

IT'S TWO DOWN FOR DMK

After Senthil Balaji's Disqualification, Party Hits Another Snag As Minister K Ponnudiy Faces Sentencing On Corruption Charges. Will It Hurt DMK's Electoral Chances?

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For years, the DMK's standard response to corruption charges was that none of its leaders has ever been convicted, unlike the AIADMK. But that defence would no longer hold good as its Villupuram strongman K Ponnudiy might become the first serving DMK minister to be sentenced for corruption.

Evidently, it's a huge setback for the 73-year-old professor-turned-politician. But for the DMK, it's a double whammy coming at a crucial time when the party is gearing up for a national role in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Only six months ago, yet another influential minister of the ruling party, V Senthil Balaji, was arrested for corruption. Both are not only ministers, who are influential among people as well as the party, but are also leaders with deep pockets.

The opinion about whether the conviction will affect the electoral prospects of the DMK is divided. For the Tamil Nadu voter, neither corruption charges against top politicians nor their electoral victories is new.

"It will not affect the DMK's victory in any way. People see our CM M K Stalin as a clean leader. Only that will count in the elections," said DMK organising secretary R S Bharathi. Political analysts too agree. They point out that corruption was never a factor considered strong enough to change the outcome of elections in Tamil Nadu. "But it will not impact the DMK's electoral prospects. People voted to power late chief minister J Jayalalithaa despite the corruption cases she faced," notes political commentator Tharasu Shyam.

It has, however, dealt a blow to Ponnudiy's political career, dented the DMK's image and given fodder for the BJP's campaigns against the DMK.

BJP was, in fact, quick to pounce on the opportunity to attack DMK, though legal experts say Ponnudiy still has the option to go in appeal to the Supreme Court against the conviction.

"The DMK which was built on a false ideological base, functioning with corruption as its primary objective is crashing down like a house of cards," Annamalai said. Other BJP leaders in the state from H Raja to Narayanan Thirupathy too mounted attacks on the DMK, painting the ruling party as a corrupt political force.

BJP men said corruption would turn out to be a key poll plank employed by the saffron party in the 2024 elections and the conviction of Ponnudiy would be the primary campaign material in Villupuram and the northern districts. The conviction

would have a ripple effect across the state, say saffron party functionaries. "Stalin cannot take a moral high ground in the national political scene now. Also, corruption cases on DMK leaders would ensure that he focusses his energy more on Tamil Nadu," said a senior BJP functionary.

The BJP is likely to use the conviction to counter the DMK's charges that the ED and I-T raids were an act of political vendetta. In the perception war, it would be tough to defend a senior leader found guilty of corruption by the high court.

Political pundits say that the BJP, in fact, would set a narrative that the INDIA front was made of corrupt parties and use Ponnudiy's conviction to garner votes across the country, like the way they used the Sanatana Dharma row to mobilise support in northern states, though it did not gain much traction in Tamil Nadu.

The AIADMK, the principal opposition party, has, however, maintained a stoic silence over the conviction of Ponnudiy. Perhaps because three of its former ministers

such as T M Selvaganapathy (his conviction was later overturned), now in the DMK, K Ponnusamy and R Indira Kumari had faced conviction in corruption cases.

When the Enforcement Directorate conducted searches in the houses of Ponnudiy a few months ago, chief minister M K Stalin hit out saying it was an act of political vendetta by the BJP. Now, though, the party has been caught in an uncomfortable situation as the blow has come from the Madras high court.

In fact, this is not the first time

that Ponnudiy has been caught on the wrong side of the law. A triple MA and doctorate holder, Ponnudiy born Deivasigamani to teacher parents in T Edayar village in Villupuram district, was attracted towards Dravidian ideals while a college student. After serving as a college professor for more than a decade, he joined the DMK's youth wing and gradually rose up the ranks after his acquaintance with then Villupuram DMK district secretary Ginge Ramachandran. The 1989 assembly election was his maiden poll, which he won. In 1991, he lost the election like many DMK candidates, but bounced back in the 1996 assembly poll. Late DMK president M Karunanidhi gave him a cabinet berth and made him the district secretary.

It was during his stint as transport minister, during 1996-2001 that he faced the first disproportionate assets case. Later, in 2004 he faced a land grab case. The five-time MLA managed to get acquitted or discharged in both the cases. The long arm of the law, however, caught up with him after 12 years in the present case filed by the DVAC in 2011 under the J Jayalalithaa government.

CHARGES, VERDICTS

> FORMER CM J JAYALALITHAA | Convicted by a special court hearing the disproportionate assets case for four years of simple imprisonment under Prevention of Corruption Act in 2014. A month later, SC suspended sentence and in 2015, Jayalalithaa was acquitted. In 2017, SC said charges against Jayalalithaa stood abated due to her death

> T M SELVAGANAPATHY | Served in the AIADMK government led by Jayalalithaa between 1991 and 1996, when he was charged with swindling public funds and convicted in 2014 in the 'cremation shed scam'. Conviction was overturned by Madras HC this year.

> FORMER AIADMK MINISTER R INDIRA KUMARI | She and her husband A Babu were convicted and sentenced by a special court to five-year rigorous imprisonment in 2021 on charges of corruption during her stint as social welfare minister.

> FORMER AIADMK MINISTER K PONNUSAMY | Ponnusamy, who served as education minister between 1993 and 1996 in J Jayalalithaa's cabinet was convicted by a trial court in 2000 for amassing wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income and was sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment.

POLITICAL PUNDITS SAY THE BJP WILL SET A NARRATIVE THAT PARTIES IN THE INDIA FRONT ARE CORRUPT PARTIES AND USE PONNUDIY'S CONVICTION TO GARNER VOTES

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A DIFFERENT BEAT: Scenes from last year's Margazhiyil Makkalisai

Parai, oppari take centre stage at this 'alt' Margazhi fest

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For three years now, the tunes, parai beats, opparis, and voices belonging to those from marginalised and oppressed communities have been receiving a stage through director Pa Ranjith's Margazhiyil Makkalisai. This year too, the event, organised by Neelam, Ranjith's organisation for the arts, will take place on December 28, 29 and 30 at Santhome High School in Mylapore.

The event aims to provide a platform to musicians who have been denied the opportunity to express themselves. Celebrating art, culture and the story of the people, Margazhiyil Makkalisai will also feature rapper Arivu and The Amabassa.

"Every year, we invite artists from across India to perform. This time we have musicians from tribal and marginalised communities performing folk songs, parai, gaana, oppari and folklore through music, as well as hip hop singers singing on resistance and revolution," says one of the organisers.

Margazhiyil Makkalisai has also been honouring artists who have been vocal about the issues marginalised communities face through their Makkalisai Mamani Award and a prize money of ₹50,000. The recipients of last year's awards are Punniyar for gaana, Velu Aasan for parai, and Ayyavu for nadaswaram. "This year has been incredible for the band and me. After our shows in India, we toured the US and are now back to give 2023 a meaningful ending by performing at this festival," says Arivu.

"In recent times, independent music is doing well because of the abundance of opportunities. People are beginning to recognise the art form and indie artists are slowly moving to the mainstream industry. But what never gets highlighted is 'people's music'; music on politics, stories of tribes and community and their issues. The music scene needs to be democratised and such music needs to get its share of attention too."

J K Jayakumar, who will be performing an oppari piece with his band Pesu, says, "Oppari is a part of nature, from a mother's lullaby to a baby's cry. However, it's been stigmatised as it is associated only with death. Having practised and performed oppari for more than 25 years, I want to educate people on the art form." He adds that 36 members will be performing several popular folk pieces with parai and other instruments for the festival. The Margazhiyil Makkalisai is from 3pm to 9pm. Entry is free.



IIM Trichy conducts convention on strategic management

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Trichy: The Indian Institute of Management-Trichy (IIM-T) conducted a convention of strategic management forum on Tuesday, aiming to provide a platform for experts and professionals to share insights on research and their experience related to strategic thinking, planning and execution.

Chief guest Rajkumar Upadhyay, CEO of C-DOT, asked the participants to note how the government makes a strategy to strengthen the nation economically and ensure people's well-being. Sound corporate strategy and impeccable leadership skills are necessary for a business to flourish, he said.

Arunaditya Sahay, secretary general of the Strategic Management Forum emphasised that without strategic acumen and understanding of the organisation, any business decision is incomplete, and an excellent strategic move acts as a catalyst for the success of a business organisation.

Umakant Dash, director of Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA), talked about the impact policies made internationally and nationally on the social, economic, and digital spaces. He asked to focus on sustainability and



EXPERTS' TALK: The 25th annual convention of Strategic Management Forum inaugurated at IIM Trichy on Wednesday

shifting consumer choices to thrive in the new cultural and economic environment. He emphasised the need to leverage technology to embrace technological disruptions led by AI, blockchain.

Charles Dhanaraj from Georgia University, USA, in his keynote address, said in this VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world, the interconnectedness of ecosystems and strategy is important. Director of IIM-T Pawan Kumar Singh was present.

Police arrest 3, seize 1 tonne of banned tobacco items

Thanjavar: A special police team arrested three men and recovered one tonne of tobacco products from a godown in Thanjavar on Wednesday.

According to police, they had received information that a large volume of banned tobacco products was being stocked at a godown at Rethinasamy Nagar in Thanjavar. Following that, the team monitored the area for the past few days.

The team intercepted a car that arrived at the godown on Wednesday and searched it. Police found banned tobacco items inside the car. Subsequently, the team searched the godown, where it found a large volume of tobacco products kept in gunny bags.

During the operation, police arrested Gowtham, 30, Veeramani, 40, of Thanjavar and Dinesh, 30, of Mannargudi. Police also seized a car and a two-wheeler.

Betel leaf farmers await long-promised centre

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“We are facing losses due to diseases and lack of awareness about technology. Despite the high demand for betel in many countries, we are unaware of the export process”

P SUGUMARAN
A farmer from Thiruvaiyaru

Thanjavar: It has been over three years since the government announced a special centre for betel vine in Kumbakonam, with an estimated cost of ₹3 crore. Expressing dissatisfaction over the prolonged delay of the project, betel leaf farmers have urged the government to expedite setting up of the centre.

Kumbakonam, renowned not only for its pilgrimage centres but for its betel leaves also, produces some of the best leaves in terms of freshness and quality, according to farmers and traders.

Farmers from Kumbakonam, Avoor, Thakkal, Rajagiri, Aaduthurai, Govindapuram, Thiruponthiruthi, Nadukavery, Manathidal, Senthilai, Varagur, and Thirukattupalli cultivate betel

Man says wife, lover sold kid

Perambalur: A 30-year-old man has complained to the Perambalur district collector to rescue his one-month-old baby allegedly sold by his wife and her paramour.

In a petition on Tuesday, R Saravanan, a daily wage earner of Athiyur village, said he and Divya, 26, have two daughters and two sons. A year ago, she ran away with her lover Dhinesh following an illicit affair. Saravanan said he traced them to a nearby village and brought his wife back to his house recently. However, she refused to live with him and left with their baby boy. He alleged that Divya and Dhinesh sold the baby to someone in V Kalathur in Perambalur for Rs 10,000.

His two daughters and a son were under the care of his mother. On December 12, Dhinesh came to his mother's house and kidnapped a daughter and a son as well. He urged the collector to direct the police to trace and rescue the children. **TNN**

ICICI Home Finance
Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India
Branch Office: 2nd Floor, No: 75 D, Laxmi Vaults, Plot - A-8, Salai Road, Thillai Nagar, Tiruchirappalli- 620018
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization 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.
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 **Symbolic Possession** of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd., 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/ Legal Heirs. 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 Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Natarajan Ramalingam (Borrower) N Venkatesh (Co-Borrower) N Kalpana (Co-Borrower) Loan Account No. LHLVL00001302467 & LHLVL00001302473 & LHLVL00001302466	Land And Building In Plot No. 108 Situated At Abdul Whab Nagar R Venkataraman Complex Melaveli Thottam Village Thanjavar Taluk Thanjavar Dt On Land Comprised of Old Survey No. 147/3 And New Survey No. 147/3a1a District Karunthattangudi District of Thanjavar Thanjavar-6209303	Rs. 66,41,669/- December 15, 2023	Rs. 70,00,424/- Rs. 7,00,050/-	January 15, 2024 11:00 AM- 03:00 PM	January 25, 2024 02:00 PM- 03:00 PM
2.	G Menaha (Borrower) Gunasekaran D (Co-Borrower) Loan Account No. NHTNJ00001260177 & NHTNJ00001260178	Sy. No. 151/2 Door No. 432/1 Keezha Vandayar Street Mela Oolur West Village Orathanadu Taluk Thanjavar- 613001	Rs. 51,25,814/- December 15, 2023	Rs. 44,86,038/- Rs. 4,48,610/-	January 15, 2024 11:00 AM- 03:00 PM	January 25, 2024 02:00 PM- 03:00 PM

The online auction will be conducted on website ([URL Link- https://www.auctionlink.com](https://www.auctionlink.com)) of our auction agency **GlobeTech**. The Mortgagees/notice are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **January 24, 2024 before 05:00 PM** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Home Finance Company Limited, 2nd floor, No: 75 D, Laxmi Vaults, Plot - A-8, Salai Road, Thillai Nagar, Tiruchirappalli- 620018** on or before **January 24, 2024 before 04:00 PM**. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit signed copy of Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions form at **ICICI Home Finance Company Limited, 2nd floor, No: 75 D, Laxmi Vaults, Plot - A-8, Salai Road, Thillai Nagar, Tiruchirappalli - 620018** on or before **January 24, 2024 before 05:00 PM**. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favor of "**ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction**" payable at **Thanjavar**

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Home Finance Company Limited** on **9920807300** or our **Sales & Marketing Partner NexGen Solutions Private Limited**.

The Authorized 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 <https://www.icicifhc.com/>

Date : December 21, 2023
Place : Thanjavar

Authorized Officer
ICICI Home Finance Company Limited



IN THE NET

Oppn not allowed to raise voice in Parl: Trichy Siva

Chennai: DMK MP Trichy Siva on Wednesday said that the MPs of opposition parties are continuously not permitted to raise their voice in the Parliament. Speaking to reporters in Delhi, Siva said that they were in a "worse situation" where they cannot speak about the security lapses inside the Parliament. "Security breach! Incident could not be taken lightly as it could have turned into another 2001 Parliament attack incident," Sivasaid. He also questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for not giving a reply about the security breach incident inside the Parliament. **TNN**

15 chosen for zonal round after tough qualifying contest at NIT Trichy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The Speak for India Tamil Nadu edition, the largest debate competition organised by Federal Bank Hormis Memorial foundation in association with The Times of India that took place in NIT Trichy on Wednesday, selected 15 students for the zonal round. The event has received massive response from students across the state. So far, students from more than 400 colleges have participated and 111 students have been selected for the zonal round.

The 15 who were selected for the zonal round are S Krishnan, Dhanraj D, Divesh Iyyapan S, Peer Mohamed Ajas Y, Munavarah J, Sri Gayatri R K, Vishwas B, Sriarthi M, Baby Shalini M, Aruvi M, Shibi Hussain S, S Lakshmi Narayanan, Prabhu T, Dinesh Babu T, and S Akshaykumar.

"The programme was wonderfully conducted and managed. It was one of a kind and the debate was of topmost quality. The competition was tough and the topics given were interesting. Overall, it's the best experience I've had," said Divesh Iyyapan, a student of M Kumarasamy College of Engineering.

Another winner, Sri Gayatri R K, a student of Annamalai University said, "The experience was just great. Everything was perfect, from the setting of this whole event to management and the whole competition itself. I personally had a memorable experience."

Students of various streams such as law, arts and science, MBA, engineering, MBBS, mass communication, biotechnology, commerce, and polytechnics participated in the qualifying rounds with almost all of them finding the contest a platform for all irrespective of their academic orientation.

MOVING FORWARD: Winners of The Speak for India competition held at NIT Trichy on Wednesday. They will participate next in the zonal round

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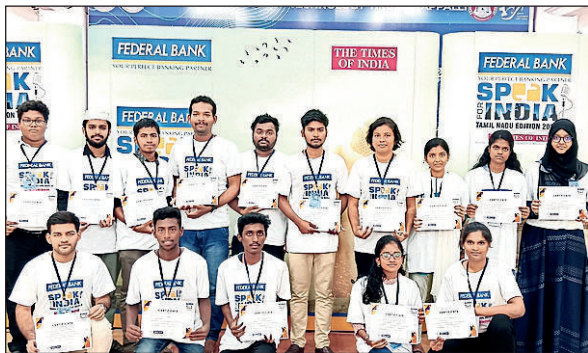
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Speak for India gives college students the platform to explore their constructive thinking, insights and perspective on contemporary topics. Participants can choose between Tamil or English as their preferred language for the debate. The winner gets a cash prize of ₹2.5 lakh and the runner-up gets ₹1.5 lakh. The six finalists stand to win ₹35,000 each.

The district competition will take place at Guru Nanak College in Chennai on December 21. Spot registration is open.

To participate in the upcoming online district events, scan the QR code and register.