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Electrocution of woman near Anna Nagar Metro Station raises questions

By Our Correspondent

THE shocking death of a 59-year old woman, Kalavathi, due to electrocution near the Anna Nagar Tower Metro Rail Station on Second Avenue has caused widespread shock and anguish in the neighbourhood. The incident raised serious questions on the lack of accountability while executive civic works.

Kalavathi, a resident of Padi Pudu Nagar, who works as a housekeeping staff at a sweet stall in Anna Nagar, was returning home this past Sunday when she fell into water-filled pit near a stormwater drain close to the Anna Nagar Tower Metro Rail Station. An underground cable line was present at the spot and she was electrocuted to death.

The water had stagnated at the pit where storm water drain

work was carried out recently. "This is the most shocking case of electrocution I have come across in this posh neighbourhood. We can understand if such an accident due to negligence had been caused in some congested interior streets in some backward locality. But here a woman died just outside the Metro Rail Station in a posh neighbourhood like Anna Nagar. The Second Avenue Road is one of the most widest road in the area and that is what makes this all the more alarming," said Rathindran, a resident of Anna Nagar.

In the wake of the tragic death, the Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner G S Sameeran and Regional Deputy Commissioner (Central) H R Koushik instructed officials to identify locations with exposed cables and inform the Tamil Nadu Power Distri-

bution Corporation Limited (formerly called the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board or TNEB) for immediate action.

However, residents said this was only a post tragedy action. "Ideally, the Greater Chennai Corporation should have been proactive and must have prevented such kind of deaths. Already the monsoon season has set in. In the coming weeks, we will be encountering water stagnation at key places. That being the case, given past experiences, officials must have ensured that commuters and road users are warned about water stagnation. The Electricity Department should also have coordinated with the Greater Chennai Corporation in making sure that its cables were not exposed to leakages due to civic works," said an elderly citizen and long time resident of Anna Nagar.



Four students off Velammal Annexe School, Melayanambakkam, (Anaysha, Sanantha.N, Hasini R and A. Jositha) won prizes in the Camlin art competition.

Man held for fixing hidden camera in women's hostel

A 27-year-old man was arrested by Vanagaram police after three women staying in a rented house in Adayalampattu near Vanagaram alleged that he had installed a hidden surveillance camera inside an electrical switch box and monitored them through his mobile phone. The accused, Saravanan, is the son of the house owner. The three women, who work at a private company in Vanagaram near Maduravoyal, had been staying in the house arranged by their company. The women alleged that Saravanan had connected the camera to his mobile phone and was monitoring the footage. They subsequently lodged a complaint with Vanagaram police. Based on the complaint, police registered a case and arrested Saravanan. During the investigation, police found that the camera had been installed inside the switch box and connected to Saravanan's mobile phone. Further investigation is under way.



Chathurya Karani of Velammal Vidyalaya Annexure secured first place in Thani Thiran at the Sports Silambam Arts Championship, held at Montfort Indoor Stadium, Mylapore.

Vasantham conducts 8th annual science exhibition

FROM August 12 to 15, the campus of Vasantham Residential Special School in East Mogappair came alive with colour, curiosity and confidence as it hosted Arivom Ariviyal 8.0, the school's eighth annual science exhibition. True to Vasantham's motto, "Challenge the Challenges," the event once again showed that curiosity and the spirit of discovery know no boundaries.

Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, guided patiently by their teachers, had spent weeks preparing hands-on science projects. On exhibition day, they took charge - explaining their work with evident pride to visitors that included students from other schools and colleges, parents and well-wishers.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Jayashree



Sundaresan, Vice President, Freshworks; B. Suresh Kamath, Managing Director, Patterns Cognitive; and Natarajan Raman, Founder Trustee, Dream India - all long-time supporters of Vasantham, who keep saying even the sky is not the limit for special needs students.

A trail of discovery

The exhibition hall was arranged as a trail of discovery stations. One much-loved corner featured the classic 'walking rainbow

water' experiment, with glasses of vividly coloured water linked by twisted paper towels, letting visitors watch capillary action pull colour upward and across.

Other stations were just as engaging. A table of simple chemistry demonstrations used everyday kitchen ingredients such as turmeric and starch to show how ordinary materials react and change colour - a gentle, safe introduction to acids, bases and indicators. A working model on the 'Sources of Water' came complete with a hand-built miniature well and house. Other displays explained how the ear, kidney and other body parts work, and how to care for them through simple daily practices and yoga. There was also a display of herbs and their nutritional and medicinal benefits, and a corner on traditional sports and



games and the skills they build.

The highlight of the exhibition, organisers said, was watching students who are minimally verbal communicate through their aided communication devices, tablets, or actions - many of them explaining their projects with more confidence on the day of the event than they had shown in their practice sessions.

Feedback from visitors

Visitors left with words of encouragement for the students.



"I'm very happy that I came here and saw many different talents. I really appreciate your hard work - keep on doing it," said one visitor. "Happy and cheerful presentation... just wow, feeling very proud. May God bless every effort," wrote another.

Each student also received a participation certificate personalised with a photograph of them with their experiment, taken on the first day of the exhibition, with felicitation held on the final day.

Eight years since it began, Arivom Ariviyal con-



tinues to give Vasantham students a stage to be seen not for their challenges, but for their curiosity, creativity and hard work. Each model and experiment on display was a reminder that with the right encouragement, every child can explore science - and every child can shine.

Vasantham Residential Special School for Individuals with Intellectual Developmental Disorders has been running since 1989, marking 37 years of service this year. More about Vasantham can be viewed in www.vasantham.org



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VKids (TSK) celebrated National Sports Day as Kiddies Meet with great interest and sporting spirit from Aug 17 to 21.

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Broken play equipment leaves children at risk

By N Rathie Chithra

BROKEN and poorly maintained play equipment at Mangal Eri Park in Mogappair has raised concerns among regular park users, with some facilities appearing damaged and one of the swings positioned directly above a pit containing stagnant rainwater.

A visit to the park showed a children's play area with swings, slides, climbing structures and other equipment. While some of the facilities appear usable, some showed visible signs of damage and disrepair.

One of the most immediate concerns is a swing in the play area. The swing is positioned over a tiny pit in the ground where rainwater has accumulated and remains stagnant. The water-filled pit is located directly below the area where children would step on and off the swing, creating a potential hazard.

The play area has a largely sandy surface, and the stagnant water has left portions of the ground wet and muddy. The condition could become particularly problematic if the water remains uncleared for several days after rainfall.

Other equipment also appears to require attention. A seesaw, a spring-mounted play structure has a seat missing, while another swing has a damaged seat and chains that have come loose from the seating platform. The condition of some metal structures and play equipment suggested regular inspection and maintenance may be required.

The park also has several benches under the shade of trees, and the play area is evidently used by children and families. This makes the condition of the equipment a concern not merely from the standpoint of aesthetics, but also of basic safety.

"Children come here to play, so the equipment should be checked regularly. A broken swing or damaged play structure can cause an



accident if it is not repaired in time," said a park user.

Another regular visitor said the stagnant water needed immediate attention. "The water should not be allowed to remain like this, especially in a children's play area. It needs to be drained and the pit should be levelled or properly covered," the visitor said.

Park users also want the authorities responsible for maintaining the facility to conduct a comprehensive inspection of the playground rather than repairing individual pieces of equipment only after complaints are made.

"The authorities should inspect all the equipment periodically and remove anything that is unsafe until it is repaired," said another visitor.

The condition of public play spaces assumes greater importance as children depend on such facilities for outdoor recreation. Regular safety checks, prompt replacement of damaged components and proper drainage after rainfall could help ensure that Mangal Eri Park remains a safe space for children and families.

VIT signs MoU with Columbia University

THE Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Columbia University's Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (Columbia Engineering), New York, paving the way for a dual-degree programme.

According to a press statement VIT is the first Indian university to enter into such an agreement with the prestigious US institution.

The MoU was signed recently in the presence of Binaya Srikanta

Pradhan, Consul General of India in New York.

The partnership will provide engineering students with international academic pathways and opportunities to pursue globally oriented programmes at both institutions.

The partnership will strengthen academic collaboration between the two institutions and provide students an exposure to international learning and engineering education.



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Sai Rajkumar of Velammal Vidyalaya Annexure emerged winner in the Under-14, 45kg Judo category at the BUCK Memorial Sports Festival, conducted at the YMCA College of Physical Education.

9,437 medical seats allotted in 1st round

A total of 9,437 seats in MBBS and BDS courses have been allotted in the first round of general counselling for TN government and private medical and dental colleges. According to a press release, 7,625 MBBS seats and 1,812 BDS seats were allotted under the government and management quotas. Around 382 seats are vacant, including 338 MBBS seats under NRI quota and 44 BDS seats under Telugu Minority and NRI categories. A total of 72,633 applications were received this year for undergraduate MBBS and BDS courses in TN. After scrutiny, the rank list was published on August 10. General category counselling was held from August 13-24, during which eligible candidates registered their preferred choices through the official website.

Pragg achieves biggest victory snatching Grand Chess Tour Finals

By R Srinivasa Raghavan

RAMESHBABU Pragnanandhaa achieved his biggest victory by winning the Grand Chess Tour Finals, defeating Fabiano Caruana 15-13 in a thrilling final. Pragg became richer by \$200,000. It was his third title of 2026. Wesley So also came back strongly to take the third spot with a 18-12 victory over German No.1 Vincent Keymer.

Pragg, Caruana and So, who finished in the top three, qualified for next

year's Tour.

In what started as a dramatic summit clash with Caruana capitalising on Pragg's blunder to win the game on the first day, Pragg made a tremendous comeback winning the next game in rapid game. In the second game, Pragg equalised comfortably and blasted open the centre with d5.

Caruana made a mistake with 27 e5 after which he was close to losing. The former Velammal student Pragg wrapped up the issue.

Pragg made it 2-2 in blitz to seal victory. It was Pragg's overall GCT victory. Pragg had this to say after his victory: "Honestly, I didn't think I had much of a chance today, especially after I saw I had the colour I didn't want. I knew I could get one win against Fabi, but to get two was a massive improvement. It's a huge honour to win a tournament like this. I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who has supported me along the way: my family, my trainers, and all of my

supporters. This means a lot to me."

"It would have been nice to have it in the Candidates, but it's still nice to win tournaments like this," said Pragnanandhaa, who considers the GCT "second to the world championship, because of the tradition." He'd like to rest for a week or two, he said, but the Olympiad is coming in less than a month.

Women Get 50 Lakhs

Hockey India announced Rs 50 lakh to the Indian women's hockey team for finishing fifth by defeating Germany 3-1.

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

City gets 250 new low-floor buses

250 new buses procured at Rs 290.08 crore for the state transport undertakings, including 130 electric AC buses for the MTC was flagged off on Tuesday.

Launched from the Secretariat, the 130 low-floor AC e-buses are among the first batch of phase two of the World Bank-supported procurement of 750 AC e-buses.

Of the 130 buses, 80 will be operated from MTC's Alandur depot and 50 from its Central depot.

As part of efforts to reduce vehicular pollution in Chennai, MTC is operating 625 low-floor electric buses, procured at a cost of Rs 697 crore, through five depots. The new services will connect key destinations including Chennai airport, Kilambakkam bus terminus, Siruseri IT Park, OMR, Tambaram, Chengalpattu, Mamallapuram, Guindy, Anna Nagar, Pattabiram, Kundrathur and Poonamallee, and ply from Alandur and Central depots.

The 80 buses from Alandur depot will operate on 15 routes and the 50 buses from Central depot will operate on 10 routes.



Velammal Vidyalaya West and Velammal Nolambur Academy, in collaboration with startup Ready Explore Team, organised a mega Career Guidance Programme on August 25, at Velammal Hall. The programme brought together 670 enthusiastic students, who gained valuable insights into higher education, futuristic skill sets, and strategic academic planning.



Pavin S. of Velammal Vidyalaya – Ayanavaram emerged winner in the Chennai District Kickboxing Championship.

GV Prakash's *Ninja* begins shooting

DIRECTOR Murugu's upcoming family entertainer *Ninja*, with GV Prakash Kumar and Prarthana in the lead, has begun shooting in Thanjavur. The first schedule is ex-

pected to go on for 20 days. Written and directed by Murugu, the film is produced by S Sai Devanand and KS Sinish.

GV Prakash was initially signed as the music

director but has now taken on the lead role. Prarthana, known for films such as *Thalaivar Thambi Thalaimeyil*, *Love Today* and *Parking*, plays the female lead while Sean Roldan will

compose the music.

The cast also includes Jenson Diwakar, Radha Ravi, Dheepa Ramanujam, Devadarshini and Kalyani Natarajan. Harish Kannan is the cinematog-

rapher, while Ganesh Siva handles the editing. Gopi Anand is the art director, Priya Ravi is the costume designer and Dinesh Kaasi is the stunt choreographer. The film is said to be a light-hearted romantic family entertainer.

Garbage bin left on Mogappair road raises safety concerns

By N Rathii Chithra

A large garbage bin left on the carriageway of Vellalar Street in Mogappair on Wednesday last raised concerns among motorists, who feared that such obstructions could result in accidents, particularly during busy hours and poor-visibility conditions.

The bin, seen occupying a portion of the road, was reportedly left there after garbage was emptied. The stretch is regularly used by motorists and also sees the movement of larger vehi-



cles, including load vans. With vehicles having to negotiate around the obstruction, road users said leaving large bins haphaz-

ardly on the carriageway could pose a safety hazard.

Residents and motorists said conservancy workers should ensure that garbage bins are returned to a suitable location after they are emptied instead of leaving them on the road.

"Large vehicles such as load vans use this road regularly. When a bin is left on the carriageway, drivers have to suddenly move around it. This can be dangerous, especially if another vehicle is approaching from the opposite direction," said a motorist

who frequently uses Vellalar Street.

Another road user said the problem was not merely about inconvenience but also about the possibility of an accident. "A garbage bin of this size is difficult to miss during the day, but motorists may not notice it immediately when traffic is heavy or visibility is poor. It should not be left in the middle of the road after the garbage has been cleared," he said.

Residents pointed out that even a temporary obstruction can become a

serious risk when vehicles are forced to change lanes or move closer to oncoming traffic. The concern is particularly relevant on stretches used by different categories of vehicles, from two-wheelers and cars to commercial vehicles.

Motorists said the civic authorities and conservancy staff should take greater care while handling garbage containers. Once a bin is emptied, they said, it should be placed at a designated spot along the roadside without obstructing the movement of ve-

hicles or pedestrians.

They also urged officials to ensure that garbage collection operations do not leave behind other obstructions on busy roads.

While the bin may have been a temporary obstruction, motorists said such instances highlight the need for better coordination during routine conservancy operations.

For residents and road users, the expectation is garbage collection should make roads cleaner, not create a new hazard for those using them.



LKG student Miridhulaa of Velammal Academy Nolambur, proudly won the Trophy in a Silambam Competition, showcasing her remarkable talent.



H. Jayasri of Velammal Academy Nolambur secured Second Position in the 5th & 6th Category at the State Level Drawing Competition conducted by Kalam Event Management.

Police recover bag, return cash to owner

ARUMBAKKAM police recovered a bag containing Rs 34,000 in cash left behind by a collection agent of a jewellery store and returned it to its rightful owner within an hour.

Police said that Special Sub-Inspector (SSI) Karuppasamy was on duty at NSK Nagar signal junction on Sunday night. He noticed an unclaimed bag on the road with Rs.34,000 cash. When no one turned

up to receive it, he handed it over to the Arumbakkam Police.

It was later found that the bag belonged to Mohan (26), a collection agent working in the marketing section of a jewellery shop in Anna Nagar. Mohan had collected chit funds from customers on last Sunday and was riding his two wheeler on his way back to the office when the bag fell on the floor.



The students of Velammal Vidyalaya Annexure, Melayanambakkam, celebrated the vibrant festival of Onam with great enthusiasm and creativity.

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