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‘Fight terror, but don’t wage war’

India, Pak ‘must talk it out’

SHIVAYAN ROY

CHENNAI: Most people in Chennai support the Indian airstrike against the Jaish-e-Mohammad camp in Pakistan but they do not want a war with the neighbor.

Tensions are running between India and Pakistan after the Indian Air Force crossed the international border and bombed the JeM camp in Balakot. India claimed that over 300 terrorists were killed in the raid. Pakistan retaliated by sending its jets to bomb a few locations in Jammu and Kashmir.

Thirulok Kumar, an LIC agent believes that the Indian airstrikes on the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) camps in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) are justified given the February 14 suicide bomb attack that claimed the lives of over 40 CRPF personnel in Pulwama.

Kumar though stressed on the fact that the war should be against the terror group and not Pakistan.

“The fight should be against

terror groups and not Pakistan as a nation. The treatment dished out to the Kashmiris too was unjustified,” said Kumar.

Pakistan’s retaliation though did not go down well with the masses as many felt that even though India did invade Pakistan’s airspace it was a countermeasure to the terrorist attack in Pulwama.

“Pakistan’s retaliation to India’s airstrike sends out the wrong message, India did not bomb any civilian settlement then why did Pakistan have to shoot down one of our fighter jets?” asked Keshwan R, an archaeology student from University of Madras.

“Pakistan should help India in conducting these strikes against groups like JeM and not support their cause by fighting us,” he added.

Rama A, also a student of the University of Madras had a different take regarding the standoff.

“I’ve seen some news outlets report that the whole thing is an election ploy by (Prime Minister

Narendra) Modi, just two months before the elections; suddenly these strikes take place and conveniently divert people’s attention from all the scams and controversies surrounding the current government,” she said.

Siva Dharani, a teacher at a school in Anna Nagar too believes that the option of war should be ruled out and that peace talks should be held between the two nations

“War is not the answer going ahead, a dialogue should be held between the two nations to defuse the situation before it gets out of hand,” said Dharani.

Siva Dharani, a housewife said that there was a serious lack of evidence

The option of war was completely ruled out by the people as many fear, a conflict right now would escalate to nuclear warfare killing millions of civilians on both sides of the border.

Many although side with the idea of surgical strikes, stand opposed to the idea of war.

Pilot returned in ‘peace offering’

SHASHWAT MOHANTY

Chennai: After two days of captivity, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was released by the Pakistani army. Abhinandan was handed over to Indian authorities at the Wagah border on 9 pm on February 28.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan announced the decision on framing it as an olive branch towards India, and hoping that India would do the same.

Abhinandan’s MiG-21 Bison was shot down when he intercepted Pakistan Air Force jets that bombed four locations in Jammu and Kashmir on February 27 in retaliation for the Indian airstrike on a Jaish-e-Mohammad camp in Balakot in Pakistan on February 26.

Before Abhinandan’s release his father refused to talk to the media. He issued a statement saying that his son was safe.

A retired Air Marshal himself, Abhinandan’s father Simhakutty



**Wing Commander
Abhinandan**

Varthaman thanked his friends for their concern and wishes. “Abhi is alive, not injured, sound in mind,” said Varthaman in a WhatsApp text message to a group of friends. “Just look at the way he talked so bravely, a true soldier. We are so proud of him,” he added.

Soon after Abhinandan’s capture videos on social media showed Abhinandan being beaten up by a mob after he parachuted down in Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

One video released by the Pakistan military showed him

standing blindfolded and with hands tied behind his back and bleeding injuries on his face. He was seen asking if his captors were from the Pakistan Army and whether he was talking to a doctor.

In the second video released by the Pakistan military, however, Abhinandan was cleaned up and was seen having tea in a video. He thanked the Pakistanis for their hospitality and for rescuing him from the mob.

“I will not change my statement if I go back to my country also: the officers of the Pakistani Army have looked after me very well—they’re thorough gentlemen, starting from the captain who rescued me from the mob and from his soldiers and thereafter the officers in the unit that I was taken into,” he said, adding that he would expect the Indian army to also treat any other captured soldier the same way.

Abhinandan’s wife is also a retired chopper pilot and a squadron leader. The family stays in Tambaram in Chennai.

Anna varsity hikes fee for research

RAJAT THAKUR

CHENNAI: Anna University has increased the fees for various post-graduation research programmes, consequently drawing protests from students.

According to the circular dated February 18 from the Centre for Research in the University, the fee for synopsis submission has been increased from Rs. 6,500 to Rs. 8,000; the fee for late submission of thesis has gone up from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 7,500 and the fee for resubmission has been increased to Rs. 12,000, which was Rs. 10,000 earlier. There has been a five-fold hike in the fee for changing the category from Rs. 500 to Rs. 2,500.

This circular was sent to all the colleges affiliated to the Anna University.

“The hike will impact our pockets because most of the students in research are unemployed and only a few are teaching in some colleges,” said P. Suresh, a research student.



Free breakfast daily in State-run schools

RAJAT THAKUR

CHENNAI: Students in schools run by the Greater Chennai Corporation will be provided free breakfast every day, under the ‘Kaalai Unavu Thittam scheme’ launched by the Akshaya Patra Foundation and Greater Chennai Corporation from 25 February.

The scheme was inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit and Minister for Fisheries, D. Jayakumar at the Greater Chennai Corporation Primary School in Thiruvanniyur Kuppan.

The Akshaya Patra Foundation is a non-profit organisation that implements the Mid-Day meal scheme in government schools.

“Tamil Nadu schools already have a strong Mid-Day meal programme. We came up with this idea of providing breakfast also. Most of the kids were not having proper breakfast, now they can have good quality breakfast also,” said Mukunda Mahadev Das of Akshaya Foundation.

B. Avishek, a volunteer at Akshaya Patra said, “Around 1000 students of corporation schools are served Upma, Idli or Pongal every day.”

Avishek said that 5000 students from 23 schools were to be covered by the next month and all 281 corporation schools would be covered in phases.

C. Maria Shanathi, Principal, said, “Parents of most of the



School children having their meal | GOOGLE

students in our school are daily wage workers. They leave early in the morning for work. So most of the kids would come without having any food at all.”

“This initiative will provide students nutrients as well as it will attract them to come for classes. We have had no late-comers since Monday,” she said.

She is expecting more students to join the school from next session because of the free breakfast scheme.

“Public schools should be promoted in various ways to attract more and more students,” she added.

The Akshaya Patra was founded in 2000 at Bengaluru in five schools with 1,500 children. The NGO is now serving food in 12 states to as many as 1.7 million students.

The foundation was awarded the prestigious Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2016 on February 26, 2019 by the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, for its contribution towards the socio-economic development of India. The idea of giving of giving breakfast to the students has been taken under the ‘Poshit Bharat, Shikshit Bharat’ (Nourished India, Educated India) initiative.

“Muscle, money needed to win elections today”

SHASHWAT MOHANTY

CHENNAI: Former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Navin Chawla cited the suggestion of an ACJ student during his previous visit to the college as one of the main reasons in introducing the ‘Other’ option for the third gender in the electoral rolls.

“During my last visit here, a student asked me why we didn’t have an option for the third gender. Before this, two students at the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT, Bhubaneswar) had asked me, and this led me to make the suggestion to the Commission which finally resulted in the ‘Other’ option in the current ballots,” said Chawla speaking to a group of students in the college.

On the current issues affecting the election system, Chawla said, “In today’s election, if you have money and muscle, you can win the election. Without either, you don’t stand a chance.”

The EC was still looking into methods to improve the situation, he added.

Speaking about the biggest influence in the upcoming 2019 general elections, Chawla singled fake news as the biggest culprit. “Every outlet is reporting different versions. I don’t know what to believe anymore. Conducting elections in this post-truth world is the biggest challenge,” he said.



Former CEC Navin Chawla addressing ACJ students | ACJ

Referring to the debate on ballots and electronic voting machines (EVMs), he said, “EVM is the way to go. The EC took 20 to 25 years to make sure that EVMs are fit enough to use in the elections, the ballots would undo that work.”

Chawla also added that the roll-out of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) was another step in the right direction in assuring the voters that their votes had not been manipulated, although the system was in its nascent stage.

With the upcoming election set to be the biggest yet, Chawla noted that the EC had done a great job in increasing the use of voter ID.

“Between 97 and 98 per cent of the people in India have a voter ID card with photos,” he remarked.

“A major problem is the lack of limit on foreign donations. NRIs can donate to political parties without disclosing their identities, which can be an easy way to funnel black money. Moreover, the cap of Rs. 20,000 per person for Indian citizens is also quite high,” he said. An ideal cap for Indians, Chawla said, would be Rs. 1,000 or at most 2,000 rupees.

Under the current system, most donations did not require identification, and were given in multiples of Rs. 19,999.

Students insist that this hike of 20 per cent to 100 per cent in the fee for various research activities would be a burden for researchers.

“We can’t afford to pay high fees. Even the amount of non-NET fellowship we receive is only Rs. 8,000 per month for full time PhD,” said B. Ravi, another student.

Similarly, the fee for institution recognition has been hiked to Rs. 1,50,000 from Rs. 1,00,000 and for institution renewal it is Rs. 50,000 now from Rs. 25,000 earlier.

According to the university, “The hike is to cover the various expenses of research like viva, calling for external examiners or evaluation of papers.”

An official at the Centre for Research said, “The fee hike is very moderate in comparison to private universities.”

One source said, “The cost of various research equipment has gone up, and laboratories also need a high amount of electricity but university does not get any concession from the electricity board. The matter should be looked into.”

Officials estimate the total strength of students pursuing their PhD at the university and its affiliated colleges to be around 13000.

They have claimed that this move is necessary.

The 40-year-old institution has been run by the State government and has been providing technical education.

LAW TODAY

New tenancy bill garners positive response from city tenants

SMRUTI DESHPANDE

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu Regulation of Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants Act, 2017, that requires mandatory registration of agreements between landlords and tenants has been well-received here in the city.

The bill requires both the parties to register their agreement within 90 days of it being signed.

“It is a welcome move and will highly benefit the house-owners as all the terms will be clear on both the sides beforehand, officially. So

if at all any issue arises in the future, the documents will help ensure that the problems get solved early as the process will be faster,” said E. Singaravelu, 51, an IT professional.

“I once had problems regarding rent payment with one of my tenants. If the law had been there that time, it’d have been easier to resolve the issue,” he added.

The law now has a provision that if the tenant doesn’t pay the rent for two months, he or she could be evicted.

The law also regulates rent depending on the area the house is in. This not only helps tenants to

hire the house, but also brokers, in carrying out their business.

Harrison, 21, who has been staying at a rented apartment in Alwarpet, said the best thing about the bill was that it regulated the rent, which will now keep the house-owners from demanding higher rates.

He also spoke about the bias his family faced in the area for being Christian.

“The area is dominated by a particular caste. They are not open to giving houses on rent outside their community as they prefer renting houses only to vegetarians,” he said.

The realtors too have welcomed the bill.

Yasser Rahman, 32, a third-generation broker who has been in the industry for the past 16 years.



He said, “Once the registration is done, we [brokers] will be able

find out the number of houses available at a specific pin code and the cost applicable in that area. With these details, we’ll be in a great position to advise clients. The bill also assures transparency.”

“Secondly, the bill partially addresses the issue of discrimination. It is a healthy move and should lead to some sort of buoyancy in the rental markets,” he said.

Earlier, although the registration was always compulsory not everybody registered agreements.

“People are always going to find loopholes to not register. Earlier, it was understood because the cost

[of registration] was high. But this time, it’ll be easier and cost-efficient. If people still want to avoid registering an agreement, then there will always be people who’d make it possible.

The brokerage business will not suffer because finding a house is the job of a broker. You can go look for it yourself, but at the end professional help is needed,” he added.

R. Saravanan, a lawyer at the Madras High Court, said, “The bill is balanced. The owners in all metro cities are dominating and the people coming from outside had to go by the cost told by the broker.

The owners used to charge more money than it was necessary for electricity bill or as maintenance.”

“There have been cases in the past where if any guests visited the tenant and stayed for a day or two, the owner would charge an additional amount per extra person per day. It’ll put an end to this and give equal rights to both the parties,” he added.

The new bill replaced the Tamil Nadu Buildings (Lease and Control) Act, 1960, which was also called as Rent Control Act and was broadly known to resolve disputes between the tenants and the landlords.

Travelling the risky way

SHREYA BASAK

Chennai: As many as 20 youth were detained at Railway Protection Force (RPF) office, Thirumayilai on Tuesday afternoon for footboard travelling on the Beach-Velachery MRTS train.

Prakash (16) from Thiruvakkara village was having a "thrill" by standing at the edge of the door, when he was caught and detained by a RPF staff at the Mylapore station.

According to Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) Staff at Indira Nagar station, footboard travelling is most rampant during the rush hours from eight to ten in the morning and six to eight in the evening and mostly done by school kids and youth.

"It's not that there is not enough space inside the compartments, it's a thrill for the youth to travel in this way even if the coaches are empty often leading to fatal accidents," said Shiva (23), a businessman man and a regular commuter from Indira Nagar station.



Police in action at Thirumayilai station |SHREYA BASAK

A sub-inspector at the Thirumayilai Railway Station said "There are always three Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel patrolling the stations 24 hours, each in one shift and a total of three shifts from 6.00 am-1.00 pm, 1.00 pm-9.00 pm and 9.00 pm-6.00 am. During the rush hours, we often have to put two more personnel on duty to manage the passengers

violating the law under Section 156 of RPF Act 1989."

Under Section 156 of the RPF Act travelling on roof, step and footboard of any carriage or engine is a punishable offence.

According to commuters at Indira Nagar station, RPF personnel are not available in all stations. They are seen from Park Town station onwards and the

busier ones are moving close to Chennai Central. There are no personnel inside the trains to check this violation.

"There are two to three floors in each station and one personnel has to look after all of them, so he might not be seen on the platform always," said the RPF SI. "There are 13 to 15 coaches in one train and how is it possible to check all at once?"

Since last year, the RPF has held around 182 programmes in stations in association with station staff, schools near the stations and volunteers to spread awareness of the risks of footboard travelling and its fatal consequences. There are a minimum of two to three such programmes every month. There are also announcements made in the compartments and messages displayed on the electronic board urging people not to travel on footboards.

"Automatic doors might be a solution to this problem but it's more on the individual to realise their own safety," added the SI.

Drinks to cost more

SHUBABRATA GARAI

Chennai: People in Chennai will soon have to shell out more for their favourite tippie because bars across the state will increase the price of liquors after the State Government decided to raise the bar licence fee for hotels and clubs. According to a recent order from the Home, Prohibition and Excise department the application fee for a new licence has been increased to Rs 7500 from Rs 3000. The licence fee has also been increased to Rs 25,000 from Rs 10,000 with effect from April 1.

Manikandan, Bar manager at the BOATS said, "Once the licence fee is increased we have to increase the price of liquor, mainly the imported one. The price of imported liquor here is less compared to other resto bars. We have no alternative other than increasing the price."

Tilak Mehta, Food and Beverage Manager at the Taj Coromandel said, "Taj itself is a brand and identity. Customers love our service. For the time being we

don't want to worry our customers by increasing the price of liquors." Though Taj Coromandel preferred not to increase the price of liquor, the other five star hotels in the city have decided to increase the price of liquor.

Anand, Business Manager at the Hilton Chennai said, "Not only the licence fee but the government also raised the annual privilege fee. We now have to pay an extra Rs 4 lakh as the annual privilege fee. This will affect the customers. We have to increase the price of liquor."

Some of the bar owners expressed their anger over the State government's decision.

An executive at the HIX Restaurant & Bar said, "Every one or two month the State Government is coming out with new kind of rules and regulations. We are not happy with the recent increase of licence fee of bars. It will affect our business."

The bar owners at Adyar said that most of their customers were students from IIT Madras and

nearby educational institutions. So increasing the price of liquors might see a decline in the number of customers in their bars but the government has left them with no option.

"The customer is our only source of revenue. Once we have to pay more taxes we have to increase the price of food items and liquor in our bar but this might reduce the number of guests in our bar," said Saifullah Mir, Manager of SNS bar. Lakshmi pathi, account manager of Black Pearl said, "Our management will take the final decision but there is a possibility that the price of liquor may go up once the order is implemented. But we might lose our customers."

Some of the bars and clubs like 3Bs, Hoppipola and Club Crest haven't taken any decision for the time being but might increase the price of liquor once the rates kick in.

Few students of IIT-Madras said they might stop going to the local bars if the increase in price of liquor does take place.

ELECTIONS 2019

Every party woos the 'Captain'

SIDDHARTH SHARMA

Chennai: The DMK and AIADMK, the two major political parties in the state, are trying to gather support from other smaller regional parties like the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam for the elections expected to be held in April-May.

DMDK, a party started by yesterday actor-turned-politician Vijayakanth fondly known as 'Captain', held a strong position in the state assembly, winning 29 seats in the 234 member assembly in 2011 elections.

The 66-year-old leader is again getting attention from the two major players

in the state politics because of the upcoming by-polls in 22 state assembly constituencies, which will be held simultaneously with the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. However his party did not win a single seat in the 2016 Assembly poll.

According to a report in The Times of India, Tamilisai Soundarajan, the state president of BJP, who has already allied with the ruling AIADMK, said that the BJP was confident of getting the support of Vijayakanth's party. Another report from The Hindu, said that DMK had asked Congress to vacate one seat from its quota for DMDK.

Political experts believe that the support of smaller regional parties will be crucial for both the DMK and AIADMK.

According to A S Pannerselvam, an expert in Tamil Nadu politics, the 2019 elections are not only about the Lok Sabha seats but more about the 22 assembly seats.

"The government right now is in minority in the state assembly. After Jayalalithaa's death in 2016, TTV Dinakaran won her seat, and then a few MLAs were also sacked,

leaving the AIADMK with 115 MLAs when the majority mark is 118. The only thing keeping them in power is the reduced strength of the assembly with 22 vacant seats", said Pannerselvam.

The 22 assembly seats are mos-



Captain Vijayakanth |THE TIMES OF INDIA

ly in north Tamil Nadu, where the DMDK is relatively stronger. This makes the party an important player in the upcoming elections.

"If the DMK wins these 22 seats they could be back in power in the state, which is why having strong allies is important for them," said Pannerselvam.

However, general opinion on the relevance of Vijayakanth's party in the upcoming election is varied.

"No one is going to vote for parties like DMDK, it is the DMK that will come back", said Karman who runs a tea stall near Tidel Park.

Ramesh D, a provision store owner in Adyar, said "Vijayakanth's time as a leader is over. His wife makes all the decisions for him and so she should be the leader. He is not even physically fit to lead a party since his health keeps deteriorating."

Bala Rajathi, a resident of Ashok Nagar who works in Tidel Park, said "Vijayakanth is still relevant because people are confused between the two major parties of the state. Parties like the DMDK will decide the fate of the state in the upcoming General Elections."

Kamal's party working in villages

SAURABH SAGAR

Chennai: Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM), a party floated by Actor and Director Kamal Haasan, has completed a year in Tamil Nadu politics.

The veteran actor launched his political party on February 21 last year in Madurai.

The party focuses on Dravidian solidarity represented in its election symbol.

MNM spokesperson Murali Abbas (49), claimed that within one year the party had reached out to all the districts of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry and that the party might contest all the 39 seats in Tamil Nadu and one in Pondicherry.

When asked about forming a coalition with DMK and Congress in the upcoming Lok Sabha election, a MNM member said, "Our whole politics has been against corrupt governance. We have been asking people not to sell their votes for money."

"While we are trying to form a non-corrupt government, we cannot enter into a coalition with corrupt parties like DMK and AIADMK."

MNM was the first party in Tamil Nadu in which, non-party members could nominate themselves as candidates, he added.

Abbas said, "We have good popularity among youngsters but now a lot of women in their 40s and 50s are joining us. I think they are fed up with AIADMK."

MNM has launched an online campaign through the Maiaam Whistle app, which allows users to anonymously report civic and social issues through pictures and videos.

Abbas said that the party had also worked actively in the villages and gram sabhas.

"Gram sabhas are the truest form of democracy. We are holding gram sabhas and discussing problems there. So, far we have effectively passed resolutions against alcoholism, lack of water and civic issues."

"Seeing us DMK President Stalin has also started holding gram sabhas," he claimed.

The slogan of fighting corrupt politics has attracted few youngsters. Some expect that Kamal Haasan will provide non-corrupt governance.

Mohammad Asif (25), who runs



MNM leader Kamal |HT

a tea stall in Alwarpet near the MNM office said, "I think he can upset many political pundits like Arvind Kejriwal did in Delhi. I support him because of his slogan of clean politics and development. A few days back, when MNM completed a year, thousands of people thronged the MNM's office, which shows his work in one year."

Bhaskaran, 52, a farmer hoped to see Kamal's reel life image in his politics.

"Just like he fights corruption in his movies, I hope he fights social evils and corruption through his political endeavours as well", said Bhaskaran.

T.K.S Elangovan, a DMK Rajya Sabha MP, when asked about rise of MNM in Tamil politics he said, "MNM is a new party and I don't think they are a threat to us."

"However, every secular party will help us in defeating the AIADMK and BJP. We are the single largest party in Tamil Nadu with over 30 percent vote share."

"We cannot give seats to a party which is contesting for the first time."

MNM is hoping to cash in on votes from Kamal fans.



Cycle sharing kiosks have been set up at four metro stations |SANAL

Cycles up for sharing

SANAL SUDEVAN

Chennai: With the motto of developing an eco-friendly public transport system and providing last mile connectivity, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) launched a cycle-sharing scheme on February 27.

The GCC, along with the Chennai Smart City Limited and Hyderabad-based Smartbike Mobility Private Limited- launched the cycle sharing service under Private Public Partnership (PPP) in four metro stations across the city, and installed 20 other feeder stations in the city.

To share a cycle, one has to download the Smartbike Mobility app and can return the cycle at any Smartbike station in the city.

The system is currently successfully operating in Hyderabad and Delhi.

The services are open at Anna Nagar Tower Metro station, Anna Nagar East Metro Station, Shenoy Nagar Metro Station and feeder stations are at Kandaswamy College, Valliammal School, among various other locations.

The user charge for the first hour

is Rs. 5 and Rs. 9 for every additional 30 minutes. The charge for a one-day pass is Rs.49 and for three-month pass is Rs.699.

In 2010, the then Mayor M. Subramaniam had decided to launch a cycle sharing system in the city, but it was kept on the back burner after the metro project was launched by the State government.

Mr.Ranjit Srivasatava, Vice President of Marketing and Operations, SmartBike said, "We are planning install such stations at 500 locations with 5000 cycles within next six months."

"We will have cycle stations at all major tourists and other crowded places," he further added.

There was a positive response from the residents of Anna Nagar.

Allen Joseph (20), a BA student at Loyola College said, "This is a good step towards easing out the traffic. I can think of using this bicycle to go to college."

Mr. Suresh K (35), a resident, said, "The metro route between St. Thomas Mount Road to Chennai Central has not been successful because of not having last mile connectivity, and obviously the metro fare is very high compared to

other cities."

"This cycle-sharing system will certainly help the residents in Anna Nagar," he added.

Last mile connectivity and pollution-free environment are the main reasons for the launch of this model. As per residents, there are no bus services available to the parts of Shenoy Nagar and on the Vardhaman Streets. People depend on their private vehicles for the transportation.

Ramesh Ramalingam, Assistant Engineer, Greater Chennai Corporation, said, "We will expand this project to the other parts of Chennai as soon as we receive approval from the Municipal Commissioner."

"We conducted a survey in Anna Nagar and found that there is a problem of last mile connectivity in this area."

"So, that is the reason we have launched it here and there is a decent crowd in this area with schools and colleges in the near areas."

"We hope to see many more people using these cycles as these are also eco friendly--" said Ramesh Ramalingam.

Piracy or online sales have not hit book stores business

SABITRI DHAKAL

Chennai: Book sellers in Chennai claim that the piracy and online sales of books have not dented their business and people have not given up their reading habit.

"Though there are pirated books available in the market, the number of customers we used to have in the past hasn't declined. Each day at least 50-60 people are visiting the store to buy the original books," said a staff member at Words & Worth, Besant Nagar.

B K Narendranathan, Senior Staff at Higginbotham on Anna Salai, said, "It is the reading habit of the people that brings them to

the book stores. People will just not buy books to keep them in the homes. I don't think the reading habit of people will go away pretty soon. These days, schools are buying original books in bulk to motivate students to read. The number of school children visiting the book stores and purchasing the books has gone up."

However some stores have also launched online operations to stay in the market.

"There is a cut-throat competition in the business. If one is not careful then it's difficult. This is why I moved to online delivery," said S Bharathwaj, another book seller in Mount Road. He has started earning an extra of Rs 6,000



Despite the rise of e-books the demand for hard bound books is still there |SABITRI DHAKAL

monthly. He earns Rs 60,000 a month from the sales of books.

"People buy pirated books because they are cheaper. Whatever the quality, people are interested in reading. But not all books they buy

are pirated. People come searching for original copy of specific books in stores. They generally buy pirated versions of fiction. But for other they come to the stores," said Bharathwaj.

K Ravi, Proprietor of Dream Books World on Anna Salai, said "People are buying the original books for their quality. The pirated books have pages missing in them. So people don't want to buy books

with missing pages."

Ravi admitted that there was some competition from the digital versions because the "mobile has become an easier tool for people in reading wherever, whenever they like."

Narendranathan said "Though people have started reading online every item is not available on the internet. There are also issues where you need to pay to get access for reading."

The introduction of big e-market retailers like Amazon India, Flipkart and Ebay has made life difficult for local book sellers but their business is still well and alive.

Some readers though find pirated books a big attraction given

that it's cheaper than buying them published by original publications.

M Gokul (23), a resident of Kotturpuram added "The pirated books are cheaper than the original one. The price of pirated books is so low that it tempts me to buy at least one whenever I am walking on the road. Though the paper quality and print aren't that good I still buy pirated books from the street vendors."

An encouraging sign for the local players is that the share of E-books in the market has seen a decline in the recent past. A survey by the UK Publishers' Association found that sales of e-books went down by 17% in 2016, while physical book sales rose by 8%.

No toilets at tourist spots

SIDDHARTH SHARMA

Chennai: Very few of the 25 tourist spots in Chennai have public toilets for the millions of people who visit them through the year.

The 25 tourist spots listed by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation include the Marina Beach, Eliot's Beach, Kapaleeshwara Temple, Fort St. George and Parthasarthy temple.

The Marina Beach, which is one of the main tourist spots in the city, has just one public toilet built under the Swachh Bharat Mission. This toilet is maintained by the Greater Chennai Corporation and is the only one available on the 3.5 km stretch from Light House to MGR Memorial. This part of the beach is more popular among tourists.

In 2017, Chennai saw more than 39 million tourists out of which 37.7 million were domestic and 1.3 million were international tourists, according to TNTDC. The number



Popular tourist places do not have toilets with Marina Beach having just one public toilet | SIDDHARTH SHARMA

of tourists is calculated based on the number of tickets sold and tourist buses taken.

"I didn't see any public toilets here because of which I had to travel to my hotel which is twenty minutes away from the beach", said Vladimir Dolzal, a Czech tourist who was visiting Marina.

St. George Fort Museum is

another tourist attraction a few kilometres north of the Marina. The Fort complex is surrounded by buildings from the colonial era which are of significance to most of tourists in Chennai. Yet, the area does not have a single public toilet in the vicinity.

Valeria Induykova, a tourist from Russia said she could not find a

public toilet near the Fort area when she was out exploring areas near Parry's Corner.

Eliot's Beach in Besant Nagar is another place popular among both tourists and Chennaites. The place has no public toilets and the visitors are often forced to relieve themselves in the toilets at one of the many restaurants on the beach.

According to the Greater Chennai Corporation, the authority responsible for building and maintaining public toilets in the city, the location of these toilets can be easily found online.

Nandakumar, Assistant Public Relations Officer at the Greater Chennai Corporation, said that the locations of these toilets were regularly updated on the GCC website as well as on Google Maps.

"We have 924 public toilets in the city with a capacity of over 6,700. These toilets are visible on Google if one needs to access them", said Nandakumar.

Lack of playing space affects city children

SABITRI DHAKAL

Chennai: Children playing on roads is a common sight in Chennai. They play on roads because there are not enough playgrounds or open spaces. Few playing spaces that are there are often occupied by older boys.

"The playground where we go is quite far and it's small too. It is often occupied by senior boys. We either have to wait until they leave or have to play within a small space," said R Mullai a 13 year old boy residing in Kotturpuram.

The children are also harassed by senior boys. "The senior boys shout to us when our ball moves to the areas they are playing in," said H Shaker (13).

There is lack of security in

certain areas here.

"Some boys drink alcohol and break the bottles leaving the shattered glasses all around. Some of us injured our foot when we accidentally stepped on the glass pieces," said Mullai.

A Carol (7) and A Jeremy (5) play on the road near their residence in Besant Nagar. "My children love playing but there is no playground in the area. It's just a little cycling and running," said A Veulah (38), mother of the kids.

However, it is risky to skate or cycle either on the pavements or on the busy roads.

"There is no fun in riding cycle if there is not much space. As there are no spacious parks here I cycle on the roads," said S Samuel (10), a resident of Kotturpuram.

R Usha (47) grandmother of a two year old child said, "The child needs a proper playing space but as there isn't any such playing ground in the areas nearby, I just make him walk around."

According to experts, playing games is necessary for physical, social and psychological development of children. It promotes physical fitness and mental well being of children.

"For promotion of the healthy development of children, playing spaces should be well maintained and well equipped with playing materials [sic]," said Dr P Gopinathan, Assistant Professor, Sports Psychology and Sports Coaching, Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University (TNPSU).

Mixed reaction to board exams for 5 & 8 stds

SMRUTI DESHPANDE

Chennai: Though the Tamil Nadu Government decided not to hold board exams for Classes 5 to 8 this year, the proposal has not been canned entirely.

Initially, the Tamil Nadu Government decided to hold the exams this year itself but a day later Education Minister K A Sengottaiyan clarified that the exams would not be held this year.

In 2017, the Central Government scrapped the 'no detention policy' that was introduced in 2009, which disallowed schools from detaining students till Class 8, to prevent the students from dropping out.

The Centre's decision was based on reports that the 'no detention policy' had affected the quality of education in schools and the students were in some cases unable to even spell their names..

However, the decision was left to the discretion of the states. Tamil Nadu decided to conduct board examinations for Classes 5 and 8 and also continue with the no detention policy.

Welcoming the State Government's decision, Kalpana K, Headmistress, Chennai High School, Kottur, said "Assessment is mandatory for development. I really appreciate this decision. Maybe the pattern should change. We must assess the students' language skills like reading,

speaking and comprehension."

The decision is contentious as some parents said that it would put an end to the inquisitive years of children and limit them to learning just for the sake of exams. But others say that it would help them manage pressure.

"I personally feel that it will give rise to the culture of negative competition at a very young age," said M R Nandini, a parent and a homemaker.

Aparna Ghosh, a parent and a homemaker, said "I don't support board exams for class five but for class eight. This will prepare children well in advance to face tenth and twelfth standard exams."

Private schools view the decision as an unnecessary intervention in children's playful years.

Julius Caesar, 54, Principal of Nellai Nadar Matriculation Higher Secondary School, said "We will fight the decision tooth and nail. School days are to celebrate learning and marks are no parameter to decide the ability of children."

"Why do we tend to put every child in the same category when they're all very different? The decision will create unwanted stress at the cost of their originality and creativity."

"The Kanchipuram District Self Financing Schools Association (KDSFSA) has decided to fight against the decision," he added.



There are 14 types of plastic banned by the government | SHREYA BASAK

Coping with the plastic ban

SHREYA BASAK

Chennai: The Greater Chennai Corporation appears to be finding it difficult to enforce the ban on the use of plastics, even a large number of people are moving on to eco-friendly alternatives.

Many small shops across the city are still using plastic bags and plastic products on a daily basis and the majority of garbage bins are filled with polythene bags.

"There are thousands of Chennai Corporation workers; but they will never be able to enforce completely plastic-free zones and monitor a population of ten millions unless people stop using the banned material," said G.Gopalkrishnan, Joint Chief Environmental Engineer, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB). The Tamil Nadu Government

banned with effect from January 1, 2019 the use of plastic bags, plates, cups and sheets. It organized several awareness programs to eradicate the use of plastic.

Gopalkrishnan said that the District Collector had formed committees at different levels, vested with the powers to enforce the ban. On February 13, the Tamil Nadu Government introduced a Bill to impose a penalty ranging from Rs 25,000 to Rs 2 lakh on people flouting the ban.

The trade licence of the business house would be cancelled by the government if the offence is committed for the fourth time.

While bigger shops have hung boards outside their shops reading 'Bring Your Own Bag', Panchavaram (45), a fruit seller at Adyar has to pay Rs 170 for 50 pieces of cloth bags. Earlier he paid

Rs 40 for 50 polythene bags.

"One may complain now of higher expenses but in the long run cloth bags are costlier yet cheaper and more sustainable," added Gopalkrishnan.

Kutti (30), a rag-picker at Adyar said that her earning from sale of plastic materials had gradually gone down from Rs. 1000 to Rs.300 a week following the ban.

Suresh(30), a rag-picker at Kotturpuram has been finding more plastic bottles nowadays than any other plastic material.

A senior official at TNPCB said, "There hasn't been a ban on plastic bottles as of now. It is being considered and will be done, step by step. However, a deadline of 2020 has been granted by the Tamil Nadu government to stop the manufacturing of all kinds of thick plastic material."

Cleaning up of Adyar estuary

SAMANTHA SHAJI

Chennai: As the garbage dumped near the Adyar estuary isn't cleaned thoroughly, the Zero Kuppai Movement has picked up the slack in a bid to help save the environment from further deterioration and damage.

The area around the estuary, also known as the Srinivasapuram slum, was one of the worst hit during the December 2015 floods that ravaged Chennai.

Since then, the movement, a group of trekkers, has periodically taken up such clean up drives in areas that require cleaning.

"This part of Adyar doesn't come under the city corporation. A private contractor is paid to collect the garbage from this area. The contractor only cares about finishing his monthly requirement of garbage cleaning up. Once he has achieved that, he doesn't care for the garbage that may be left behind," says Rochish S., a coordinator with Zero Kuppai.

Right after the 2015 floods, the group conducted weekly clean up drives to rid the river of debris left in it after the floods. The group has also tried and included the residents of the slum by educating them about the importance of correct

garbage disposal methods.

Though they were initially quite resistant and unmotivated to help the group with the cleaning of the estuary, over time, they have become more open and responsive to the efforts of the group, according to a volunteer associated with the Zero Kuppai.

There are around 200 homes in this area but only eight dustbins have been fixed for the people to make use of.

Zero Kuppai can't place more dustbins legally, and hence take up such drives to help clean the place. There is no door-to-door

garbage collection either, which adds to the garbage which is collected at the mouth of the river.

The movement has also undertaken such clean up drives in other parts of the city like Nochi nagar, towards north of Chennai.

Branches of the Zero Kuppai Movement are also engaged in helping the environment with different focuses like ridding the city of loose plastic around the city.

"Though we are all working very hard, the results are very gradual. Not many people understand the importance of what we are trying to do. But we aren't giving up on our efforts," Rochish said.



The estuary is cleaned periodically | ZERO KUPPAI

Stray dogs guard street and its residents

SAMIKSHA GOEL

Chennai: An army of 11 stray dogs fed and taken care of by a family in the 8th street of Agathiyar Nagar, a Villivakkam neighbourhood, guards the street and protects its residents.

According to the residents, it has been three years that the dogs have been here and there has not been a single incident of theft. The dogs chase anybody who is rushing on bike or seems suspicious to them.

Three years ago, when Karunya Shree (18) started feeding Revathi, a few months old pup, she had no idea that the dog would become a part of her family.

"We feed all of the dogs but Revathi stays in our house while others come and go all day. The dogs get along well and she is the leader of the pack," she said.

Shree's parents would not allow her to stay close to the stray dogs because of her bad immunity. Her brother was also prevented from adopting a Labrador.

"I was surprised when my father went and fed a stray dog biscuits. Then some other residents also started feeding the dogs on our street; my mother made it a point to feed them every day," she said.

The family called up the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and got the dogs vaccinated and sterilized.

"Initially there were only five to six dogs but when my mom started feeding



Vasudevan taking the dogs for a walk | SAMIKSHA GOEL

the dogs a year ago, the army grew to 11," she added. On the possibility of more dogs coming in, Shree said that now these 11 didn't let any other dog enter the street.

Meena Vasudevan (49) feeds the dogs milk, chicken or rice twice every day. "They only prefer chicken. If on some days, I give them curd rice, they give me this 'what kind of food are you

giving me' look," she said.

Shree's father, Vasudevan (51) said that recently, a man snatched a gold chain from a woman walking on the Thirumangalam road nearby. Now these dogs make sure that no such incident happens on 8th street.

However, sometimes they bark unnecessarily, scaring children and people passing.

According to the Vasudevan family, while some residents support them feeding the dogs, others have fought with them. Once, the family recalled, the dogs started barking at a woman who was speeding. She stopped her bike and started screaming on the road.

"My mother also went and started screaming. The woman said that because we are feeding them, the dogs are barking and creating trouble for everybody on the street," said Shree.

Meena Vasudevan said, "We cannot just feed them for five days and then stop feeding them. We will feel guilty as they would not even go anywhere but our street."

"They are stray dogs, if we will not feed them, who else would?" asked Vasudevan.

Food for all the dogs costs the family Rs 5,000 a month, which they think is affordable. Vasudevan takes all the dogs for a walk in the evening and at night.

All of the dogs have names. There is Rose who got its name because of the colour of his nose. Then there is Brownie who is brown in colour.

The family had once called SPCA to take Rose because she would unnecessarily bark at everyone. "Our neighbour who only feeds Rose got him back. While some residents appreciate the presence of dogs, many others have adapted to it," Shree said

Shree who is a NEET aspirant, said that after she became a doctor, she wanted to open a centre only for stray dogs.

Toiling away their lives for incentives

SAMIKSHA GOEL SAURABH SAGAR

Chennai: Swiggy, Zomato and Uber workers say they work for several days straight to benefit from the companies' incentive based system, often compromising on health and living a stressful life.

In Swiggy, there are three levels of basic incentives based on the amount earned through the orders delivered, the workers say. These include, weekday incentives, weekend incentives and monthly incentives. There are incentives for late night shifts (beyond 11pm) and rainy days as well.

K. Ramesh(36), a Swiggy worker said, "Incentives force us to work during unnatural hours. I work for 12 hours on weekdays and more than 12 on weekends. There is no leave for work here, unlike Zomato which gives a day off in a week to its workers."

According to him, Swiggy transfers Rs35 to the bank account of its workers for a delivery and if the worker has delivered orders amounting to Rs 3500, they get an incentive of Rs 450. To earn a maximum weekly incentive of Rs 1000 on weekdays and Rs1500 on weekends, a worker should have delivered orders amounting to Rs 4,400.

"We cannot rely just on the earning from delivery as it's not enough to go on with our daily lives, which fuels the drive to earn more through these incentives," said Ramesh.

Balaji (21), a Zomato worker who is a student in Madras University said, "We need to deliver minimum 7 orders a day. We get Rs 30 for one delivered order."

"Since its not a fixed time job, it does not occur to me while working that I have worked for 12 hours or so as we are always in a hurry to deliver orders. But all this is affecting my studies."

Both Ramesh and Balaji talked about the lack of health and travel allowance for the workers..

"A few weeks ago, one worker met a fatal accident while delivering food, but the company did not come for any help," said Balaji.

"The only way to reach the higher brackets of the incentive system is to put in more hours to deliver many more orders. This is the reason why workers end up working from 7 am in the morning to 3 am next morning (20 hours), so that they can make the most from the incentives," said Chandrika Venkaraman, a blogger and a trade union activist.

On similar lines, In Uber, the current incentive system requires a driver to make 54 trips during weekdays for which they get paid Rs 2700, in addition to the fare.

In most cases, itbecomes impossible to achieve these targets simply because the driver has no control.

"Once I worked 14-15 hours a day and somehow managed to complete 53 trips. I waited hoping that I will be assigned the last trip but it never happened and the deadline was over", said Muthuswamy (30), an Uber driver.

The Swiggy workers in December last year protested when the service charge was reduced from a base price of Rs 36 for 4 kms to Rs 35 for 4 Kms.

Swiggy has promised that they'll look into the matter..

Mylapore hosts 110 year old typewriting school

SAMIKSHA GOEL

Chennai: Computers have not replaced the typewriters that continue to clack away at the 110 year-old school for shorthand and typewriting on Mylapore's Kutcheri Road.

The Shorthand School was started by P Srikandaiyer in 1909. His great grandchild, Padmanabhan (68) is the only teacher in the school for 50 years now. He finished school and took over his father's job in 1969.

Many Government jobs require typewriting speed certificate, says Padmanabhan. On an average, 60 people join the school every six months before the typewriting exams begin in Tamil Nadu.

Padmanabhan takes 12 sessions every day with the first session starting as early as 6 am. He teaches the class for five minutes and the students practise for 40 minutes.

Talking about the name of the school, Padmanabhan said that his great grandfather used to teach shorthand. "My father continued the practice but I only focused on typewriting," he said.

"Now there is a great demand for shorthand but there is no staff. We cannot afford hiring teachers," he added.

Padmanabhan's sister, Parvati said that changing the name entailed a long legal procedure. Anyway, the school never really tried because "they like it as it is."

Parvati said "To print from computers, we need a printer which is expensive while printing from a typewriter costs only Rs 5 per page"

"However, for publications we can directly use the paper from a printer while that's not the case with pages printed from typewriters."

"Typewriting is a convenient choice only for learning and simple work," said Parvati.

Padmanabhan, Parvati and all their other siblings know typewriting.

However, times are changing. "My daughter is not at all interested in learning typewriting," said Padmanabhan.

The course is offered for Rs 350 per student. "It was never about money. If it was, the school would not have looked as it looks now," he said.

'Science at the Sabha' bridges the gap

'Informative, entertaining' event to be made biannual

SHUVABRATA GARAI SAURABH SAGAR

Chennai: The fourth edition of the 'Science at the Sabha' organized by the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai opened to a packed audience on February 24 at the Madras Music Academy.

Started in 2016, the event is aimed at anyone with an interest in science, irrespective of age or background.

An exhibition with 13 panels highlighting the contribution of various science institutes and their scientists was organized outside the venue.

The displayed panels showed the contributions of Scientists like Sir C.V. Raman, S. Chandrasekhar, India's first botanist Janaki Ammal and others.

"Since the last four years we have been organizing this event as part of our outreach programme. We try to keep the event close to the National Science Day i.e February 28. This year the number of attendees is much higher than in the past years which show the success of our event," said Gautam Menon, Faculty of The Institute of Mathematical Sciences.

"From next year we are planning to make this a biannual event. We started this event to bridge gap between general public and Indian scientists. We call Indian scientists every year to give a talk on their research without using any science jargons and people are supporting us."

The event saw four scientists speak about their work and related it to day to day life. The venue was packed with people from all age groups.

Risabh (14), a student, said, "It is very entertaining. Most of the people don't find science entertaining, but I think they should come here."

Gopikrishnan(24), a B.Tech graduate, said, "It is very informative. I think it needs promotion, so that other enthusiasts can also attend."



Panels highlighting the contribution of Indian scientists at the Science Sabha

'Indian cities are ecological disasters'

SHUVABRATA GARAI SAURABH SAGAR

Chennai: Rapidly growing Indian cities are an ecological disaster, according to Harini Nagendra, Author and Professor at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru.

Speaking at the Science at the Sabha, she asked the audience to think ecologically about the cities before it was too late. "The more rapidly we urbanise, the faster we are degrading our eco-system," she said.

"India stands second after China where the maximum urbanization occurred in the last 20 years. The United Nation (UN) World Urbanization Prospects: 2014, shows that by 2050, India will be 75 per cent urban," she added.

Two decades before the cities were a place for intellectual progress but now they were a magnet for ecological disaster. Most of the cities flood every two to three years.

"Urbanization creates an increased pressure on the environment. India will soon face the

worst water crisis and 21 cities are likely to run out of groundwater in the very next year whereas by 2030, 40 per cent of the Indians will have no access to drinking water," she warned.

The World Health Organization said recently in a study that children born in Indian cities would have 7-8 years less life expectancy.

Cities exploited nature and there have been instances in the ancient ages too. In the Mahabharata, the Pandavas destroyed the Khandava forest to build their capital Indraprastha.

Bangalore today had become so polluted that the city's Bellandur lake had started producing 10-ft high toxic foam.

Superbugs had appeared in all the water bodies of the Kazipally Industrial Area in Hyderabad. In the last 10-20 years lakes, wetlands had disappeared drastically in Chennai and Mumbai and so floods have become common in these cities.

A study has shown that if roads had trees lining them the temperature would be reduced by 5°C.

"So, before things run out of our hand we should be smart enough to build our smart cities," she said.

Sandhya Kaushik, an Assistant Professor at Tata Institute for Fundamental Research, Mumbai, gave an interesting lecture on "Traffic Rules in Our Nervous System. "What is common in our nervous system, movement of ants inside a capillary and roads in Indian Cities? They all suffer from traffic jams," she said.

"Neurons, the basic unit of nervous system, which, sense, integrate and transmit information, have cellular roads in them, the same like Indian cities."

"A lot of movements occur in these cellular roads. We can call them human roads."

"Cargo moves inside these cellular roads. Cargo is like little cars moving inside these roads. However, when observed through an electron microscope, we find that a lot of protein cargo does not move at all."

"These immovable proteins are 'fruits and flower sellers of Indian roads'."

"Like on Indian roads, cars

stop at fruit and flower sellers to buy, the same goes in neurons, this movable cargo is stopped by immovable proteins. This creates a traffic jam," she added.

"The traffic jams on roads can be prevented by reversing the vehicle or by changing lanes, the same goes for the neurons. The flow of cargo and traffic jams is necessary. The traffic jams occur in every healthy neuron. As long as there are roads, traffic is inevitable," she said.

Sitabhra Sinha, faculty at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, stressed how a complex system was very different from its component parts.

Knowing how each part of a complex system behaved was not enough to tell how the whole would behave.

"The whole is the sum of its parts," he said. "A mob, in which, each individual is law abiding but when they come together, they become violent."

Complex system emerged due to growth of simple systems at multiple levels. A reductionist approach to research, in which only

a part of a complex system was taken, made the process incomplete as some other aspect of the complete system was left behind.

He further gave an example of excitation. Each particle or human needs certain level of excitation. Mobs become excited after certain energy is given to them.

The same goes in human heart where, muscles excite to produce heartbeat.

The other speaker, a Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Awardee, Vijay Shenoy, Professor at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, spoke how electrons contributed in every stage of the progress of humanity.

He said that Diamond and Graphite are both made of carbon atoms but Diamond is an insulator where as Graphite a Conductor. Maybe in coming days we would come across certain substance which can act both as a conductor and insulator.

"Currently we are in the era of semi-conductors which is the mobile age and progressing towards an era of artificial Intelligence," he added.

Football bodies fight it out

SANAL SUDEVAN

Chennai: The tussle between the Chennai Football Association (CFA) and Tamil Nadu Football Association (TNFA) has intensified after the former approached the Madras High Court for a resolution.

As per media reports, the CFA had written a letter to the All India Football Federation (AIFF) in December last year asking the national body to intervene against the TNFA restrained referees from officiating in the second division matches.

The matches are conducted by the district association.

The tussle started when the TNFA asked CFA to vacate the office that was allotted to them in Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Periyar.

The CFA refused to vacate the office. F. Madurai, a member of the Chennai Football Association said, "The TNFA disconnected water and electricity supply to our office. They say that the JN stadium offices should be allotted to the state



Nehru Stadium, homeground of Chennaiyin F.C | SANAL

sports organization and not district organizations."

Bhagawati Raj, member of the opposing TNFA said, "The matter is sub judice. We cannot comment on this."

Players are unable to play state tournaments due to the fight.

Dilipan (23), a footballer from Vyasarpadi, said "There are only two or three Tamil Nadu players in ChennaiyinFC. Rest all are from the

other states."

U. Yogesh (16) was the captain of the Chennai district juniors' team last year and won the State tournament, scoring four goals. But during the selection, he was overlooked by the selectors.

He said, "One player (who did not wish to be named) played for just 15 minutes in every match of the tournament and was selected for the state team."

Saying more than a thousand words

SAMANTHA SHAJI

Chennai: The second edition of the month long Chennai Photo Biennale, showcasing artwork by national and international artists, commenced on February 22, 2019, at different locations in the city, with the aim of making photography more accessible to the common man.

Installations from the Biennale have been erected at various venues around the city. In a city where traditional art forms are have always thrived, the Biennale offers a change in the pace and kind of conversation that art encourages.

Each artist at the Biennale has a different style and technique which comes through in their artwork and enhances the topic their exhibition focuses on. Artwork by students from the National Institute of Design and National Institute of Fashion Technology are also on display.

Vijay Jodha's exhibit, named The First Witness, is a series of black and white pictures of the wi-

dows of farmers in Telangana who killed themselves in the face of mounting agrarian crisis. It aims to put faces to the victims and the primary witnesses of the on-going tragedy.

Giving faces and names to those affected by the crisis makes the issue more tangible to the otherwise oblivious urban dwellers, according to the artist.

Manit Sriwanichpoom, a leading artist from Thailand, exhibited his photo series called The Pink Man. The series features various scenes in black and white with the only color being a man in a pink tuxedo.

The series is a photo commentary on the consumerist habit that has overtaken the artist's country.

It can however also be extended to the rest of the world.

The Pink Man, with his various expressions, exudes an eerie feeling, according to some of those who were present at the Biennale.

There are also workshops and talks conducted to facilitate an open dialogue between the audience and the artists. Guided



Pictures displayed at the exhibition | HELLOMADRAS

walks and film screenings have also scheduled.

The Senate House, Government College of Art and the MRTS stations of Chintadripet, Kasturba Nagar and Thiruvanniyur are some of the venues where the artwork of the Biennale is on exhibition.

The Biennale, co-founded by the CPB Foundation and the Goethe-Institut/ Max Mueller Bhavan,

Chennai, has decided to choose sculptor Pushpamala N. as the Artistic Director for the second edition.

The philosophy for this edition is Fauna of Mirrors, an old Chinese myth that talks about an alternate universe that exists behind the mirror, another dimension which is home to unknown creatures and unknown worlds.

'India should play with Pak in World Cup'

SHIVAYAN ROY

Chennai: A cricket match between India and Pakistan has always been a riveting affair, especially when it is a World Cup tie or some other limited overs match.

The two nations are scheduled to face each other in June at the Cricket World Cup 2019 in England.

Amid calls for boycott, as many as four lakh people have registered for tickets for the India-Pakistan match on June 19. This shows that this game has a global reach despite the tension, reported The Sportstar.

The tension between the two nations has boiled onto the cricket pitch after the terrorist attack at Pulwama in which over 40

CRPF jawans were killed.

The Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI) has sent a letter to the International Cricket Council (ICC) urging them to ban Pakistan from the tournament because it was funding terrorism.

However, people feel that the gentleman's game should be handled in a manner that would live up to its reputation.

"Why should we boycott the game when we can easily beat the Pakistani side," remarked Kumaran Elumalai, an avid cricket fan and medical student.

"We've never lost to Pakistan in a World Cup tie before, then why should we forfeit the game and break that record? Why does the government need to drag its issues onto

the cricket pitch?" added Elumalai.

Nairath Kumar, an IT consultant from Chattisgarh, though had a contrasting opinion.

"Boycotting the game is a sort of symbolism, a message being sent out to Pakistan by India that we will not let them go lightly. We will lose two points by doing so; but even then I believe the Indian side should qualify given that we play to our strengths," said Kumar.

Sanjay Mullasery, a former Ranji player and also the former coach of the Tamil Nadu cricket team, feels that India should play Pakistan in the World Cup.

But after the mega event India should look to boycott Pakistan and also get other cricket

boards to do the same, he added

"Politics should not run into sports. Not playing the game gives Pakistan the points it needs to qualify," said Mullasery.

"The BCCI should pressure other boards to boycott Pakistan after the World Cup is over, similar to the treatment given to South Africa during apartheid. This will make Pakistan look into its issues internally."

"As a cricketer when you step on to the field, every opponent is your enemy. Playing Pakistan has an added weight but the aim always is to win the game."

The former cricketer asserted that the Indian national side would easily beat its rivals given the team's recent successes in overseas in every format.



Will India and Pakistan play meet in the 2019 World Cup? | REDIFF