

# NRCB opens gene bank to save rare banana varieties

Rewards for farmers who come forward to preserve unique varieties

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Tiruchy

IN an effort to support the banana genetic conservation and prevent the loss of valuable genetic resources, the National Research Centre for Banana (NRCB), Tiruchy, launched the 'Banana Field Gene Bank' project on Monday.

Farmers who grow rare banana varieties can register with the NRCB, where scientists will preserve and develop it for multiplication. "This is the first field gene bank for banana in the country," said Dr Trilochan Mohapatra, chairman of the protection of plant varieties and farmers' rights authority, launched the project in Tiruchy on Monday | EXPRESS



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for conserving plant genetic resources, he said adding that cash prize of ₹10 lakh will be awarded for farmers community and ₹1.5 lakh for individual farmers.

They also receive up to ₹ 15 lakh over three years for conservation efforts.

Dr Dinesh Kumar Agarwal, Registrar General of PPVFRA, New Delhi, said the PPV&FRA Act supports not only the registration of new varieties but also traditional farmer's varieties for future breeding multiplication.

"So far, over 10,500 varieties have been registered out of 21,500 applications across the country, of which nearly 50 per cent is owned and preserved by farmers. As the registration

process is free for farmers, the country has achieved significant progress in conserving efforts in recent years," he added.

Dr R Selvarajan, Director of NRCB-Tiruchy said 11 banana varieties have been registered so far, including traditional varieties such as Karu Vaalai (Manoranjitham) from Kolli Hills and Chingan from Nagercoil, along with other five varieties developed by NRCB.

Over 120 farmers, entrepreneurs participated in a biodiversity fair cum farmer's meet held followed by the launch of field gene bank project, where they imparted awareness on Intellectual Property, Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FRA).

# LPG auto drivers' income dips by 50%

VIVANESH PARTHIBAN @ Tiruchy

LPG autorickshaw drivers in Tiruchy have said that they are seeing a 40-50% decline in daily earnings over the past one month, owing to the war in the Gulf and the resultant disruption in fuel supply. This, they added, has been compounded by the annual summer slowdown in passenger demand due to school and college holidays. While some of them are switching to CNG mode, those using hybrid autos are relatively less affected.

V Marimuthu, an autorickshaw driver operating near the Tiruchy railway station, said, "I used to earn around ₹1,000-₹1,200 a day. Now it has come down to ₹500-₹600. I cannot increase fare because many drivers are switching to diesel, CNG, or hybrid vehicles, making competition tougher."

Another driver, T Natarajan from Palakarai, has already shifted strategies to cope with the situation. "I converted my LPG auto to CNG, as I feel this issue may not be resolved soon.



Autos waiting in a long queue at an LPG station in Tiruchy | MK ASHOK KUMAR

I own three autos, but I have stopped leasing out the LPG vehicle as it is no longer profitable after paying the driver. Managing with the remaining vehicles has become difficult," he said.

Natarajan pointed at the steep rise in LPG prices as a major concern. "Two months ago, LPG cost around ₹65 a litre. Now, government-run filling stations such as those operated by Indian Oil Corporation charge about ₹85, while private stations charge nearly ₹100. If

government stations run out of stock, which happens frequently, we are forced to rely on private outlets. That is unaffordable."

According to L Palaniappan, treasurer of CITU auto drivers' union, the shortage has severely disrupted daily operations. "Out of seven LPG filling stations within the city limits and three in suburban areas, only two in the city are functioning on alternate days. Often, fuel supplies arrive late at night, forcing drivers to queue up at

11 pm or even 1 am. More than 15 drivers from the association have switched to CNG mode, while those using hybrid autos are relatively less affected."

The situation has been worsened by the closure of multiple private LPG outlets, impacting an estimated 1,000 autorickshaw drivers out of 5,000 registered drivers in the city, according to the CITU association.

"Many now spend one to two hours waiting in queues for refuelling in suburban areas every alternate day, significantly reducing their working time," Palaniappan added.

Offering hope to the drivers, A Saravanan, a dealer associated with Bharat Petroleum, said the supply situation has recently shown signs of improvement. "Over the past 10 days, supply has stabilised to some extent, though there have been disruptions again in the last two days. The situation is better than before, and we expect it to normalise soon," he said. However, he acknowledged the financial strain on drivers.

# Old woman murdered, gold jewels missing

KARUR: A 79-year-old woman was found murdered near Uppidamangalam in Karur district on Monday. Police identified her as Thayar Ammal of Salaipatti village. She was living alone since her husband had died some years ago and her children had got married and shifted. When she did not come out of her house on Monday morning, one of her relatives living nearby went to check. She found Thayar Ammal dead with her limbs tied and a towel stuffed into her mouth. Police rushed the spot and conducted an inquiry. Her gold earrings and nose stud were missing, and police suspect it to be a case of murder for gain. Police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem.

# Tiruchy records 11.6% increase in voter turnout

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Tiruchy

POLLING in Tiruchy district saw a sharp surge in the Assembly election, with 1.14 lakh more voters exercising their franchise when compared to 2021, pushing the turnout up by 11.63 percentage points to 85.42%. The rise marks a clear shift from 2021, when overall turnout stood at 73.79%, according to data.

Of the 21.47 lakh electors, 18.33 lakh voted across 2,787 polling stations in nine constituencies. Women outnumbered men, recording 86.27% compared to 84.52%, while third gender turnout stood at 65.48%.

Constituency-wise, all nine segments crossed 80% polling,

underlining a broad-based rise in participation. Manapparai recorded the highest turnout at 88.81%, followed by Srirangam (87.90%) and Manachanallur (87.67%). Thiruverumbur, despite being the lowest, still registered 81.20% polling. In absolute numbers, Srirangam saw the highest votes polled at 2,52,304, while Tiruchy (West) recorded 1,94,284 votes. Officials attributed the increase to the SIR of electoral rolls, during which 3.31 lakh names were removed and later rationalised to 2.42 lakh after re-verification, improving the accuracy of rolls. They also pointed to a multi-cornered contest and heightened interest among first-time voters.



# 'Postpone CWMA meet till new govt assumes office'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Thanjavur

THE Tamil Nadu Farmers Association (AIFS) has demanded the postponement of the meeting of Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) scheduled for April 29.

The association's state general secretary, Sami Natarajan, in a statement said of the four states which use Cauvery water, the election process is yet to fully end in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry. The results are expected only on May 4. In the backdrop of Karnataka repeatedly demanding CWMA to give nod for building a new dam at Mekedatu, it would not be appropriate to convene the meeting of the authority in the absence of popular government in three states, Natarajan said.

Though the only higher officials of the states concerned are members of the authority, they could not get instructions from their governments. Hence the meeting need to be postponed, he added. Meanwhile, PR Pandian, general secretary of Tamil Nadu Cauvery Farmers Association urged the CWMA to order Karnataka to ensure release of Cauvery water as per the monthly scheduled arrived at by the tribunal and the Supreme Court. Citing low storage in Mettur reservoir, Pandian urged the authority to instruct the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee to implement the authority orders by releasing the water from Karnataka.



Since Monday afternoon, volunteers have been assisting in chopping vegetables and preparing the grand feast | K K SUNDAR



# A feast fit for the gods: Madurai set for thirukalyanam, ceremonial meal today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Madurai

A spirit of festivity pervades Madurai as several thousands converge on the Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple for the Thirukalyanam, the main event of the annual Chithirai festival, scheduled to take place on Tuesday. Temple priests would perform wedding rituals for the deities of Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Sundareswarar between 8.35 am and 8.59 am at the Thirukalyana Mandapam. Special arrangements, including LED displays, have been made across the Chithirai and Masi streets for people to witness the event live.

The Pazhamudhircholai Thiruvalluvar Murugan Bhakta Sabha Trust will be organising a grand wedding feast on April 27 and 28 at Sethupathi Higher Secondary School for the 27th year. According to the organisers, the festivities begin with the 'Maapillai Virundhu' (feast for the bridegroom) at 5 pm on April 27, followed by food distribution from 7 am on April 28.

Pandals have been erected on 12,000 sq. ft. area to accommodate the guests. The menu of the feast includes wheat sweet, kalkandu rice, ven pongal, sambar rice, vegetable pulao, tomato rice, potato curry, vadai and pickles. Volunteers have been assisting in cutting veg-

etables since 1 pm on April 27. Organisers said vegetables were sourced from Paravai and Matuthavani markets, while cooking gas is supplied by traders' associations. Ahead of the Chithirai festival of Lord Kallazhagar, the ceremonial vahanas dispatched to Madurai from Alagarkoil on Monday, in preparation for the deity's procession later this week. The procession of presiding deity of Kallazhagar will begin in a golden palanquin from the Alagar hills on April 29. After reaching, Tallakulam Perumal temple, Kallazhagar will be mounted on the famous golden horse vahanam for the ritual of Vaigai river entry.

# Two-wheelers on platforms irk commuters at Nagai bus stand

MOHAMED SALAHUDEEN B @ Nagapattinam

COMMUTERS at Perarignar Anna Bus Stand in Velipalayam have raised concern over the increasing number of two-wheelers being parked on platforms, alleging that it is causing inconvenience to passengers and disrupting movement within the premises.

"We are at risk as two-wheelers move freely inside the bus stand. Bikes parked on the platforms restrict our movement, and carrying luggage through the crowded space becomes difficult," said Vinoth V, a commuter.

K Venkatesan, town secretary of CPM, said unauthorised parking on the platforms reduces waiting space for passengers and creates difficulties for the elderly, women, and those carrying luggage.

Though the bus stand has a designated parking area for two-wheelers, commuters said visitors to shops inside the premises continue to park vehicles on the platforms. "People visiting tea stalls and restaurants inside the bus stand park their bikes right in front of the shops, obstructing passengers. Officials should regulate two-



People visiting tea stalls and restaurants inside the bus stand park their bikes right in front of the shops, obstructing passengers | EXPRESS

wheeler movement inside the bus stand," said Aravind Kumar of Nagai District Consumer Protection and Passenger Association.

The decades-old bus stand is one of the district's major transit hubs and witnesses heavy passenger traffic throughout the year. Its connectivity to major religious destinations makes it an important transit point for pilgrims and travellers visiting the district.

The facility serves people

travelling to the Nagore Dargah, the Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health, and the Sikkal Singaravelar Temple. During festival seasons and special occasions, the bus stand witnesses a sharp rise in footfall, with thousands of devotees and visitors using the facility every day.

Responding to the complaints, Nagapattinam Municipality Commissioner Leena Simon said on Sunday that the issue would be regulated.

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| <p><b>Change of Name</b><br/>I, P.GUNASEKAR (Given Name), Aadhaar No.7650 9467 8774 S/o. Packrisamy (Surname) Aachiponnu (Mother name) Resident of No.1/106, Kovilpathu, Maruthuvanchery (Post), Nannilam (Taluk), Thiruvavur (District), State of Tamilnadu - 609503 shall hence forth be known as P.GUNASEKARAN (Given Name) Packrisamy (Surname) Aachiponnu (Mother name). P.GUNASEKAR Nannilam, 18.04.2026.</p> | <p><b>MISSING</b><br/>I have missed my Grand Mother Apoorvam Tiruvurur Sub Registered this Original document No.2246/2000 at EC Copy going to Collector Office ESevai Center. The document went missing while it was kept in the Vilamai High ways. Those who same this our requested to inform us below address.<br/><b>K.KARTHIKEYAN,</b> 285, Thenkarai, Vadakarai, Tiruvavur-610103<br/><b>9443354003</b></p> | <p><b>Change of Name</b><br/>I, SANKAR, (Surname) H/o. Senbagavalli (Given name) (Passport No. N5737204) resident of 183B, Natarajapillai Street, Mannargudi, Thiruvavur District, -614001, Tamil Nadu, Shall hence forth be known as Sankarapandian, (Surname) Senbagavalli (Given name). SANKAR Mannargudi, 27.04.2026.</p> |
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**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, SP-24, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai- 600058

**PUBLIC NOTICE-TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET**  
(See proviso to Rule 8(6))  
(Notice for sale of immovable asset(s))

E-Auction Sale Notice for the sale of immovable asset(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

This notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited will be sold on 'As is where is', 'As is what is' and 'Whatever there is' as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

| Sr. No. | Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.  | Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any  | Amount Outstanding                     | Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit | Date and Time of Property Inspection   | Date & Time of E-Auction               |
|---------|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| (A)     | (B)  | (C)  | (D)                                    | (E)                                 | (F)                                    | (G)                                    |
| 1.      | ASF Marine Represented by its Proprietor Srinivasan Ravichandran No 18D, South Street Kidaragondan Thiruvavur-610003 (Borrower) Srinivasan Ravichandran, Ravichandran M, Uma Rani Ravichandran (Guarantor) Loan Account No. 052605015557 | S. No. 201/1A, 201/1B1, Nirthanmangalam Village, Vadavur Panchayat, Nagapattinam- 611102. Residential House/Land Area 13868.60 Sq.ft., Built-up area 1036 Sq.ft. | Rs. 30,13,429/- as on (April 02, 2026) | Rs. 26,30,000/-<br>Rs. 2,63,000/-   | May 07, 2026 From 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM | May 20, 2026 from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM |

The online auction will be conducted on the website (URL Link-assets.matexauctions.com), of our auction agency M/s. Matex Technologies Private Limited. The Mortgagee/ Notices are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest by May 19, 2026 before 05:00 PM else the secured asset(s) will be sold as per schedule. The prospective bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Bank Limited, SP-24, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai- 600058 on or before May 19, 2026 before 03:00 PM. Thereafter, they have to submit their offer through the website mentioned above on or before May 19, 2026 before 05:00 PM along with the scanned image of the Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. In case the prospective bidder(s) is/ are unable to submit his/ her/ their offer through the website, then the signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank Limited, SP-24, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai- 600058 on or before May 19, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Nagapattinam. For any further clarifications in terms of inspection, Terms and Conditions of the E-Auction or submission of tenders, contact ICICI Bank Employee Phone No. 7550214251. Please note that Marketing agencies 1. M/s. Auction Bazaar, 2. Matex Net Pvt Ltd., have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property. The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed Terms and Conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s  
Date: April 28, 2026  
Place: Nagapattinam & Thiruvavur  
Authorized Officer, ICICI Bank Limited