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Ola, Uber drivers want better deal

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SC rules on mercy-killing

'Living Will' will now permit doctors to carry out euthanasia

MEHNAZ YASMIN

Chennai: The Supreme Court's recent decision on euthanasia has defined what was not previously defined and has provided for a well set out comprehensive procedure to be followed for passive euthanasia, according to Nilofar Absar, an advocate practising in the Delhi High Court.

The Indian laws of euthanasia are the best one can "give to a society such as the one we live in where crime rates are extremely high," she added.

The Supreme Court in its ruling on March 9 announced that "persons of deteriorated health or terminally ill patients should be able to execute a document titled -My Living Will and Attorney Authorisation" for euthanasia.

An advance directive stating an individual's wish to end treatment will be given the status of a 'living will' and that "can be presented to the hospital" when the executant is unable to communicate his wishes due to his suffering from a serious terminal illness.

The court judgement followed Pinky Virani's plea in the case of Aruna Ramachandra Shanbaug, a



The SC ruled 'Living Will' to state an individual's wishes to end treatment WWW.EVERPLANS.COM

she was sodomised by an attendant in the King Edward Memorial hospital in Mumbai. Shanbaug was in a permanent vegetative state for 42 years before she died of pneumo-

Absar said, "It would be correct nurse who went into a coma after to say that passive euthanasia was

given the color of Law following the Aruna Shanbaug Judgement. However that did not lay down the guidelines to be followed while implementing the decision and did not provide for checks and balances in

the system. Neurosurgery resident Dr Sai

Sriram welcomed the judgement and said that the patient's wish to leave in dignity should be respected totally.

"It is an informed decision and the doctors are not taking it unilaterally," he said, adding that, the question was whether you want to prolong the suffering of the patient and his family, "both financially and emotionally".

About palliative medicine being used to counter the need for euthanasia, he said it involved administering stronger painkillers which again makes it another form of passive euthanasia. The Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) laws are not followed in India vet.

The right to live with dignity, according to the judgement, guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution means availability of food, shelter and health and does not include the right to die with

The right to die with dignity is however "inherent" and "inextricable" and hence the "right to die sans pain and suffering is fundamental to one's bodily autonomy and such integrity does not remotely accept any effort that puts the individual on life support without any ray of hope".

AMMK is TTV's new party

MEGHA KAVERI & JAGDISHOR PANDAY

Chennai: Sidelined AIADMK leader and RK Nagar MLA TTV Dinakaran launched his new party named Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) in Melur, near Madurai on Thursday.

Unveiling the party flag, he said that this was "just an interim arrangement till the original party is retrieved from betrayers like Edappadi Palaniswami (EPS) and O.Panneerselvam (OPS)." His flag bears the colours of the AIADMK flag with a sketch of former Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa in the mid-

"I will not rest till I get back the two leaves symbol from them," he announced at the function.

TTV Dinakaran, nephew of V.Sasikala, a long-time aide of Jayalalithaa, had won the RK Nagar seat as an independent candidate, which had fallen vacant after Jayalalithaa's demise. He contested on the "Cooker" symbol after having lost the "Two Leaves" symbol to Palaniswami.

AIADMK had split into two factions- one led by Sasikala, who nominated Palaniswami as the Chief Minister and the other led by Panneerselvam after the death of Jayalalithaa. After Sasikala was imprisoned in the Disproportionate Assets case, the two factions merged, with Panneerselvam becoming



Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) features a sketch of J Jayalalithaa in its flag

the Deputy Chief Minister. TTV Dinakaran was evicted from the

This led to a few AIADMK MLAs switching over to TTV camp. The case against those MLAs is pending in the Madras High Court.

This is the second party launch in Tamil Nadu in less than a month. Actor-turned politician Kamal Haasan launched his party Makkal Needhi Maiam on February21. Another actor Rajnikanth is all set to come up with a new party. Interestingly, Dinakaran and Kamal launched their parties in Madurai.

Dinakaran has the support of the 18 MLAs, all members of the AIADMK, who were disqualified by the Tamil Nadu assembly speaker last year. They supported Dinakaran and expressed lack of confidence in the Palaniswami

AIADMK leader and Fisheries

Minister D Jayakumar dismissed Dinakaran's party as a "mosquito" and called the ruling AIADMK a

Journalist Dharani Thangavelu said the launch a new party by Dinakaran might change the internal dynamics of the ruling AIADMK.

Social media user Srinivasan from Chennai tweeted, "So 'Amma' is more relevant today than 'Anna' and Dravidam'. This was in reference to the fact that the word 'Dravidian" which figures in most regional parties in Tamil Nadu is missing in the new party.

Traffic chokes '108' vans

KATHLENE REENA

Chennai: A 25-year-old woman died after an ambulance was unable to reach her on time in Tiruvidanthai on the East Coast Road here on

a share auto along with her family when the auto driver lost control and the vehicle overturned. Kuppulakshmi's leg was severely injured on impact. "A '108' call was made immediately but the ambulance took over two hours to reach them," said her husband Nagooran.

Residents living south of Chennai, on the busy areas of Old Mahabalipuram Road do not have easy

access to government-funded medical facilities as the nearest hospital is at least 30 km away in Royapettah

major impediment. Ambulances are unable to get to the patient in time, Kuppulakshmi was travelling in or are not able to return to the hospital so that proper treatment can be

> that they pay no heed to an ambulance. Sometimes, even if they are willing to move, traffic is so chocka-block that they are not able to," says M. Selvakumar, a traffic policeman stationed on Kamarajar Salai, one of the busiest roads in



Traffic snarls on busy roads block ambulances from reaching the spot on time WWW.INDIABOOKOFRECORDS.IN

Even though according to the Code of Medical Ethics, 2002, hospitals cannot deny treatment to road traffic accident (RTA) victims, pri-Traffic on this 30 km stretch is a vate hospitals turn them away, making government hospitals the only

"Private hospitals are reluctant to take road accident cases for two main reasons. One, it was earlier "Most people are in such a hurry required for the police to be informed. Even now, these hospitals are still afraid of police harassment. Second, because it is unsure whether the patient can pay for the treatment he receives. More often than not, the treatment procedures are expensive and complex," says Dr.

> Gaurav Sharma. GVK EMRI, the company that provides the '108' ambulance services, however denies the claims that ambulances are unable to reach the accident victim on time.

"In areas where there's more traffic, the number of ambulances are almost doubled. The ambulance is required to go to the hospital that the patient asks for. Private hospitals will not stop us from entering because we're carrying a road accident patient. The woman died because of her injuries and not because an ambulance couldn't reach her," said an official at the GVK EMRI.

MEGHA KAVERI

Chennai: Various doctors and medical students associations of Tamil Nadu have come together to press their demand for 27 per cent reservation for Other Backward Class (OBC) in the all India quota seats in postgraduate medical courses in Tamilnadu

Representatives from the Doctors Association for Social Equality (DASE), Government All Doctors Association (GADA), Service Doctors Welfare Association (SDWA), Tamil Nadu Medical Students Association (TNMSA), and Indian Doctors for Peace and Development (IDPD) presented their demands related to medical education here on Tuesday.

As much as 50 per cent of the PG seats in the medical colleges in Tamil Nadu is being earmarked as All India quota which is filled based on the results of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET-PG). Their demand is to provide for OBC reservation in this quota.

"The current process of NEET-based admission is against social justice and reservation. We hereby ask the Tamil Nadu Government to request the Centre to take action and allocate 27 per cent for OBC candidates," said Dr. G.R. Ravindranath, General Secretary, DASE.

Till 2017, the candidates serving in government hospitals were given grace marks between 10 and 30 per cent in NEET based on the number of years they had served in those hospitals and reservation of up to 50 per cent in admissions. The Supreme Court, in 2017, had abolished reservations for in-service candidates. thereby directing the States to follow Medical



Dr.G.R.Ravindranath, the General Secretary of DASE speaking to reporters about the demands put forth by the associations. MEGHA KAVERI

Council of India (MCI) regulations in this re-

Doctors seek OBC quota in PG seats

"The abolition of service quota reservation is detrimental to the government doctors and hospitals and the poor people. We want the decision-making power regarding reservations to be given to the State Governments and the MCI rules to be amended accordingly," said Ravindranath, referring to the SC judgement.

Other demands of the collective includes priority for candidates for Tamil Nadu for seats in the colleges in the State, building helipad and establishing fire and trauma care centres in district hospitals, establishing emergency medicine and burn injury treatment as a separate course in the curriculum and increasing the state government doctors' emoluments and other benefits on par with that offered by the Centre.

The collective has requested the Chief Minister to write to the Prime Minister detailing their demands failing which the members of the associations plan to go on strike from March 20.

Pepper sprays not popular among Chennai women

KANISHKA SARKAR

Chennai: With increasing cases of stalking and eve-teasing in the city, women safety has become a major concern. However, pepper spray, a primary medium of selfdefense is not very popular among women here.

Akhila, a student of Ethiraj College, said that most people here were not familiar with the concept of using pepper spray for self-defense. In fact, many here waited for something to happen to them and then learnt safety measures.

She added, "Even I haven't owned a pepper spray until now, but now that crime against women are on the rise in the city, we all must be cautious and keep such a handy device for safety."

was killed in front of her colmore alert while on the road. However.

when asked about the safety There are no buyers. Only measures they take, they said when there are buyers, they complained shopkeepers can start to the police or selling pepper sprays. snapped back at the stalker, but -Narayanan other than that they didn't use any self defense

Another college student Niveditha said, "I travel in MTC buses and many a times people try and touch women inappropriately. Most women shout back and the

techniques.

crowd, however that may not be lege in broad daylight by a stalker. the case when one is alone, therewomen in the city have become fore carrying a pepper spray is a Back in

> 2016, Swati, an IT sector employee was murdered by a stalker, at the crowded Nungambakkam railway station, with

mute spectators around. She was hacked to death at around 7 a.m. in the morning.

Even after such incidents, where no one stepped forward to help, it's high time women realize

After the 20-year old Ashwini men shy away because of the that there will be situations where they might be alone and will have to act swiftly to escape the danger It is strange despite realizing

the need to carry pepper sprays, which is handy and is as cheap as Rs. 130-180, not many women do

However, commenting on the availability of the product in the market Niveditha said that pepper sprays were mostly available only in malls, which was not an affordable option for many women.

Narayanan, owner of Cobra Pepper Spray Dealers in Thiruvanmiyur, said that in the course of past few months the demand for pepper spray had increased but not as much as it should be. Explaining why there were not enough shops in the city he said, "There are no buyers. Only when there are buyers, shopkeepers will start selling any specific product." When college going girls were

asked if any lectures or workshops happened on their campuses to teach simple self-defense techniques and train them against sexual harassment, most of them said that no such training took

However, Delviya, a college student said, "No such workshop has taken place yet in college, but back in school, we were taught a few self-defense measures. However, it is equally important to hold such workshops in college as well."

When asked if she used a pepper spray she said there were no shops in her area that sold pepper sprays and hence she had to buy it



Pepper sprays are still slow-moving goods in Chennai

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CITYSCAPE

Stray menace intensifies

More than 1.02 lakh stray in city, GCDA says just 85,000

BHATTACHARYA

Chennai: The stray dog menace has increased over the years and the canines now prevent children from walking to school in Adyar.

Gandhi Nagar in Adyar is lined with premium educational institutions like St. Patrick Educational Institutions, Bala Vidya Mandir Senior Secondary School, Kumararani Meena Muthiah Matriculation School and many others.

Many children in the neighbourhood walk to their schools from their homes.

After four incidents of strays attacking pedestrians in Gandhi Nagar were reported in February, students and their guardians have been apprehensive about them walking to school.

Nandini Prabhakaran, mother of a student studying at Bala Vidya Mandir Senior Secondary School, said "My daughter Revathi is in the sixth standard and she would walk to school every day since we live only fifteen minutes away. Lately, she has been scared to walk home alone or with friends because there are strays roaming in these lanes and they tend to follow the chil-

"One of these strays attacked one

child last month. It is tough for me or my husband to come and pick her up around this time. Both of us work and it is nearly impossible to body to carry out the necessary

Ranjana Padmavathy, a volunteer at the organization said, "We



Animal welfare organisations have taken initiatives to implement birth control measures THE HINDU

commute back to work around this time," she said.

Organisations such as Animal Welfare and Protection Trust based in Chennai took an initiative to promote and implement birth control measures regularly.

A recent government order instructed these organizations to put an end to this and directed the civic scary but some students have complained and the watchman often hits the animals to drive them away and it saddens me to see the dogs in such a poor condition.' Akansha Banik, an animal wel-

Secondary School said, "I am a dog

lover and I don't find these strays

fare activist said," You cannot blame the poor dogs because they are often starved of food and tortured by pedestrians on the road and they develop a sense of fear. The civic body needs to feed them, treat them and find them a home."

The Greater Chennai Corporation had fixed the number of stray dogs in the city at 85,000. However, this number comes in sharp contrast to the data derived from a 2016 census that clearly states the number of strays present in the city is much higher at 1.02 lakh.

Dr.A.Vinod Prakasam at the Chennai Veterinary Hospitals and Shelters insists that the Greater Chennai Corporation needed to rectify the number and account for the strays roaming the streets.

He said, "The government hands out so many freebies. Why don't they feed these dogs and look after them? The civic body needs to support us and other welfare organisations to control the growth of stray dogs in the city."

Ayurvedic Anomalies

Herbal treatment centers in the city remain divided over store-front structures

LAVANYA NARAYANAN

Chennai: It has been a week since Kodambakkam's Lalitha Ayurvedic Pharmacy owner M. Vijayganesan reopened the pharmacy. He had only shut doors for ten days and yet, he spent those days making house calls and delivering medications while simultaneously overseeing renovations that he called "absolutely unnecessary."

"We received notice from the Ayush Medical Association of India that as a private alternative medicine clinic, our medicines must be kept in enclosed areas to avoid heat contamination anD modification of our products," he explained.

The sudden order forced Vijayganesan to close shop, investing Rs. 1.2 lakhs in order to extend the small clinic. While the pharmacy previously displayed select medicines and herbal powders on a ledge outside, saving the interior space for physician consultations and more expensive products, the new structure removes products from easy visibility, a move that Vijayganesan said might negatively affect product sales

"Many of the herbal powders and tonics sold outside previously did not require a prescription and by customers. Having them on display helped me sell more units, but now that those are hidden behind

were often last-minute purchases building look nondescript due to the new plain white exterior and sliding glass that hid the clinic's sign board.



this glass, I do not know how much we will be able to sell," he told us.

The sudden structural modification has been replicated in the CNR Herbs Psoriasis Clinic, located near the Power House junction in Kodambakkam. Owner Philip Thomas faced the same struggles. He said that the renovation had made the

"Our clinic took many walk-in clients and referrals. Since we are located at a busy junction, having an open entryway and a large sign helped draw attention to our clinic. Now, it looks like any other allopathic pharmacy," Thomas lamen-

New open-air gym at Mylapore

MEGHA KAVERI

Chennai: An open-air gym is to be inaugurated at Nageswara Rao Park in Mylapore. The date of inauguration is yet to be decided.

Aiming to woo more people into embracing a healthier way of life, the gym, located adjacent to the children's play area, has 12 pieces of equipment to cater to different workout routines.

It will now be an added attraction to the fitness-oriented crowd that visits the park.

"I think it is a good initiative. It gives something extra for the people who are bored of just walking here. However, I am doubtful about the weather conditions, since this is an open-air gym," said Preetha who has been a regular visitor to the



People feel having a supervisor at the open-air gym is necessary MEGHA KAVERI Finance Limited.

park for over twenty years.

Dev, a finance professional, said "I have been coming here regularly for the past seven years and I feel this is great for old people who want something different. I hope it will be maintained in good condition, with regular servicing of the

However, there are voices of concern against the idea.

"I am not so sure about the gym. In gyms generally the equipment is used by people aged over 18 years. don't know how that can be implemented in an open space like a park. The risk of children getting injured is very high," said Abiishiek, a visitor at the park.

Vignesh, a Parkour trainer who trains his group in the park, "I like the idea but I think it would be

worthwhile only if a supervisor is around and adequate signboards are installed

"Not everybody knows how to use the machines and if used wrongly, the chances of injuries

are high," he adds. The park, established in 1940 in Luz corner, is now maintained by Sundaram

Bringing creators to the fore

LAVANYA NARAYANAN

were asked to stop the operations

and now the civic body operates in

Pulianthope, Lloyds Road in Roya-

pettah and Kannammapet in T

However, there are others who

Apurvi Vidhva, a class XI stu-

dent at Bala Vidya Mandir Senior

are concerned about the ill-treat-

ment of the stray dogs.

Chennai: Slightly worn out by the two-hour journey from Kanchipuram 82-year-old K. Lokesh digs out a carefully-folded maroon-andemerald Kanjeevaram saree from his hefty rucksack and lays it across the display table in the Amortela showroom on J.J. Road. The showroom is filled with Chennai's elite; it is the first time he has met a customer outside of his 6x6 feet humble showroom in Kanchipuram.

Under dimmed lights, a lady adorned in a pastel green Jamdani cotton weave spins away from a towering man as the crowd watches,

On one side sits Bengali weaver Amrish Basu, caressing the fabric that will soon be presented to the audience for sale. Meanwhile, a narrator tells the infamous tale of Draupadi's disrobing in the Kaurava Court.

The exhibition, a coming-together of native weavers, garment selstorvtellers Bharatanatyam artists, is the first of

"We often host exhibitions, but this is the first time we've been able to host the weavers of these fabrics themselves instead of selling their products in a commercial fashion," says Amortela owner Tija Indrajith.

> The showroom, a multi-designer concept store, sources fabrics from villages all over India. While Indraiith has interacted with indigenous weavers from the beginning,



The exhibition, is the first of its kind in Chennai and hosts the weavers themselves

the exhibition, titled Divas and Drapes, marks the first urban integration of the weavers into the

"I have only been to Chennai once before, as a boy. I am proud that now, I can come sell my products and tell my story to the people, instead of seeing them bought by large saree stores," Lokesh smi-

Bharatanatyam dancer N. Saraswathi calls the collaboration "unusually thrilling." She is one of two dancers that have been asked to bring the fabrics to life in front of

the weavers and the audience. "As a dancer, we are often dressed in the most ornate of costumes, rarely knowing their origins. Interacting with the weavers has given us a new perspective on the way we dress our characters," she says.

Apart from Lokesh and Basu, the

exhibition features Satyarao Kanikalli's Pochampally Ikkat creations from Kappaladoddi, a rural area in Andhra Pradesh. It also features Benarasi silks woven by F. Ansari.

"It is exciting, even for us, to meet the creative minds behind our sarees. Earlier, we would have to personally travel to Kanchipuram to even think of finding such a garment," says customer Shantha Ra-

While the dancers showcase a total of six different weaves during their presentation, the weavers set up individual tables to present their works. Indrajith watches the interactions closely: she says it is the start of something "huge."

"The market is saturated in terms of commercial fabrics. It's time to now focus on the roots and respect those who preserve tradition," says

Warmer summer to hit Chennai

Max.

temp.

36.1 C

35.1 C

MD EYAMIN

Chennai: The temperature this summer in Chennai will be 0.5 degrees Celsius more than the average normal temperature, according to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)

year

Mar

2016

Mar

2017

Last year the ave- Month/ rage temperature in summer was 31 degrees Celsius.

The IMD has published this forecast on the basis of the Monsoon Mission Climate Forecast System

(MMCFS) which is adapted for Indian conditions.

According to the IMD, January and February are winter months and the March to May period is known as summer or pre-monsoon period, while June to September is known as the monsoon and cyclone season. Summer is hotter than other seasons in South India.

Last year, Chennai was in the grip of blistering heat with Meenambakkam recording 43.6 degree Celsius on May 19, the highest temperature in the last 15 years. Meenambakkam had recorded 44.6 degree Celsius in May 2003. With the lowest temperature of 27 degrees Celsius recorded on May 04, the average temperature was 33 degrees Celsius.

Last year the maximum tempe-

rature recorded in March was 35.1 degrees Celsius on March 12 and the lowest temperature was 22 degrees Celsius on March 1. Earlier, in 2016 the maximum temperature recorded was 36.1degrees Celsius on March 22 and 23 while, the lowest was 24.1

degrees Celsius on March

Prediction says, the seasonal average maximum temperature is likely to be

SOURCE: IMD higher than

temp.

24.1 C

22 C

normal by 1 degree celsius in the north especially Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, west and east Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, west and east Uttar Pradesh, West and east Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. It is likely to be 0.5 degrees Celsius over Kerala. Tamil Nadu, South Interior Karna-

taka and Andhra "Beside this forecast there will be a day to day observation. Then the daily temperature could be wormer or colder than our summer prediction," said Dr. S. Balachandran, Director of Area Cyclone Warning Center. "The level of temperature depends on several things. Mainly forest and trees, sun declination angle and pollution are highly responsible for weather."

TN's lack of regulations for cab aggregators crushes workers

Long working hours and company commissions as high as 27 percent leave next to nothing for the drivers

KALYANI S.

Chennai: D.Elumalai, 34, has been working as a driver for Ola for the past one year. His day starts from around 8 a.m. and he gets back home at around midnight, working for over 16 hours. His savings every month is next to nil. If one subtracts from his income, the company's commission, the amount due for the loan he has taken to buy the car, the expenditure for diesel and maintenance. nothing actually remains.

"Today I drive just so I can pay the dues. If my house wasn't my own, then there would be no way that I could sustain," he says.

However, Elumalai's is not an isolated case of 'broken dreams' in

The lives of thousands of cab drivers working under the two big cab aggregators- Ola and Uber continue to be plagued by issues of low wages and harsh working condi-

"Uber charges less than Rs.7 per km and takes a 27% share per ride. I drive around 150-200 km in a day

and diesel for the same costs me around Rs.800-1000. In addition to this, it takes at least Rs.1 lakh every year for the maintenance or tire and oil service of this car. Add to this the Rs.20,000 that I have to pay every month for the money I borrowed to buy the car. How do you expect us to earn anything when this is the reality?" asks Mayandi Dayalan. Uber driver and Secretary of the Road Transport Workers Union, affiliated to the CITU. However, things were not so bad

when the two companies started off in India, says Dayalan. Rates per km were way higher than what it is

C.K.Sami, former driver with Uber, who started off by earning around Rs.5500 a day, sensed trouble when his earnings dropped to below Rs.3000 after the company cut their per km rates.

"It will take wages from at least five years of hard labor to recover the losses I incurred while working there," he adds

Cheaper rates meant more customers, however what will happen to the workers, asks Dayalan.



On Januray 3 this year, a large number of Uber and Ola drivers in Chennai affiliated with the CITU went on strike demanding the Government introduce auto meters for call taxis and regualte their long working hours. This had caused a surge in prices and travellers in the city had to pay high fares. However, despite staging protests and voicing their con-THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS cerns, the government seems to pay no heed to these workers.

Sri Kanth, a former LIC Agent at his village in Tirunelveli, drives his friend's car for Uber. A few years ago, his friend left his job as a software engineer and bought two cars to attach with Uber, driving one himself. The prospect looked great.

However, as earning neared almost nothing, he had to sell off one of his cars. The friend has now started a business on his own hoping for a new beginning, while Sri Kanth still drives the other car. After subtracting the company's share, he gets 30% of the income, while the rest goes to his friend.

H.Abra, Business Development Manager, Uber office, Chennai, says "We charge Rs.8 per km as per company policy and take around 20% per ride as our commission. There are no targets or anything that we set; we let them take on as many rides whenever they want. We just provide them with incentives to work.'

However, drivers say that the commission rates are higher.

"The average working hours of drivers in these two companies is around 18 hours a day. And there is

no statutory compliance by either of them. Workers don't have Employees' State Insurance (ESI), Provident Fund (PF), gratuity or provisions for bonus. The major problem is that unlike Karnataka, Tamil Nadu does not have a policy framework to regulate these taxi aggregators. It is necessary that they be regulated by the state," says Jeevakumar Emmanuel Joseph, General Secretary, CITU, Chennai.

Karnataka in 2016 implemented the Karnataka On-demand Transportation Technology Aggregators Rules, becoming the first State in the country to have a strong regulatory framework to control working of cab aggregators like Ola and Uber.

"While passengers have an SOS button near them to use during emergencies, the drivers don't," says Jeevakumar, talking about the lack of safety measures for drivers.

"Every three or four months, we try to organize some kind of protest to attract the Government's attention, so that there is at least some minimal improvement in the workers' lives," he adds.

CHENNAI March 16, 2018

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CITYSCAPE

Riding without helmets

MD EYAMIN

Chennai: In the 10 minutes from 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday as many as

Chennai Central Station. At least and goes against the police claim drivers. Those found without helone hundred of the riders were ri-

This is despite the regular crackdown by the police on people riding two-wheelers without helmets

that about 90 percent of motorcyclists wear helmet in Chennai.

tory requirement for two wheeler

lier it was Rs 100 According to the Traffic Police The Traffic Police Department rules, wearing a helmet is a mandahas been organising awareness raising programme to increase the hel-

> "The number of helmet users has been increasing," said R. Vellu, Traffic Inspector.

mets would be fined Rs 1,000. Ear-

Vellu said "People are now awarded enough punishment for violating rules. They get away with

Others accused the police of taking bribes of Rs 50 to Rs 100 and letting the helmet-less riders get

"In my eight years of motorcycle riding, I was fined twice. First time I could manage the traffic police offering him a cup of tea and the second time by offering Rs 100," said V. Sathish, a sales manager of Yes

Satish added that "Health problem is also responsible for less use of helmet. Due to use of helmet some people suffer from hair fall. And, some motorcycles don't have helmet locker."



Children between ages 8 and 18 sitting on the footpath by the exit gate at Chennai **Central Railway Station** LAKSHMIKANTH K A

Runaway children

alcoholic fathers.

LAKSHMIKANTH K A

Chennai: About 200 children between ages 12 and 18 were identified as runaway children and were rescued at the Chennai Central Railway Station, here, in the last six months, according to officials at Chennai Central office of Child India Foundation, an NGO that operates a telephone helpline called Childline, for children in distress. states all over India, especially,

'We see children coming in from Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Orissa. Usually they are 8 to 18 years old; they run away from home for all sorts of reasons exams, running away from school, family problems like abusive and

Last week a group of 6 children ran away from their school in Coimbatore and told us that they came here to see Marina beach.

There are even cases of mental

health problems in the children we rescued," said Malini, Coordinator, Child India Foundation, Chennai Central

"Almost 90% of the cases, we were able to contact the parents and reunite the children Parents come down and collect

their children. We have two bunk beds here at our facility, and we provide food and accommodation for a week till the parents arrive. If it takes more than a week, the children are shifted to government

Malini also said that, though few, there are cases of child labour in the last few months - runaway children who start off as cleaners in tea stalls and other small hotels were sent to industrial areas like Ambattur for work. In such cases, it takes longer time to track the children, more than two weeks. "We go for rounds once every three hours, day and night. If we find any unattended children we bring them to our centre. When these children arrive, some find work at tea stalls, mechanic shops, and as hawkers selling toys on streets. Within ten days, they are tired from the work and want to go home; they wander around on the platforms and we find them," said V Ganesh, staff

member at the NGO.

Lack of handicap-friendly infrastructure makes people like

No facilities for the handicapped

Kumar's life harder every day.

JAGDISHOR PANDAY

Chennai: Siva Kumar, 31, is blind. A white-stick is his friend from childhood. He lives temporarily in Thiruvikanagar and is a student of Tamil Language at the International Institute of Tamil Studies in Taramani. "Coming to college and going back to my room every day is hard for me. Using public transportation like bus and train is burden for people like us," said Kumar in his office.

Lack of handicap-friendly infrastructure makes people like Kumar's life harder every day. For example, the Rajiv Gandhi Salai IT expressway highway (45km) is a major road connecting Chennai with Mahabalipuram, in Kanchipurum district, and local train (19.8 km) connect Velacherry to Chennai Beach are tough places for handicap people.

The purpose of building these networks are to make people to access it. But these infrastructures reS. Krishna Kumar, 58, is a temporally handicap person. He had an operation on his right leg

A man riding his moped without helmet at the Tharamani main road as he goes past

vehicles. Two bikers were seen wearing helmets.

He became friends with a stick for a few months. "But, I can't easily walk around Tiruvanmiyur (house) to Indiranagar," lamented. "Though, I am temporary a handicap person I experienced many things in the short time." He questioned, "The train will stop for two minutes here. But. how will a handicap

person get into the

main burden for those handicap

V. Karthick, 34, is an officer at Directorate of Tamil Etymological Dictionary project in Taramani. He doesn't have legs and has been using a wheelchair from his childhood

"But it is a tough job for me to attend office from house and a retune back," he said. Moreover, there is no wheelchair friendly structure in his office too. "I have to roll my body every day to climb to the first floor of my office," Karthick added.

The entire infrastructure in local railway, express highway and government office's infrastructures is not handicap friendly people.

In local railway stations, there are no facilities for wheelchair people. At Indiranagar railway station, there are big ladder steps, pyramid like slope path where wheelchair can't move up and down easily, and no proper toilet system for handi-

cap people. S. Krishna Kumar, 58, is a temporally handicap person. He had an

operation on his right leg knee.

He became friends with a stick for a few months. "But, I can't easily walk around from Tiruvanmivur (house) to Indiranagar," he lamented. "Though, I am temporary a handicap person I experienced many things in the short time." He questioned, "The train will stop for two minutes here. But, how will a handicap person get into the

He said that government should introduce the handicap friendly trains, roads, stations, and offices as soon as possible

He added, "How a handicap person can buy ticket at the busy station like the Central Station in

An officer Karthick said that even though government had given them a discount while travelling at the bus, but a conductor took more money from them

"They will ask full money. Sometime they also ask wheelchair money saying that it occupied space in the bus," he said.

Take care when you order

MIRAH ZAMIN

Chennai: When Vaibhav Kumar, owner of Red Box, a Chennai based restaurant, signed up for the Zomato food delivery service, he was amazed that the Zomato team required no licence issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India and did no verification of the quality of food.

"They did no food tasting, nobody came to check where the restaurant was or what quality or quantity we were serving", says

According to the agreement that a restaurant signs with a delivery service, 'any violation of the Food safety and Standards Act, 2006 is the sole responsibility the seller, vendor, or restaurant 'and the service provider is not accountable for any violation. Malaravan Kalyan, owner of the Mama Shop,says "Many outlets are registered with two names, with different prices on these delivery services apps since there is no verification process.

"There is lack of communication on part of these companies about customers' complaints," he added. B. Balasubramaniam, an official

Every outlet small or big should have a licence from us. The entire process is online and simple, if delivery services like Zomato start demanding licences before registering a business, people will have no choice but to get a licence.".

at FSSAI, Chennai office says '

"In Chennai there are thousands of outlets which are not registered and yet are on these food delivery apps

With the level of hygiene or the quality of material being monitored, these delivery services companies should be held liable" added another official.

Towards a Smoke-Free Chennai

LAKSHMIKANTH K A

Chennai: The Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places Rules, 2008, seems to have reduced the instances of people puffing away in public, according to police

"There are very few offenders we caught in the past few months.

the entire day is gone for the offender. So next time, he will be more careful not to smoke in public places," Mohan added.

However, Sudarshan P, who is a non-smoker said, "People who do it still do it; they even smoke in the bathrooms of trains. I know people who were caught smoking in trains,



A college student smoking in front of the Institute of Hotel **Management in Taramani** LLAKSHMIKANTH K A

Most people go out of the station and smoke. They are very much aware of the no-smoking rule in railway stations and bus stands," said V Mohan, Inspector Railway Protection Force, Chennai Central Railway Station.

"The fine is just Rs. 200 and there is no jail term according to the law. What we do is this: we take him to the court, collect his identification details and the magistrate would book a case and levy a fine of Rs. 200 and in all this process

but they weren't asked to get out of the train. But there is more awareness among the public for sure. They won't stay quiet if someone is smoking around them in a public

L Ranganathan, who is a smoker, said "I don't smoke in public places as a matter of principle, but it is not so strict otherwise. Usually everywhere, if you are caught smoking they charge you Rs.200 and let you go. Sometimes they take you to court, but that is very rare.

KANISHKA SARKAR

.Chennai:After two months of continuous drop in prices of vegetables in the Koyambedu wholesale vegetable market here, wholesalers finally found relief as prices showed a gradual increase. However the prices of not many vegetables have increased drastically. For two weeks now, the price of beans has been increasing. It was between Rs. 8 and Rs 12 last week, and is now between Rs. 18 and Rs 22. It is being sold for Rs. 30-45 at retail shops, said Soundar, a wholesaler here.

Another wholesaler-cum-retailer, Ajith Kumar, said, "Except for yellow and red capsicum whose price has come down from Rs. 90 to Rs. 50, prices of all other vegetables have increased. Earlier when the prices were low, our wholesale and retail prices were the same. However, with the increase we are able to stabilize the business by stating fairly high retail prices." Due to the drop, not many people were coming here since they got the vegetables at very low prices at their nearby vegetable shops itself, but now that the prices have increased buyers in the wholesale market have increased, he added. Explaining the reason for the change in prices, Ajith said, "Now that the climate has changed and the yield has reduced, and there is no surplus. Therefore, prices have become stable. For instance, if earlier I was getting 600-700 boxes of vegetables, now I have to take only 500 boxes, which can be easily sold."

P. Sukumar, treasurer of the

Price-rise brings relief to vegetable vendors



Wholesale vegetable vendors selling their produce at the Koyembedu Vegetable market.

KANISHKA SARKAR

Koyambedu Vegetable and Flower market Association, said that the fluctuations in supply due to weather change happened every year. However, this year owing to the good yield, and surplus produce, prices unexpectedly dropped a lot.

According to Sukumar, now that

P. Sukumar, treasurer of the Koyambedu Vegetable and Flower market Association, said that the fluctuations in supply due to weather change happened every year. However, this year owing to the good yield, and surplus produce, prices unexpectedly dropped a lot.

the weather in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka had changed, and vegetable supply had become stable, prices were on the rise by at least 10%. Prices were expected to increase further, however, only until March. In April again, there would be a marginal drop, he added.

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No hurdle big enough for Women's football team

BHATTACHARYA

Chennai: In a historic match, the Tamil Nadu women's football team recently won the 23rd edition of the Senior Women's National Football Championship, lifting the national title on their first ever final.

But the national champions, who defeated their opponent Manipur 2-1, did not receive any prize money for their win. Their top player Indumathi received a cash prize of Rs 25,000.

This comes in sharp contrast to the large sums of money that male football players receive during the Indian Super League (ISL).

ISL paid Atletico de Kolkata, the winners last season, a cash prize of Rs 8 lakh while other men's football tournaments like the I-League, offer cash prizes worth Rs 1 crore.

Defender Imdrani N said, "Football doesn't cover my expenses, most of us work part-time to earn enough money to support our families. Practice sessions often get interrupted because some of us remain at work."

Most players in the 20 member women's team come from lower mid-



The girls practice rigourously on a daily basis THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

opened by the Sports Department of

Tamil Nadu from 2003. These insti-

tutes often provide free education and

lodging, drawing more players in to

team remain hopeful about the future.

The unequal pay and risky nature of

Midfielder Geethanjali S said,"My

family arranged my marriage; they

told me they won't allow me to play.

It was very hard to convince them but

we overcame everything and won the

the game does not unnerve them.

Battling all odds, the women in the

them are the sole bread earners for their families

"These girls are studying with the support of the government. The Sports Development Association of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) has been coaching them since 2012, and some of them are still studying in college," said coach Muruhuvendan.

He added, "Football may be catching up in India, but women playing the sport are yet to be taken as seriously as the men's teams are. The situation has improved after sports institutes and private academies were

"Some of us have so many problems like erratic menstrual timings and the game can be extremely challenging physically. By the end of the practice sessions, we are left with no energy for anything else."

The Tamil Nadu police have a job quota for female footballers and many players quit football and take up the

Three girls in the team are studying in Ethiraj College in Chennai and they hope to use the sports quota to find work afterwards

Midfielder Nandhini R said, "I just want to make my country and my parents proud. I have two siblings to look after and unless I continue studying, there are less chances of getting a job. We are restricted by age in this game because we cannot keep playing forever."

Indumathi was named player of the tournament and the final and has also represented India at the Asian Games.

The young player said, "My dream is to play national and I will not quit football until I get there. As a sportswoman, you earn your respect and the hard work will surely amount to something for all of us. I am extremely

Therapy for inner self with the paint brush

S. KANIMOZHI

Chennai: Meet A.V.Ilango who

uses art for therapeutic purposes. In 1973, upon completing his Masters in Mathematics at the Bangalore University, A.V.Ilango took up artistic research.

This self taught artist grew up in Gobichettipalayam in Coimbatore district.

The Blue Mountains with their green carpet, and the Bhavani River nurtured the creative muse in him. Now based in Chennai, he teaches art at Ilango's Artspace. Children and adults attend his classes.

Back then, there was no electricity in his village. While some families used kerosene lamps, some sat under the lamp post. Ilango spent his childhood fishing and swimming along with

He recalls his first experiment with art. "I was in my fifth grade when I used to draw caricatures of my grandmother on my slate."

Those were the times when he abundantly enjoyed his life. "My wife gifted me 25 volumes

of Time and Life series. She was a French professor in Madurai," he

In 1981 he had his first show in Alliance

Française. One of his paintings was sold for Rs.800. "I was always an angry young

man," he says. The only way to with his emotions through art. Ilango

continues masterpieces translate his inner chaos into beautiful believes, "As an artist, I don't

retire. I keep running this endless race." His favourite genre of art is using space, line and form as the

essential core of artistic practice. Through Chandra Ilango's

Visual Art Foundation, started in loving memory of his wife, Ilango continues to support his wife's passion for art by encouraging young artists.

Ilango's believes in the traditional guru-sishya system. In a

bites, insect stings, bruises, frostbites,

sprains and fractures," she said. For

protection against animal attacks,

firewood, rubber bullets and knives

were carried. The school authorities

confirmed that the students were only

A.V. Ilango creating one of his

ALCHETRON.

illustrations on a canvas. He society teeming with issues such as environmental degradation, poverty and violence, Ilango finds a way to portray the reality through his nuanced sketches and painting.

According to Ilango the journey to self-discovery as an artist begins with introspection contemplation.

Through art Ilango revisits his subconscious mind communicates the desires of his heart. "Art transcends, touches your soul and makes you happy,"

Chennai swimming pools have seen better days

Maintenance is poor, say swimmers

KATHELENE REENA

Chennai: Swimming pools are going to be the place to beat the heat this summer in Chennai

The city has several swimming pools, both government-run and private, to cater to the large number of people who swim, both professionally and for pleasure.

The Marina Beach stretch houses two swimming pools and a skating

The Marina pool is opposite Presidency College and it is maintained by the Chennai Corporation. The second one called the Anna

The Anna pool is the first Olympic-size swimming pool in Chennai and is

maintained by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT). "The Anna pool is where most professional swimmers go to train in Chennai," says Ajith. S, a national

level swimmer. The Tamil Nadu Government opened up several swimming pools in the city to encourage the sport. The Marina pool was opened as early as 1947. The SDAT maintains four pools- in Velachery, Shakti, Shenoy

owned-pools are maintained by the Chennai Corpora-Public pools cost less and are therefore not wellmaintained. However, for people looking for a low-cost

nagar and Madras University. Other government

option, they are ideal. "If I'm practising every day, and I am not with a swimming team, these are more feasible than the pri-



swimming pool is located During summers, many children take to swimming to beat the opposite the University of heat at the Dolphin Swimming Academy in Chennai

TRAVELLERSWORLDWIDE.COM

vate pools, which are usually in hotels," says Aiith. However, compared to the other states, Chennai's public pools need improvement.

"The changing rooms and swimming pool maintenance is poor here in Chennai. In fact, most swimming teams travel to Bangalore to practise during competition season," says Sharan, another swimmer, "Bangalore has better facilities, even with their government pools as tthere are more swimmers,"he adds.

Authorities say that they clean the pool and the washrooms on an hourly basis but the visitors do not main-

"The visitors pay no heed to cleanliness. They leave the washrooms dirty and the pools too. They are required to take a shower before getting into the pool but most people jump in with dirty, muddy feet," says Rajamani, maintenance staff at the Anna swimming pool.

Treks safe only if rules are followed: Chennai trekkers

into forests without any knowledge of

the terrain, natural calamities or

wildlife, Christopher said. Forest

guides must always accompany

trekkers. These guides or Anti-

Watchers

MEHNAZ YASMIN

Chennai: Trekkers should never take the chance of entering a forest without obtaining permission from the Forest Department, said Anand Kumar, owner of Chennai

based Nature Trails N Kumar said he had "seen a lot of forest fires during treks since the company started ten years

back", His son Praveen Christopher said "forest fires are so big that you can either spot smoke from a distance of 15 to 16 km or you can smell it, so the forest always know.

"More than the fun of trekking, safety is important," he added.

Eleven trekkers One of the Nature Trails' N Treks trip to Pambadum Shola National Park lost their lives when the forests in the Kurangani hills in the Theni district caught fire on

Sunday. The trekkers "went out on their own without taking any permission from the Forest Department and also

did not follow the regular route," Christopher said. Kumar said "Before vou undertake a trek, you have to inquire with the particular area and seek

permission from the Forest Department. You have to pay a government fee and a declaration is signed by all the

participants." People of late ventured

appointed by the State Government were residents of local tribal settlements "who know the forests in and out". They were also equipped with wireless devices like "walkie talkies" to alert officials during emergencies, because mobile

network receptivity was uncertain in

such areas, he added. Oishee Mitra, who recalled her school trekking trip to Barsey in Sikkim said that they never considered forest fires. "We only considered animal attacks and the trek leader had first aid kits to treat snake

guided by their school teachers and that no Forest department official accompanied them. To ensure safety, trekkers should always abide by rules and regulations. The Forest Department staff would list out instructions before the trekkers entered the forest. The trekkers should always wear dark colours for "camouflage". They should "maintain silence," so as to ensure that wildlife was not disturbed. Cigarettes should not be taken inside the forests, because "forests are mostly dry" and caught fire easily.

PRAVEEN CHRISTOPHER ANAND

No place to run or walk

MIRAH ZAMIN

Chennai: Five years back the Greater Chennai Corporation built a running track along the Besant Nagar Beach but with time the track is in 'no use condition' and covered with sand.

"The track was never made even; they had used stones of different sizes to build the walking track. And, with time the wind brought sand from the beach," says Prakash Jaganathan, a resident of Besant Nagar. The senior citizen group of Besant Nagar has initiated a drive to clean the track and is waiting to get permission from the corporation."We wrote several times to the corporation to remove the sand covering the running tracks but no heed was paid to the request and so we have decided to do it on our own," says V. Chandrasekar, president of the group.

"We are waiting for permission from the corporation because if we start removing sand, the corporation will file a case against us saying we are sand mining at the beach," he adds.



2 crores spent five years ago to build these tracks. MIRAH ZAMIN

Walking on the roads is difficult for senior citizen owing to the morning rush. The road is used by the children and young for cycling and skating which makes the area accident prone for senior members who come for a walk.

"My wife and I both have arthritis we cannot walk fast, the walking track gave us that freedom to walk on our own pace, but with sand covering the uneven surface walking is not possible now on the track," says K. Jayakumar.

Subha, Javakumar's wife, says "On both sides of the track there is a raised platform to sit, for senior citizen like us we could take rest when tired." The Vendors are responsible for the litter.

Sundar, a general physician, says "At night the vendors take over the track and use it to put up stalls, very often one can find pieces of glass. plastic and left over food on the walking track in the morning.

A group of five sexagenarians had nurtured a row of trees on the walking track which were cut by the corporation to lay the track.

"After our trees were cut down, we again have planted saplings and we water them every day but with sand absorbing all the water the plants don't grow," says L. Anitha, resident of Kasturba Nagar.

They launched an era of togetherness

KALYANI S.

Chennai: "Jai Hind," Nehru would repeat thrice at the end of every speech, each time louder and louder. However, in 1950, when Sukarno, Indonesia's first President was visiting the Delhi University (DU) for the convocation ceremony, he ended his speech by repeating "Jai Hind" thrice.

Nehru wasn't someone to lag behind in style, and he ended his speech by saying 'Merdeka' thrice. In Bahasa Indonesia, it means freedom, and was the cry of the Indonesians, when they struggled against Dutch imperialism.

Such was the fondness the two leaders had for each other, and this stands testimony to the kind of

"What is fascinating about Indonesia is its pride in its cultural heritage. This pride in culture, we do not have. And it's unfortunate that we don't," said Professor V.Suryanarayan, a specialist in

relationship the two nations had

South and Southeast Asian studies. He was talking at the launch of

his book on India-Indonesia relations. The book, "Together in struggle: India and Indonesia 1945-1949' was launched at the Press Institute of India, Taramani. The book focuses most importantly on the inspiration that India was to the Indonesian Nationalist leaders during their struggle than won them freedom on August 17, 1945, from Dutch colonial rule.

Talking about India's cultural contributions to Indonesia, M.Ganapathy retired IFS officer and Chief Guest at the event said: "There is an image of Sarawsati outside the Indonesian embassy in Washington. Interestingly, even Sukarno's name comes from the name of one of the characters in the Mahabharata, Karna. Such is Indonesia's 'syncretic culture'."

The book narrates an instance from when Sukarno and his wife Padmavati visited Pakistan. The Pakistani media went into a frenzy about a Muslim woman with a Hindu name, and one of the newspapers said: "Sukarno, with



it was the friendship between Nehru and Sukarno that sowed the seeds for the relationship between the two countries that we see today. MERDEKA.COM

his wife Fatima, is coming to Pakistan today" Speaking of his inspiration to

write the book, Suryanarayan said that it was his encounters with journalist turned IFS officer P.R.S.Mani that motivated him to write on this subject. P.R.S.Mani was a Captain in the British army deployed in Indonesia in 1944 to fight against the nationalist forces. His dispatches from the time are the only existent account of an Indian about the said events. The way many Indian troopers deserted the British army to fight on the side of the Indonesians is an interesting aspect of his dispatches. He later worked as a foreign correspondent for the Free Press Journal.

"There are a lot of commonalities between the freedom struggles of both these nations. And the events in Indonesia's freedom struggle are discussed by the professor through the lives of leading men of the time like Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta. Western Scholars have for

years sidelined this contribution of India to Indonesia's struggle but no other country has helped it as much as we have," said Ganapathy, adding that this book could not have been written by anyone better. However, after Sukarno's years,

India-Indonesia ties faltered due to a number of reasons. Sukarno was the guest at India's Republic Day Celebrations in 1950, but after that it was only in 2011 that a leader from the country was invited to grace the Republic Day celebrations, said Ganapathy.

But now, there is a revamp in India's relations with Indonesia, he said. However, the author pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had not yet paid an official visit to Indonesia.

M.R.Sivaraman, retired IAS officer and former Revenue Secretary pointed out how the times that followed the period in discussion were extremely tumultuous for Indonesia and suggested the idea for a sequel to this new book.