



Are crèches in office a reality?

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Sensex dips with global crash

SIDHARTH YADAV

Chennai: The Sensex went into a tailspin on February 6 plunging by 1,275 points and the NSE Nifty by 390 points leaving investors jittery.

However, the crash was seen as a temporary event that would not affect long term investors.

While most observers blamed it on fears that the US Federal Reserve might raise interest rates others linked it to some initiatives in the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on February 1.

Stock market analysts urged investors not to dump their shares to minimize their loss and suggested that investors look at long term plans.

"Investors should hold on to their stocks; they should not panic and sell-off. Even after today's crash, markets are down to where they were in December," Surya Bhatia, a financial planner, told The Economic Times.

Anand Kalyanaram, Chief Research Analyst, Business Line, said "There is a sell-off in global equities which is having

Sensex	February 5	February 6	February 7
Opening	34,718.85	33,753.78	34,563.30
Closing	34,757.16	33,482.81	34,082.71
Drop/Gain (Points)	485.61 (drop)	1,274.35 (drop)	599.9 (gain)

a rub-on effect on the domestic market."

The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) of the Wall Street took its steepest dip sinking by 1,175 points on February 5 sending ripples across the Japanese, the Australian and Indian markets, he added.

Harsha Subramanian, Executive Producer at Bloomberg said the US economy was growing faster than anticipated. This meant an interest rate hike was probable.

However, Business Line Deputy Editor K S Badrinarayanan believes the reintroduction of a 10 per cent tax on long term capital gains (LTCG) to close the widening fiscal deficit could be a reason.

"The investors are upset. They are hastily cashing in on the gains already made," he said.

Has the crash discouraged investors? "Domestic investors are not spooked at the moment, but they will be on the loo-

kout," said Prince Mathews Thomas, Corporate Bureau Chief, Moneycontrol. "If the plunge was closer to 5 per cent, it would have been a discouragement."

"Polls are due in five States this year, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost the Rajasthan by-elections in three constituencies earlier in January. If the BJP loses more that might put investors on a back foot," said Thomas.

However, some investors are seeing this as an opportunity to buy stake in larger stocks, now dwindling in value.

"Many buyers are asking which stocks to invest in. They are optimistic and might take the risk," said Badrinarayanan.

Foreign Institution Investment would not be affected. Most foreign buyers were long term investors, he added.

Subramanian concurred saying, "There is no immediate impact of the crash on the

FIIs. However, they could invest in an emerging market like India as interest rates shoot up in the US."

Suresh Babu M, Associate Professor at IIT Madras, said "On the macroeconomic front we don't need to worry much as Sensex is just one of the indicators."

"The Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subraminiim had already warned the retail investors that the present levels might not be sustainable and markets would go for a correction. Unless we get signals from the global market we would not recover," he added.

On February 7, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept the repo rate, the interest rate at which it lends to other banks, unchanged at six per cent for the third time in a row.

Many expected a rise to rein back inflation and adjust to the expected increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) announced on the Budget day.

"No one was expecting a rate cut. Markets were already factoring in a possible status quo. However, rise in the rates is due and it remains to be seen when it would happen," said Subramanian.

Dearth of doctors

VIGNESSH

Chennai: The absence of a forensic doctor at the Government Hospital at Chrompet here, is forcing doctors at the casualty department to conduct autopsies, leaving patients to wait.

Though the Tamil Nadu Government had scrapped the 24-hour shift for doctors a year ago, a doctor, who did not want to be named, said that eight doctors at the casualty department were working for 24 hours once a week.

"There will be only one doctor at casualty to attend to inpatients. Others will be either on leave or attending to outpatients. The doctor on duty will also have to conduct three post-mortem examinations, on an average every day. The number sometimes goes up to five or six," he said. "While we conduct post-mortems, which usually take at least half-an-hour, orthopaedicians or paediatricians attend to the inpatients. If they have other work, patients have to wait."

The doctor added that the government should appoint more doctors to the casualty department. "As this is a second-

dary care hospital, which does not have a college attached to it, forensic doctors cannot be employed here. But the government can increase the number of doctors and reduce our load," he said.

Two post-mortem assistants at the hospital, working day shifts, are also in charge of the mortuary. An assistant, who has been working for 30 years at the hospital, said that they would help the doctors in carrying out autopsy.

"As they [doctors] have little experience in conducting post-mortems, we would dissect the body. Then, no one will watch over the mortuary," he said. However, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the hospital rubbished the claims. She said that there would be no delay in providing treatment.

"We have doctors at full strength in all the departments. Sometimes the conduction of autopsies will be delayed due to delay in police requisition, which usually takes time," she said.

The CMO added that doctors on 24-hour shifts would be free to attend to patients after 5 p.m. as autopsies were not conducted beyond that time.



Pepsi and Coca Cola are back on the racks. | MARKETSMORNING.COM

Pepsi and Coke bubble in markets

SHUCHITA KUMAR

Chennai: A year after two traders' bodies, the Tamil Nadu Vanigar Sangangalin Peramaipu and the Tamil Nadu Traders Federation, had decided not to sell the products manufactured by MNC giants, Pepsi and Coca Cola are back on the racks in the provision stores.

"In accordance with the ban, I stopped keeping Pepsi and Coke in my shop. For two months I kept only Bovonto, a locally made soft drink; but now the increasing demand for Pepsi and Cola has compelled me to move back to these brands," said S. Venkatraman, the owner of Sri Vijayalakshmi Stores in Adyar.

The demand for a ban on products had come in January last year in the wake of Jallikattu protests on the Marina Beach in Chennai. The protestors had alleged that the companies were exploiting the state's water bodies to manufacture the drinks at a time when farmers were facing severe drought in the state.

Though the traders' federations had asked for a total boycott of these drinks, some shop keepers

fearing a decrease in the monthly income had not removed them from the racks.

"The demand for Pepsi and Coke was high and I would have lost the customers who would have come asking for them. Though I didn't participate in the ban I started procuring some local brands soon after. But their demand is not as high as the demand for the foreign brands," said M. Shivaswami, the owner of Siva Cool Bar in Indira Nagar.

There are some who believe in promoting indigenous brands and boycotting MNCs.

"We were with the federations and had boycotted the sale of these foreign brands which are unhealthy. Home-grown soft drinks approached us, and Bovonto even gave us a refrigerator facility. The sale was affected in the beginning but with time the customers have adjusted to the local brands," said the owner of Ganga Hot Chips.

The traders selling beverages in Indira Nagar claimed that they had taken part in the boycott back in 2017 but the high demand for Coke and Pepsi compelled them to abandon the local brands.

Govt extends date for 2-wheeler Scheme

Vehicles manufactured on or before January 1, 2018 come under the Plan

SHRUTI AGRAWAL

Chennai: The deadline for applying for the subsidy Rs 25,000 for buying scooters under the Amma Two-wheeler Scheme has been extended till February 10.

Mageswari RaviKumar, Deputy Commissioner for Education, said "The date has been extended so that more women can apply. Our aim is to empower working women. Ease of use is important. Hence, the vehicles are gearless/auto-gearless. One lakh women will be benefitted from this scheme."

The vehicles that were manufactured on or after January 1, 2018 can be purchased.

A government official from the Chennai Corporation said "Up till now, we have 2,101 applications. We are the Government's extended arm. Scrutinising, and analysing the forms is all we do."

The beneficiary can buy the vehicle from her own funds, or by getting loans from banks/ Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFs) governed by the rules of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

If the applicant wishes to buy the vehicle from her own funds, a Subsidy Claim Form is to be submitted for subsidy's release. Thereafter, it will be released directly to the applicant's bank account after the purchase of the

vehicle and submission of the proof of registration, adds Mageswari RaviKumar.

M. Raghu. Manager, Hero Honda, Adyar, said "Around 400 women have collected the brochures, and price list. The scheme covers vehicles with the maximum engine capacity of 125cc and those that are eligible to be registered under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. Three scooters-Pleasure, Maestro Edge, and Duet come under this."

The Government has taken a special initiative to provide a maximum subsidy of Rs. 25,000 or 50 per cent of the cost of the two-wheeler, whichever is less, under

the Amma scheme. The benefits of the scheme can be availed from Feb 24.

According to the Scheme, the annual income of the beneficiary should not exceed Rs. 2,50,000. Women residing in hilly regions; women heading households; unmarried women aged above 35 years; destitute or differently abled women; transgender; Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SCs/STs) would be given priority.

One condition that is to be fulfilled by beneficiaries is that the right to purchase the vehicle cannot be transferred to a male member, and the vehicle cannot be sold for a period of five years.

Eligibility Criteria

- Resident of Tamil Nadu
- Age- 18 to 40 years
- Annual income less than Rs. 2,50,000
- One woman per family to avail benefits
- Appeared for class eighth examination
- Possess a valid two-wheeler license
- Priority to be given to working women in remote areas, women-headed households, deserted women, destitute widows, SC/ST, transgender, unmarried women above 35

Eviction drive leaves city vendors helpless

SATENDRA SINGH

Chennai: The fifth day of eviction drive against encroachment on Ratan Bazaar Road, by Greater Chennai Corporation, saw an outburst from homeless street vendors, who were unwilling to leave the pavements as they did not have anywhere else to go.

Most of the street vendors were either fruit or vegetable sellers, who had come from different parts of Tamil Nadu for employment.

"We sell fruits and vegetable, and these officials are removing us from here, this is our only home and we do not have anywhere else to live," said P. Selvam, 40, who lives on the pavement with his wife and two children.

"The government does not care for poor people like us; they only care about rich people who evade taxes."

According to the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014, every zone should have a Town Vending Committee (TVC),

but as of now, Chennai still does not have any TVCs. Last year, the Chennai Corporation directed the zonal executive engineer of each of the 15 zones to identify the possi-

ble vending zones to accommodate the vendors.

"We have just finished the survey and taken the biometric data of all the street vendors," said R. La-



Street vendors being evicted at Ratan Bazaar.

| SATENDRA

litha, Deputy Commissioner. "All existing street vendors, identified in the survey, will be accommodated in the vending zones."

According to the 2014 act, the number of street vendors can only be up to 2.5 percent of the population of each zone.

"Now we are waiting for the local body elections and TVCs will be formed only after the elections are over," says Lalitha.

Condemning the anti-encroachment drive, C. Thiruvendtai, District Secretary of Centre of Indian Trade Unions, said he had filed a petition against the eviction drive.

"The government had earlier provided night shelter for the street vendors, but the shelters are too far that they cannot come and go every day." He said the people should not be evicted until the TVCs were formed and proper shelter for street vendors was provided.

Anxious parents join the rat race for school admissions

TANISHAA NADKAR

Chennai: Admissions are in full swing across the city with many parents hurrying to schools to ensure their child has a chance at quality education, but fierce competitiveness has turned the once straightforward process into a difficult race.

With schools such as Sishya already having closed their registrations for LKG for 2021, parents have now begun registering their unborn children by putting a question mark for the gender column.

"My daughter joined Sishya School in 2015 as we had gotten her registered way back in 2011. After that, it was a smooth process, the school took a small interview of sorts just to assess the parents' backgrounds and whether or not the child is responding to their surroundings," said Kanchana Krithivasan.

"We wanted her to study at Sishya as it is a reputed ICSE school and my husband is an alumnus."

Sishya is one of many schools which gives preference to children who are related to alumni such as

Parents are struggling to find schools which provide quality education without a hefty fee structure.

parents or a sibling.

"My daughter is joining LKG this year and we're hoping to send her to Sri Sankara, a CBSE school in Adyar, as my wife used to study there as well," said Srinivasan, another parent.

But it is not smooth sailing for everyone as parents are struggling

to find schools which provide quality education without a hefty fee structure. Many are finding it increasingly difficult to find such schools with seats still available.

S. Balakrishnan has applied to two schools for his daughter who will join LKG this year and is awaiting results, "If my child is going to

be spending half her day till age 15 in one place then it is important to be sure that she is getting the best education possible, no matter the cost."

"Besides, it becomes difficult to change schools when children are older," he said as he recalled the problems they had to face when his elder son, now 11, wanted to change schools after fourth standard as he did not like it.

Many schools have a fixed number of students for each class making it harder for students to transfer after kindergarten.

City based psychologist Anitha, who works at Institute of Mental Health said that getting their children admitted to a good school, and their education played a big role in parents' stress level.

"We recently saw a student exhibiting symptoms of a seizure but it turned out that it was due to the pressure and labelling in school coupled with a learning disorder. He had to be pulled out and the parents had the tough task of finding another school which would let him join midway," she said.

"Intense selectivity is especially

true for big private schools who have built up a brand. It is much easier to get seats in corporation schools but parents are hesitant to send their children there as their quality is questionable," she added.

As an ex-counsellor and teacher at Lalaji Omega International School, Anitha saw many cases of parents repeatedly visiting the school regarding admissions.

"There are quite a few choices available for LKG but it became nearly impossible to get admissions for students in higher classes," she said.

State unprepared for NEET

SUSMITHA SURESH

Chennai: With less than three months left for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), Government run coaching centres in the State are yet to receive textbooks and other aids to help students prepare for the exam.

"Without textbooks and guides we find it really hard to prepare at home," said a class XII student, "We have to solely depend on the classes."

"It's up to the Government," said M Rajendra, Headmaster of Government Higher Secondary School, MGR Nagar.

"We are doing all we can for the students, but if the Government doesn't provide us with the material, there's a limit to what we can do," he added.

A school official said that all 412 Government run coaching centres were opened on February 5. Prior to that, only one of the ten in Chennai was open, he said adding that the newly opened centres would do little to help aspirants prepare for the NEET exam on May 5.

The Joint Secretary to Govern-

ment from the Department of School Education, Tamil Nadu, could not be reached for comment.

"Classes have been going on here for three months now," said R Rajkumar, the Political Science teacher at the Government Higher Secondary School, MGR Nagar. "More than 150 students have enrolled for the programme from many Government and private schools nearby."

The students are to be provided with free classes on the weekend from 9 am to 5 pm through video conferencing. The two way communication will allow the students to ask doubts in between as well. Study material, including textbooks, guides, pens and notebooks were to be provided to the children as well.

Currently, the students are provided with

two hour coaching classes in English and then in Tamil as well. The NEET syllabus will be soon included

into textbooks in class XI and XII.

With less than 90 days for the exam, students, parents and teachers are concerned as the study

materials are yet to reach schools.

Tamil Nadu Government announced that NEET coaching would be provided to underprivileged students at Government schools for free after the suicide of Anitha, a medical aspirant, shook the State.

The Supreme Court had made NEET mandatory for medical aspirants throughout the country. NEET required special coaching for students in Tamil Nadu as the syllabus taught at State Board schools differed from the CBSE syllabus on which the NEET exams are based.

Even as protests against NEET continue in Tamil Nadu, School Education Minister K.A. Sengottaiyan has announced that intensive coaching for 18 days in Chennai would be provided

to 2000 selected students out of the 70,000 who had enrolled for coaching at Government run coaching centres.



Oppn protests against NEET

VIGNESH

Chennai: The opposition parties in Tamil Nadu have decided to continue protests against National Eligibility and Entrance Test (NEET) until the two bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly get the President's nod.

The Assembly passed the bills on February 1 last year seeking exemption for the State from the common entrance exam. President Ram Nath Kovind is yet to approve the bills.

The Opposition parties feel that the State Government was not strong in its opposition to NEET. It had even gone ahead with the opening of centres to train students for NEET.

The reason given was that since the President had not given his assent, students had to write NEET and should therefore be trained for the purpose.

"It is the failure of the state government in pressuring the Centre to grant exemption for the medical aspirants in Tamil Nadu from NEET," said T.K.S. Elangovan, Member of Parliament and Organisation Secretary of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. "We (DMK) are planning to meet students across Tamil Nadu and explain to them the negative impacts of NEET"

Prince Ennares Periyar, State Secretary of the students' wing of Dravidar Kazhagam, which led the state-wide protest against NEET on February 5, said that his party was holding meetings with the students' unions of all opposition political parties in the State to start protests as soon as possible.

"Now we are focusing on how to pressure the Centre in exempting the State from NEET. Further, we are also planning to begin legal proceedings if the protests do not work out," he said.

However, Aloor Shanavas, Deputy General Secretary of Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi, said that the issue would be solved only when people take to streets and start protesting like they did in support of Jallikattu last year.

"Protests conducted by opposition parties will only have minimal effect. People should agitate against the State and Centre to get president's assent to the bills."

Shanavas added that the current Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister of the State were not as rigid as Jayalalitha was in her uncompromising stand against NEET. The exam is scheduled to be held across India on May 06.



T. Pruthvi Gyandeeep takes up the 'Pad'Man challenge'. T. PRUTHVI GYANDEEP

'Pad'Man helps challenge stigma around periods

SIMRAN BAJAJ

Chennai: Many men and women have taken the stand against menstruation taboo with the PadMan challenge. However, some still resort to pre-puberty giggles and dismiss it as a mere publicity stunt.

T. Pruthvi Gyandeeep, second year B.Com student, Loyola College, said "I feel there is lot of stereotypical thinking in our society which leads to a lot of problems, especially for girls. I took up this challenge to break this typical mindset."

"It is a good idea, as girls can now openly talk about something which is a part of their daily lives," said Charuprada, first year B.Com student.

Another student Sengalvarayan of the Madras Christian College, pointing towards his male friends said, "I will not take this challenge as these people will make my life difficult."

He went on to call a female friend to take up the challenge saying "she is a girl, she will do it, but not me." Following which he and his friends broke into laughter.

Likewise, Gowtham felt embarrassed and short of words when asked about the challenge. He simply grinned and said, "I am not in-

terested in such things."

The challenge was initiated on February 1 by Arunachalam Muruganatham, the subject of the movie PadMan, with the aim of breaking the taboo and initiating a conversation on periods. Participants are supposed to hold up a sanitary napkin and declare "Menstruation is normal and there is nothing to be ashamed of."

Arjun, a B.A. Journalism student felt that the stars associated with the movie were now getting more credit than the person on whom the movie is based.

"If they cared so much, then they should have started this challenge earlier, and not during the peak time for their movie release. They are exploiting feminism," he added.

Anjali, a third year B.Sc. (Physics) student said "It is a great idea as long as it is used for spreading awareness and not merely for entertainment or for political aspirations."

Rekha, first year Journalism student, Madras Christian College, said "The challenge is a good initiative; it is creating a platform for discussion. But only if this challenge is used for the bigger picture it makes sense, otherwise it is purely a publicity stunt to promote the movie."

Babies still not allowed in workplaces

SIMRAN BAJAJ

Chennai: The requirement of a crèche at workplaces under the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 has not yet been met by many establishments in the city.

Also, firms are confused about the criteria under which they are supposed to arrange for a daycare centre.

Divya, Human Resource Manager at Magzter, a digital magazine

company in Anna Nagar, said "We don't have a crèche facility as the office has less than 10 female employees. However, initial talks are on about arranging a crèche facility."

Divya joined the company only last week after her maternity leave.

Magzter was one of the two companies in the city to provide first day of period as leave to women last year.

Yet, it hasn't provided a crèche

As per the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, any establishment with 50 or more employees is supposed to provide a crèche.

facility as the office says they have few female employees.

A senior specialist at the World Bank office said that the office had no daycare facility available.

The firm has 750 employees and the women were allowed to bring their kids to the office; the office had toys for the kids, but no separate playroom, he added.

The specialist insisted that crèche facility was to be only provided when the six months maternity leave was not given.

Another big IT firm and a pharmaceutical company in the city which didn't want to be named, do not have crèches.

Zoho, a software company based in the city has a crèche in tie-up with Kanchana Paati, which is a

12-year-old daycare centre with multiple outlets in the city.

"We have a crèche from 2015 and at present, the facility has around 50-60 children," said Pratip Vijaykumar, Business Development Manager, Zoho.

Kanchana Paati also has tie-up with Ford and provides daycare facility at their corporate office in RMZ Millenia Business Park, Perungudi.

Tidel Park, Taramani has tie-up with KLAY schools and caters to over 200 children.

As per the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, any establishment with 50 or more employees is supposed to provide a crèche, either separately or through a common facility. And the mother is to be allowed four visits to her child per day.

According to a report from www.moneycontrol.com in response to an RTI, the Government has said that the cost/expenditure on account of the crèche is to be borne by the employer.

The last date for complying with the provisions of the Act was July 1, 2017, after which firms would attract penalties.



Children playing in a crèche. THE HINDU

SRMC launches genome centre

SUDIPTO CHAUDHARY

Chennai: Sri Ramachandra Medical College (SRMC), in a joint venture with Medgenome, a US based genetic research firm, has launched a genomics research and lab facility on its premises.

TG Nallamuthu, Media Relations Executive at SRMC, said "The lab has been set up to encourage genomic research for both academic and clinical applications. It is only the second of its kind in Chennai, with the other one at Madras Medical Mission in Mogappair."

"However, while that one primarily focuses on heart diseases, we shall research procedure for all kinds of diseases or anomalies," he said.

Another advantage of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Medgenome is the setting up of an in-house Post Graduate program for Genetic Research.

"Earlier, all genetic tests, especially for checking of foetal defects during pregnancy, needed to be done by a third party lab. With this facility, not only do we save time, but our patients save their effort and money."

Initially, the primary focus of the lab will be for health problems related to conception and birth.

"An anomaly test, done at 18 weeks of pregnancy, was usually the first time the health of the fo-

etus was monitored. However, with genomics, the parents' lineage itself can be mapped, for indications of whether any history of medical problems may reflect in future generations."

Another way that genomics helps is that birth defects without fixed genetic causes, such as partial deafness or inability to focus vision can be addressed actively. Currently, corneal surgery (for vision) or cochlear correction (for hearing) are lengthy and costly processes, usually dependant on viable donors.

Another application for genetic mapping will be done, in future, with the Center for Sports Sciences, already established within SRM."

"A common feature among champion sprinters," said TG Nallamuthu, "is that they are all of African or Caribbean descent, as

these body types are genetically strong runners. Similarly, we too shall go by way of genetics to gauge an aspiring sportsperson's aptitude and guide him or her into a sport that they are genetically designed to excel in. We will simultaneously keep them away from sports with movements that may be detrimental to their physiques, in essence preventing an injury before it arises," he said.

Genomics is the branch of molecular biology concerned with the structure, function, evolution, and mapping of genomes.

Victims unaware, miss out on legal aid

ROCHANA MOHAN

Chennai: Most cases of medical malpractice are not taken to court, especially those in private hospitals due to lack of knowledge surrounding the law, according to lawyers.

"Usually, private hospitals would like to settle any such cases quietly," said Kalpana Rao, Executive Assistant speaking for Surana and Surana International Attorneys, a law firm based in Chennai.

"But there is protection available for patients under the law. Mostly the educated would fight such cases in court. Poorer sections are willing to accept the settlement amount without fighting," she said.

Under Section 304-A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), a complaint may be registered against a physician for alleged criminal negligence, and can face up to 10 years

imprisonment and a fine.

Patients do not have specific rights in this regard, save for their fundamental rights of knowing their condition and participating in decision-making processes.

A hospital in Chennai has been fined Rs. 50,000 by a consumer forum for wrongly finding a resident HIV-positive when he took a pre-employment medical fitness test in 2006 after he was offered a job in Malaysia.

As reports by three other institutions showed that the man Jifrik Ali had tested negative for HIV, the District Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum, Chennai (South) directed the Huma Specialist Hospital and Research Centre to pay Ali Rs 50,000 as compensation for his mental agony.

There have been numerous cases like this. Recently, 33 people were

NEGLECT & PAY

> The SC on October 25, 2013, awarded a record ₹5.96 crore at 6% interest - taking the amount to ₹12 crore - to a US-based doctor who fought for 15 years against four doctors and Kolkata's AMRI over the death of his wife

> In May 2009, the SC awarded ₹1 crore to a wheelchair-bound Infosys engineer for medical negligence in a surgery at Hyderabad's Nizam Institute of Medical Sciences that damaged his spinal cord

> The National Consumer Forum on April 28, 2015

ordered Indraprastha Apollo Hospital and its gynaecologist to pay ₹1 crore to a couple for wrongful delivery of their child in 1999 that caused permanent brain damage

> The National Consumer (NCC) Commission on August 24, 2009 directed a Haryana-based hospital to pay ₹17 lakh to the family of a patient who lost her life during an operation

> NCC on April 30, 2010, directed AIIMS to pay ₹5 lakh to a woman for accidentally removing one of her breasts

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Indian students prefer Canada over US

Fears over visa complications, violence and abuse against non-Americans

SUSMITHA SURESH

Chennai: More students are preferring to pursue their studies in the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany and France over the United States this year, said Vignesh Raja, Senior Executive for events and strategy at The Hindu.

"There are a lot more complications with the US visa than before," said K Bhunit, an MBA aspirant who wants to study in the UK.

"Also there's so much violence and abuse against non-Americans happening there. I don't think my parents could sleep in peace if I opted

to go there."

Ever since the Trump administration came into power in the US, a steady decline in the number of people who opt for the US as their first and second place of choice to study was noted. The Trump administration has instilled fear in the minds of most with its "racist" policies. There are other reasons for students opting for countries other than the US.

"It's also because other countries like Australia and Germany are inviting foreign students," said Agalya Kathir, Manager Canada & US for Canam Group who had their

stall at The Hindu International Education Fair organized in the city.

"Also there's so much violence and abuse against non-Americans happening there. I don't think my parents could sleep in peace if I opted to go there."

K BHUMIT, MBA Aspirant

"They have changed their policies and given special benefits to

foreign students."

"The US is still one of the favourites," said C Dharanija, in charge of Admissions at Magoosh Test Prep that offered free GRE/GMAT mock tests to students. This year we have a lot of very good students. They are all academically brilliant, and 95% preferred the US"

The Education Fair was the tenth edition of the event at the Hyatt Regency, Chennai. With over 22 stalls opened by many universities, and seminars throughout the day, the fair, which began on February 4, had seen over 1900 participants on

the first day, and even more on the second.

"There was a huge increase in the crowd. This year, we tried to bring in a lot more organic crowd," said Vignesh. "We directly approached many TPO (Training & Placements Officer) of many colleges to get a specifically targeted crowd."

A platform for educational institutions to interact with and for students to explore beyond international boundaries. The Education Fair will end in Hosur (Bangalore) on April 27 after going to Coimbatore.

Doubts over ASI plan for disabled

SHUCHITA KUMAR

Chennai: Though the Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) move to develop seven sites in Tamil Nadu into ideal monuments, under the 'Adarsh Smarak Abhiyan' is being welcomed by many, some experts are skeptical about the move.

"Facilities such as ramps, Braille boards are fine but if they are going to build toilets they should not build them close to the monument, any construction in the 100 meter periphery can affect the structure," said T.S. Subramanian, former Associate Editor, Frontline.

Disabled friendly facilities and other necessary facilities will be built in Brihadeeswarar temple, Thanjavur; Vellore Fort; Kailasnathar temple, Kancheepuram; Sithanaval caves, Pudukottai; Moovar Koil, Kodambalur; Gingee Fort and Shore temple, Mamallapuram.

"No alterations will be made to the monuments. For example the ramps will be made out of wood and will be portable, we will not add any concrete structure to the existing building," said a senior ASI official from the Chennai circle.

Due to the heavy tourist footfall,



Tourist facilities such as WiFi and interpretation centres as well as facilities for persons with disability will be installed at seven sites in Tamil Nadu by ASI. | WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

ASI will be making arrangements for audio-visual, lighting the monuments at night; tri-lingual boards about the place; cafeteria facilities; wifi and interpretation centres showing short films about the monuments.

"Where bathrooms are concerned we will build them in such a way that they do not hinder the view of the monument and precau-

tions will be taken so that the structure is not harmed because of the new construction," said the official.

"No lights and wires will be installed inside the monument, even the wifi router will be placed outside the structure," added the official.

Historian, R. Nagaswamy worries that the Centre's move to take up infrastructure projects within the

100 metre prohibited periphery around protected monuments may not be handled properly.

"They don't understand, what if in the process of providing facilities under this scheme they build a new structure within the 100 meter radius and it affects the monument which is highly plausible. We will be damaging some thousand-year old structures," he said.

Unplanned urbanisation in conflict with ASI plans

SIDHARTH YADAV

Chennai: Unplanned urbanisation and lack of civic enforcement were to be blamed for the increasing number of conflicts over archaeological sites, historian R. Nagaswamy said.

"Heritage is in the hands of residents and they should act responsibly," said, Nagaswamy, who was conferred the Padma Shri this year.

"Areas like Mylapore and Thiruvanniyur were ancient village settlements that were independent of each other. They were forcibly connected so that houses could crop-up in between and the city could expand," he said.

In September last year, the Madras High Court ordered a survey of a 57-acre archaeological site in Pallavaram here that lay buried under layers of construction. This came after the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) failed to mark the area because of public agitation for three years.

Nagaswamy, the founding-Director of the State's Archaeology

Department, also commented on the fire incident at the Sri Mee-nakshi Sundareswarar temple in Madurai which gutted 30 shops in a mandapam.

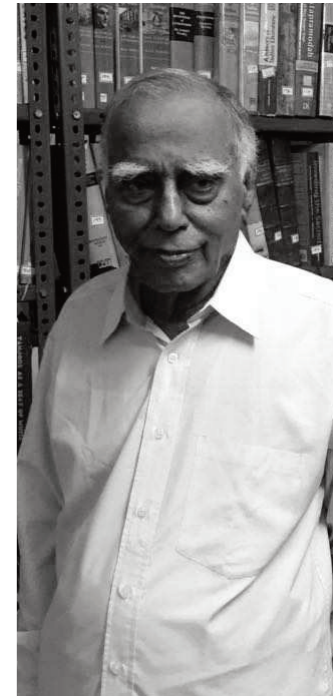
"Temples are places of worship and not commercial spaces. The concept of shopping centres is different from that of temples," he said, calling for the eviction of shops from places of worship.

Although the source of the fire is still unknown, Nagaswamy believed the trigger - shops selling material made of plastic, wood and cloth - was certain.

"The space is so cramped, even the fire tenders couldn't effectively douse the flames," he said.

The mandapams were built by great kings and chieftains for specific purposes like the harvest festivals, which are now treated as empty spaces and rented out to vendors, he said.

"When I visited the Madurai temple last, I could see coats of soot from burning oil lamps covering the ceiling. This is a ready-made recipe for fire," he said.



87-year-old historian R. Nagaswami won the Padma Shri this year. | S. YADAV



Reports say metro areas show a drop in human rabies rate after vaccinations. | FILE PHOTO

Waste aids stray problem

SRIJA PODDER

Chennai: Stray dog menace is aggravated by lack of proper garbage disposal methods and human cruelty towards the animals, according to an official of the Animal Welfare Board.

Vinod Kumar, Assistant Secretary said, "When solid waste management is not done properly, the dogs form packs, and these packs become feral and they usually attack only when provoked or scared."

Referring to the Animal Birth Control Programme, he said that the government had mandated the local animal welfare organizations to take steps to sterilize and vacci-

nate stray dogs. The board had set up standard operating procedures for the scheme.

According to reports, a significant reduction in human rabies cases has been noted in the metros where the ABC programme has been properly implemented.

Dr. Sokkolingam, Veterinary Surgeon in the Madras Society for the Protection and Care of Animals, said that after vaccination and sterilization, the dogs were relocated to the same place along with rabid dogs, where they faced the danger of getting infected or bitten.

"I have started free-rabies vaccination campaigns to ensure that a mark is made to distinguish sterilized dogs," he added.

A sum of Rs. 500 is allotted for the sterilization by the ABC. The sterilization helps to bring down the aggression.

Sokkolingam highlighted the need for euthanasia on infected animals.

"We have a separate ward for keeping dogs under observation if a dog is suspected to have contracted rabies. If it shows signs of the disease, on 95% confirmation, the dog is put to rest before it can bite other dogs," he added.

P. Chandrasekar, Senior Inspector of the Society, said "Human cruelty is responsible for the situation. We have had cases of people simply throwing stones or pouring hot water on street dogs."

Chennai's Green Cover continues to decline

VIDHI VERMA

Chennai: Green cover in Chennai has been declining over the years, with only 15 per cent of the total 456 sq km land area covered with trees, against the stipulated target of 33 per cent as per the National Forest Policy. It was 79 sq km in 2000; 74 sq km in 2005 and has been further reduced to 64 sq km in 2017.

A study conducted by the Care Earth Trust, a technical non-government organization, whose main concern over the conservation of biodiversity stated that Adyar has the highest green cover at 30 per cent, followed by Tey-nampet (22 per cent) and Anna Nagar (20 per cent). Manali and Alandur have the least number of trees.

The Trust submitted a 600-page interim study report headed by a retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) S Balaji, to the Greater Chennai Corporation.

A meeting was held at the Corporation office on Feb 2, attended by the stakeholders and Resident Associations from 15 zones in Chennai and the changes suggested by them would be incorporated in a final report.

A report in The Hindu had said that at least one lakh trees out of the 4.5 lakh trees in the city were uprooted as a result of Vardah in 2016.

"We can only be prepared to minimize the damage caused by natural calamities. Other than that developmental work is mainly responsible for large scale felling of trees," said Mr. Srinivasan, Executive Engineer of the Parks Department at the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC).

Dr. Jayshree Vencatesan, Managing Trustee of Care Earth Trust said, "Development has a direct bearing on the environment, especially trees."

"The major challenge is to increase tree cover in the midst of all the developmental projects that keep coming up in the city," he added.

S Balaji said that a group of architects from Care Earth Trust involved in identifying the extent of vacant spaces in the city.

They designed models for utilizing spaces such as the medians on the roads in the best possible way and the Corporation would execute their suggestions.

Madhavaram and Shollinganallur have been identified as the potential vacant spaces for tree plantation.

Stressing on the importance of trees in regulating temperatures, Mr. Srinivasan said that the Corporation maintained the 525 parks in the city and many parks had come up in Porur and Anna Nagar."

Dr. Jayshree said that Chennai's coastal climate would support excellent tree growth.

At present there were six dominant tree species in the city, like the raintree, gulmohar, neem, and the NGO had suggested around 91 varieties of trees to the Corporation in their project report.

Mr. Balaji said that around 20,000 trees were planted by the Corporation last year and they intended to plant over 10 lakh trees in Chennai over a period of five years.

"We can only provide suggestions to solve the problems of decreasing green cover in the city. The actual implementation power lies with the Government," said Dr. Jayshree.

700 workers affected after leather plant shuts down

SUDIPTO CHAUDHURY

Chennai: The leather processing facility at Madhavaram has been closed down by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) stating that the capacity of effluent treatment plants within the facility was being expanded without prior consent.

The Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) with a capacity to treat 4.5 lakh litres of effluent daily was commissioned in 1997. This was being expanded to a capacity to treat 9 lakh litres of effluent waste.

Power to the plant has been shut down for the past ten days due to which about 700 workers who depend on their wages have been affected.

Officials within the Central Leather Research Institute, Adyar, said that the plans to upgrade the treatment technology were set up under the guidance of experts from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Chennai.

The new plans which would use reverse osmosis to achieve recommended dilution of the treated effluent by Chennai Metro Water, all of which are within the TNPCB's prescribed norms, had already been shared with the TNPCB.

Additionally, Chennai Metro Water is laying a pipeline to transmit the effluent to its sewage treatment facility in Kodungaiyur for safe disposal.

In spite of this, the closure of the plant was ordered, that too after most of the work has already been completed.

However, according to TNPCB officials at their Environmental engineering branch in Ambattur, the units at Madhavaram were closed after issuing show cause notices were issued to them.

This was done after inspection into of the functioning of other CETP facilities in the state, namely those at Tiruchi and Dindigul.

These facilities have been given time till the end of the month to make the prescribed corrections to their effluent treatment methods.

The plant has 15 tanneries and 16 non-leather manufacturing units over an 11-acre site.

An exhibition dedicated to the Cooum river

ROCHANA MOHAN

Chennai: The DAMned ART exhibition boasts a colourful roster of artists attempting to spread awareness on the environmental degradation of local water bodies through their art.

Organized by the Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan and held at Lalit Kala Akademi, the exhibition focuses on the poor condition of the Cooum river which flows between North and Central Chennai and the possible means to educate and engage the public in water preservation practices.

Such is the German artist Anna Witt's participatory piece, "The CIRCLE of LIFE and THINGS", which engages children and adults alike. The women who clean the Cooum are asked to trace the trash they find, and the children draw an animal or plant that could exist in the Cooum over it. The final pieces are embroidered onto long pieces of cloth. Workshops are held by environmental experts for the participants to educate them on issues affecting the rivers in Chennai.

"The citizens of Chennai have

turned away from the damage done to their rivers and water," said Helmut Schippert, Director of the Goethe-Institut. "It's the Cooum', we say, not acknowledging it as a river, it's just an expression of disgust. Our vision was to make people turn around, face the river and embrace it."

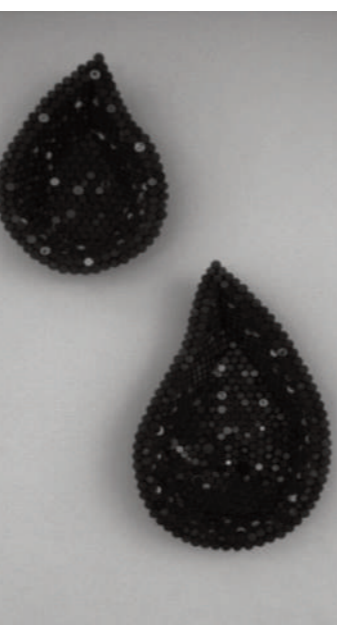
To this effect, talks and workshops have been organized at Lalit Kala Akademi to educate art-goers on the larger issues surrounding the exhibition.

Films and documentaries on water conservations by Indian and international directors will be aired as well.

Musicians such as Karthik Iyer Live! and theatre artists such as Theatre Nisha are also scheduled to perform.

Local artists such as Rohini Devasher, Parvathi Nayar and Atul Bhalla and international artist such as Suyeon Yun and Gigi Scaria are featured in the exhibition.

The DAMned ART Exhibition will be held at Lalit Kala Akademi, Greams Road, till March 4, 2018. Visit the Goethe Institut website for further program details.



Works at the DAMned Art festival used waste collected from the Cooum river to highlight its current situation.

| ROCHANA MOHAN

Water scarcity still plagues the city

VIDHI VERMA

Chennai: Chennai is plagued by water shortage all throughout the summer months from March to September, in spite of having three waterways - the Cooum, the Adyar and the Buckingham Canal - four main reservoirs in the suburbs.

Residents face water scarcity in summer when the demand shoots up and water from multiple sources is not sufficient to meet their daily requirements.

The Corporation reduces the daily water supply from 80 litres a person a day to 50 litres a person a day in times of acute shortage.

An official of the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) Zone13, said, "The four main reservoirs feeding the city, Chembarambakkam, Red Hills, Poondi and Cholavaram are only 50 per cent full after the rainfall last year. The reservoir water usually lasts till May-June."

The official added that water from the reservoirs is drawn and treated for potable purposes.

Also, water is drawn from other lakes, like the Veeram Lake, in nearby districts and transported through tankers.

In addition, sea water is treated

in perennially operated desalination plants of 400 MLD (Million Litres a Day) located in and around the city and then sent to places where there is water shortage, said the official.

Jaishankar, Assistant Engineer from the Metro Water Head Office in Chintadripet said that rainwater harvesting was being promoted by the Corporation officials to maximize the use of rainwater.

"As much as 12600 litres of rainwater can be stored in a building of 2400 sq m", he added.

Shaju John, a resident of Perungudi said he had a rainwater harvesting arrangement at his house where he uses rainwater to meet his water demands during the monsoon.

"Groundwater is an additional source of meeting the water shortage. We have also ventured into new areas where quarry water is treated and used for domestic purposes," said Jaishankar.

Arun Krishnamurthy, an environmentalist from the Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI), said that minimizing wastage and using water judiciously was the only way to combat the increasing water woes in the city. He is actively involved in lake conservation.



Puzhal Eri at Red Hills is one of the four drinking water suppliers to the city. | ARVIND PRASANNA

Tibetans to file RC online

TENZIN KHANDO

Chennai: The Centre has informed Tibetan refugees that they have to register their Registration Certificate online by March 31, as a step towards easing their travel regulations within India.

According to Tenzin Nyibum, a

needed to travel somewhere in India, we had to physically go to Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh and through all the tedious process of getting an exit permit."

Nyibum recently found out that he had already been registered online.

"I went to Dharamshala to renew

with care.

According to Nyibum, the online registration seems to be a step towards turning all Tibetan refugees into international subjects, as he was asked to provide the same document requirements as any other international student does in India. Nyibum thinks that this new step

from Himachal area have been seeking an Indian passport, after the Delhi High Court ruled that Tibetans born in India between 1950 and 1987 were eligible for Indian passports in 2017.

"I think the online registration and the scrapping of the 'return permit' for Tibetans to travel abroad with their Identity Certificate might not really discourage the Tibetans born in India from seeking Indian passports."

According to Nyibum, Tibetans born and brought up in India have applied for Indian passports not only because they wanted easy travelling but also seek other facilities which are available only to the citizens of the nation. "They feel it is their birth right and are equally part of India as any other Indians", he added.

Tenzin Donsel, BSC Hospitality and Hotel Administration student from IHM College said "Maintaining Tibetan identity is crucial for the Tibetan cause. If every Tibetan holds Indian passport, surrenders their RC and IC and cut connections with the Tibetan administration in Exile, our struggle for freedom will be lost."

"I went to Dharamshala to renew my RC some months back, and there I had to go through an extensive process to extend my stay permit. That time, no one told me that my RC was being registered online."



T. Bhagyalakshmi's collection of old coins and stamps are a show stealer at the expo. TANISHAA NADKAR

Where history meets life

TANISHAA NADKAR

Chennai: An array of colourful handloom and handicrafts adorn the space in Bharani Hall in Saligramam with vendors from places such as Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh showcasing their best lot.

Yet one of the most interesting stalls is that of T. Bhagyalakshmi who sits alone outside aided with only a bulb and her table neatly displaying her collection of old currency and stamps on sale.

Colourful plastic bowls brimming with coins from different eras such as the Mughal Empire, the East India Company, the Chola Dynasty, the Kushan Empire and notes from around the world are arranged in neat rows.

"I started Poorani Collections four years ago as I was always interested in historical artefacts," said the mother of two who has also been working as a tailor for ten years.

Operating mainly out of her house in Villivakam, she is the sole proprietor although her husband helps her occasionally.

"It was a hobby I shared with my uncle and he helped me set up the business initially," she said.

According to her, there are a number of amateurs dealing with old currency and stamps with many cus-

tomers selling them to her. "Chennai is such an old city, usually people find these things when they're moving houses and doing a thorough sweep of the place."

Ranging from Rs.40 to Rs. 150, these artefacts will make a valuable addition to an avid collector or even a casual history buff.

The room inside however, has a completely different aesthetic with stacks of kalamkari, a block-print cloth from Andhra Pradesh, in every corner.

Bright furniture, showpieces and utensils with elephants and men with large turbans and moustaches – the kind of handicrafts which have become synonymous with Rajasthani culture also take the stage.

"The exhibition was initiated with the help of Rajasthani Artisan Welfare Association but we have exhibits from all around the country," said Rajesh who hails from Orissa and has been one of the two organisers for ten years. "Each stall pays 25 per cent commission to the organisers."

While many stall owners share rooms given the fact that they've been working together for years, the occasional vendors live in the hall – cooking and sleeping wherever they find space.

"Someone has to stay here to guard the stock as well, we have become used to living on the move," said Athar from Orissa.

Representational image

B Tech student from SRM University and a member of TSAM (Tibetan Student Association of Madras), the online registration announcement has not been very clear.

"This process will of course be of some help in a way if we are allowed to get permits online for 'departure' and 'arrival' from one state to another. Till now, whenever we

my RC some months back, and there I had to go through an extensive process to extend my stay permit. That time, no one told me that my RC was being registered online."

Tibetan refugees need to surrender their old RC book in order to register their RC online. They get a single page document after their registration, and that is to be kept

can be helpful for the Indian government to easily catch a criminal. "As long as Tibetans do not commit any crime, they don't have to worry about this online registration", he added.

Some feel that this online registration process has been initiated by the Indian government to encourage Tibetans to stick to their refugee identity. Many Tibetans

A heavy price for love

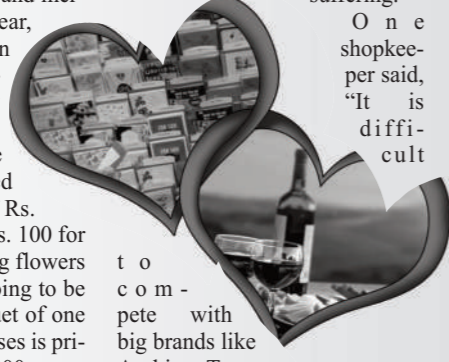
SRIJA PODDER

Chennai: With the price of valentine's Day greetings and merchandise soaring this year, couples will have to burn a huge hole in their pockets to celebrate the day of love.

Local stores here are selling heart-shaped cards at a minimum of Rs. 250 for big cards and Rs. 100 for the smaller ones. Buying flowers for loved ones is not going to be cheap either as a bouquet of one dozen long-stemmed roses is priced at a whopping Rs. 300.

Narayan, a local flower vendor, said, "Our price is still cheaper than online sites where the same will cost you more than Rs. 400."

As more people are resorting to online sites to purchase gift items, the small shop owners are suffering.



One shopkeeper said, "It is difficult to compete with big brands like Archies. To promote sales, we are offering combos worth Rs. 250 comprising candles, customized mugs, cards and chocolates."

Fine-dining restaurants around the city are also gearing up for couples to have the best experience but at insane prices.

At Flower Drum, Adyar, a candlelight dinner for two exclusively in a private lounge will cost Rs. 8,000, whereas the average cost for two people is listed as Rs. 700 in Zomato.

However other restaurants are trying to attract the crowd by serving unlimited food and drinks for Rs. 1500 for a couple. Deck 4 in Shollinganallur is organizing a masquerade party too. Other events are also providing cruise rides at Rs. 4000 for couples apart from mainstream parties, who crave quality time. The cost of spending time is high.

'Valentine's Day, not a part of our culture'

SATENDRA SINGH

Chennai: Valentine's Day is a week away but Hindutva outfits have started flexing their muscles in protest against the celebration.

"We are not against the Valentine's Day, we are against Valentine's Day being called lovers day. Our Indian culture is based on families, and every day is love day in our culture. Valentine's Day is promoting obscenity before marriage, and ruining our culture and that is why we condemn it," said, Arjun Sampath, a leader of Hindu Makkal Katchi, a Hindutva political outfit based in Tamil Nadu.

"We are also urging the Government to ban Valentine's Day." Meanwhile couples are anxious about whether to go out or not on Valentine's Day. They are thinking of places other than beaches or public parks because they do not want to be accosted by vigilantes and even the police.

"It will not be possible for us to visit or roam freely on the beaches or public parks on Valentine's Day," said a boy who was there with his girl friend on Elliot's Beach.

"Moral policing is very common in Tamil Nadu,

but it gets stringent during Valentine's week."

However another couple said that moral policing was negligible in Chennai.

The pro-Hindutva outfits might talk of Valentine's Day as a blot on Indian culture, but they did not come out on the road to protest or harass people as they did elsewhere in the country..



"There is not much of a moral policing in Chennai, and this is because RSS and other Hindutva outfits do not have strong hold here," says K. Narayanan, a student of Dr. Ambedkar Government Law College in George Town.

Police officials at J5 Shastri Nagar Police Station said though they were expecting nothing unusual on Valentine's Day, extra police force would be deployed.

"We are not against the Valentine's Day, we are against Valentine's Day being called lovers day. Our Indian culture is based on families, and every day is love day in our culture"

Chennai welcomes Drag Queen

TENZIN KHANDO

Chennai: Jabez Kelly, 19, an international Drag Queen, performed at Secret Society Bar last night.

"It's the first time I am performing at a proper place in Chennai; otherwise I have done shows here but in others' backyard only."

The show comprised cross dressing, comedy, songs, dance and reading whatsapp messages of random audiences.

Spectators of the show belonged to different age groups from 21 to late 50s, and also of different sexual orientations.

"My on stage character name is Exxta-C. She is a hateful person. But my real character is of a shy guy who barely talks to people", Jabez said.

Exxta-C picked on certain people and ragged them without any political correctness. Though some people might have taken offence to what she said, the majority of the audience laughed till their cheeks hurt.

Parvati, a college student, said "It is the first time I am hearing of this type of show. I was excited to be a part of it and experience it, as well as appreciate Jabez's guts to perform this kind of art which might be considered unacceptable in this conservative nation."

However, the drag performance



Jabez getting ready before the performance.

TENZIN KHANDO

and how it might be perceived by other people, Exxta-C did not care and used curse words throughout the show.

Jabez does shows abroad on a regular basis which keeps him on a very tight schedule. He wants to take a break and concentrate on his studies for now.

He has recently taken up a course named LGBTQ Politics. As a gay man himself, he wants to have a better understanding of where does his choice of sexuality stand in general and what are the political notions that surround it.

The stereotype that all drag performers are either gay or transgender is false, according to Jabez.

"I have worked with drag queens who are straight men. And they are better female on stage than most of the women," he added.

A drag queen is a man who dresses up in women's clothes. The first recorded use of "drag" is from 1870.

are not new in India. This form of art has been present for almost 10 years, but on a very minute scale.

And according to Jabez, drag performances are inspired from the traditions of Kathakali in Kerala, where men cross dress and perform folk dance on stage.

It is only recently that the drag

performances are recognized in big cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore. Jabez said, "I am glad that big enterprises are taking the initiative and welcoming our performance for their audiences."

Jabez and Exxta-C are two very contrasting characters. While Jabez was very cautious with his words

Beautifying ordinary mason jars

SHRUTI AGARWAL

Chennai: Be it old glass bottles of alcohol or jars of delicious fruity jam, Nargis Miyajiwala, a freelance graphic designer tarts them up by doodling various designs on them.

Nargis, through her start up All That Jars customises mason jars to incorporate different interests of customers. Mason jars designed by her can be used as soap dispensers, candle and light stands, plant holders, piggy banks, and lamps.

She says, "The idea was to utilise used bottles, jars, pitchers or any other storage glass material and transform them into utilitarian art pieces. Glass wares always fascinated me. Instead of throwing them away, I, along with my baker friend Farida thought of giving them a new definition. Hence, All That Jars."

Nargis and Farida Bharmal started their little business from home in February 2017. She moved to Chennai from Dubai three years ago. She rekindled her passion for art through mason jars. As the work is handmade, the word slowly spread and people started taking interest in their art pieces.



Decorated glass jars for use as piggy banks

Nargis caters to all schools of thoughts when it comes to designing- from young couples to homemakers. These jars are perfect for decorating the kitchen, and workspace.

"I want my customers to tell me a story. I want the jars to be functional. I cannot doodle or draw bland images. They look flat. When I listen to a

detailed description, I can quickly pick up substantial content and then draw meaningful, beautiful designs," adds Nargis.

She gets two to three orders every week. The price of the jars depends on the size and detailing. One can get a customised jar for Rs. 200 to Rs. 5,000.

Exhibitions and workshops are helpful as she gets to meet people who understand and appreciate the art form. They have a taste for handmade stuff. Every exhibition acts as a launch pad. She first showcased her jars at an exhibition at Amethyst Cafe in Royapettah.

Nargis was motivated by waste management and quirky ways of re-

using everyday items. She saw her grandmother using old pens as supporters for money plants; empty soap boxes for scenting clothes.

Nargis wishes to open her own studio where people will have elbow room to doodle and create items of their choice.