

Check out
Easter cuisines
from different
parts of
India
Page 2



Take a look at
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new summer
workwear
collection
Page 4

Concrete causes trees to crash

Mindless paving is depriving trees of nutrition, and causing them to fall. A courier executive died on the spot when a branch crashed on him on Wednesday

A courier executive died in Bengaluru on Wednesday when a tree fell on him.

The heavy downpour on Wednesday and Thursday, accompanied by gusty winds, brought down many trees across the city.

Experts blame the phenomenon on mindless concretisation of footpaths.

Dr T V Ramachandra, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, says 'irresponsible concretisation' chokes tree roots, depriving them of water, nutrients and

respiration.

Overall, mismanagement of natural resources is a big cause for trees crashing.

"Apathy and greed are the prime causal factors. There is an 88 per cent decline in vegetation cover, 79 per cent loss of water bodies, and 1,028 per cent increase in paved surfaces in the last five decades. Today, the city is choked with 80 per cent paved surfaces and it has only 4.5 per cent natural spaces," he explains.

Vijay Nishant, urban conservationist and founder of Project Vruksha, seconds Ramachandra's views.

"The space around trees is choked with cement and tar. The roots are chopped to make way for sewage lines," he says. He says the BBMP must regularly prune weak and dry branches.

The need of the hour is to



POOR PLAN This picture, taken during 'white-topping' in Basavanagudi, shows how roads and footpaths are built with concrete choking trees.

preserve the city's biodiversity, says environmentalist Suresh Heblikar of Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development.

"People have begun to look at trees from two perspectives-- commercial and environmental. We must look at

what trees can be planted in the city, given its dramatic growth. We have to also examine the soil structure to understand which trees are long-lasting," he told *MetroLife*.

Nina C George

Branch fell on courier exec's head

Kiran, 27, was on a courier delivery errand when it started raining on Wednesday. He parked his bike by the roadside and took shelter under a tree on Outer Ring Road near Hebbal. The tree crashed, and a branch fell on his head. He died on the spot. About 25 trees fell on Wednesday.



Kiran died when a branch fell on him on Wednesday.



NEGLECT This picture, taken in Jayanagar, shows what happens when trees are given no breathing space.

Choose honge over gulmohar

Experts offer some solutions

Empower ward committees with multidisciplinary knowledge (waste management, trees, lakes, drains, gardens, recreation space management). They could stop the BBMP from taking irrational decisions.

Move towards native species such as neem and honge. It is time to replace exotic species with native species. Native species are well adapted to Bengaluru conditions. Exotic species may look good but fall easily.

Have a dedicated tree wing (with an advisory committee) for species selection and tree management. The experts can come up with plans for gradual replacement of weak trees.



Employees gather in Delhi and break down after Jet Airways announced a suspension of flights on April 17. They made an appeal for its revival, a day later, at this meeting. PTI

Jet staff in city still await salary

The sudden suspension of operations has left many in distress. A member of its cabin crew tells her story

As Jet Airways ground all its planes and suspended operations, it left many of its employees in Bengaluru in distress.

"They aren't sure what the future holds for them, and whether the airline will resume operations. Reports say about 20,000 jobs are at stake.

A member of Jet's cabin crew (who didn't wish to be named for this story), spoke to *MetroLife* about what happened in the run-up to the shutdown.

Launched in 1993

Jet Airways was founded in 1992 and began full-fledged operations in 1995. In October 2017, it became the second-largest airline in India after IndiGo. Before its temporary suspension, it operated flights to 52 destinations. The airline's financial woes reached a crisis in February this year. It ceased international flights on April 12. It grounded all planes on April 17.

Protest march

Employees of Jet Airlines are taking out a silent march in Bengaluru on April 22.

In May, it is going to be two months without money. For the last five-six days, the company has emailing us about the developments," says the crew member.

Polls finger lickin' good

When you vote, you not only participate in the festival of democracy but also get deals on snacks and stuff

This season, casting your vote is rewarding in more ways than you would imagine.

If you have an inked finger, many businesses are ready to offer you discounts.

At Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel, voters get to feast on a 1+1 lunch or dinner buffet. Started on April 18, the offer ends on Saturday.

"The turnout was pretty good for a luncheon. Many people love to dine with us, and we just wanted to give one more reason to vote," says Karthik, marketing manager, Sheraton.

Another eatery offering election deals is Chetty's Corner. You get 10 per cent off on their entire menu till Wednesday next.

Director Anil Chetty says the elections as an opportunity to "contribute to society."

"We wanted to encourage people to vote; it is for a social cause, not at all a promotional stunt. We carry out such deals every



Archana M V from B.PAC gives away a tulsi sapling to a senior citizen who took the trouble to vote.

year for a social cause, and this year, we decided to go with elections," he says.

Chetty says many thronged the chaat outlets on Thursday, after voting. Hotel Nisarga Grand, Nrupatunga Road, gave away about 5,700 dosas for free to those who cast their votes. They also thanked voters with sweets.

Mallini Raghu and Rakshitha M N

Basil gift

Bangalore Political Action Committee (B.PAC), described as 'a citizen's platform for participative democracy,' describes the season as 'Election Habba'.

Its pre-election activities included preparing reports on candidates, and endorsing some of them.

"Election Habba" culminated with distribution of tulsi saplings, a 'thank you gift' to those who cast their votes. Ten B.PAC volunteers gave out 500 saplings across constituencies.

Archana M V

researcher and program coordinator.

B.Pac, says, "We mainly focused on first-time voters and senior citizens as it encourages them more."



Chetty's Corner is one of the many eateries that offered discounts.

Fast food and free rides

Fast food chains like Dominos, McDonald's and Subway also provided election discounts.

Hero Moto-Corp offers free two-wheeler wash and servicing at Rs 199 (usually Rs 500-600).

The deal is available across India within two days of polling.

Ola gave free rides for the physically challenged in Bengaluru, Mysuru and Mangaluru on April 18.

The service is available on April 23 in Ballari, Gulbarga, Hubli-Dharwad and Belgaum, when those cities vote.



Hotel Nisarga Grand's announcement offered butter dosa, sweets and cool drinks to voters.

