# THE WORD

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### LAB JOURNAL OF THE ASIAN COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM



**Parties promise** loan waivers for students, farmers Page 2



**Violations of HC** ban on flex banners continue in city Page 3



Kallicharran back with book on his struggles Page 4

of Pollachi are in shock, not

understanding what exactly has

happened. Both these parties

(DMK and AIADMK) are looking

Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker

"There is no evidence for the

Jayaraman has denied allegations

that his family was involved in the

allegations made against me and

members of my family. We help

those who are affected and nobody

will be affected by us," he told The

Further, the victim who came

forward and complained to the

police also revealed in an interview

to The Lede that she had met Mr.

Jayaraman along with her brother

and that he had helped them file the

"It is clear that it is the DMK's

agenda. The party president M K

Stalin and former Minister K

Ponmudy have said that this case

will be beneficial for the DMK in

the elections," Jayaraman told The

Social media users had started an

online petition calling for a judicial

probe into the case, which was

signed by 1,34,000 people at the

for political mileage."

case

Hindu

case.

Hindu

## **Anti-incumbency grips** Outrage over bid to politicise Pollachi rape **Chennai ahead of LS poll**

#### NARESH SINGARAVELU

#### OMJASVIN M D

#### NEETHU S

CHENNAI: Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections on April 18, a strong sense of anti-incumbency and resentment against poor water supply are prevalent among voters across the three Lok Sabha constituencies in the city, according to a survey conducted by The Word.

Out of nearly 150 voters chosen at random and surveyed in Chennai North, Chennai South and Chennai Central constituencies in the city, 81.6 percent said 'no' when asked if they were satisfied with their constituency's MP.

The anti-incumbency sentiment was as high as 95 per cent in Chennai North alone which mostly has fishermen, labourers, and small scale workers. The AIADMK won the seat in 2014.

In Chennai Central constituency, won by the AIADMK, the anti-incumbency rate stood at 79.2 percent. People were especially miffed with the Rs. 2000 assistance scheme launched by the AIADMK

CHENNAI: A special voting booth

is to be set up at the Institute of

Mental Illness for its 200 inmates,

according to an official of the Elec-

Allaying concerns that these

people could be manipulated, Ba-

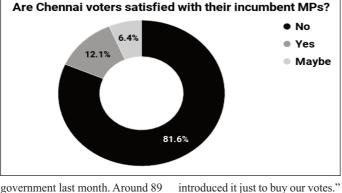
laji, Deputy Collector at the Public

(Elections) Office Tamil Nadu, said

tion Commission of India.

NEHA MALARA

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percent of the respondents believed the scheme will not be useful.

"It is not very different from bribing for votes. They [AIADMK] are selling votes," said Dhanalakshmi (43), a fruit seller. A similar trend was seen in the

Chennai South constituency, held by the AIADMK; here 78.6 percent of the respondents said they were not satisfied with the current MP and 21.2 percent expressed satisfaction with the current government. As much as 78.6 percent of the respondents opposed the cash assistance of Rs 2000.

Pushpalatha(40), a teacher from Guindy, said "They are giving back our own money. We all know they

have been made for six of these

which include visually impairment,

speech or hearing disability and lo-

comotor disability. This is the first

time the Election offices at various

levels have been asked to identify

persons with disabilities from the

Special ramps have been

constructed at polling booths and

wheelchairs will also be provided

**Booths for disabled** 

electoral roll.

However, 19.6 percent said that these schemes will indeed benefit poor people. 'This government did not do anything for the betterment of peo-

ple. We want a change", said Aravindan R (22), Alandur. of the biggest civic issues.Around 67 percent of respondents in the

quate water supply or poor drainage as their single biggest issue. Almost 90 percent people in Chennai north said poor water sup-

ported either water supply or drai-

ling through the media to reach out

to the differently abled. They were

asked to call in at a Whatsapp num-

ber (9445477699) to register but

The Election Commission of

India had also issued guidelines to

provide pick and drop facilities.

However, the officials are still

unclear on how to execute them.

These guidelines were released in

only about 100 responded.

Poor water supply remained one three constituencies cited inade-

ply was the major problem in their constituency and 76 percent of the respondents in Chennai South re-

nage as their biggest issue."Metro water authorities are providing water only on alternate days. Hence, we are facing a terrible water shortage," said Muthukumar R (45), an auto driver in Santhome, part of Chennai South.

P.Thanigaivel, a resident of Old Washermenpet said: "The metro water sometimes stinks and is in yellow colour. We use that for bathing and cooking as well."

Most residents in Washermenpet do not have bore-well facility and they're dependent on the handpumps and the water tankers. "We have to request houses with borewells to give us water," he says.

In Chennai South, many residents complained they got water only on alternate days. "We are facing acute shortage. Water is not coming from the borewells hence we are completely depend on Metro water", said Ramadevi K (22), who owns a tea shop in Alan-

The story was similar in Chennai Central. "With the summer approaching, the water problem will only increase. I can't afford water tankers," said Durai (52) an auto driver based in Egmore.

AMIR MALIK

NARESH SINGARAVELU

CHENNAI: The horrific case of the alleged sexual harassment of over 50 women in Pollachi and its subsequent politicisation has left residents of Chennai enraged.

The issue caused widespread outrage after popular Tamil magazine Nakkeeran released a heart-wrenching video of two unidentified victims pleading with their tormentors.

The editor of the magazine, Nakkeeran Gopal, released a separate video where he linked Tamil Nadu Deputy Speaker Pollachi V. Jayaraman and his sons to the case.

This was followed by an intense politicisation of the issue, with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) blaming the Deputy Speaker and the latter filing cases against Sabareesan, son-in-law of DMK president M K Stalin, and Nakkeeran Gopal, for an alleged misinformation campaign.

Reacting to the developments, residents in the city called for swift justice for the perpetrators.

"The issue has now been made into a political blame game, and the victims are now left with no

Monthly metro rail

justice," said Dhanalakshmi (43), a fruit seller. "All those involved in this must be given the worst possible," punishments she

asserted. The four accused, Κ Thirunavukkarasu (27), Ν Sabarirajan (25) aka Rishwanth, N Sathish (29) and T. Vasanthakumar (24) were arrested after an FIR was registered on February 24 based on

a complaint from a 19-year-old girl, who was befriended by Sabarirajan before being lured and allegedly sexually harassed in a car on February 12.

The name of a fifth accused, 'Bar' Nagaraj, an AIADMK functionary, who was expelled by the party on 11 March, has been

added to the FIR. "Without the assistance of politicians, how can these men exploit so many women for seven years without getting caught? Why did AIADMK expel Bar Nagaraj?" said Shanmugam (32), a cab driver. Dr R Mahendran, Vice President

of Makkal Needhi Maiam, told The Lede, an online news portal, "This is an outcry from the people. No political party should try to gain mileage out of this."

"For nearly 20 days, the people

Compost bins or dumping sites?

N SINDHU

time of writing.

CHENNAI: The Greater Chennai Corporation has decided to create small composting yards in parks and other open spaces to make the city free of garbage bins and prevent rubbish from piling up on the roadsides.

passes find few takers that day. Ramesh, a commuter said, "the fare is high

CHENNAI: Chennai Metro Rail Limited has already, it will only help the upper class."

Ganeshan, a Pharmacist who travels four to five

times a week from Ashok Nagar to Anna Nagar, said

introduced a monthly pass costing Rs 2500 that allows commuters to travel any number of times and

that a survey conducted at the institute concluded that the inmates were in a condition to vote. He pointed out that special booths had been previously set up at a blind school in Tondiarpet for the State Assembly elections.

According to the Election Commission's guidelines, Braille voter slips will be provided to help the visually handicapped people.

The Election Office, under the Greater Chennai Corporation, has also provided training to its staff in basic sign language with help from the CSI Higher Secondary School for Deaf and Dumb in Santhome.

Special provisions will be made for other differently abled voters in the upcoming General Elections with ramps, wheelchairs, special booths and a designated app.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2016 identifies 21 disabilities. The special provisions

for easy access. Currently, there are 913 locations in the city and one wheelchair will be provided for each location. However, there are 3754 polling booths in the city. Thus, each location may have more than one booth which will have to share the wheelchair.

Balaji adds, "It is very difficult to bridge the gap and provide for all. We have identified the total number of people with disabilities but are unclear on which booth will be provided the wheelchair."

The Commissionerate for the Differently Abled has estimated that a total of 57,000 people fall under these six categories. However, this number is dated and does not reflect the actual number of people. Balaji says, "The identification was done in 1980 and there has been no update since. We have added an extra 4000 from our side." The Election Office tried appea-

October last year but the election office here says that they were not implemented until January this year.

The ECI has also set up a helpline number (1950) and an app called 'Persons with Disabilities' to aid voters with all election-related queries. However, both facilities have not been successful, according to activists.

Disability rights activist TMN Deepak, Founder of 3 December Movement, has been working with the officials.

In an interview to The Hook, he said, "Even I have had no success in accessing 1950. The number does not connect. This cannot be the case. Why does the Chief Election Commissioner make statements that disabled people will be enrolled at the doorstep when you cannot even ensure access to a helpline?'

anywhere on the network for 30 days. The cards have a validity of 90 days and can be recharged before it expires.

Metro fares range between a minimum of Rs 10 and a maximum of Rs 70 with the fares doubling for the special class. With the Rs 2500 card, the average daily fare works out to Rs 84 for an unlimited number of trips.

"The card will help office goers avoid standing in long queue," said Senthil Kumar, station manager at the Central metro station.

However, Murugadoss, a ticket-issuer said there were not many takers for the monthly pass because people found it expensive "There is not much crowd at ticket booking either," he added.

"The scheme will work for those who travel many times a day," added another ticket issuer at the Central Metro.

David, ticket issuer, said that the card would help only those tourists who stayed in Chennai for a month. If Chennaiites could not travel on the metro, what purpose could the metro serve then?

Vladimir and Nicka, tourists from Russia, said the move was good but that they were leaving Chennai

if the metro reduced the fare, more passengers would come. "The metro then would not have to woo them by giving free rides," he added.

Mohammed Kauser, station manager at Central metro said only if a person travelled 4 to 5 times a week the cost of the monthly pass would be recovered. Otherwise the cost was too much for a person. After two or three months we might revoke the move.

David said "also, the card has only Rs 50 cashback value, if it is lost a hefty amount will be lost."

Kauser said that if the Chennai metro follows the Delhi metro approach, it would help both the metro and the commuters here. Passengers using the Delhi buy a new pass for Rs 150 of which Rs 50 is retained as security deposit and the fare is deducted for each trip. Passengers can recharge the pass for a minimum of Rs 200 each time.

Govindan S, a ticket checker did not see anyone with the monthly pass.

"I know that the metro has introduced this kind of move, but it is unlikely that we get to see a traveler with one such card," he said.

However, 169 micro composting centres which were set up across the city earlier, for processing compost from waste, have become dumping sites.

These compost centres have the capacity to convert up to five tonnes of bio-degradable waste into manure. This method of solid waste management was adopted to reduce the strain on dumpyards and save on the transportation costs.

The major issue with this system is the lack of records and poor waste collection methods. Segregation of garbage at source into biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste is an important step for sustainable solid waste management.

Many residents are not aware of source segregation or the process of composting followed in these micro composting centres.

Initially, the municipality had given two different coloured dustbins- green for biodegradable and red for non-biodegradable waste to implement source segregation of waste.

G Shivashankar, a resident of Kodambakkam, who lives close to a micro composting centre said, "People followed this for only a short period of time but the method failed eventually. Even when the residents handed over segregated waste, it was mixed up in the main bins by the municipality workers who were not trained to handle the wastes separately."

Jayaraman, a member of the Residents Welfare Association of Kodambakkam, said "The Corporation comes up with good ideas but none of this ever properly implemented. Earlier the centre here was functioning properly with waste being segregated properly, however now it is nothing more than another dumping ground filling the locality with bad smell. This is also because workers also tend to bring in plastic waste to these centres."

G Veerappan, Superintending Engineer of Solid Waste Department at the Corporation claimed that all the existing micro composting centres were functioning properly.

## 'Sexism exists in legal profession like in any other'

#### PRAGATI K B

CHENNAI: When a woman senior advocate faltered with her arguments last week at the Madras High Court, the judge asked her if she had had a busy morning in the kitchen that day.

Jayna Kothari, a human rights advocate with 20 years of experience behind her, was appearing before the Supreme Court in a saree. She was wearing the lawyer's band as mandated by Bar Council rules. One of the judges on the division bench asked her why she wasn't wearing the collar along with the band. The rules do not stipulate the collar and Kothari pointed this out. The judge turned to the other judge and grimaced in open court, "Ye kya pehen ke aa jaate hai, sab kuch dikhate hai." [Look at how they dress, showing everything.]

Kothari said "why he was looking at my neck, is beyond

me." Two weeks ago, on International Women's Day, Indira Jaising, the first woman Additional Solicitor General, wrote an open letter to the Chief Justice of the country on casual sexism in courts, asking him to step in and makes rules against it. Sexism in courts, women advocates say, manifests both

overtly and covertly. "Judges and male colleagues get patronising with us and take it upon themselves to coach us." said Ninni Susan Thomas, a lawyer from Delhi who was in the city to represent a prisoner.

Tanvi N. S, another lawyer, said "if we get even slightly assertive about our case, the judges push back. But if a male lawyer gets aggressive, he is lauded as valorous.

The profession itself demands such aggressive performances. But if a woman breaks from the

immediately shown her place," she adds.

Thomas said "clients don't want to engage with women lawyers. They don't repose faith in your competence. I just spent four hours convincing a prisoner, for whom I had just gotten a favourable order, that I know what I am doing. And all along, he kept looking to the male advocate for validation, who had previously given up on the case." Priyam Lizmary Cherian, an

advocate who appeared in the Navtej Johar judgment that decriminalised consensual gay sex, said "the ratio of women lawyers to male lawyers is very low. Because of the inherent bias against women, they are simply not given enough opportunities. Many law chambers do not take

women juniors as a rule." "Even if we have prepared the briefs and researched the case, a

stereotype of being meek, she is male colleague will be sent to argue, because the opposite counsel and the judge are more likely to take him more seriously than me," says Deepa Moondra, an advocate from Jaipur.

> There are about 8 women senior counsel designates in the Delhi High Court as opposed to 200 men.

> "Unless we have appeared in many high stakes matters, we don't get noticed and hence won't get designated as senior counsels. And because women aren't taken seriously, they aren't entrusted with substantial work. They remain juniors despite 20-30 years of experience or are relegated to minor tasks like getting an adjournment," says Thomas.

Pavitra Venkateswaran, a commercial cases lawyer, said that socialising was important in litigation, and women get excluded from it in the profession. "A boys club camaraderie exists, which a woman cannot penetrate."

I wouldn't want to be a part of the locker-room talk that men in the legal profession engage in outside the court. I find it offensive," says Pranjal Mehta, another advocate.

explains why socialising is important. "It makes you visible and that's how you get clients. The more the people know about you and your area of practice, the more the visibility," she said. And if women do socialise,

they are labelled as loose and available, says Naina Saraf, a Jaipur-based advocate. "If I have a pretty face and get a favourable order, rumours start flying," she adds

Maitreyi Krishnan, another advocate said, "There are strict hierarchies in the profession. Talking back to your senior and

arguing with a judge are considered transgressions and they can have repercussions on your practice. This is why calling out sexism is difficult." Krishnan added merely talking

about sexism was a narrow reading of the problem. Class, caste and gender prejudices were all interlinked.

Sudha Ramalingam, a senior lawyer here said that sexism was not distinct to just the legal profession, and existed like in any other field.

Krishnan said "Years of conditioning needs to be undone. A lot more women lawyers are joining the bar now and the scene is changing. Slowly, but definitely."

Krishnan said "Years of conditioning needs to be undone. A lot more women lawyers are joining the bar now and the scene is changing. Slowly, but definitely," says Krishnan.

Kothari



## **ELECTION 2019**

## **City plagued with civic issues as elections near**

#### NEETHU S NARESH SINGARAVELU OMJASVIN M D

CHENNAI: Nearly 150 voters in Chennai North, Chennai South and Chennai Central constituencies were chosen at random and their opinions sought on a variety of issues in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections scheduled for April 18.

Bad roads, lack of street lights and environmental neglect were some of the reasons why voters in North, Chennai especially Kaladipet and Tondiarpet were not happy with the AIADMK Government in Tamil Nadu and the Central Government.

"Although, there are CCTV cameras around the area, the road lights do not work in the nights, proving unsafe for women," said Arun Prasad, a resident of Tondiarpet and an IT employee.

Fishermen in Ennore said they faced complete neglect by the ruling Government and all the Central Government projects were against the environment.

"The thermal power and petrochemical industries continue to pollute the river and the Government has not done anything yet," said Sasikumar, a fisherman in Kaatukuppam, a village in Ennore.

"The Central Government project, Sagarmala, which aims to expand the Kamarajar port also poses a huge threat to the coastal environment," he said

The lack of public buses was another issue.

"The government must put a restriction to the growing number of share autos in the area. The buses have been reduced and share autos charge a lot to go to nearby places," says P. Mallikarjunan, a resident of Washermenpet.

In Chennai South, 22 people responded that drainage and mosquito menace were the main issues they were facing. People from Guindy, Alandur and Sholinganallur said they were facing traffic congestion during the rush hour and that the Government

was not doing anything to solve the problem. In Chennai Central, the biggest

problem was the poor water supply. The survey sought the opinion of the voters on whether they would vote for their favourite party or whether their votes would depend on the candidate.

In Chennai South constituency, 66.1 percent of the respondents said that their vote would be based on

nature, while coming back from work", said Latha M, an IT professional staying Ekkattuthangal Crimes like chain snatching have

face sexual harassment of a verbal

been on the rise and 14.3 percent of the respondents said this was the biggest problem women faced currently. As much as 17.9 percent said that the lack of proper regulations in TASMAC led to an



#### Poor water supply is one of the main issues in the city

the best candidate irrespective of the party he/she belonged to, whereas 26.8 percent said they would stand firmly with their favourite party. Apart from these, a minority of 7.1 percent said that they did not believe in elections and would vote for NOTA.

The numbers were similar for Chennai Central, with 61.5 percent saying they would vote for the best candidate and around 31 percent saying they would vote for their preferred party.

In Chennai North, 59 per cent of the respondents said they would vote for their preferred party and not just the candidate. When it came to issues faced by

issue.

women, only 1.8 percent of the respondents in Chennai South found the constituency to be safe for women and 14.3 percent of the respondents cited sexual harassment as their single biggest

"My co-workers and I regularly

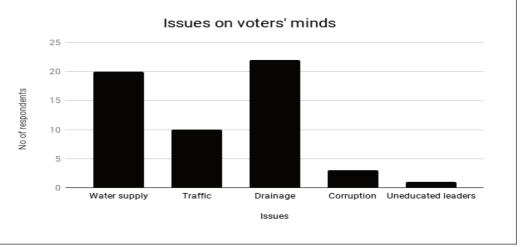
unsafe environment Most of the voters opposed the idea of film stars entering the fray.

In Chennai South, 58.9 percent of the respondents were against the idea of film stars entering mainstream politics. However, 33.9 percent welcomed this move and some people said that actors turned politicians like Kamal Hassan could bring a change to the system. In Chennai Central, a whopping 81 percent of the people surveyed were against the idea of film stars

in politics. However, in a marked shift, around 60 percent of respondents in Chennai North welcomed the idea of film stars in politics Demonetization and GST were

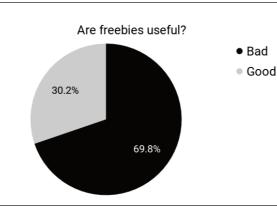
the other two biggest factors that caused angst among people. "It has been three years since demonetization, we still have not recovered to normal business," said

S. Vanmani, a vegetable market vendor in Washermenpet.

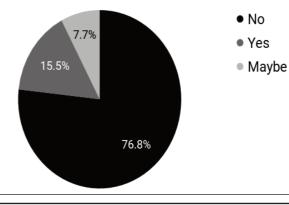




**DMK vs PMK Chennai North:** DMK vs DMDK **Chennai South: DMK vs AIADMK** 



#### Is the NDA alliance winnable in Tamil Nadu?



**KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE MANIFESTOS** 

#### DMK

#### AGRICULTURE

**EDUCATION** 

ture zone.

the state list to

concurrent list

from NEET

country

LOAN WAIVERS

\* Exempt Tamil nadu

\* Free education to all

diploma/degree holders

\*Waiving loans taken by

children across the

\* Rs 2000 to SSLC

until they get a job

small and medium

farmers and students

A separate union budget for farmers

annually.

education in the state

unemployed graduates

\* Getting back

list from the

\* Stipend to

NEET

concurrent list

\* Exemption of

Tamil Nadu from

Declare Cauvery delta as a protected agricul-

**AIADMK** 

#### THE NUMBERS GAME

Chennai North					
Year	Winner	Party	Vote percent		
1999	C.Kuppusami	DMK	53.57 %		
2004	C.Kuppusami	DMK	62.25 %		
2009	T.K.S. Elangovan	DMK	64.91 %		
2014	T.G.Venkatesh Babu	AIADMK	44.67 %		

Chennai South						
Year	Winner	Party	Vote percent			
1999	T.R.Baalu	DMK	60.03			
2004	T.R.Baalu	DMK	60.37			
2009	C.Rajendran	AIADMK	42.38			
2014	Dr.J.Jayavardhan	AIADMK	40.03			

Chennai Central					
Winner	Party	Vote percent			
Murasoli Maran	DMK	59.00			
Dayanidhi Maran	DMK	61.68			
Dayanidhi Maran	DMK	46.83			
S.R.Vijaykumar	AIADMK	40.88			
	Winner Murasoli Maran Dayanidhi Maran Dayanidhi Maran	WinnerPartyMurasoli MaranDMKDayanidhi MaranDMKDayanidhi MaranDMK			

## **AIADMK** aims at poverty relief

Promises farm loan waiver, and NEET exemption for State NOEL ADRIAN CORERA

#### PRIYANKA KAUL

CHENNAI: Waiver of farm loans and education loans taken by students belonging to Backward Classes (BC), Most Backward Classes (MBC) and SC/ST communities was among the promises made by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in its 100-point manifesto released ahead of the Lok Sabha 2019 elections here on March 19.

The state-owned banks will incur a cost of no less than Rs 8,000 crores spread across 4 lakh accounts if the education loans are waived. More than half of all the education loans are in South India, Tamil Nadu being at the forefront, while Kerala comes next, according to a report by Indian Bank's Association.

Released by the party president M K Stalin, the 76-page manifesto also promised to make Tamil an official language in central government offices in Tamil Nadu and a court language in the Madras High Court.

Another major point was the abolition of National Eligibility En-

trance Test (NEET), currently used for admission to medical colleges. "(NEET) is against the interest of the poor, rural and oppressed class, across the country. In the interest of social justice, DMK will strive for its abolition," Stalin said

**DMK promises loan waiver** 

Election manifesto focuses on the State's rights,

vows to make Tamil official in Central Institutions



#### M.K.Stalin | THE HINDU

The party also promised to create more jobs and fill up existing vacancies in all government departments and implement pension schemes for State government employees. As part of corporate social responsibility, the private sector would be urged reserve jobs for the deprived sections.

The party has said that it would

compensate the families of over "100 people" who it said "died while waiting in long queues to exchange demonetized notes."

"On November 8, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, without consulting Reserve bank of India or renowned economists announced the demonetization of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currencies which came as a rude shock to the people of India. Families of the victims who lost their lives while standing in the bank queue for changing demonetized votes will be compensated equally," the party president said. However, no cap on the compensation was mentioned

The party said all Sri Lankan refugees living under camps as per the 1964 Indo-Sri Lankan agreement will be given citizenship and a full-fledged statehood for Puducherry. The DMK said it would make ef-

forts to release the seven convicts \*Waiving all loans taken in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination by all farmers and case and stop the Salem eight-lane highway project and instead widestudents ning the existing routes, etc. were

among the other assurances.

## Women candidates number shrink in TN

Tamilachi Thangapandian.

Kanimozhi, who will be

elections from Tuticorin this time,

said "The need of the day is to

ensure a constitutionally sanctioned

women representatives to enter

legislative bodies. We live in a

Thangapandian's

#### NIKITA SINGH

CHENNAI: In a state where women voters will outnumber men in the upcoming general elections, the number of women candidates has dwindled. Tamil Nadu's prominent parties including the AIADMK, DMK and BJP only have one or two women on their candidates list.

The AIADMK under Jayalalithaa had won a record 37 seats with four women candidates in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, has only one woman candidate this time, Maragadam Kumaravel from Kancheepuram.

A senior leader of the party, C. Ponnaiyan, said that the scaling down of the number of women candidates would not affect the

party's image or female vote bank. Dismissing the allegations of the party becoming more patriarchal after Javalalithaa's demise, he said, "The party's male candidates are backed by a band of top women leaders of the party and they very much represent them. We are confident the women's reservation bill will be passed in the next parliamentary session.'

DMK MP, TKS Elangovan said society described as patriarchal. "We have to field men to win There are barriers in women against men. However, if exclusive entering the workforce across constituencies are reserved for sectors and inherent gender bias is a reason. DMK has consistently women candidates. DMK would have fielded more women voiced support for the Women's candidates. It is a question of win-Reservation Bill" ability.'

While the Congress is yet to The party has fielded two release its candidates list, the BJP candidates, has fielded its state president women Μ Karunanidhi's daughter Tamilisai Soundararajan from MK

Kanimozhi and late DMK MLA Tuticorin as its only woman daughter candidate.

Vinoj P Selvam, BJP Youth Wing President, said, "Our youth contesting her first Lok Sabha wing's national President and the

#### legal change to pave the way for There are barriers to women entering the workforce across sectors and inherent gender bias is a reason. - MK Kanimozhi

Tamil Nadu state President are women. Over the years, women participation in the Tamil Nadu youth wing has also increased. BJP Tamil Nadu youth wing is rooting for the Women's Reservation Bill."

-

representation in the lower house has intensified with Naveen-Patnaik led Biju Janta Dal listing seven women candidates for the 21

Lok Sabha seats in Odisha and Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress listing 17 women candidates for the 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal.

Out of a total 543 Lok Sabha seats, women candidates had secured 61 seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, against 59 seats secured by women candidates in 2009.

It remains to be seen if more women are allowed to join the fray with the last date for filing nominations being March 26 and the last date for withdrawing the nominations March 29.

CHENNAI: The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) has promised the implementation of the "Amma National Poverty Eradication Initiative (ANPEI), among other \* Bring education from measures, in its election manifesto. Under this new initiative Rs. 1500 a month will be distributed to

people living below the poverty line, destitute women, labourers and widows without income among others. Speaking at a press conference, Chief Minister K Palaniswamy,

along with other senior leaders, announced the

The manifesto promised the people that AIADMK would urge the Centre to shift the 'education' portfolio from the Concurrent list to the State List and to exempt students from Tamil Nadu from writing the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for medical

The AIADMK will push for the waiver of the loans taken by small and medium farmers and poor students

of the Philippines.

The party will also urge the Centre to accept the Justice Sachar Committee recommendation to treat the converted Ss/STs. BCs and MBCs (to both Islam and Christianity) as "regular SC/ST/BC/MBC and provide them with all concessions now provided" for them.

Deputy CM O Paneerselvam said that the party would push for the release of seven convicts accused of killing Rajiv Gandhi. "AIADMK will urge the Government and the President of India to permit the Governor of

Tamil convicts as ordered by the Supreme Court and approved by the cabinet of Tamil Nadu government," he said.

The AIADMK added that it would press the Centre to take up the issue of "massacre" of Tamils in Sri Lanka during the civil war, with the International Court of Justice at The

Hague. **Rs.** 1500 a "Frequent increase in prices of month will be distributed to people living below the poverty line

petroleum products by oil marketing companies have been increasing the cost of all essential commodities. consumer goods

and transport cost to all commuters, increasing the cost

of living of consumers," the manifesto said.

Reflecting Jayalalithaa's firm stand on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), the party said it would urge the Union government to give up the policy of allowing FDI in retail to protect small and tiny retailers.

To counter Tamil Nadu's water crisis, the party will urge the Centre to link the Cauvery and the Godavari, and divert this water to drought-hit areas. There is a scheme to boost ground water table as well. Other promises include the establishment of a national commission for fishermen.

The party also said that it would urge the Union government to implement Tamil as one of the official languages of India, and also impress upon it to declare the Cauvery delta as a protected agriculture zone.

The party will urge the Centre to accord full statehood to the Union Territory of Puducherry to fulfill the aspirations of people.

AIADMK leads the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

The NDA constituents in Tamil Nadu are Bharatiya Janata Party, Desiya Murpokka Dravida Kazhagam, Pattali Makkal Katchi, and others

features of the manifesto.

admissions.

Pointing out the need to skill the youth, the party said it would ask the Centre to set up an organisation similar to the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority



## **ELECTIONS 2019**

## From the sheen of the silver screen to the dust and din of politics

#### NEETHU S

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu and its people have always been obsessed with cinema and the stars of the silver screen.

Edition 8 Page 3 Layout 1 3/25/2019 10:10 AM Page 1

Karthik Subramanian, an independent photographer, was also charmed by the delicate and complex relationship between cinema and politics.

With 'I Swear on My Mother,' an experimental photo exhibition currently being showcased at the Chennai Photo Biennale, the photographer has tried to narrate how inseparable politics and cinema are for Tamilians.

His work is a two-screen video piece that explores the political

journeys of former Chief Ministers M G Ramachandran (MGR) and Jayalalithaa — the duo who rose from stardom on the silver screen to become the two most popular leaders in Tamil Nadu's political history.

"We all know that there is a special relationship between Tamil politics and cinema. My work is an attempt to study the last 50 years of cinema-influenced politics in this state," Karthik said.

The work shows Jayalalithaa in her earlier movies on one screen while the other shows real life footage, in which Jayalalithaa is welcomed by her party members. While one screen plays the movie

scenes of MGR and Jayalalithaa, the other shows the party meetings held by Jayalalithaa and MGR. Both screens try to maintain a certain level of harmony which balances the relationship of politics and cinema

For example, when the film footage shows MGR placing a crown on Jayalalithaa's head, MGR, on the other screen, he is seen inviting 'heiress apparent' Javalalithaa to the stage during a large party gathering.

It also plays the background voice of Jaya mentioning MGR as her guide and crediting him for preparing her for politics. She is heard saying that she will remain

in politics for the promise she gave to MGR.

After the death of MGR, his party AIADMK split with rival factions being led by his wife V N Janaki and his favourite co-star Javalalithaa

"Amma arrived at night and traversed the streets urging us to vote for her party," said photographer Karthik reminiscing the time when she had come to his hometown to campaign for her party.

The video further shows the journey of MGR and Jayalalitha and their intertwined path. It explains the influence of film and politics on Tamilians and the rise of popularity of the duo among

the masses. It ends with Amma's speech in which she says her iconic line: "I am by the people, I am for the people.

Kunal, a Gujarat-based photographer says the piece of work was very informative for him. "The juxtaposition of comments and visuals going on both screens was very unique to me. These show how the two leaders supplemented each other," he said

Anupriya K, a photography student, said "It shows the intimate relationship between the politicians and the masses. We can see the whole journey of Jayalalithaa through this video and it is very informative."



Karthik Subramanian, curator of 'I Swear on My Mother' | CHENNAI PHOTO BIENNALE

## **HC flex ban openly flouted** No technical glitch in

#### PRIYANKA KAUL

CHENNAI: Despite the Madras High Court ban, flex banners, party hoardings, cut outs and posters of all political parties can still be found on the roadsides across the city. Flex banners continue to be displayed in places like Tondiarpet, Alandur, Guindy, Chromepet and Tambaram and haven't been removed despite complaints.

The banners are fixed by digging up the footpaths which are then left unrepaired; they are also a cause for distraction for motorists. Some banners block the view of the drivers/riders.



Flex ban ineffective in the city | THE NEWS MINUTE

In Februrary, this year, the Madras High Court had come down heavily on the police and local body officials for letting political parties display boards despite the ban and "aggravating" a contempt of court petition already pending against them.

In its 30-page interim order on December 19 last year, the court comprising Justices Μ. P. Sathvanaravanan and Rajamanickam had restrained all the recognized and registered political parties from putting up these banners until further order. The ban had come into force after a batch of Public Interest Litigation

(PIL) petitions were heard, including the one filed by activist 'Traffic' K.R. Ramaswamy that accused the Congress party men of having erected several flex boards when party leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi were to visit Chennai

The flex banners and the roadside encroachments at Chitlapakkam Main Road stretch, among other places, have become a constant problem. Residents complain that some banners, fixed on transformers, pose a serious risk during monsoon and heavy winds. According to a tea seller, who runs his stall on the footpath in Chitlapakkam, small accidents because of these flex have

occurred. But they either go unreported or there is no action taken on it, until it's a major one. In November 2017, K Raghupathy, a software engineer, was killed when he was thrown off his bike after hitting an illegally constructed wooden arch that was jutting out onto the road in Coimbatore. The arch had been raised for the MGR

centenary festival in October. Despite repeated bans since 2006 by the Madras High Court. the violations have been blatant. Sunil Jayaram, a volunteer at the

NGO Chitlapakkam Rising, said, "Despite several complaints to the police, we are met with excuses. The police put the blame on the Corporation and say no action can be taken until they are ordered from above. But we know even corporations can't do anything as politicians are the reason behind it." He added that as the elections were round the corner, the court should put strict restrictions.

Earlier, a request at least two days prior had to be made for erecting the banners. However, most of the Corporation commissioners, collectors and police officials in the State now offered permission even at the eleventh hour.

David Manohar, president of Arappor Iyakkam, an anticorruption NGO in Chennai said, "In some cases, the scaffoldings are not removed at all, which makes it easier for other parties to simply put up their banners after one party has removed them."

Despite several complaints, Manohar said, the police and the corporation kept on playing the blame game. In some incidents, police even shared the number of the complainant with violators to 'sort' issues.

## cVIGIL app: State EC

#### PRAGATI K B

CHENNAI: The cVIGIL app, launched by the Election Commission (EC) last week to address model code of conduct violations (MCC) ahead of the General Elections, is working fine, said the State EC officials on Tuesday, denying reports of a technical glitch.

"Citizens are successfully complaining about MCC violations and we are investigating them too. I'm not aware of any problem with the app, it is running smoothly," said Deepak Jacob, Joint Chief Electoral Officer, Information Technology. He said that he had just finished scanning the app for any bugs with officials from Delhi and had found none.

The New Indian Express, in a report on Tuesday, said that though citizens were able to file complaints on the app, officials weren't able to successfully transfer these complaints to the flying squad through the app. Flying squads are being alerted

through phone calls instead of through the app, thereby increasing time lag and defeating the purpose of the app, the report said.

Another glitch reported was that the District Election Officers were unable to access complaint resolutions, thus leaving the app -without supervision.



(election office), denying any knowledge of these glitches said that even if there were glitches, the State Election Commission could not resolve it since the app was managed by the Election Commission of India officials in

Ashok Kumar P., System Manager, said so far, around 450 complaints had been received.

"It is an on-going process and most cases are under investigation," he added.

Citizens can raise a complaint by uploading a picture or video of MCC violations like distribution of money, liquor and freebies, firearms display, intimidation, communal hate speech, paid news, fake news and property defacement through the Android-based app. The officials are expected to resolve it in 100 minutes and update the status.

Kumar said that they received the maximum number of complaints about fake news and distribution of liquor and money.

Awareness about the app among Android phone users seems to be very low. Out of 50 college students aged between 19 years and 22 years, only two were aware of the app. There were no users. Response from the older people was no different. There was very little awareness about the MCC too.

## TASMAC to restrict alcohol sale during voting

NOEL A CORERA

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CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu State the bank and card number, will be complete.

single sale using their card, since law has been overruled by the new details of the individual, especially order till the voting process is will be monitored round the clock, 90 anyway," he added.

Stating that sales of illicit liquor sell more than what is allowed Prohibition Enforcement Wing teams

Mohan, who lives in the vicinity,



Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) has ordered the restriction of bulk alcohol sale during the days leading to the Lok Sabha elections on April 18.

The new order states that a person can now pay cash and buy on a day only two full bottles of hard liquor (750 ml), four bottles of beer (650 ml), or 6 pints of beer (325 ml). In addition to this, a person can only store up to four bottles in his home.

However, a person can purchase five full bottles of hard liquor in a stored. An individual can stock one case of beer (12 bottles) and an equal number of wine bottles at home.

"As beer and wine have lower alcohol content, we didn't change the norms," the official added.

According to the 2018 amendment to the Tamil Nadu Alcohol (Possession for Personal Consumption) Rules, 1996, although there is no limit on the number of bottles which a customer can buy, they can keep 12 bottles at home. This

The government will also be assigning security personnel at sensitive liquor stores during the campaign.

"Soon after the poll schedule was announced, a meeting involving excise officials and revenue authorities was held, to discuss the restriction of sale. We also discussed possibility of closing liquor shops across the State on the day nominations are filed," said a senior official of TASMAC.

will be deployed during elections to prevent distillation, transportation, possession and sale of illicit liquor and also smuggling of spurious liquor and non-excised Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL).

"Police personnel have been assigned to keep a check on retailers as well as the customers," said Rajamuttu, an employee at the Nehru Nagar TASMAC in Adyar. "We have been given strict orders to follow. The police monitor our stores. We do not

said that although this restriction wasn't ideal, the political situation of was such that voters were 'influenced' especially during the elections. "Voters are enticed with cash, liquor, etc during the elections. This can be hopefully monitored," he said

At present, TASMAC has 43 IMFL depots, 4,000 retail vending shops and 1,450 bars attached to these liquor shops. "About 500 liquor shops across the State have been identified as sensitive," the official said.

Shop outside the DMK office | OMJASVIN M D Party souvenir sales gain momentum

#### OMJASVIN M D

CHENNAI: Party flags, banners and pens, shirts, cards, stickers with their leader's face printed on them are being sold with election fever gradually gripping the city.

Vendors inside Anna Arivalayam - the DMK headquarters are selling Dhotis, White and Black shirts, and kerchiefs and flags with the party logo and leader's face printed on it.

"Ahead of elections, souvenirs boost the enthusiasm of cadre," says M. Siddarthan (51), District Vice-Chairperson, DMK Union of Physically Challenged.

"We buy these souvenirs not to idolize the leaders alone but to express love for the party, its ideology and stand out," says Siddarthan, who has been a member of the party since the age of eight.

Gunasekar, a vendor in the DMK office, says 'The products for every district is made in made the district itself and is available in all the party's local offices in the city." Items like pens and stickers cost about Rs. 10 while the shirts cost Rs. 150.

It is not the just the DMK cadre buying up these souvenirs. The ruling AIADMK has women members who buy white saris with Jayalalithaa's face printed on them. These saris have been a trend for a long time.

"These saris cost about Rs. 250 and are bought by party cadre in wholesale during the election time," says Moorthy, a vendor in Old Washermenpet.

"AIADMK boasts of a huge women cadre and are fond of 'Amma'. This time, more people may buy it remembering Jayalalithaa too," he says.

This year the sales have been moderate compared to the last years but Moorthy hopes it will pick up once the campaigning begins.

## 7 years on, city waits for ITMS

#### NEHA MALARA

CHENNAI: The Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) designed to reduce traffic congestion in the city is yet to be implemented, more than seven years after its first announcement.

The system (ITMS) includes the installation of 100 CCTV cameras, traffic control rooms, signal coordination system and number plate recognition software. The system was to have been implemented across 453 junctions with 159 junctions in the first phase. It falls under Chennai Smart City Limited (CSCL) that is a branch of the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC). However, CSCL has not even floated tenders to find consultants for the project.

M Govindrao, Deputy Commissioner (Works) GCC who is also the Managing Director of CSCL, said, "We are yet to invite bids from consultants. This is a scheme from the Central Government and has been put on hold with the elections coming up.'

The ITMS will be executed by CSCL that falls under the Smart City Initiative of the Central Government. This project is a joint venture with the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA).

According to a press release by JICA, Rs 500 crore will be loaned to the government for this project. JICA is also a partner in the Chennai Metro Rail Limited.

The initiative was first announced in November 2011 by the then Chief Minister Jayalalithaa. It was called the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). Under the Build, Operate, Transfer scheme, the project was expected to cost Rs. 108.12 crore. The ITS project was discontinued in April 2014 due to legal issues with the contractor, Purple Info Tech.

In 2012, IIT Madras built a prototype of the ITS with cameras installed at various junctions in South Chennai. The prototype is called Real-Time Traffic Information and is still functioning. The website (www.rits.iitm.ac.in) shows live footage from 13 cameras at various signals and gives the estimated time to travel through main routes in South Chennai.

According to a report by the State Transport Authority published in April 2018, Chennai has 5150509 non-transport vehicles and 243904 transport vehicles with motor cars leading the tally at 856270 vehicles.

## **Metro ATVMs remain unutilised**

she has never noticed the ATVMs.

Park Town railway station said that the

M Vadivel, chief commercial

machine is only for educated people.

made only in English.

#### NIKEETA GAUTAM

CHENNAI: Though Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVMs) are available in major MRTS stations including Park Town, Chennai Fort and Chepauk, commuters don't prefer using them considering it to be highly technical.

B Pandiammal (36) who is a staff nurse at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH) located at Park Town has been traveling from Indira Nagar to her workplace for eight years. "The machine looks technical and there is no one to guide us. So, I prefer to stand in a queue rather than feel awkward in front of a crowd," she said.

Some commuters walk out from station without noticing the machine whereas



said.

ATVM at the Park Town metro station | NIKEETA GAUTAM

There is no regular facilitator hired for the ATVM at Park Town station. "However, a one day workshop for commuters about using smart card in the Venkat Rao (32), a regular commuter at ATVM is organised once in a year here,"

> Other railway stations including Egmore, Chennai Beach and Park observe it is a different picture. Four retired railway commercial supervisors handle two ATVMs and help passengers to get tickets through their smart card. In Park station, facilitators have been appointed for two ATVMs.

"One facilitator sells three bundles of ticket in eight hours duty. Each bundle contains 500 tickets," said S Siraj, one of the retired commercial supervisors facilitating the ATVM installed at Chennai Beach station. The facilitators help the commuters from 6 AM to 9 PM.

K.Kottaiah (25), who works as a senior processor associate at Sutherland is a regular MRTS commuter from Chennai Beach to Velachery. He uses a smart card to purchase tickets.

"In smart card we have concession. We get Rs 3 extra while recharging for Rs 50. On top of it, through ATVM, we can see the map and take tickets accordingly. This helps us to calculate the distance if someone has not traveled the same route earlier," he said.

He said that as most commuters were not aware of its use, facilitators should be hired in every major railway stations at least for a few months so that people get to know the benefits of the machines and use them.

supervisor at Park Town railway station

said that only IT employees and few students use the ATVM. "There are 20 regular ATVM users from this station," he

According to a report published in The Times of India on March 16, only seven per cent of 11 lakh commuters of Chennai suburban train service use the ATVM which is present in almost all major

some believe that the commands can be railway station. Indumati (23), a medical billing officer regularly travels on the MRTS but says

Vadivel said.



### **CITYSCAPE**

CHENNAI March 22, 2019

#### LITERARY WATCH

## West Indian homecoming An ode to the lives Freda lived

Cricketer Alvin Kallicharran in the city to promote his new book AMIR MALIK

CHENNAI: The hostile spells he faced were not only on the cricket field. He has had to deal deftly with racial barbs and overcome poverty. West Indian southpaw Alvin Kallicharran's story is one of passion and triumph.

Born in a family with ancestors being indentured labourers from India, Kallicharan endured a hunger and poverty ridden childhood in Guyana. He did menial work in the neighbourhood to get a meal and lived in a small house with 11 siblings.

Kallicharan overcame all obstacles to become one the most celebrated cricketers that West Indies had produced. The Caribbean great. Sir Garfield Sobers praised him for his great footwork. He also had flawless stability, magnificent timing and breathtaking courage.

In conversation with N. Ram, Chairman, The Hindu Publishing Group, Kallicharan spoke about his roots in Chennai, then called Madras. His mother Padma was from Madras. The event, presented by Sportstar at the Kasturi Srinivasan Hall, Madras Music Academy also saw the launch of the now 70 year old batsman's upcoming book Colour Blind.

"I would cut a piece of wood and use it as a bat. Then I would make

a wooden ball and roll rubber bands over it," said the cricketing legend on how he managed to practice in his early days.

"You should play on those pitches. If you do not get hurt a day, you were lucky," said Kalli. "But you cannot bat to save your life," he added on why he did not

use helmet even when he was facing the fastest pacer. In a 1975 World Cup group stage match against Australia, Kallichar-

ran, only 5 feet and 4 inches, bareheaded and shirt unbuttoned halfway down, took on a glowering Aussie pace bowler Dennis Lillee. In ten balls from Lillee, Kallicharan scored 35, the sequence went 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 1, 4, 6, 0 and 4.

"The key to batting is to get the bowler to do what I want him to do, pull and cut are the shots that you play on the bouncers. Follow the ball because it is a dangerous ball," he said.

The self-taught cricketer would tie the ball to a tree and practice his shots. He would cut sugarcane in his early days and he said that it helped him play square cuts.

Talking about his encounters with Aussie pace bowler Dennis Lillee, he said "The Australians are good at changing names. After Lillee called me Black, I said to him that he was wrong. Black is batting at the striker's end. When the bats-



"The key to batting is to get the bowler to do what I want him to do" Alvin Kallicharran in conversation with N Ram at Kasturi Srinivasan Hall I AMIR MALIK

man at the other end asked him what had happened, he said, 'Lillee thought I was you. Indian all-rounder Eknath Solkar

was the finest close-in fielder he has played against. "Whenever ball hit the pad, he

would say, 'Up him! Up him!' I said, 'Eknath, if I hear you say up him one more time, I am going to play the sweep shot. Bishan Singh Bedi was bowling to me and I swept it to the square and it passed his cap. Eknath told me, 'Kalli, I was not the one who shouted!"

For Kallicharan, Sobers was the greatest cricketer, while Rohan Kanhai was his role model.

Talking about his book, he said the title was Colour Blind because "I have been facing racism and have never reacted to it."

When the audience applauded him like he was on the field once again, Kallicharan became emotional and tears rolled down his cheeks

"I want to thank the people of Madras for all the love and affection they have shown me." he said.

MUSKAAN SHARMA

CHENNAI: "When I first came across Freda's story, I knew I had to tell it to the world," says former BBC correspondent and historian Andrew Whitehead about the subject of his book 'The Lives of Freda'

The book, launched at the Asian College of Journalism on March 19, chronicles the 'lives' of Freda Bedi - her personal, political and spiritual journeys. She was an Englishwoman who married an Indian man in the 1930s and became part of India's freedom struggle against the colonial government. She then joined the Kashmiri nationalist struggle and also wrote for newspapers. Later, she turned to Buddhism and became a fully ordained Tibetan Buddhist nun.

Born in a provincial family in Derby, England Freda Houlston met Baba Pyare Lal Bedi while studying at Oxford University. Despite the opposition to their relationship, the couple soon decided to marry and moved to India

Freda's son and Bollywood actor, Kabir Bedi who was the chief guest at the book's launch spoke of his parents' ideology. "My parents were Oxford graduates and could have been financially well off if they had chosen that path; but these were people who lived for their ideals. They believed that if they

worked to uphold their ideologies, the universe would provide for them. They cared about eliminating poverty, suffering and deprivation," he said

Although Freda's life has already been the subject of another book, Whitehead said his work focused on the person behind the long list of accomplishments. "I was keen to make it a biography and not curriculum vitae. I looked at the political, personal and spiritual aspects of her life as Freda was a fearless and confident woman but she was also a vulnerable person.

In one of her articles for a newspaper, she writes about the night before her arrest during the freedom struggles. She was sleeping with her kids on either side of her and at that moment she felt completely alone. The book reflects how this remarkable woman was also filled with hurt and dilemmas.'

According to Whitehead, Freda's vulnerabilities, starting from losing her father to the First World War and the void that left in her life, turned her to seek a spiritual path through Tibetan Buddhism. She was first ordained in 1966 and was given the name Gelongma Karma Kechog Palmo. In 1972, she took full bhikshuni ordination in Hong Kong to become the first woman in the Tibetan tradition to receive this

Kabir remembers the day her

mother showed up in her red monk

Journeys of Freda Bedi Freda Bedi's biography written

ANDREW WHITEHEAD

the LIVES of

FREDA

The Political Spiritual

robes. "I was always close to her so I was angry at her for keeping it a secret from me. But gradually I realised that she chose that path to seek personal evolution. She was always anxious and the decision gave her a sense of completion," he said

Whitehead also emphasised the relevance of telling Freda's story in today's time.

"We are more obsessed with identity now than ever whether it is our religion, caste, class or gender. People are compartmentalised in social and political spheres.

For me, the most important aspect is the way in which she crossed borders in a transgressive way. Freda refused to be a part of this categorisation and crude established her own identity without any labels," he said.

**Dustbins lie unused on Elliot's Beach** 

#### MUSKAAN SHARMA

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CHENNAI: Elliot's Beach recently received a major upgrade with a wide disabled friendly path, first aid station and drinking water kiosk built around the periphery. However, the beautification efforts by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) which also included flower beds, trees, garden umbrellas and new play equipment for children have done little to tackle the beach's garbage disposal problems

While the new path laid with anti-skid tiles, is a hit among senior citizens, especially those who walk with the help of canes or walkers, it is already lined with garbage and betel-leaf stains.

the two, including sheet metal and plastic wrapping, are strewn around the sand along with an array of unused dustbins and play equipment.

The newly-made garden next to the Police booth is already filled with discarded food packaging and

In 2010, Save Chennai Beaches, an NGO, had protested against GCC's

proposed upgrades, saying that they broke Coastal

which restored the Schmidt memorial onat the beach, said that while the concretisation of the beach might be the GCC's idea of beautification, the beach was in desperate need of clean sand and a proper waste disposal system.

"The beach is a very small area with a sensitive eco-system and is also the nesting ground for Olive Ridley turtles," she said. " More than half of the beach is

already occupied by vendors and these new constructions will occupy more area of the sand and generate more garbage," she added.

A National Centre of Coastal Research survey published by The Hindu found that 40 per cent of the garbage on the beach was generated by visitors and tourists. The beach is the only open area in the Adyar region. The newly planted trees block the view of the sea from the road and the plants will most certainly die out soon as they cannot grow in the sand," she said



## "Garbage Parties" for zero waste

#### N SINDHU

higher ordination.

CHENNAI: Namma Ooru Foundation, an NGO organizes 'Kuppai' or 'Garbage parties' in apartment complexes across the city in a move to offer waste segregation and create awareness about zerowaste living.

"The Kuppai party is literally like a solid waste management workshop for people" said, Janani, a member of the NGO who is also the organising head of these events. The idea behind these parties is to offer waste recycling solutions to people and also teach them simple methods of converting biodegradable waste into manure. The residents are required to bring vegetable peels and other organic waste from their houses to attend these parties. The parties are organized as part of the 'Namma Thooimai' (Our Cleanliness) sessions which are aimed at providing solutions for effective waste management. Following phone calls from residents who are interested in solid waste management, the venues for the 'garbage parties' are decided. The NGO charges a nominal fee for hosting the party which includes the cost of their transportation and the composting materials to the venue. The parties are usually held on weekends

Last weekend, the party was held at Casa Grande's Cherry Pick in Perumbakkam. "Approximately 60 percent of the waste that is generated per household is wet waste, of this 30 percent of the waste cannot be composted," said Viji Ganesh, a member of the NGO. However, around 60 kg of wet waste from 92 households were converted into compost in the recently held 'Garbage party'

Janani said "The residents are also taught the process of composting which helps in reducing the overall waste that is being generated in a housing complex. A couple of weeks ago the Garbage party

and Personal by Andrew Whitehead.

Additionally, the path meant for wheelchair-bound citizens has only one ramp for entrance.

Meanwhile, the first aid station and drinking water kiosks remain locked and are not functional yet even as construction material from **Regulation Zone** rules.

plastic wrappers. Kamakshi Subramaniyam, founder of the civic forum. SPARK



Garbage thrown along the disabled friendly path at Elliot's MUSKAAN SHARMA Beach

### **Retailers at Temple festival feel economic brunt**



Kapaleeswarar Temple during the brahmotsavam 2019. | NIKITA SINGH

#### NIKITA SINGH

CHENNAI: Vendors on the streets around the Kapaleeswarar Temple in Mylapore say business was damp for the second consecutive year during the 10 day long annual festival

"It used to be quite profitable earlier, as nobody charges us for putting up the stall here. However, buyers have become more difficult in the recent years. I am barely making a profit of Rs 200-300 every day this time," says Bahadur Rapani, who comes from Mandavelli to sell miniature toys on the North Mada Street during the festival. He has been putting up the stall here on all ten days of the festival for the past 30 years. He puts up his stall at Velachery on other days.

Another retailer, Zahir Hussain not have money. May be the

politicians do?" he asks

Mohammad Ashraf (28), a Bsc graduate, who was propelled by his financial conditions and low paying able to make as much profit as he jobs to join his mother in putting up stalls on the street, also complained of a dull business during the festival this year as compared with Even during the festival, profits are the past years.

"My mother has been putting toy stalls during the festival since the past ten years. She sells toys only during the festivals because of high profits, but business has not been very profitable this time," he says. However, the temple festival's sponsors continue to fund the events. "My business has slowed down since demonetization, but the festival spirit is always alive," says Satish (40), owner of Sarangam Flower Shop. He continues to sponsor at least one meal at the temple during the festival.

was held at Jains Sasvat in Adambakkam and the residents there have managed to reduce their garbage generation by almost a tonne in the past two weeks."

The NGO also organises small activity sessions for about 45 minutes for children called the 'Green Ninja Warrior Program'. The kids are made to watch the whole process as their parents learn and try their hands at composting. Apart from this the kids are introduced to terminologies like composting, solid waste management, wet waste

"We stress the importance of zero-waste living and our goal is to push more apartments to work towards achieving this" said Viji Ganesh.



Women at Kuppai Parade, masked and gloved INAMMA OORU FOUNDATION

## Thuli: a shopping getaway for the underpriviled ged

(42), who has sold shoes,

readymade clothes and women

accessories in the area in the past

37 years, says that he is not even

"My business has especially

slowed down since demonetization.

low. Five years back, I used to earn

Rs 10,000 a month from selling

bangles at Rs. 10. Now, the same

product is priced at Rs. 20, but I

still don't earn as much, I am not

making much profit even during

Shiv Kumar (26), a migrant worker

from Uttar Pradesh, who has been

selling golguppas in the North

Mada street during the festival for

the past six years is facing a similar

"Who will buy all this? People do

ordeal.

the festival this year," he says.

used to make five years back.



V Laxmi selecting sarees at the store at Adyar | NIKEETA GAUTAM Kumar.

#### NIKEETA GAUTAM

CHENNAI: A Chennai based NGO has started 'Thuli' for a shop where underprivileged people can "buy' clothes and shoes for free.

The store which is one of a kind in Tamil Nadu provides this experience to around 15,000 people around Chennai, Tiruvallur, Madurai, Ennore and Chengalpattu. 'Thuli' was started in February 2018 by three entrepreneurs Shivaji Prabhakar, Jeybala and Ajith

"We have a database of underprivileged people which we get through local NGOs. We call each family and provide a voucher of Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 which they can use to buy clothes," says Prema Vishwanathan (60), who is a volunteer at Thuli.

Also, Thuli collects old clothes and shoes from individuals. The first quality clothes are dry cleaned and sold in the store. The second quality is given out to orphanages and other charity organisations. Thuli has a collection and sorting

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center near the store at Gokul Arcade at Adyar. The store does not have any indication which mentions that the clothes are for charity. "We want them to shop with dignity," says another volunteer Uma Naganathan (52). V. Laxmi (52), who works as a cleaner at a Royal Enfield showroom at Sriperumbudur came to the shop for first time. "I always wanted to buy in a luxurious place. My family members will be very happy to receive these new clothes bought here," she said. She bought

four saris and T-shirts for her family members and herself.

The store which is open between 1 pm and 8 pm is looked after by the three volunteers. Prema is a retired bank employee. Uma had worked in multiple sectors including teaching and Shivadevi Denadayalan (39), another volunteer was a homemaker. The volunteers said that Thuli had helped them to learn about different

experiences of poor people. "We talk to them about their giving up drinking and gambling habits,

preventing child marriage and also encouraging their children to read by providing them free books while they select clothes. There is no separate counseling because we want them to understand these things gradually and internalise them with time," Prema said. Thuli, which means a 'piece of hope' also, gifts toys and stationeries to children whenever they come for shopping. They give out sanitary napkins to each woman shopper. Thuli also gifts wedding sarees to shoppers who are about to marry.