



"Studying is a form of austerity. It's a process, like the bud unfolding into the beautiful fragrance spreading flower. Understanding this, we should approach our topic of study with love and patience."

Stand up for your rights, even if it is a bus ticket

Private buses in Palakkad flout rules by not giving tickets to passengers

Vishnu K Varma

"Why should we give tickets when people have never bothered to ask for them? Palakkad has always been like this and it is never going to change as well", says Vasudevan, a private bus conductor on the Palakkad-Nenmara bus route. Well it seems the people of Palakkad are all to blame when it comes to ticketless travelling in private buses in the district.



According to standard RTO rules, a passenger on any bus is entitled to a ticket which has to show the charge of the ticket as well as the name of the destination. But the buses in the district do not seem to follow the system of giving tickets. Many of the bus conductors say that they do stock tickets for special RTO inspections. But such RTO inspections are quite unheard of. The alibi for ticketless travel amounts to a careless overload of passengers which can lead to accidents as well. "The rule asks every bus operator to give tickets to the passengers. We do charge them if they are found violating the rule, but other than that we cannot do anything. We have not received even a single complaint from the pub-

lic regarding this matter", says Abdul Salam, Senior Superintendent, RTO. K I Basheer, General Secretary, Palakkad District Private Bus Owners Association (PDPBOA), voices the same view. "If people want tickets, we are ready to give them", he says. His statement further impresses upon the people shooing away from standing up for rights even when it comes to a bus ticket. Jayaraj, a daily passenger between Olavakkode and Town Stand, has always wanted to ask for a ticket. But due to the fear of being sidelined out by the majority, he has always remained silent. Maybe there are people like Jayaraj

Photo Courtesy: Flickr who wish to speak for their rights, but eventually they all get out classed by the majority who are not bothered about whether the law is really being implemented or not. Who is really to be blamed for such discrepancies in laws? Is it the public who do not wish to stand up for their rights? Is it the bus operators association who may have twisted means behind such a system? Is it the government which does not take pains to even check the fitness certificates of these buses, spare the ticketless system? The questions all remain unanswered.

Development in tatters

Municipal authorities show fallacy in collecting revenue taxes

Pratheek .K P

The district of Palakkad faces a major setback in its developmental plans thanks to the incompetence of the Municipal Revenue Authority in collecting the tax revenue effectively. The insufficiency of funds has led to the discontinuation in developmental work of roads, drainages, electrification of villages and many other indispensable works.

At present, the Municipal Authority is shy of nearly 1.5 crores that is needed to resume these works. "Because of the shortage in the amount, the contractors have boycotted all other works as well", says the Standing Committee Chairman, Mr S. Bhaskaran.

"The reason for the unsuccessful collection of taxes, is that there is still no change in the pattern for collecting the income tax and other taxes", complains K.P Sreekumar, the Revenue Officer for the Palakkad district. As stated by the law passed in 1996, those who receive an income of Rs 1, 20,000 and above have to

pay a tax of Rs 1250. So, even if the income of a person is Rs 1 crore, he has to pay only Rs 1250 as tax. The minimum tax received by the department is Rs 120. However, the Municipality remains silent to this problem of



Photo: Pratheek K.P

incorrect and inappropriate method of collection of taxes due to the stringent but outdated rules of collecting taxes.

Enter the world of 'Iravan'

Soorya .V

Eunuchs are a community who have always been ostracized and neglected by the society. But, here's a mountainous village in the interiors of Palakkad who have written off the odds by inviting hundreds of eunuchs for its annual temple festival. Panangattiri is a rural hamlet which conducts its annual 'Iravan' temple festival with the proud participation of the 'Puthukudi' clan of eunuchs. This is the only shrine in Kerala where Iravan (Koothanda), their deity, is worshipped. "The Pathukudi community was driven out of Kaveri Poo Pattinam (near present Trichi) by the Chola King 400 years ago. They took their deity with them and built this temple with the permission of Kollengode King," says Kuttikrishnan, the priest of the temple. Every year, in February, hundreds of Eunuchs come here to



Photo: Soorya V

celebrate their annual festival of 'Koothanda Vela'. On the day of Karthika, an effigy of Lord Iravan is made with hay, wood and clay. The model is torched on the final day of the 18-days-long festival symbolizing the death of Iravan on the last day of the Kurushetra war. It is therefore interesting to note that while the modern community still remains adamant to accept the third sex people, rural people pave the way for human equality and brotherhood.

Nagarjuna: an actor and beyond..!

Report & photo : Vandana Rajan

Simplicity personified' could be the best word used to describe Nagarjuna, the south Indian film luminary. Thanks to the economic recession that happened subsequently on his completion of Automobile Engineering from Louisiana University in the year 1985, the reason why he couldn't find a job and he came back to India to join his Dad Nageshwara Rao's film fraternity. With his first film, Vikram, he proved to be an amazing actor which resulted in hundreds of opportunities knocking at his door and he became the south Indian Idol in no time even to those who have never watched a single film of Nagarjuna. Actors tend to confine themselves with their fame and stardom but, Nagarjuna isn't just an actor. Beyond, an automobile engineer, he is a business person who runs hotels and many other business organizations, he works for the reinforcement of HIV/AIDS victims through the TeachAIDS campaign initiated by

the Stanford University. Besides all these, he works for the Blue Cross of Hyderabad which takes care of thousands of abandoned animals in the city.

"To satisfy the actor in me, I work with good roles that comes my way, but to satisfy the human being in me, I think the best way is to give care and compassion to the suffering and the down-trodden inhabitants living around me", says Nagarjuna with his experience in acting over hundreds of films and winning many state and national awards.

"Thought provoking and thematic movies as in the Malayalam film industry which hardly comes to the limelight should be made examples of by the other languages in order to save themselves from continuous box-office failures", he asserted.

More than awards or accolades what can make Nagarjuna happy would be just a text message or an E-mail from someone who loves him and his ovies or activities sitting in some corner of the world. "It gives me im-



mense pleasure and nothing in the world can refuel or empower me as much as it does", he says in bliss. Always propagating quality cinema with clean entertainment, Nagarjuna yearns to make good movies, which would not only rise above the typical commercial movies but also enhance our heritage, rich tradition and family values. His new bilingual movie Payanam which has come out under the Prakash Raj Productions that talk about a flight hijack story continues to make waves in theatres across South India.

Editorial

Coimbatore wetlands face extinction

The title "Manchester of India", given to the second largest city of Tamil Nadu, and one of the most industrially active cities of India, comes with a very heavy blow to the environment. With around 30,000 industries in the city, it would be amazing if pollution levels don't increase. The industries however don't seem to realize that these toxins are highly harmful to human life and not just the atmosphere and water bodies here.

According to the statistics provided by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Coimbatore ranks 34 in the polluted zones of India and is the 4th most polluted city in Tamil Nadu. The Noyyal River is the primary source for the 28 wetlands that dot the expanse of Coimbatore, and are home to a large number of species of flora and fauna, including a lot of migratory birds.

The lakes in Coimbatore are located around busy, urbanized centres, and industries of various types. Information from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board's figures shows that the Singanallur Lake has extremely high levels of alkalinity.

According to a study Genotoxicity of Textile Dye Effluent on Fish, by M. Sumathi, P. Rajguru, of the Department of Environmental Science, PSG-CAS, fish are the best source for checking for toxicity in water, as are life systems that metabolize, concentrate and store water pollutants. In other words, they are the first organisms to absorb the toxins onto their bodies. The fish, hence caught from the Kovai water bodies are heavy with poison. Although several NGOs like Siruthuli, Save Coimbatore and others have been protesting against the pollution of Siruvani, Noyyal and other water bodies, the administration do not seem to be listening to them.

Excessive texting might numb your thumb

Research throws light on side-effects of texting

Rajesh P.G

Are you a messaging freak? Have you ever tried out switching off your cell phone and staying away from it? Well the latter is something that you'll be doing eventually after you catch the "blackberry thumb" – a syndrome or a form of repetitive strain injury caused by the frequent usage of thumb(s) to press buttons on smart phones or mobile devices.

The name has derived from the popular mobile brand "Blackberry". Thanks to the wide variety of SMS packs introduced by service providers, messaging or "texting" as they call it, is the new affair in teenage town. But this continuous messaging has led to teens being affected by the syndrome characterized by a sore thumb and throbbing pain in the wrist. Janaki, a 3rd year engineerins student says "First my fingers started aching. I didn't bother much. But then it gradually

started affecting me so badly that I was not even able to hold my pen properly. Then my entire wrist and hand began throbbing and became numb. Later I got to know that it was 'Blackberry thumb'."



Photo: Rajesh PG

Similar is the case with many school and college-goers in Coimbatore. From a high school student who possesses a mobile phone to almost all the college-going or working teenagers, everyone seems to have the habit of constant messaging day

Dr.Suresh Kumar Thampi, a neurologist at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi says that the disease was earlier found only one among thousand people. But now it has risen to one among hundred

people. Over-exposure to mobile devices has been found to be the evident reason for such a disease. "Treatments to this syndrome include wearing a splint and applying ice to the affected area. In extreme conditions, Cortisone injections and surgeries may be required", adds Dr. Thampi.

However, the new generation teenagers seem to be ignorant about this syndrome and their days to walk holding an ice-bag to cure the pain is not so far.

Dogs, Dogs and more dogs

A home in Palakkad with 41 dogs amazes residents

Sruthi K

Chottu, Mottu Kunji and Ukru are quite eager to meet guests who come to their home. The image of four pampered kids may cross anyone's minds, but in reality they are four of the 41 dogs owned by Ushadevi, a resident of Palakkad. Ushadevi is a mother of three children and also a teacher working in the Government Moyens School in Palakkad. Her parents' death and the sudden loneliness in her life was a time when she decided to adopt a dog. "When that dog delivered 10 puppies, I fed them all like my own children. I never felt alone when I am with them" says the teacher. From ten, the number of dogs increased and she couldn't lift them up, all by herself.

There are several different varieties of dogs with Ushadevi. They range from Labradors to German Shepherds to the Pomeranian, spaniel and several other varieties. The dogs are well cared for and are vaccinated regularly. The food given to them is also highly nourishing in nature.

Ushadevi, who loves her dogs a lot, is worried about violence towards animals in various parts of the world. The latest issue of mass slaughter of 100 healthy sled dogs in the British Columbia shocked this pet lover who is highly passionate about animal rights.

Usha's passion and devotion to animal rights is indeed inspiring to all those who know her personally.

Village in Palakkad terrorised by drunkards



Vidyakumari A

Pothukallu, a village on the outskirts of the Kerala-Tamil border, on first glance, seems like any other village where people lead peaceful lives mixed with their own little troubles. But it is not so in reality for the people who have long lost the

notion that they can lead a peaceful life, thanks to the government neglect and the onslaught of anti social elements.

An unlicensed local toddy shop which supplies illegal liquor beyond the time limit adds to the troubles of the villagers who are suffering from problems caused by irregular water supplies and lack of electricity. The shop has been in the village for nearly 30 years but apparently does not have a license. With no time restrictions here, people have faced several problems from drunken men who have tried to abuse them.

Says Punitha, a local village woman, "I'm a housewife. Once while on my

way to collect water, some of the drunken men hurled abuses at me and used highly abusive language at me. I was forced to come home without taking the water, in fear.

Says Arun, another villager, "We have given complaints against the toddy shop to people ranging from police to Tasildar to the collector for the past 6 months but to no avail"

The govt has another version of the whole matter. "The toddy shop is licensed and as far as we are concerned, the shop is not a nuisance to the villagers as it runs according to a specific time limit. If the complaint persists, we will look into the whole matter" says Excise Inspector Robert

Caught in a Shot



When the wheels just start rolling away...Photo:Sabyasachi

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Letters to the Editor

It makes interesting reading the Campus Beat. After a lull, it is coming now with new themes and social issues. I was struck with wonder to read the news item that a mentally unsound man has got a bumper lottery of 30 lakhs and a Maruthi car but is not entitled to enjoy it due to his state of mind. Do have consultation with legal experts and offer him a solution.

Congratulations to the Editorial team of the latest issue as well as the previous one.

Dr. J Paranjothi Ramalingam, Head of the Department, Social Work

This is with reference to the article titled, 'Pilgrimage Season Annoys Passengers' by Sreya Jacob in the Campus beats edition dated 27 Jan 2011. I am deeply concerned about the harsh criticism & cynical attitude

against the Ayyappa pilgrims which the article espouses. The article makes no mention of the government apathy in providing proper facilities to the Sabarimala pilgrims. The recent horrific tragedy at Sabarimala is a case in point. Instead of improving the safety and amenities for the pilgrims, the government and judiciary are attacking the faith of the Sabarimala pilgrims by questioning the Makarajyothi etc. The article does not touch upon the real issue of the complete lack of amenities like adequate special trains or other facilities for Sabarimala pilgrims but instead criticizes them harshly for 'dirtying the trains' etc.

As if the Indian trains are very clean without the Sabarimala pilgrims!

M. Pramod Kumar, Assistant Professor and Coordinator, Cultural Education