



Protestors want written promise

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HC reprieve for water can units

NEIL CORNELIUS

The seven-day strike by the Greater Tamil Nadu Packaged Drinking Water Manufacturer's Association (GTNPDWMA) has been withdrawn after the Madras High Court issued an order revoking the closing down of the 552 manufacturing units that did not have a no-objection certificate.

The High Court has now said that these units would be re-evaluated keeping in mind that these plants had built permanent structures before the laws were put in place and license will be issued for these units within 15 days upon deposit of Rs. 50,000.

R. Velu, a member of the GTNPDWMA said that most of the industries that were sealed were all constructed before the new laws on water extraction had been implemented. "Most of the units that

were shut down were built before the laws were even formed. They are telling us now that the distance between the borewells is too less. How will we change that? It will ruin us," he said.

Velu said that the strike was to ensure the survival of packaged water manufacturers throughout the state.

Ravi.S, a departmental store owner who has been selling water cans for the past 15 years said "It is a good thing that the strike was withdrawn. Had it continued for a couple more days, the entire city would have been in a huge crisis since most of the population of Chennai uses these water cans every day for their daily consumption.

Many water can dealers did not fully understand the nuances of the strike. Babu.C, a water can dealer from Adambakkam said "I don't

know why exactly we are on strike. I know that they have shut down some water plants but I'm not sure of the details. Me and all the other dealers are on strike because our association (GTNPDWMA) said so."

Babu said that we were only on strike for the first two days (Saturday and Sunday) and on Tuesday. "We can't afford to indefinitely shut down our business. We have families to look after," Babu said.

Other dealers sold water discretely to the public in limited quantities due to the fear of losing their customers. J. Isaiki who works at Culture Aqua, a Water can dealership in Velachery said "We used to let out a few cans everyday just for our regular customers if we do not do that they will get it from someone else and lose all of our clients. In this business you cannot survive without regular customers."

City to get water from new reservoir

KEERTHI KRISHNA

Piles of sand and cement on the road, half-constructed embankments and a half-filled water body. This is the site of Theruvoy Kandigai reservoir near Thiruvallur. Expected to be completed by the end of April, the reservoir that has been formed by linking two lakes Theruvoy Kandigai and Kankankottai will be used to supply water to Chennai.

Work on the reservoir has been delayed multiple times. According to Babu S, an assistant engineer at the site, problems in acquiring land for the reservoir was the reason for the delay.

People at the Theruvoy Kandigai village said, the piles of sand and cement on the road were hindering traffic. Marimuthu, a senior citizen said, "We are unable to walk on certain stretches because of the cement dust which makes it difficult to breathe."

Upon its completion, the reservoir will be Chennai's fifth reservoir.

Manoj S, an accountant at the



Theruvoy Kandigai Reservoir | KEERTHI KRISHNA

site office, said: "Theruvoy Kandigai reservoir will receive water from the Krishna Basin and rains." According to the Water Resources Department, the reservoir will supply 65 million litres of water to the city. Kousthala from the WRD said that the reservoir would have a capacity of approximately 1500 million cubic feet (mc ft). She added that water from the reservoir would go through pipelines to the Poondi reservoir.

The four reservoirs that feed the city: Poondi, Puzhal, Chembarambakkam, and Cholavaram have a total

capacity of 11257 million cubic feet and the 5th reservoir is expected to add another 1500 mcft After the South West Monsoon (2019) brought 30 per cent surplus rain, the North East Monsoon came with 17 per cent deficit rainfall.

The summer of 2019 was one of the driest periods in Chennai's history and most parts of the city experienced water scarcity. The moderate rainfall in 2019 has not improved the condition according to an official from the WRD.

According to statistics from the Chennai Metropolitan Water

Supply and Sewerage Board, the four reservoirs had 6140 mc ft of water as of March 4, 2020. This is around 54 per cent of their total capacity. On the same day last year, the reservoirs had 1038 mc ft of water, which is around 9 per cent of its total capacity.

The Theruvoy Kandigai reservoir project was launched by the then Chief Minister Jayalalithaa in September 2013. Land acquisition problems caused a lot of delay with more than half of the Rs 380 crores allocated to this project as compensation to the landowners.

More homeless shelters needed

KRITHI KANNAN

The 37 shelters of the Greater Chennai Corporation are inadequate to house the city's homeless.

The shelters serve 1880 people according to a report in The Hindu. However a survey conducted by the corporation in 2018 identified 9000 homeless people in the city.

"Many of us are not accounted for as we do not have Aadhaar cards or any means of identification. We are also often harassed by cops who lathi charge us if there is any commotion in the area," says Kamala who stays on the sidewalks of the Marina beach in Chennai.

Loganathan, a policeman at the Marina beach police booth, said "The homeless people often litter the pavements, get into drunken brawls and fights, forcing the police to intervene."

A representative of the Government shelter at Austin Nagar said the aim was to ensure that the homeless were identified and made aware of the schemes.

Platform ticket price hiked

KRATI PURWAR

Residents of Chennai are unhappy with the Southern Railways reported decision to increase the price of platform tickets to Rs 15 from Rs 10.

"Why should I pay extra money only to visit the platform? It will affect the poor like me," said Ramana, an old man in his late 60s, about the decision of platform ticket price hike of Rs 5 at the Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. MGR Central Station, here.

According to a recent report of The Hindu, Business Line, the Southern Railways has decided to implement the price hike between April and June 2020 in order to decongest the station.

However M. Murugan, Station Manager at the Central Station, said that the price hike had nothing to do with decongesting the platforms or regulating of the traffic. It was being considered to make profit.

"The cost of the platform ticket has been Rs. 10 for the past 10



Chennai Central station | GOOGLE

years," he said adding, "this is only on a trial basis and afterwards, analysis will be done to see if it can be implemented permanently at other stations as well."

Lakshmi Sivamani, a housewife, said, it was not fair, even for the middle class. "What if more than one person from a family comes to receive or send off a relative?" she added.

S. S. Bhadauria, a software developer from Madhya Pradesh said, people came to the station for just 10-15 minutes. It was not right to ask them to pay at all, let alone in-

crease the fare. Murugan said that the Indian Railways had the largest land acquisition compared to other departments, therefore, commercialising everything would help in bringing money which could be used for the development.

On an average, at least 20,000 platform tickets are sold at the Central station, said Mr. Murugan.

The price hike would bring at least Rs 1 lakh profit a day, nearly Rs 30 lakh profit a month, and about Rs 1 crore quarterly profit from only one station.

KMC isolation ward shut

Suspected coronavirus patients sent to other hospitals

MAHERA DUTTA

A senior medical officer has reassured people that the likelihood of able-bodied persons being infected by Coronavirus is minimal.

Dr. Thirunavukkarasu, Resident Medical Officer at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, said messages and videos being shared on WhatsApp and various social media platforms were making the public concerned.

"I have received many anxious phone calls, especially from people who have travelled internationally in the recent past. It is important for people to know that the likelihood of able-bodied people contracting the disease is minimal," he said.

As many as 800 people are under observation for Coronavirus in homes and hospitals across Tamil Nadu.

A testing facility for the virus was inaugurated in Chennai's King Institute of Preventive Medicine

and Research, Guindy by the state Health Minister C Vijayabaskar in February.

Thirunavukkarasu said that the State Government has pushed all major government hospitals to have access to all equipment and medicines needed. "Earlier, we needed to dispatch specimens to the National Institute of Virology, Pune, for diagnosis. The results would only be available in 48 hours. Now, we are equipped with technology which can help in early detection," he said. The RMO said: "Our staff has been sensitized on how to protect themselves from the illness too. They have been told to wear masks and wash their hands repeatedly."

The Infectious Disease ward in the hospital had been fitted with all the equipment and infrastructure required to treat infected patients.

Meanwhile, officials at the Kilpaik Medical College said that all suspected Coronavirus cases in

Chennai were being redirected to the city's major government hospitals after a six-bed isolation ward at KMC was shut down.

The ward was set up in January this year to screen patients showing symptoms of the illness.

Dr. Vignesh, Medical Officer said: "There have not been many patients complaining of Coronavirus symptoms these past few weeks. If we come across patients who may be facing a threat of the virus we will send them to Rajiv Gandhi (Government Hospital) or Tamil Nadu Government Multi Speciality Hospital."

Travellers arriving in the city from Coronavirus-hit countries were brought to KMC's isolation ward for screening, he said.

A total of four cases have been reported in Tamil Nadu. They have been isolated and public authorities have sent their samples for testing at the preventive centre in Guindy.



Burnt warehouse at Madhavaram | NEIL CORNELIUS

Poor safety standards at Madhavaram Warehouse

NEIL CORNELIUS

The Chemical warehouse in Madhavaram that caught fire on Saturday was ill equipped to deal with fires, said firemen who contained the blaze within hours of being summoned.

"It (the warehouse) did not have the necessary safety precautions to prevent the accident nor did they have the facilities required to contain the fire. Knowing the kind of chemicals they were storing, it was essential for the warehouse to have stocked up on much better equipment," said Gopi Prabhakaran, fireman from the Madhavaram Fire Station.

Prabhakaran added that there were only a couple of fire

extinguishers in the warehouse and that they should have had Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF), Dry Chemical Powder and at least 15 carbon dioxide based fire extinguishers at a place that stores flammable chemicals- none of which the warehouse had.

The workers at the warehouse did not know how to contain the fire or use the extinguishers.

A circular issued by the Central Warehousing Corporation in 1993 states that every employee in a warehouse must be taught basic firefighting principles, know where the firefighting equipment is kept and used properly. The circular also details that regular fire drills must be conducted in warehouses so as to prepare the workers in case of an

emergency.

The fire was reported by employees at the warehouse at 2 p.m. on Saturday and fire fighters from the Madhavaram Fire Station were called to the scene. 500 fire fighters were involved in the operation and destroyed the property worth Rs.100 crores.

"There were no casualties as the workers all ran out of the building as soon as they saw the fire," said Venkatesh (24) one of the firemen.

An FIR has been filed and the fire safety licence of the warehouse is being re-evaluated. The fire Department officials say that the owner of the warehouse has not responded to them since Monday.

Workers at the warehouse refused to comment on the issue.

'Chennai Shaheenpet' protest continues

Protestors hopeful of a positive response from government

MEGHNA.M

The Washermentpet sit-in continued for the third week despite over 50 women falling ill from exhaustion and lack of sleep.

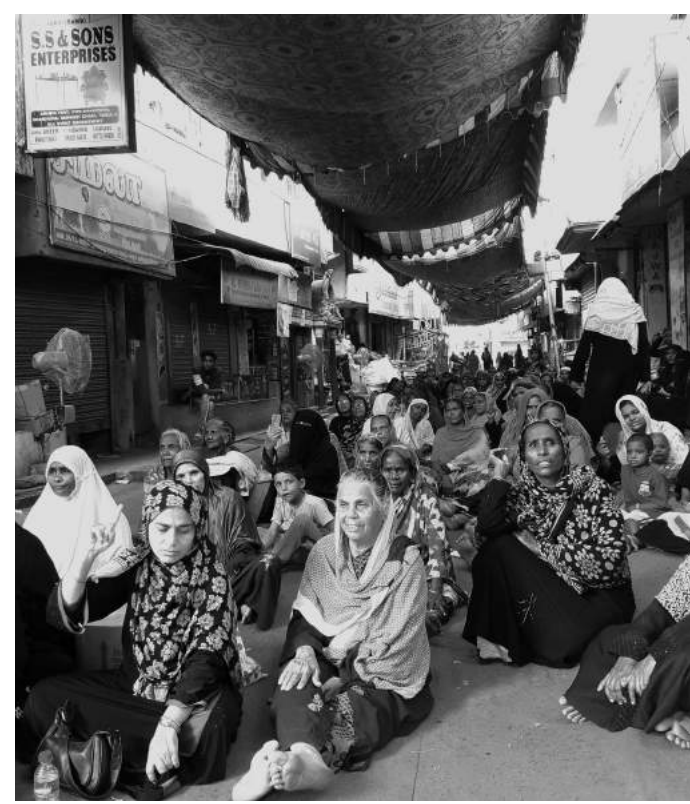
"I come from Minjur and fell sick last night. They provide us with tablets to combat this but I will visit the doctor tomorrow and come back here," said Haseena Begum, a protestor.

Many women with diabetes, blood pressure and other ailments bring their medicines to the site.

Tahira Begum (70) said "I have brought my diabetes medicine here. I went to Coimbatore last week to protest there. I have to take care of myself if I want to continue to protest here. My daughter's family was here until yesterday but are now admitted in the hospital from exhaustion and fever."

Shehnaaz Begum, one of the organizers said that many of the donors have donated over the counter medicines to tackle fever and common cold. "If it gets serious then we have a doctor-on-call here to attend to them."

The agitation started on Feb.14 when Muslim women from Washermentpet, now dubbed Chennai's Shaheen Bagh, gathered to protest against the Citizenship (Amendment Act) (CAA), National Population Register (NPR) and



Women protesting at Washermentpet | MEGHNA.M

National Register of Citizens (NRC). The protest started with 200 women and the number went up to over 1000 women in the last three weeks.

The women stay on the Sajja

Munusamy Street and the Azeez Mohammed Ghouse Street in Washermentpet only moving from there to send their kids off to school and feed them in the evening.

"My kids come directly here

after school. They have made friends here. It is after all for them that we are fighting. It is important for them to be a part of this," said Haseena.

The women held a candle light vigil on March 3 to pay homage to the 49 lives lost in the communal riot on Feb.23 in Delhi. "When will the government take any action? These are all human lives that are lost. What more will we have to lose?" asked Shenaaz.

The CAA essentially seeks to amend the definition of illegal immigrant to help Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Buddhist and Christian immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who have lived in India without documentation.

M.Amir, another organizer anticipates that a solution is at hand "We are hopeful about a positive outcome when the assembly convenes again on March 9. We would like the government to meet our demands that we have put forth from the first day of our agitation. Many other states have passed a resolution against CAA. Why can't our CM[Chief Minister] passone? What is stopping our CM?" he asked.

"If it isn't a positive outcome then we are not going to move from here. We will take the next step of necessary actions," said Shehnaaz.

Protestors want it in writing

KRATI PURWAR

Muslims protesting in Washermanpet, Chennai against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act want Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to give a written promise in the Tamil Nadu Assembly that the rights of the minorities would be protected.

Kathija Beevi, North Chennai President of the National Women's Front, said one could not believe the words of the government until it scrapped the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), National Register of Citizen (NRC), and National Population Register (NPR).

Kathija said today the Government was implementing the NPR and what would happen if tomorrow it used the same data for the NRC. All Indians, not falling under its criteria would be thrown out of the country or sent to detention camps, maybe. The protest was about all the people who did not have certificates and documents. "How will the government call them citizens?" she asked.

According to Kathija, the NPR and NRC were designed against the Muslims and minorities.

On March 1, Palaniswami said that no Muslim born in the State would be affected by the National Population Registration (NPR). Asking the Muslims not to protest, he assured them that the question of the birth place of parents would be omitted from the process and no records were required.

Shehnaaz Banu, a Madaras High Court lawyer, said, "We went to the



Men, women, and children shouting 'Azaadi' slogans at Anti-CAA protest at Washermanpet in Chennai | KRATI PURWAR

CM and told him to write his promises in the assembly and we will believe him. We do not want the CAA, NRC, or NPR." It would not affect only Muslims but also Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and other religious groups.

Banu said that it was the BJP's game. Until the reign of the late J. Jayalalithaa and M. Karunanidhi, Tamil Nadu was the safest for Muslims but not now.

H. Dasthageer, an auto driver, said that the protest was not about Muslims but all people who con-

sidered themselves as citizens of the country were standing here together.

Pointing out that a retired Indian Army officer Mohammad Sanaulah and Bengali Hindus had been left out of the Assam NRC, he said it was about the method of implementation.

Dasthageer said the concept of 'Indian citizenship' through NPR and NRC was vague. It was all about the implementation of the RSS ideology and 'Manudharma' (Hindu Law Book) and the BJP tak-

ing the Constitution and law in its hands. People around India should protest in order to bring the change.

S. R. Sayed Vyan Abdullah, a real estate worker, said just as it gave written remarks during Jallikattu protest, the Government should do the same in this case as well and they would stop the protest.

Nooruma, a housewife, said the NPR would affect everyone and if the Government stops implementing then the protest would stop. "This is a fight for all of us."

Stringing life in city

MEGHA MALLICK

"When we came here 8-9 years back, we used to reside on the beach, just like many other people. But miscreants get drunk and start picking up fights. We moved to a house just 2-3 years ago," says Sujata, a migrant from Rajasthan.

She and her husband moved here from the Sawai-Madhopur district because of scarcity of water, posing a roadblock for agriculture. She says, "Khetibaari to bahuthai, par paanibakhetbekarhai (We do have a lot of land, but it is of no use without water)."

Sujata strings beads at the end of the Marina Beach, in front of the Triumph of Labour statue. She says, "At least 10 people from Rajasthan are here, and all of them do the same work. There was another woman, Laxmi, selling these bands there," she says pointing towards the other umbrella-like structure. "Her child was kidnapped," Sujata informs.

"The child was kidnapped at a year old. Laxmi bathed it and put it to sleep in the park here, beside a neem tree. Then she came here to put up her shop. Her husband, Pappu, is a tattoo artist. He was busy in that, and in the meanwhile, someone picked the child up," she narrates. It has been two years since then, but the child could not be traced. Advertisements were put up but to no avail. The police tried a lot, too. That was the only instance of kidnapping among this community.

"I have four children", she says, pointing to an infant asleep under the adjacent umbrella. It is her youngest child, a year old, Rittika. "I will tell honestly, before my work, I should pay more attention to my children. If they are with me, a lot of money will come and go," Sujata says.

"My husband, who is also a tattoo artist, believes the same. Laxmi did not pay enough attention to her child. This one, my child, is now asleep. It will wake up after a while and run around this place. And I will run with it too, leaving the shop," says the 35-year-old.

"While searching for that child, I gave birth to my



Sujata stringing beads | MEGHA MALLICK

son Ayush at the AmmaHospital here. I have left him in the village back in Rajasthan, with his grandmother. His siblings, Mayank and Radhika, are also there. They are closer to their grandmother than me," she says with a smile.

She tells that the people in Chennai are good. "They are good with good people and bad with the bad. These flower sellers here, they will call me for food if I don't have; or will give me a cup of tea. I do the same in return. Other people might not like them, but for me, they are nice."

"If there is a rush of the public, I earn almost 1000 rupees a day; but if there are not many people, maybe not a single penny. I need to give 50 rupees for each journey back and forth to my home, and also send money back home. It is not easy, but that is how we need to live," Sujata says.

A taxing time for school students

MARIAH DINS

March is the most taxing time of the year for students taking class 10 and 12 board examinations. The pressure to score more is pushing the students into developing serious physical and psychological conditions like stress and anxiety. Many of them resort to continuous medication and counseling during this period.

"There are many students who suffer from serious cases of examination fear. Unhealthy competition and parental pressure are the primary reasons for developing this mental condition, and some may even resort to sleeping pills and stress relief pills which may not be prescribed by the doctor," said Mangala.R, Psychologist at Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), Chennai.

Lakshmi Raghav, a class 12 student complains of having to go through a tough time covering all the portions before the exam starts. She says the schools complete the portions only two or three days before the starting of study holidays. Also the unavailability of blue prints evokes the feeling of uncertainty among the students.

"I have friends who attend tuition classes for every subject. For them it is double the pressure. Parents think their children will score better if they are sent for tuitions," said Lakshmi.

Sara Koshy, Principal of Don Bosco High School, MKB Nagar said that, they requested the parents not to send their children for tuition. "What is taught in school is sufficient if they revise at home. The pattern followed by the school and the pattern followed by the tuition centers may vary; this will confuse the child."



Students taking exams | THE INDIAN EXPRESS

"Towards February, we divide the children into 3 categories; those who might score above 80%, 60% and below 35%. Those falling in the 80% category are given extra attention to help them score high. Those falling in the 60% category are brought to the level of distinction and special care is taken to train those below 35% category in order to boost their marks," she said.

According to Dr. T. Lavanya, Associate Professor at the Psychology department of the University of Madras, it will differ from person to person and it is predominantly the fear of failure. "Parents can be very unrealistic at times by acting against the capacity of their children."

This puts the child under pressure and will ultimately make them disappointed because they could not perform well or could not meet up to

their parents expectations. The openness and freedom to discuss their likings do not come with our family set up."

A person's behaviour, nutrition, sleep patterns also affect the cognitive functioning of the brain. This might reflect in forgetting what the child has studied at the time of examination. Parents and schools must be able to provide good career counseling, where they give a realistic balance between interest, aptitude and career opportunity. Give less weightage to scoring high marks and meeting the family or social status.

"We want our children to end up having a good job in order to lead a good life. Nowadays students are not admitted if they do not score above 80 per cent. Whatever we do and say is only for their good," said Shanta.N, a parent.

'RO filters better than cans'

KRITHI KANNAN

Reverse osmosis filters to provide clean water are a better alternative to the plastic water cans, according to residents of Chennai.

"An RO water filter is a better alternative to bubble top cans. We do not need to worry about the ill effects of plastic contamination," said Ms Kamala Rajendran a resident of Teynampet who recently switched to using a water filter.

P. Kumar an employee at MJM water solutions Chennai says "Many flats have connected their metro water pipes to water filters. Hence not only do they have a better alternative."

Kumar added that people need not be dependent on the bubbletop water cans. The recent strike by water packaging units led to a scare of shortage of bubbletop water cans.

N. Kumaresan a manager at Dolphin RO units, said, "Water packaging units waste a lot of water

when they purify groundwater. However the water discarded from the RO purification system can often be reused in the garden or the lawn since the water purification system is installed at home itself. People with water filters have a chance of reusing water which people with bubbletops do not have."

R. Lakshmi a resident of T Nagar said that when she was using water cans her supply of drinking water depended on when the can was delivered and sometimes the water in the cans were polluted. But after installing a purification system she has round the clock access to drinking water.

Dr Srimathi Sridhar, a general physician at Apollo Hospitals, said "Whenever you drink from a plastic bottle or a bubbletop, you risk ingesting the chemicals used to make these bottles as these toxins can leak into the water over time. This is particularly common with bottles that have been exposed to heat. Bisphenol A and



Bubble tops cause contamination | THE TECHNOLOGY LEGACY OF NCL

other plastic toxins from these bubbletop cans can make their way into the blood stream and cause a host of problems including certain cancers and liver and kidney damage."

P. Venkatesh, a resident of Gopalapuram, said "Even though reverse osmosis can sometimes over purify the water and extract essential minerals present in the water, it does not contaminate like plastic does"

Harshad Venkatraman, an environment activist and water expert, said, "Excessive extraction of groundwater can lower the groundwater table leading to water scarcity."

"Additionally due to improper disposal of plastic, contaminants can seep into the ground and also taint groundwater. Hence it is good that the government has taken steps to shut down water packaging industries without licences," added Venkatraman.

150 years of science and scientists through the pages of 'Nature'

KEERTHIKRISHNA
KRATI PURWAR

Celebrating the '150 years of science through the pages of Nature', M S Swaminathan Research Foundation organized special talks by six eminent scientists on March 6 in Chennai.

Dr. Madhura Swaminathan, Chairperson of MSSRF, welcomed everyone "to celebrate science and scientists" and "achievements of science in India in the last 150 years."

Prof. M S Swaminathan, Founder-Chairman, MSSRF, walked the audience through the journey of life-changing research in genetics and its contribution to the environment, double Helix, plant breeding progress, induced mutation, progress in Mendelian, impact of genetics alteration of plant architecture on food security, from genetic modification to genome editing, and conservation of traditional technology attention to the gender dimension.

Ms. Subhra Priyadarshini, Chief Editor at the Nature India, presented the past, present, and future of



Prof. D Balasubramaniam addressing the gathering on 'Popularising and Communication Science' at the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai | KRATI PURWAR

the 'Nature' (International Journal of Science).

Delivering a talk on the importance of popularising and commu-

nicating science, Professor D Balasubramaniam, Scientist at the L V Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, said that there was a shortage of

science writers in the local Indian languages, despite India having 18 official languages. He said there were no Tamil science writers ever

since Sujatha died.

Balasubramaniam cited the example of the G.N. Ramachandran plot on "the triple helix structure of collagen is an essential tool in the field of protein conformation."

Ramachandran's plot came out in the Sixties but people got to know about the discovery much later, because nothing was published about it.

Professor Nitya Rao talked about the changing lens of gender research in the country. She said that there was a research focus shift from sex to gender.

"Gender relations have become power relations between people with different roles, responsibilities and identities. Gender norms had become unspoken rules across social institutions of home, community and workspace," said Nitya.

"Gender identities have become the ways in which people perceive and present themselves across cultures," added Nitya.

Stressing the need to combat stereotypes, Nitya, who is professor of Gender and Development at the University of East Anglia, said that

women should be recognized as farmers, just like men because women are not just a source of physical labour anymore.

Speaking about Research and Development expenditure in India, Shahid Jameel, CEO of Wellcome Trust and DBT India Alliance, said that despite there being an increase in the Gross Expenditure on Development and Research (GERD) in the last decade, the ratio of GERD to the GDP had remained constant at 0.6 per cent.

In contrast to advanced countries, the government was the primary funder and user of R and D.

"The share of public expenditure to GERD is very high in India which implies that universities do not play a major role in this regard," he added. India's R and D expenditure was inadequate to meet its developmental needs.

Prof. T Jayaraman, Senior Fellow of Climate Change at the MSSRF, said "It is crucial that we become intrinsically anthropocentric about the global warming. It is important that we are aware of it and know the difference between the context of discovery and the

context of justification."

Talking the Greenhouse effect and global warming, Jayaraman said that often the scientists were driven to meet the definite ends they desired. This affected the environment and none took the responsibility for it.

Dr. Sandhya Koushika, Associate Professor at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, said the biggest and the hardest change needed in India in was cultural because risk taking, accepting failures, and trying something different in science were not in the Indian DNA.

She said that it was better to let the scientists do what they were good at instead of involving them in administration work.

Dr. T Ramasami, former Secretary at the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, said that poverty had a direct relation with research and development because it pushed the country to do something innovative. The global market needed to move towards a sustainable structure and find convergent solutions to the problems of poor, he added.

Unfair pricing and faulty permits 'Exciting' time for journalists

MEGHNA M

The 2000 odd Tata Magic share-autos that run in the city do not have stage carriage permit to pick passengers up at any stopping, yet the police allow them to do so with a fine of Rs.200.

T.Kathiravelan, who runs a Tata magic auto on the T.Nagar route said, "We have tried to go to the RTO [Regional Transport Office] and fight for a different permit but they just leave us hanging."

The Tata Magic share-autos that were introduced in 2010 initially ran in the city without a permit for a year before being granted the tourist permit. The tourist permit allows them to take up point to point long distance travel.

The Tata magic share-autos with the tourist permit have permission to only taken in six passengers. But they accommodate 11 passengers.

Shyla Mary, Head Constable, traffic at St. Thomas Police Station said, "They do not have permission to take passengers from any stopping. We fine them not only for permit but also for obstruction of traffic movement and for parking at no parking places."

There is a long line of white share-autos on T.Nagar parked on the narrow street with a board above that says "No parking for 100 metres" which they utilize.

M.Vasudevan, a share-auto dri-



Share autos at Guindy

| MEGHNA M

ver on that street said, "I started driving this auto in 2011. We run only three routes in this part of the city. Our day starts at 7:30 a.m and we make about four trips. We make a paltry Rs.600 everyday excluding the fine we pay every three days. The government does not do anything in our favour and when we ask for it, we are denied."

S.V Ravi, an accountant at Abiramapuram RTO, said "There are about 50 break inspectors and 5000 share-autos; they can only catch these autos when they see them. And the fine rates came into effect only after the Motor Vehicle Act (1974) was passed and they have been revised periodically. That is how the rates are fixed."

But there have been mounting complaints about these autos.

Shyla said, "These share-autos go into bus stops and terminuses

and obstruct people from getting into their busses during the peak hours. This causes traffic jams. If they don't stop and keep going then it wouldn't be such a menace."

"These share-autos are peoples' livelihoods and snatching them away would be unfair. The production of the vehicle can be stopped as that itself is faulty. But that cannot be expected. For every person, the police stops two more people will buy the auto and come. So they don't stop them," she said.

Yellow share-auto drivers see these Tata magic drivers as encroaching on their business space.

The stage carriage permit allows the yellow share-autos to pick passengers up at any point on any given route.

"We filed a case against them back in 2011 and we won. But they continue to run. Our business has

taken a hit and we are fighting to keep our routes. They are now operating on three of our previous routes," said M.Annamalai, leader of Binny Road Share-Auto Sangam.

N. Ezhumalai, who runs a yellow share-auto near Spencer Plaza Mall said, "At first, they did not get permission to use it even as a tourist vehicle as the engine is right under the driver's seat. The more it heats up, the more dangerous it is for everybody. But the public loves it, hence it is still running."

However, the white share-auto drivers are hopeful that these differences can be resolved.

"We need to fight the bigger cause, our rates and work permits which the government is overcharging us for. I paid nearly Rs 1.5 lakhs at the RTO for this year's fitness check up. We need to come together. But it does not seem like something that will happen any time soon."

People however have complaints on the share-autos overcharging and the delayed time management.

"The share-autos stop at every given opportunity even if the person outside is not interested in boarding it. And if it is a major stopping then its 15 minutes down the drain as he needs to fill every single seat," said Varun.R who travels from Mogappair to Loyola via one and has to start an hour early to reach college on time.

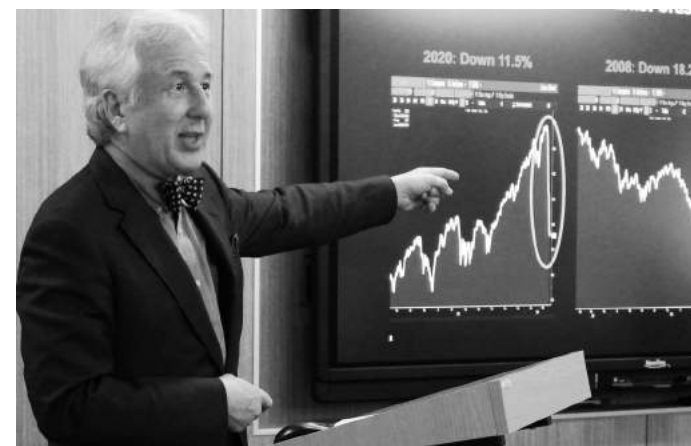
MANTHRA KOLIYER

It is "exciting" to be a journalist today because they have access to data and information that their peers never had in the earlier years, said Matthew Winkler, co-founder of Bloomberg News.

In an hour long conversation with Sashi Kumar, Chairman of the Media Development Foundation, at the Asian College of Journalism in Chennai, followed by a question and answer session, Winkler said "This is the most exciting time to be a journalist. You have access to information in a way that we never did. You can acquire perspective through voluminous sets of data that were otherwise unavailable to people like me at the beginning."

Talking about Bloomberg's work in India, the former-editor-in-chief of Bloomberg News said "We provide the greatest value with what we can do with respect to Bloomberg in India. We can show how India, compared to every other country...to Brazil or to Turkey or any nation for that matter using any number of criteria."

Talking about the media in general, he said "Figuring out and providing context and perspective, that's probably where much of our profession falls short because we don't have the discipline or the rigor to acquire sufficient facts to get the perspective that's necessary



Matt Winkler.. making a point with data

for people to make informed decisions."

While talking about founder Michael Bloomberg's reason to contest for the 2020 Democratic Party race for nomination as the presidential candidate, Matthew Winkler said, "Someone had to do it. Michael is passionately committed to everything that the country is today."

Referring to the problems that the US was facing, Winkler said "There are many fundamental issues, climate change, health issues, hostility towards migrants.. Michael looked at the contestants for presidency and he didn't see anyone providing the necessary

leadership and experience required".

"He was completely committed and devoted to carrying out his goal. His tenure as the Mayor of New York city for 12 years is a reflection. It contributed to a form of total Renaissance."

Bloomberg reportedly spent more than half a billion dollars of his own money in the Democratic primaries. But Bloomberg bowed out saying that it had become evident that former US Vice-President Joe Biden was the candidate to unite behind with the best chance at defeating US President Donald Trump in the November presidential elections.

'India needs pro-business not pro-crony policies'

MAHERA DUTTA

Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India, Krishna-murthy Subramanian, called for pro-business policies which provided a level playing field for firms to enter the markets and businesses and enable wealth creation in the country.

Subramanian, who prepared the Economic survey for the financial year ending March 2020, was delivering the 7th Raja J. Chelliah Memorial lecture at the Madras School of Economics (MSE) on Wednesday.

The economist stressed the need for ethical wealth creation in the country as he spoke of the necessity of combining the "invisible hand" of the market with the "hand of trust". Addressing the distinguished guests, faculty and the students at MSE, he said: "We must consider all the means to an end. Wealth must be created without destruction." Urging budding economists in the audience to not make decisions based on anecdotes, he said "Post the global financial crisis, it was widely believed that markets cannot achieve prosperity hundred per cent of the time. Economists should consider averages, aggregates and functions of the market while making such conclusions."

Subramanian claimed that the



Subramanian addresses audience at Madras School of Economics | MAHERA DUTTA

process of wealth creation accelerated during the liberalisation phase in 1991. Liberalisation, he claimed, helped people from non-privileged backgrounds move up the socio-economic ladder by helping entrepreneurs grow from "remote parts of the country."

Making a case for pro-business policies rather than pro-crony ones, Subramanian spoke of firms with

opaque financial statements and transactions, labeled as "willful defaulters" from 2012 to 2014. "The amounts lost by some of the defaulter companies run parallel to spending on health, education and the social sector," he said.

He was of the view that a focus on 'specialization' absent for almost one and half decades would create more jobs and wealth, thanks to the availability of a large workforce and the country's demographic dividend.

Comparing China's edge in specialization, Subramanian said it assembled every iPhone that was sold all over the world which helped it become a large exporter. Assembly of network products, according to him, was one of the few sectors that offered huge scope for the Indian economy. The export of network products is expected to grow to \$7 trillion by 2025.

C Rangarajan, former RBI Governor and Chairman, Madras School of Economics, delivered the vote of thanks honoring late Raja J. Chelliah for his contribution to reforms in public finance and policy. Asking the audience to ponder over the subject of the lecture, he said: "One must ask how far we've implemented the basic principles of liberalism in policy. In the event of a market failure, it is the responsibility of the state to intervene."

Private parking lots mushroom in Chromepet

MANTHRA KOLIYER

Many private two wheeler parking lots have mushroomed near Chromepet suburban station because the parking lot at the station is unable to cater to the increasing demand.

According to the two-wheelers association they currently have 22 parking lots at Chromepet itself. Each of them houses a minimum of 200 to 600 vehicles depending upon their respective shed.

Velu and Bhaskar, the workers at the government parking lots under Ranjana enterprises (contractor), have an issue on a daily basis. Bhaskar says, "People lie to us that they will take their vehicle back but do not return in time, we do not have space at all for newcomers."

Murugan, who parks his cycle at the parking lot right outside the station says, "on Saturdays it is easier. The private ones aren't feasible. I can only afford to pay Rs 10 for my cycle everyday". The rates at the government owned parking lots near the station charges lesser than the other private ones. The government parking lots charges Rs10 for every vehicle and the pass is Rs300 for every month.

The rates differ for every vehicle. Jammal, the owner of the parking lot at Radhanagar market says, on an average we have 200 pass holders and 150 daily coupon hol-



Private parking lot in Chromepet | MANTHRA KOLIYER

ders. None of the private owned parking lots can increase the rates by themselves.

The president of the two-wheelers parking association, Ramakrishnan, issues them a notice every four years. The rates are determined accordingly. The private owned two-wheeler parking lots work 24 hours. Many of them also have CCTV cameras installed. While many commuters insist on keeping their helmets also at the parking lot, some private owners take care of them.

Residents from Asnapuram, Laxmipuram, Kelambakkam and Tambaram also park their vehicles at these parking lots.

Chennai student wins eco summit

MANTHRA KOLIYER

A project for making car parts with the help of orange peel and coffee filterate has won the first prize at the Eco Summit conducted by the Green Brigade Club of CEG (College of Engineering Guindy) at Anna University.

Joshua Richard, a first year BE student, was awarded a trophy and cash prize worth Rs 20,000 for the project that seeks to make steering wheels and cup holders. The college has decided to fund his project and look at aspects with which it can be made commercial.

The event was open to all Engineering departments. They went by the slogan, "Be a part of Solution; Not Pollution".

Printing technology students, D Rishikesh D, S Vniksha and Vidhesha Shetye had come up with a compact plastic recycler. They had created a machine that shreds plastic and makes it reusable with the help of injection moulding.

"What about the plastic that is regenerated again with the technique of moulding?" The students themselves raised this question since their project could not provide a solution for it.

Sandhya and Praveen Kumar from Textile technology, Alagappa College of Technology, displayed an air purifier that can work in a 10 by 10 room. Sandhya says, "This project has been tested for the past two months. It assures 99 per cent cleaner air than the one we breathe right now".

Green Brigade president Renith Kumar said, "Though the projects are only on display, for now, we will surely work towards making them a reality until they are functional."

Volunteer Deeksha said, "Our department students have come up with the innovative idea to earn money from waste college notes as well"



Joshua Richard, winner of the quiz | MANTHRA KOLIYER

Great Bombay Circus running on borrowed money and time

MEENAL VASHISTHA

Former presidents and prime ministers, renowned politicians and actors smile in old photographs hung on the bamboo poles holding up the giant tent of the Great Bombay Circus (GBC). The entrance, carpeted but dusty, is cluttered with empty red chairs. At far left, behind the bamboo boundary is a stable with a few horses and two camels.

All is not well with the Great Bombay Circus at the SIAA Grounds near the MGR Central Railway Station.

"For the last three years, I've been running the Circus by borrowing money. A Circus is like a village in a city; you have barbers, electricians, cooks, welders, tailors; everybody is there. We only get crowd on weekends now, earlier every day was a holiday," says Sanjeev Balagopal, Managing Director at GBC.

At the height of its glory, the century-old Circus had over 700 people—both staff and performers—and a zoo of animals including lions, tigers, black panthers, chimpanzees, gorillas, lamas, gibbons, polar bears, orangutans and over 26 elephants, among others.



Tulsi Das, the oldest joker at GBC.

MEENAL VASHISTHA

But with the government ban on child artists and animal training, followed by the waning public interest and logistical challenges, the circus is struggling to make ends meet.

By 2021, as GBC celebrates its 101st birthday, the Circus MD is left with no choice but to downsize it into a smaller show—trimming the current staff of 180 artists and 70 temporary staff to 50 to 60 all-rounder artists while outsourcing the rest.

Founded in 1920 by Baburao Kadam, the Grand Bombay Circus, after merging with K. M. Kunhikannan's Whiteaway and Great Lion circuses, was renamed Great Bombay Circus in 1947. After K. M. Kunhikannan's death in 1953, his nephew K. M. Balagopal succeeded him, taking the Circus to international waters including Sri Lanka and South Africa.

Sitting in the first row on the right of the entrance is an older man. The man is dressed in a blue

shirt and black trousers and wearing black rubber sandals. His feet dangle nearly one foot above the ground and head bent over the smartphone.

"That's the history of Great Bombay Circus," says Balagopal, pointing to the old man.

Tulsidas Chaudhary, hailing from Chapra district in Bihar, has been a joker at GBC for 61 years. He joined the circus at the age of twelve or thirteen, he says. In all these years, the three-foot tall Chaudhary never demanded a salary but says he's living well. All his medical expenses are paid by the Circus, including a major stomach surgery in Indore, a few years ago.

He visits his family in Dehradun, once in every two years. He had four brothers and three brothers, all of whom have passed away. He had also three girlfriends in his youth, he says. Holding the giant Samsung smartphone with his tea-(Chai)-colored bloated left hand and tapping the right index finger through the gallery, he hunts for his first girlfriend's picture.

"Baby," he pointed to his first girlfriend, "She's a grandmother now. We're still in touch." A woman, with a grey hairline tur-



The crew at GBC. MEENAL VASHISTHA

ning into black hair falling on her left shoulder, dressed in a saree, was smiling in the picture.

"Abhi Bhavishya ka main kya-batau. Mujhe kya pata kya hoga, (What can I say of the future? What do I know what will happen?)" he wonders, adding "Jo aata hai, usi ko dehnaha!" (Whatever may come, I have to see it).

But for younger members of the circus like Suraj Jadav and his wife Poonam (both 30-years-old), the

future also means raising and educating their five-year-old son Vihan who's currently living with his grandparents in Gujarat.

"Achanak mein bhayanak ho gaya, (It all happened very suddenly)" Suraj says, bursting into a peal of big laughter and his wife joins him. The joke was about his marriage being a tragedy.

Both born and raised in families of Circus Artists have seen no other world than this show business.

They met at the age of 18 in Golden Circus and after three years of courtship, tied the knot in 2010. They're saving up money to open a beauty parlour back home in Gujarat, so Poonam can be with her son.

For Sabina, 40, the circus is her only employer. Her family—a husband and two boys in their twenties—live in Kerala. But there is no work for her there, she says. She was seven or eight, when she left her home in Hetoda, Nepal, to join Golden Circus.

Looking at the empty seats with a few dozens of uninterested spectators, it was hard to believe that it was an iconic show. Children with their mothers and grandparents made up the majority of the crowd. Occasionally, some middle-aged men took out their phones to record scantily dressed female performers. Nobody laughed at the jokers; the acts barely scored loud applause and the only artists to get some engagement were the Ethiopians who tacked on some dancing to their act. efore it is turned into a smaller show.

But for its people, life must go on, as each of them chase their dreams in carefree retirement or with a well-educated son. or with the thought of a lost legacy.

Work at Museum hinders visitors

MARIAH DINS

The ongoing work to build a park at the Government Museum at Egmore is giving its visitors a difficult time. The once well-maintained green campus is now history with trees cut down and construction material piled up in the place.



Construction work at the Government Museum

| MARIAH DINS

The loud sound of construction work disturbs the peacefulness of the place and the deep pits that have been dug make it hard for the visitors to move from one building to another.

The massive collections at the museum are housed in several different buildings, with sections devoted to anthropology, stone sculptures, bronzes, zoology, natural history, numismatics, national art and a children's museum.

Marie Elise, a tourist from France, said she had high expectations, but was completely dispirited after entering the premises. As somebody who admired art and culture, Marie said she expected to spend quality time going around the place to observe and learn about the exhibits, but could not do so because of the noise from the construction work.

Justifying the work being taken up, K. Parthipan, Assistant Engineer, said "The government is tak-

ing the initiative to build a park with better seating facilities and greenery for the visitors who would like to sit down and spend time reading and studying. We are aware about the inconvenience it is causing to the visitors, therefore we are taking steps to finish the construction within six months."

India's second oldest museum had approximately 500 people visiting it everyday and there is enough in store for everyone who would like to spend an hour there. But there are several aspects of the museum that are crying for attention.

The Zoology and Natural History section leaves much room for improvement.

"Some of the exhibits are covered in dust, which clearly shows how much attention is being given towards preserving these exhibits. It is very disheartening to see such a great place being maintained shabbily," said Meena Kumari, a visitor.

The digital displays installed to show information about all the exhibits are not in proper working condition. Many of the hallways are pitch dark without proper lights and the walls look worn down.

"The vast collections in the museum are being maintained with a very few staff which is difficult to maintain," said Vikram, staff.

Futsal turf comes to the rescue of football players in Chennai

NIMA

The locals interested to play football rushes to book a slot at Jawaharlal Nehru stadium or reserve one of the artificial Futsal turfs installed by private individuals in Chennai today.

Safe for those students going to school and colleges that has football ground, the opportunity to play football ends with graduation for most of the football enthusiasts in the city.

This has led to private individuals installing artificial Futsal turfs on a space available on the rooftops, and in small space near their residential campuses, among others. The change has come as an opportunity for sports business while creating proper facilities to play for the locals.

A resident from Chennai, Balaji said that most public space was taken by private individuals to build houses and commercial apartment with urbanization taking place at faster pace. "Government took up the available space to build road and for widening purposes," he said.

He added that cricket playing folks used most grounds making it less possible for locals and children interested in football to find a space to play.

He said that over the years, people who love to play football moved on to playing 5-sided Futsal matches and the city has many turfs installed. "There are only countable numbers of football ground in the city," said Balaji.

Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium received reservation to play at least five matches in the morning and seven matches in the evening in a week from local clubs and private individuals.

The stadium charges for government and college students are Rs 2,500 per match. The private individuals pay Rs 3,500 per match. The stadium is packed especially in the morning and evening with local clubs and private individuals reserving the turf to play weekly and daily, said an official from Tamil Nadu Football Association.

Arun, a 30-year-old private official plays Futsal every Tuesday at Gofutsal Velachery with his

friends for recreation.

"I played football on a bigger ground during my college and school days only. After that it was difficult to play despite being interested. And we could hardly find bigger ground in the city," he said.

He added that most football grounds were in schools and colleges and it was restricted to their own school tournaments and events.

"So the best option is to play Futsal, which is equally interesting and the turfs are available," he said.

Pranesh S, coach at FC Madras Academy said that the academy's 11-sided artificial turf, installed two years back, is the first football pitch to have rubber turf in the city. "We are not able to make it available for those willing to play football," he said.

The artificial turf at Thoraipakkam is fully engaged with children as young as 13 years old learning to play in one of the best football academies in Tamil Nadu. The futsal turf that keep the scene alive and provide a place for casual footballers.

KEERTHI KRISHNA

Potteries, paintings and artefacts made out of bamboo and coconut waste by women from the tribes of Nilgiris and Andaman were the highlights of a tribal exhibition from the Women's Bazaar, inaugurated at the C.P. Ramaswamy Art Centre in Teynampet, Chennai to mark International Women's Day.

Soup bowls and spoons made by Kota tribes; paintings depicting tribal life and forests by Kurumba tribes; baskets, earrings and other jewelry of bamboo by tribes from the Andaman and bowls, holders and vessels made out of coconut shells by other tribes from the Nilgiris were on display in the event.

Events like this are a way for tribal women to showcase their talents according to Dr Sudhakar, the executive director of Green Skills Development Programme (GSDP).

"GSDP, which comes under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, organises livelihood programmes for tribal women with a motive to enhance their lives. In-

come from this would help tribals given they are not allowed to collect Minor Forest Produce (MFP), which was allowed earlier. The tribes use discarded waste to make these products" he added.

This tribal exhibition is one among the many stalls at the 5 day bazaar, organised to bring out the talents of women.

Colourful collections of sarees, customized earrings and pouches, and a wide array of readymade food like pickles were spread across the hall.

Inaugurating the event, actor Sushasini Maniratnam said that the exhibition is a landmark for women empowerment.

"This is a celebration of women and women entrepreneurship," she added.

The bazaar was filled with customers. "Having earrings, sarees, pickles and vadams under the same roof certainly helps us," said Sujatha M, a customer.

Another customer Hema said, "I regularly visit this place and buy stuff. People here are like family."



Clothes, crafts and jewelleryes put for sale at the women's bazaar at Teynampet | KEERTHI KRISHNA

Shopkeepers like Rajini Surana, who runs a saree shop in the event, said that the event was a getaway from her daily routine.

"I work as a teacher, this event gives us something different to our daily lives. I buy sarees from Rajasthan, Ahmedabad and Kolkata and sell them here," she added.

Shantha, the exhibitory officer cum manager of the Art Centre and organiser of the event, said that the

event aims at bringing women out of the house.

"There is a chance for every woman here and there are around 50 stalls run by women here," she added.

The event is funded by collecting some amount of money from the shopkeepers and all the profit from sales goes to the shopkeepers," says Shantha.

Saying a lot with ceramic

MEENAL VASHISTHA

The Varija Gallery at Dakshina Chitra displaying pottery works of eight ceramic artists—4 each from India and Korea—drew a poor crowd because of its distance from the city.

"It took us 40 minutes, and a cab-ride of Rs.360 to reach here, which dictates what kind of public can come here and engage with the exhibit," says Solomon Benjamin, 59, Professor at IIT Madras.

The exhibition, that started on February 26 and ended on March 6, displayed a wide-range including terracotta, glazed rope work, stoneware among others. Pieces like 'One leaf could be a Ganesha' by Suh Sanghee were one of the many accounts of cultural exchange between the artists.

Ramkumar Kannadasan's elephant, another piece in the exhibit, titled 'Vanishing Point' is set in stoneware, with houses in front and green and yellow mushroom-shaped trees at the back.

"I like Ram's work, especially the elephant. He didn't talk about any other animal, just the elephant in the room. He's portraying the binary of rural-urban existence," says Nideesh, 29, PhD Scholar at IIT Madras.

"In every piece, Ram is precisely picking up issues with political dimensions to them. Once the artwork is complete, the artist is dead. After that, the art speaks for him. If he were here, it would have



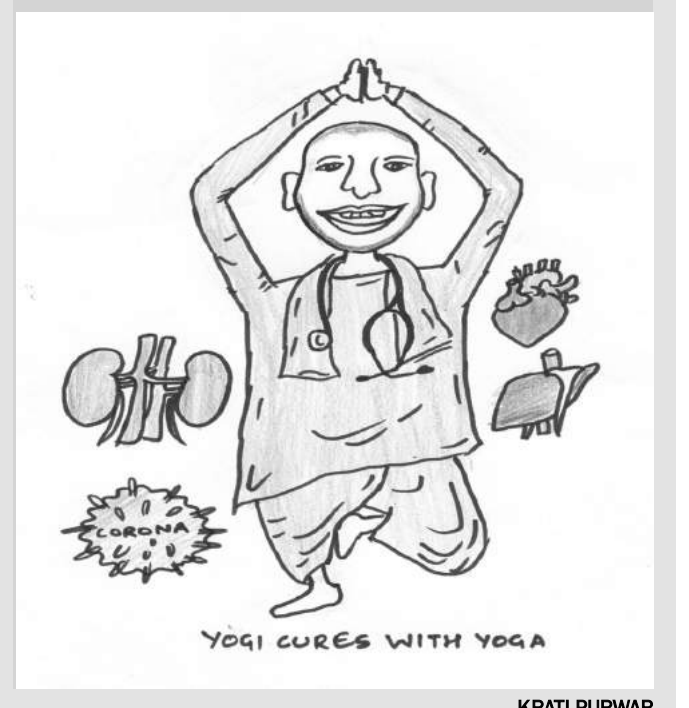
Ganesha in ceramic

been interesting to talk about the pieces," Nideesh added, pointing to the aerial view piece showing an oversized JCB drilling in a farmland.

The third edition of the InKo Ceramic exhibition, in association with Clayarch Gimhae Museum, Korea and Dakshin Chitra, presented a unique Indo-Korean Ceramic Residency project that brought the eight ceramic artists—Abir Patwardhan, Debashish Das, Neha Kudchadkar and Ramkumar Kannadasan, Hong Geunyoung, Kim Mijin, Park Ja-il and Suh Sanghee—in a five-week residency

"The artists had to make three works at least. The pieces will be kept at the Dakshin Chitra Museum and sometimes a few pieces are décor," said Gita Hudson, a painter and art curator.

Yoga for Corona



KRATI PURWAR

Govt work on display at trade fair

MEGHA MALLICK

Stalls of the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption and the state's Legal Services Authority welcome the visitors at the entrance opposite to the War Memorial at the 46th India Tourist and Industrial Fair 2020, at the Island Grounds here.

Most of the stalls at the fair belong to the various departments of the state governments, such as the Fisheries Department, Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority and Information and Public Relations Department.

Sunderan, an official at the Fisheries Department says, "Our department is a century old, and we have been attending the fair since its inception."

"The common public knows many things about the revenue and the road departments, but they do not know about the fisheries department. When they visit this stall, they can get to know the schemes for fishermen and beneficiaries from the fisheries sector," he adds.

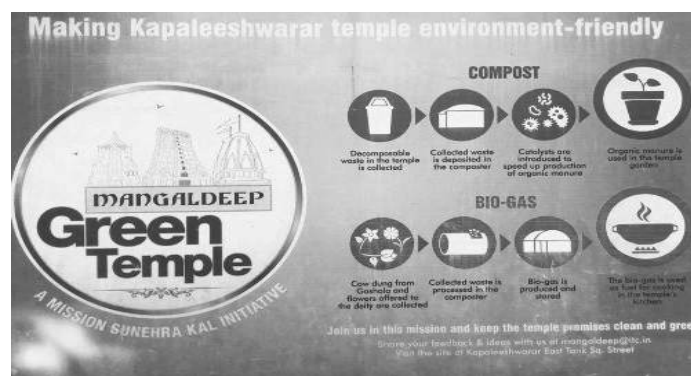
In this stall, wooden models of the various types of fishing boats are on display, alongside various types of fishes like Gourami,

Cichlid and Albino Rainbow sharks in aquariums. A small pond is spread across the centre, for small Koi Carp fishes to swim in.

There is a stall for the Health and Family Welfare Department, showcasing various medicinal herbs and information about the department. Outside its stall, an ambulance, 'Hospital on Wheels' is also stationed. In the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services stall, various types of rope knots that the fire-fighters use while extinguishing fires, their uniform are on display. Some major fires that the department fought are also put up in pictures.

Raju, a visitor to the fair, says, "I have been coming here since I was a child. This is a really good place to know about the plans, programmes and schemes of the government. The public gets useful information."

At the Youth Welfare and Sports Development Authority, the trophies won by various state teams in sports such as volleyball, athletics and fencing are exhibited; and at the Tamil Nadu tourism stall, some major tourist destinations of the state like Kapaleeshwarar Temple. The fair is open from 3p.m to 9 p.m. on all days.



Kapaleeshwar temple goes green | MAHERA DUTTA

Temple goes green, but streets are dirty

MAHERA DUTTA

Mylapore's greatest historical treasure, the Kapaleeshwarar temple, was recently in the news for going "green" with garbage being segregated and sweepers cleaning the premises regularly. But the streets outside the temple are dirty and littered.

The drains remain clogged with plastic bottles and milk packets thrown by vendors and visitors to the temple.

Under the Mission Sunehara Kal initiative by the ITC, launched by the Mangaldeep Green Temple, decomposable waste collected in the premises is turned into manure

for the temple garden. Inside the temple, there are bins at every corner along with the availability of clean water. Sweeping, in the State Government administered temple, takes place at regular intervals. Sundaram Iyer, a visitor said "The green temple initiative remains much appreciated but is limited in its scope. A proper segregation of the waste is not followed by vendors outside the temple premises. The visitors also contribute in littering."

Ranga from Adyar said "Many initiatives can be introduced but until citizens have a basic civic sense, nothing is going to work. It is worse during Panguni festival."

Metro users unaware of free bicycle offer

NEIL CORNELIUS

The Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has been offering commuters bicycles for free use by the public for more than one and a half years now and yet most metro-goers are either unaware or feel that the cycles aren't not useful.

The cycles are given to the people for 24 hours over a caution deposit of Rs 3000. A late fee of Rs 50 per day is deducted from the deposit amount. The deposit is returned upon return of the cycle.

Arul Kumar (34), who works at the Alandur Metro Station, said that none of the passengers wanted to use the cycles.

"We have four cycles in this station and none of them have been used even once," he said. Arul who worked at the Ashok Nagar Metro station earlier said that the situation was the same in that station as well.

S. Sathish Kumar (32), the station controller of the Koyambedu Metro Station, had a different explanation for the underuse of these cycles.

"Since there are very cheap (Rs. 10) feeder services to and from the metro, people do not want to take the cycle out in this heat. They are also very apprehensive because of



Smart bikes available outside the Metro stations

the huge caution deposit," said Sathish. He also said that there were currently six cycles in the Koyambedu station out of which three were taken out by commuters who paid the deposit.

G Karan (22), a student at Guru Nanak College, who uses the metro regularly said that he had not heard about the cycles till date since there weren't any posters or boards informing people about this facility.

V Kuberan (19), a student of M.G.R University, said "I've used the cycle service once and it isn't

really useful to me. If I'm not using the metro the next day then I will either have to pay a fine or come cycling all the way to the station just to drop the cycle off and then return home by other means."

When asked if the CMRL is going to scrap the cycle free facility Sathish said that there were no such plans and that the facility would be available for the public to make use of whenever they want to.

Every metro station other than CMBT had these cycles.



46th Industrial & Tourist Fair 2020 | MEGHA MALLICK