

 **WINDOWS**



Chidambaram allocates Rs 2 cr for Sivaganga GH Cath lab

SIVAGANGA: Senior Congress leader and RS member P Chidambaram announced on Thursday an allocation of Rs 2 crore from his MPLAD funds to equip a new Cath lab at the Sivaganga Government Hospital. Addressing a press briefing to detail the utilisation of his constituency funds, the former union minister also dispelled media claims that he had conducted an official audit of the local healthcare facility. “A newspaper reported that I inspected the general hospital. I did no such inspection. I went there to ask what their requirements were and only sat in the Dean’s room,” Chidambaram clarified.

Following discussions with the hospital’s Dean and the District Collector, he said three urgent requirements were identified: a Cath lab for angiograms, a dedicated ambulance, and a waiting shelter for patients and their attendees. Acting on the request, Chidambaram said he immediately approved the medical equipment.

“They said it would cost Rs 4 crore -- Rs 2 crore for the building and Rs 2 crore for the equipment. I am giving Rs 2 crore from the MP funds for the equipment. I told them to construct the building from government funds,” he stated.

He added that the ambulance would be funded once formal quotations are received, while the waiting shelter is being deferred to next year’s budget. Detailing broader constituency development, the Rajya Sabha member noted that six infrastructure projects are currently nearing completion in the district, 14 are underway and expected to open early next year, and 12 new requests are currently being processed for tenders.

Relief for Nilgiris residents as another tiger trapped



UDHAGAMANDALAM

FOREST Department officials trapped a male tiger in a cage set up at Gudalur in Nilgiris district on Thursday morning, weeks after another tiger responsible for human attacks in the region was captured.

The operation follows a series of terrifying incidents that began on August 9 and 21, when a tiger attacked and claimed the lives of two people in the O’Valley-Lauriston region near Gudalur, forest officials said.

Enraged by the fatal attacks, locals staged massive protests demanding the immediate

capture of the man-eater. Yielding to public pressure, the Forest Department deployed traps, successfully capturing the tiger on September 18 and subsequently transferring it to the Vandalur Zoo.

However, recent sightings sounded alarm bells and the forest personnel spotted another tiger roaming the Silver Cloud and O’Valley areas bearing visible injuries, prompting renewed surveillance.

Authorities immediately intensified monitoring operations across the Mudumalai, Gudalur, and O’Valley belts, deploying cages at strategic locations. Their efforts paid off when the injured animal walked into the trap set near the Halalla area close to Silver Cloud in the early hours. Forest officials stated that further course of action regarding the captured tiger will be decided on strictly following directives from senior forest department officials.

TN conducting India’s first dengue vaccine pilot study, says Minister

CHENNAI

TAMIL Nadu is conducting India’s first dengue vaccine study in Tenkasi district, overseen by the ICMR, Health Minister K G Arunraj said on Thursday. Speaking to reporters at the sidelines of a workshop on child development here, he said the vaccine is currently part of Brazil’s immunisation schedule.

“It is being evaluated for its effectiveness in Indian conditions and currently offers 80 to 90 per cent protection against severe consequences and hospitalisation,” he added. The health minister also said while the current dengue situation is under control, the real challenge will emerge during the rainy season over the next two to three months.

He appealed for public cooperation to prevent water stagnation in households and cautioned against self-medication. “If at all there is a fever case, they should immediately come to the hospital and then they should not venture trying home medicines, home recipes in this regard,” he said.

The minister also addressed the recent detection of a single avian flu case at the Vandalur Zoo, confirming the facility has been closed to the public as a precautionary measure while animal handlers are tested. Defending the state’s monsoon preparedness, Arunraj noted that despite an unexpected downpour of over 36 cm in three hours a few days ago, roads were cleared for traffic within hours following multiple review meetings chaired by the chief minister.

On the political front, the minister dismissed accusations by the BJP in Delhi that protesters questioning government policies are

“anti-national,” stating his party, TVK, stands firmly for democratic ideals and the Constitution.

He also stated the party’s opposition to hasty revisions of electoral rolls ahead of elections, calling instead for a transparent process to ensure free and fair polling. Earlier, addressing the gathering at the workshop on child development and Artificial Intelligence, the minister urged the media to reframe narratives around children with developmental delays.

He requested journalists to highlight early intervention successes, noting that dignity, rather than pity or inspiration, is the narrative that leaves the child intact. He further challenged the press to hold the government accountable for outcomes -- such as therapy accessibility and travel distances -- rather than merely counting screening camps.

Identifying fundamental pillars of early development, Arunraj stressed that exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months is an essential requirement for a child’s brain development. Equally vital is psychological nourishment.

“Unconditional positive regard is the most important vitamin and mineral a parent can give to the child,” he said, urging parents to embrace their children without judgment.

Speaking on the intersection of AI and journalism, the minister noted its utility in quickly translating datasets like the National Family Health Survey into Tamil charts or captioning media for inclusivity.

However, he issued strict ethical guidelines, cautioning reporters against letting machines generate the face of a child to illustrate stories on disability. He warned that AI medical suggestions are merely hypotheses for paediatricians, not confirmed facts for print, and reminded reporters to verify data against official sources because a “machine’s confidence is not evidence”.

Stressing that public trust cannot be restored by a correction, he urged journalists to disclose AI usage and reminded them that no machine can replace the human empathy required to notice a distressed child at an Anganwadi centre.

Vandalur Zoo closes due to bird flu spread threat

CHENNAI

THE Arignar Anna Zoological Park, familiarly known as the Vandalur Zoo, here, has appealed to the public to abstain from visiting the zoological park for two days from Thursday as a precaution following the confirmation of H5N1 Avian Influenza infection in water birds by the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal.

The Vandalur Zoo will not allow visitors on October 22 and 23 as a precautionary measure following confirmation of H5N1 Avian Influenza infection in water birds by NIHSAD on October 21, 2026, the zoo authorities said.

Immediate preventive measures, including disinfection, sanitisation, and strict implementation of biosecurity protocols, have been undertaken in accordance with the Government of India’s guidelines.

“No further bird mortality or sickness has been reported since October 9, 2026. This temporary measure is intended to facilitate intensive sanitisation, strengthen biosecurity measures, and ensure close monitoring of the situation. The public is requested to cooperate with the precautionary measures,” a statement from the Director of AAZP said on Wednesday.

According to sources, seven water birds died in the zoo’s largest enclosure - the Vedanthangal birds enclosure - between October 3 and October 9. The fatalities included four painted storks, one grey pelican, one grey heron, and one oriental darter.

The National Institute of High Security Animal Dis-



Govt extends tenure of local bodies Special Officers by six months

CHENNAI

THE Tamil Nadu government has extended the tenure of Special Officers administering the local bodies by six months, pushing the timeline until April 19, 2027.

The government issued orders stating that the rural local body elections cannot be held immediately due to ongoing administrative restructuring, including the merger of 46 rural local bodies with urban local bodies and pending ward delimitation.

In its order, the government said the extension applied to all 37 districts.

It extended the tenure of Special Officers in 28 districts (where elected terms ended previously) and appointed new Special Officers in the remaining 9 districts where the elected terms officially expired on October 19, 2026.

As a result, instead of elected politicians, these government-appointed officials - such as block development officers and project directors - will continue to oversee civic services like drinking water, street lighting, and infrastructure maintenance.

A senior official on Thursday indicated that owing to pending reorganisation, upcoming winter monsoon duties, and the census, local body elections will likely not take place until after March 2027.

HEAVY RAINS BATTER PONDY; SCHOOLS SHUT, LOW-LYING AREAS INUNDATED

PUDUCHERRY: Puducherry and its suburbs were pounded by heavy rains overnight, inundating roads in several areas. The heavy downpour disrupted traffic and affected daily wage earners.

In view of the rains, Minister A Namassivayam announced a holiday on Thursday for all government-run and privately-managed schools in Puducherry and Karaikal regions.

Puducherry recorded 7 cm rainfall during the last 24 hours ending 8.30 a.m. on Thursday, official sources said. A control room has been set up to handle emergency calls for help. Official sources told PTI that revenue and other departments are fully geared up to handle any exigencies. On Wednesday, Pro Tem Speaker A Anbalagan presented a petition to Chief Minister N Rangasamy seeking steps to drain out water from low-lying areas.

Pralhad Joshi launches Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 portal

NEW DELHI

UNION Minister for Education Pralhad Joshi on Thursday launched the registration portal for the fifth edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS 5.0) scheduled to be held from November 28 to December 12.

The Ministry has invited eligible applicants from Tamil Nadu, especially youth and students, to register for Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 and participate in this celebration of India’s cultural oneness, linguistic diversity and shared civilisational inheritance, said an official statement.

Interested applicants may register through the official portal at <https://kashitamil.iitm.ac.in/>, hosted by IIT Madras with effect from October 22, it said. The Portal will accept applications till November 13 under seven categories: Students, teachers, writers and media professionals, agriculture and allied sectors, professionals and artisans, women and spiritual leaders. The programme will celebrate, reaffirm and strengthen the age-old civilizational bonds between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, the two ancient seats of learning, strengthening the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, said an official statement. Joshi said that since ancient times, the country has had a strong cultural unity. He noted that many people visited Kashi and Rameswaram as part of their religious traditions, reflecting the deep-rooted cultural bonds between the northern and southern parts of India.

He stated that the programme would bring together students, teachers, writers, professionals, agriculturalists, artists, women and spiritual scholars. He also highlighted that educational outreach initiatives would be carried out in higher education institutions to familiarise students with the objectives of Kashi Tamil Sangamam. The Union Minister reiterated that Kashi



YouTuber arrested for financial influencer Harish’s suicide



CHENNAI

YOUTUBER Jason Samuel Vijayakumar was arrested on Thursday for allegedly abetting the suicide of 27-year-old financial content creator V Harish, police said on Thursday. After the death by suicide of 27-year-old Harish, following alleged cyberbullying over his investment advisory credentials by Vijayakumar, a case was registered by police.

During the course of the investigation, based on witness statements and documentary evidence, it was established that 30-year-old Vijayakumar was allegedly responsible for Harish’s suicide, police said. Consequently, Vijayakumar, son of George Lambert, was arrested and produced before a Judicial Magistrate Court, and he was remanded to judicial custody. Harish was running a YouTube channel under the name “Finance with Harish” through which he provided

Insta reels fuel real violence among youth: AIADMK

MADURAI

A dangerous trend of posting videos with weapons has emerged among the youth, glorifying rowdiness and declaring themselves as ‘dons’ on Instagram, former AIADMK Minister R B Udhayakumar said on Thursday.

In a video statement, the AIADMK leader said the intense competition for online popularity has also led to cyberbullying.

“In an environment of intense competition, driven by severe, unrestrained, and uncivilised criticisms, how many ‘Insta celebrities’ have ended up taking their own lives today,” Udhayakumar asked.

Referring to recent revenge killings driven by online provocations, the AIADMK leader cited the murder of 26-year-old ‘Sullan’ Madhan in Sivaganga district, an incident fueled by Instagram reels.

He also pointed to the financial advice and had approximately 13 lakh (1.3 million) followers.

Against this background, Vijayakumar allegedly attempted to “extort” Harish and is said to have posted defamatory videos about him on social media platforms, the police said.

Harish’s social media account was blocked as a result of these defamatory allegations. Due to mental distress, Harish died by suicide by hanging at his residence on October 20, 2026. Based on a complaint lodged by Harish’s father, Vinayagam, a case was registered at the suburban Kanathur Police Station. Vijayakumar had denied the cyberbullying

killing of 24-year-old Surya in Madurai following an online dispute over the title of local ‘Don’ and the murders of Ashok Kumar and Sriram in Coimbatore, which stemmed from rival factions brandishing weapons and issuing threats on social media.

Udhayakumar said instead of bringing order to the chaos, the ruling TVK government is encouraging this “reel culture.”

“They are unable to maintain law and order. Through Instagram, they are diverting the people’s attention. Insta reels are not just for the youth. It is an obsession for the ruling TVK government too,” he added.

Udhayakumar charged that the administration has offered this dangerous digital obsession as a “fatal gift” to the youth, allowing what begins as online entertainment to devolve into real-world bloodshed.

allegations in a social media statement, asserting that he was acting in the consumer interest by highlighting that Harish lacked a SEBI-registered Investment Advisor (RIA) license.