Gymkhana"; Emcy Joseph's survival thriller "Meesha - Moustache"; and Rajesh Madhavan's directorial debut "Pennum Porattum - Girl and the Fools' Parade".

The festival will also screen Omkar Bhatkar's experimental drama "Ikt-suarpok - The Weight of Longing", Anusha Rizvi's satirical comedy "The Great Shamsuddin Fami-

ly", Chaiti Ghoshal's directorial debut "Nevermind", and Khanjan Kishore Nath's Karbi-language drama "Kangbo Aloti - The Lost Path".

The documentary section includes Haider Khan's "Saath Paar Zindagi - Life Beyond 60", which profiles five Padma Shri awardees, including transgender folk dancer Manjamma Jogati and elephant trainer Parbati Barua.

Khan's "Tears Beneath the Laughing Sky" and

"Divine Beasts in Bondage" will also have their world premieres at the festival.

The festival's queer cinema programme will feature filmmaker Onir's short film "Tumhari Khushboo - Your Fragrance", Chandradeep Das' "Jasmine That Blooms in Autumn", and the documentary "Bride of Aravan", which explores the lives of transgender women during Tamil Nadu's Koovagam festival. *Agencies*



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Velammal alumnus Harshavardhan is India's 97th Grandmaster

Former Velammal student crossed the rating of 2500 at the competition of the Chola Chess Tournament, which is the prerequisite for confirming the GM title

By R Srinivasa Raghavan

INDIAN chess is an exalted state, producing plenty of Grandmasters (GMs). India's GM count is inching towards 100! Exactly a week ago, GB Harshavardhan (6.5/9) became India's 97th GM, making his third and final GM norm in the just concluded Second Chola Chess GM Norm Round-Robin Tournament in Chennai. Finishing second, the 22-year-old gained 15.3 rating points, besides having a performance rating of 2620. Importantly, the former Velammal student crossed the rating of 2500 (having a live rating of 2508) at the completion of the event, which is the prerequisite for confirming the GM title.

Michal Krasenkow, who was a former top 10 player, sealed the title, securing seven points (six wins, two draws and one loss). The former Polish champion used his vast experience to win the title at 62! Having the best

performance rating of 2675, Krasenkow had a rating gain of 21.5 points.

Thanks to a better tie-break, Harsh Suresh pipped Mihail Nikitenko (both 5) for the third spot.

Hat-trick of victories over Mohan Kushagra, Krasenkow and Alexei Fedorov in the sixth, seventh and eighth rounds was the key to achieving his GM title. His victory over eventual champion Krasenkow (his only loss) was impressive. The Chennaiite handled the pressure well at the business end of the tournament.

Being the son of former player and FIDE Trainer K Gopalakrishnan played a sizeable part in Harshavardhan's success as a chess player. Accompanying his son to many tournaments, his mother Bama played a pivotal role in Harshavardhan becoming a champion chess player.

His maiden GM norm came after his triumph in the Open section of Asian

Junior in 2022. After a gap of three years, Harshavardhan bagged his second GM norm with his best-ever performance at the Asian Individual Chess Championship (10th), which helped him make the cut for World Cup. From that point, he has been making steady progress, which finally culminated in Harshavardhan accomplishing one of his dreams (GM title) in his hometown.

When asked how impressed are you by Harshavardhan achieving the GM title? Gopalakrishnan was ecstatic, saying: "I was impressed by the way he took the steady way and delivered when it mattered! I had some doubts till the seventh round against Krasenkow. As Krasenkow rightly said, if you want to become a GM then beat the GMs - and that's what exactly happened. We're greatly relieved he finally got the title, which was eluding him for quite



FACTBOX

Name: **GB Harshavardhan**
Age: **22**
Country: **India**
Title: **GM**
Rating: **2508**

THREE HIGHS

2022: **Winning Asian Junior title**
2025: **Qualifying for the World Cup**
2026: **Becoming a GM**

some time."

When did you think Harshavardhan had the potential to become a GM? "Harshavardhan is a hard-working player and maybe during 2023 I felt he should've been a GM. After his steady show in the Asian Individual and qualifying for the World Cup, I

was sure that it's just a matter of time before he becomes a GM," reflected Harshavardhan's father. According to Gopalakrishnan, resilience and never say die attitude are Harshavardhan's biggest strengths.

In a whatsapp interview to Mogappair Mail, Harshavardhan shared his thoughts on his coaches, parents support etc.. Excerpts:

Q: How much of a role did your coach Deepan Chakravarthy has played in your growth as a chess player?

A: Deepan anna has been playing a vital role in moulding me as a stronger player. Coach has been helping me a lot in my preparation as well as improving my calculation skills. He is also stressing the importance of psychological aspects of the game.

Q: How much influence has your father played in your chess success?

A: My father has been supportive of all my endeavours till now. In the early days of my career, he was guiding me with analysing many old classical games, and important theoretical

endgames.

Q: How much mother's support has helped in your chess career?

A: My mother has been a pillar of strength. She was travelling with me to many tournaments till some time ago, taking care of me, particularly with my food. In fact she was more concerned about me achieving greater things than myself! I'm so happy to have achieved the GM title for now.

Q: How much have you learnt from former coach K Visweswaran?

A: I have learnt a lot from Visweswaran sir! He taught me how to prepare systematically. He also imbibed in me the fighting spirit and keeping the game alive.

Q: What are your goals for 2026?

A: My primary goal this year was to complete my GM title, which I have already achieved. I'll try to play stronger events, more tournaments with the aim of improving my rating.

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

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Velammal Vidyalaya, Mel Ayanambakkam, conducted its Investiture Ceremony. The newly elected student leaders were honoured with badges. The ceremony featured the lighting of the lamp and inspiring addresses by alumni Ms. Gayathri, Class 10 topper and Ms. Tharunya, Class 12 topper.



Velammal Vidyalaya, Mel Ayanambakkam, welcomed Smt. Archana, DSP, Singappan Sirappu Adhiradi Padai, for an inspiring interaction with students.

GCC responds to resident's complaint, trims tree branch

By Our Correspondent

THE Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has trimmed a dangerously hanging tree branch in Mogappair after a resident highlighted the safety risk on social media, demonstrating the civic body's continued use of its online grievance redressal mechanism to address public complaints.

The issue was raised by a resident on X, who alerted the Corporation about a large tree branch that was precariously hanging over VGP Nagar Main Road. In the post, the resident warned that the branch posed a serious threat to both pedestrians and mo-

torists using the busy stretch.

"This tree branch is very dangerously hanging on to the road and can pose a very high risk for pedestrians and motorists. Kindly do the needful before anyone gets seriously hurt," the resident wrote while tagging the Greater Chennai Corporation.

Responding to the complaint, the civic body acknowledged the issue and informed the resident that it had been registered on the Corporation's Public Grievance Redressal Portal. The Corporation also shared Complaint No. 2026-343ICS, enabling the complainant to track the status of the grievance



online.

Soon afterwards, the Greater Chennai Corporation posted an update confirming that the necessary action had been taken.

"Vanakkam #Chennai-ite, Necessary action has been taken regarding your complaint. Thanks for writing to us," the Corporation said in its reply on X.

The resident later re-



sponded with a brief message thanking the civic body for its prompt intervention.

The trimming of the hazardous branch has removed a potential danger on the road, particularly at a location frequented by residents, shoppers and motorists. Overhanging branches, especially during periods of strong winds or

rain, can snap unexpectedly, posing risks to road users and causing damage to vehicles.

Civic activists said the incident highlights the increasing role of social media as a platform for residents to report civic issues directly to government agencies. The Greater Chennai Corporation has been actively responding to complaints received through its official social media handles, in addition to grievances registered through its online public grievance portal.

Residents have increasingly turned to digital platforms to report issues such as damaged roads, water stagnation, malfunctioning

streetlights, fallen trees, blocked stormwater drains and sanitation concerns. In many instances, civic officials acknowledge the complaints, register them on the grievance portal and share updates after the work is completed.

The swift response in Mogappair has been welcomed by local residents, who said timely action on such complaints helps prevent accidents and improves public safety. They noted that prompt maintenance of roadside trees is particularly important during the monsoon season, when weakened branches are more likely to fall due to heavy rain and strong winds.

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