

WINDOWS

VCK criticises CM's 'hand gesture' in Assembly

CHENNAI : VCK founder and president Thol Thirumavalavan on Thursday criticised Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay over his “body language” in the state Legislative Assembly towards DMK chief M K Stalin, while also demanding the withdrawal of the State Law Minister Nirmal Kumar’s remarks on the MISA era.

He said severe criticism has surfaced over the Chief Minister’s “body language” mocking Stalin during his reply to the debate on the police grant. “Although the Chief Minister’s side has clarified that there was ‘no ill intent’, we, on behalf of the VCK, point out that such body language is neither a dignified approach nor aligned with human values”, Thirumavalavan said in his social media platform on Wednesday.

Stressing that respecting elders is among the highest of human values, the VCK leader said, “therefore, it would be beneficial for a Chief Minister, who holds such a highly dignified and exalted position, to exercise utmost care regarding his body language in the future”.

Referring to DMK’s request that certain portions of the speech be expunged from the House records, Thirumavalavan said, “the MISA related remarks made by the Law Minister, who intervened during that debate, amounted to a “historical error”.

“The repression during the MISA era is well known to the entire nation,” he alleged adding “making a completely false statement regarding the DMK president, who endured that cruel repression, is strongly condemnable”. “We urge the Minister to declare the withdrawal of his remarks,” he added.

BIS seizes 804 gms of non-hallmarked gold jewellery

NEW DELHI : Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on Thursday said it has seized 804 grams of gold jewellery in Chennai as the articles were not hallmarked and displayed for commercial sales. Mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts was launched in June 2021. Hallmarking provides an official indication of the purity or fineness of precious metal articles.

According to an official statement, the BIS’s Chennai Branch Office “seized 803.99 grams of non-hallmarked gold jewellery during an enforcement search and seizure operation at a jewellery shop in Ambattur, Chennai, on September 1, 2026”.

The action was carried out under Section 28 of the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016, after non-hallmarked gold jewellery was found displayed for commercial sale. “The seized jewellery included 175 mangalsutras (thalis) weighing 671.50 grams, 12 children’s bangles weighing 25.02 grams, 40 earrings weighing 86.14 grams and 10 pendants weighing 21.33 grams,” it added.

The BIS officials found the jewellery in different designs and categories being offered for sale without the required hallmarking. The articles were confiscated for detailed investigation and further legal proceedings.

S D Dayanand, Head of the BIS Chennai Branch Office, said, “BIS regularly undertakes market surveillance and enforcement activities to ensure that products covered under mandatory BIS certification and hallmarked requirements comply with the prescribed standards.”

He mentioned that such enforcement actions prevent the sale of substandard products, check misuse of the BIS Standard Mark and hallmark. Hallmarking, the BIS noted, offers an official guarantee of the purity or fineness of precious metal articles. Under the existing system, hallmarked gold jewellery carries the BIS logo, purity/fineness grading, and a six-digit Hallmark Unique Identification (HUID) number. Consumers can verify the HUID of hallmarked jewellery through the BIS CARE app.

Sudhakar Reddy hails party cadre ; BJP’s 175-km ‘Ballari Chalo’ yatra ends

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BALLARI

BJP national co-in-charge for Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and former MLC Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy on Thursday participated in the concluding programme of the party’s ‘Ballari Chalo’ padayatra in Ballari.

The 10-day foot march, led by Karnataka BJP president B Y Vijayendra, began at Lin-

gasur in Raichur district on September 1 and covered around 175 km before culminating in Ballari.

Reddy congratulated Vijayendra, the Karnataka BJP leadership, district units, morchas, elected representatives, office-bearers and thousands of party workers for successfully completing the march.

He said the disciplined and sustained efforts of party workers, who remained

among the people throughout the 10-day yatra, were commendable.

The ‘Ballari Chalo’ yatra conveyed a strong message about the BJP’s need to maintain continuous engagement with farmers, youth, women, SCs, STs, workers and other sections of society, Reddy said. Reddy said the political momentum generated by the yatra should now be converted into sustained public out-

reach, booth-level strengthening and organisational expansion across Karnataka. He expressed confidence that the enthusiasm generated by the padayatra would further strengthen the BJP in Karnataka and energise its cadre.

Several senior BJP leaders participated in the concluding programme and the final leg of the yatra, including B Y Vijayendra, B S Yediyurappa, Basavaraj Bommai, Jagadish

Shettar, R Ashoka, Chala-vadi Narayanaswamy, Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi and V Somanna, Karnataka BJP in-charge Radha Mohan Das Agarwal, B Sriramulu, G Jannardhana Reddy, C T Ravi and other senior leaders and party functionaries. Reddy once again congratulated Vijayendra, the Karnataka BJP leadership and all party workers for successfully completing the ‘Ballari Chalo’ padayatra.



ECI recognises TVK as state party, reserves ‘whistle’ symbol

CHENNAI

THE Election Commission of India (ECI) has recognised the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) as a state party in Tamil Nadu and reserved the “whistle” symbol for it, giving the organisation a permanent electoral identity after its successful Assembly debut.

The recognition follows TVK’s performance in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election, in which it emerged as the single largest party. Contesting its first election, TVK won 108 of the 234 constituencies and secured 34.92 per cent of the valid votes polled across the state.

The ECI’s decision marks an important organisational milestone for the party, founded and led by actor-turned-politician C. Joseph Vijay. It places TVK among Tamil Nadu’s officially recognised state parties and allows its candidates to contest fu-



ture elections under the same reserved symbol.

The whistle had initially been allotted to TVK as a common symbol in January, ahead of the Assembly election. At that stage, the party was registered but unrecognised and had requested a single symbol for its candidates as it prepared for its maiden electoral contest. Following its strong showing at the polls, the symbol has now been formally reserved for the

party.

Under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, a political organisation can obtain recognition as a state party by satisfying any one of several conditions linked to its vote share and the number of seats it wins in Assembly or Lok Sabha elections. One route requires a party to secure at least six per cent of the valid votes polled in the state and win a minimum of two As-

Custodial death of temple guard Court remands 4 police officials, including DSP

MADURAI

IN a significant legal development, a city court on Thursday ordered the judicial remand of four police officials — a DSP among them — in connection with the 2025 custodial death of temple security guard B Ajith Kumar.

The V Additional District and Sessions Court, Madurai, framed a murder charge under Section 103 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against a former DSP of Manamadurai, a former Thiruppuvanam police Inspector, a former SI and a former head constable, in connection with the custodial death of Kumar, a security guard at the Madapuram Kaliaygman temple in Sivaganga district, and directed that they be sent to prison.

The court ordered their immediate remand after observing that they had appeared before it without securing formal bail petitions. The CBI had opposed their release, telling the court that local police elements were still actively trying to influence the case — including an incident flagged before the court on



Thursday, in which a local police inspector arbitrarily withdrew protection from key eyewitnesses.

The section invoked against the four carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and is non-bailable, a source said. The High Court had earlier directed the four to appear before the trial court to execute bonds. However, they appeared before the judge on Thursday without filing a bail petition. As a result, the judge exercised the court’s statutory power and ordered them to be taken directly into judicial custody.

Kumar, 27, reportedly died in June 2025 after being subjected to police brutality during a probe into a missing gold chain of 10 sovereigns.

The incident triggered massive public outrage, prompting the CBI to take up the case. The agency’s investigation uncovered brutal torture of Kumar by local police over the theft allegation, which was later found to be entirely baseless.

An autopsy report confirmed 18 distinct injuries on Kumar’s body. Following the CBI crackdown, 10 police personnel have been named as accused in the custodial murder case. Five constables were arrested and remanded in 2025, and a police driver was subsequently taken into custody, police said. A supplementary chargesheet later named the four officials, who were subsequently suspended.

TVK fields two ex-AIADMK MLAs in October 6 bypolls

CHENNAI

THE ruling TVK in Tamil Nadu on Thursday announced former AIADMK legislators K. Maragatham Kumaravel and P. Sathyabama as its candidates for the October 6 Assembly by-elections in Madurantakam and Dharapuram, respectively.

The nominations confirm that both leaders will seek to return to the Assembly from the constituencies they represented before resigning on May 25 and switching allegiance to the TVK.

Their departure from the AIADMK and resignation as legislators created the two vacancies. Madurantakam and Dharapuram are reserved constituencies. The Election Commission has scheduled polling for October 6, while votes will be counted on October 9.

Maragatham Kumaravel, a former Madurantakam MLA, is now the deputy general secretary of the TVK. Sathyabama, who previously represented Dharapuram, serves as the TVK’s Tiruppur South-East district secretary.

Their selection was widely anticipated after party sources



as indicated, soon after their induction, that they would be offered another opportunity to contest.

TVK president and Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay urged party office-bearers and cadres to work together to ensure a decisive victory for both candidates. He said Maragatham Kumaravel and Sathyabama would enter the contest as nominees of the Secular Social Justice Victory Alliance.

The announcement sets the stage for closely watched contests involving the state’s principal political formations. The DMK has named I. Paranthaman for Madurantakam and S. Suganya

for Dharapuram.

The AIADMK, meanwhile, is preparing to reclaim the two seats it lost following the resignations and has approached its alliance partners, including the BJP, for support.

For the TVK, the by-elections will be an important political test after forming the government. By fielding the two defectors, the party has chosen candidates with prior electoral experience, established local networks and familiarity with the constituencies.

The AIADMK is expected to portray the contests as an opportunity to regain its former strongholds, while the



DMK will seek to capitalise on a multi-cornered fight.

Campaigning is likely to intensify once nominations are completed, with alliance strength, local issues and the candidates’ personal influence expected to shape the outcome.

Both constituencies will therefore draw statewide attention as parties test their organisational machinery and attempt to consolidate support among Scheduled Caste voters within them. The results will also offer an early indication of voter sentiment towards the Vijay government and the changing political alignments in Tamil Nadu.

Auto unions announce September 19 stir

CHENNAI

AUTO-RICKSHAW trade unions in Tamil Nadu have announced a protest in Chennai on September 19, intensifying pressure on the Vijay government to revise fares that have remained unchanged for 13 years.

The Federation of Auto-Rickshaw Trade Unions said drivers would assemble near Rajarathinam Stadium in Egmore, demanding an immediate government order on revised meter fares.

Union representatives said nearly five lakh drivers across the state were struggling with higher fuel, maintenance and insurance costs. The decision follows three rounds of consultations held with the Transport Department since the Vijay

Demand immediate fare revision

government assumed office in May.

At the latest meeting on August 27, unions submitted a fare chart proposing a minimum charge of Rs 60 to Rs 70 for the first 1.5 km and Rs 25 to Rs 30 for every additional kilometre. Passenger representatives who attended the consultations supported the demand, union leaders said.

The federation has now consolidated its demand at Rs 60 for the first 1.5 km and Rs 30 for every subsequent kilometre, along with separate waiting and night charges. It said repeated discussions had produced no firm assurance.

Drivers had expected a decision during the Assembly

debate on the Transport Department’s demand for grants. However, Transport Minister A. Vijay Tamilan Parthiban said that an announcement would be made soon, disappointing the unions.

A government committee had earlier recommended, in 2024, a base fare of Rs 40 and Rs 18 for each additional kilometre. That proposal remained pending. Following the consultations, officials were understood to be considering a higher recommendation of Rs 50 as the base fare and Rs 22 to Rs 25 for every additional kilometre. The State Home (Transport) Department must take the final decision, the unions said. The last revision,



introduced in 2013, fixed the minimum fare at Rs 25 for the first 1.8 km and Rs 12 for each additional kilometre. Unions argue that those rates bear little relation to present operating expenses and have made meter-based services unviable.

Commuters, meanwhile, have complained that airport-based aggregators impose surge pricing, while some driv-

ers demand amounts above displayed estimates.

Transport activists have called for an enforceable fare structure, tighter regulation of aggregators and action on complaints. Officials said the revision would be based on the committee’s recommendations, but the unions maintained that only a time-bound order could avert agitation.

TN to run 5,400 special buses for Vinayaka Chaturthi rush

CHENNAI

TAMIL Nadu’s State Transport Undertakings will operate 5,400 special buses over five days to handle the expected surge in passenger traffic ahead of Vinayaka Chaturthi, auspicious wedding dates and the extended weekend. The additional services will run from Thursday to Monday, connecting Chennai with major towns and cities across Tamil Nadu and neighbouring states.

The transport department has planned the largest share of services from Kilambakkam bus terminus, the principal departure point for south-bound routes. A total of 585 special buses will leave

Kilambakkam on Thursday, followed by 1,255 on Friday, 1,030 on Saturday and 650 on Sunday.

These buses will serve Tiruvannamalai, Tiruchy, Kumbakonam, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Nagercoil, Kaniyakkumari, Thoothukudi, Coimbatore, Salem, Erode and Tirupur. Koyambedu will also handle additional services during the holiday period.

The transport corporations will operate 240 special buses from the terminus on Friday and Saturday, besides 105 services on Sunday. They will connect Chennai with Tiruvannamalai, Nagapattinam, Velankanni, Hosur and Bengaluru.