

Lack of donors cost lives

By Udita Chaturvedi

OVER 70 percent of people awaiting organ transplants die in hospitals before they can receive them.

"More than seventy percent of the patients die in the hospitals waiting for matching donors for organ transplantation," says Dr. Satish D, nephrologist, Apollo Hospital.

"Donor count in India is very low. In the whole of last year, only 81 transplants took place in India, which is only 0.08 per million population of the country," said Dr. Sonal Ashthana, multi organ transplant specialist, BGS Global Hospitals.

He added: "In Karnataka, only 10 cadaveric donations took place in the last one year."

"The state programme in Karnataka is very poor. When donors are from among the family, the process takes only 1-2 years while when the state committee is approached, it takes much longer," said Dr. Satish.

Dr. Asthana said: "According to world statistics, one out of five patients die waiting for an organ transplant. In India, the figures are much higher but as there is no government system to collect this data, there are no official figures."

Dr. Satish said: "Only three cadaveric kidney transplants have taken place in the hospital between May 2011 and September 2012 out of a total of 30."

There are currently four patients admitted at the Apollo Hospital seeking kidney transplant.

Multi Organ Harvesting Aid Network (MOHAN) Foundation, one of the leading organizations actively involved in organ donation, states that: "At present, in India, the approximate prevalence of chronic kidney disease is 800 per million population (pmp), and the incidence of end-stage kidney disease is 150-200 pmp. Nearly 3,500 transplants are done annually as against the



Photo: BGS Global Hospitals

A patient, before and after, undergoing a kidney transplant.

need for 210,000 kidney transplants."

There are currently close to 800 patients' waitlisted under the Zonal Coordination Committee of Karnataka (ZCCK), in Karnataka, for an organ transplant. 600 of these are registered for kidney donations, 57 for liver and 32 for heart.

"Since 2007, there have only been three heart transplants in the city," said Dr. Asthana.

"The frequency of organ donations is highest in Tamil Nadu, followed by Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka. 1602 cadaveric donations were made in Tamil Nadu between 2008-2012"

"There are literally no cadaveric donations made in the North. There have been only eight transplants in Delhi between 2011-2012," he said.

MOHAN Foundation says that the shortage of organs is not only due to human psychology but organ donation laws. Current

law states that the final decision of organ donation falls to the power of the deceased patient's next of kin, irrespective of the donor card.

8198 people pledged to donate organs from MOHAN foundation by signing up donor cards during the last one year.

"Last year, only 81 transplants took place in India, which is only 0.08 per million population of the country"

"Patients prefer an organ transplant to dialysis because the quality of life is much better for those who undergo transplant, rather than those who are treated with dialysis," said Dr. Rajannah Sreedhara, nephro-

gist, Fortis Hospital.

About ten patients underwent kidney transplant in the last one year in Fortis Hospital.

Three patients lost their lives in BGS Hospital in September alone, waiting for an availability of an organ for transplant.

Gift Your Organ is another foundation that is actively involved in working towards organ donation. The organization launched an initiative earlier this year in collaboration with the RTO, Bangalore.

Gift Your Organ Foundation has been working with the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Karnataka and the Department of Transport, Government of Karnataka to give the option of organ donation on Driver's License cards. Those willing are issued a special driving license indicating they have pledged to donate their organs.

Reshma Budhia, co-founder of the organization, said: "We've got a response of 48% got so far which is fairly good."

Around 1000 people have pledged their organs through the RTO since July 24, 2012 and about 600 other donors have pledged with the organization in the last one year. The organization hopes that other states will follow soon.

Dr. Asthana said: "These guidelines are standard internationally and even the country has the Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994."

He added: "A first degree relative (parents, siblings or children of the patients) is preferred when a living donation is made."

There are currently 25-30 patients registered in the BGS Global Hospitals, seeking an organ transplants.

"BGS hospital conducted four kidney transplants and nine cadaveric liver transplants and one living transplant in the last one year," said Dr. Asthana.

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Yet another bandh cripples city.

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Rise in brain donation helps the researchers.

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400 years old banyan tree becomes a dustbin.

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Ban on plastic affects income of street vendors.

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Drug abuse cases in the city are on the rise.

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Police nab alleged petrol scamsters

By Nijhum Rudra

ONE of the two men who allegedly rigged a petrol pump to fleece customers has been brought to book by the police.

Rajan Sheikh and Dinesh Mishra, employees at Girinagara petrol pump station stole petrol and cheated customers by showing false readings on the meter, according to police.

Customers complained to police that petrol worth Rs. 160 cost them Rs. 320 when the two men were working.

Angry customers claimed one of the men would distract them while the other fiddled with

the meter readings to show a higher amount.

Rajesh, another cashier at the petrol pump, said police believe Rajan distracted motorists while Dinesh rigged the machine.

Anand S, another worker, said: "The petrol pump has been in business for more than 15 years and we have never faced any problem before. Rajan Seikh and Dinesh Mishra started working here in September 2011."

He added: "Rajan is from Malleswaram and Dinesh, originally from Patna, lives in Koramangla."

Being the only petrol pump on Girinagara main road, it was very popular among customers.

Sales plummeted, according to staff, in the wake of the arrests.

Last month on September 17, a customer brawled with Rajan after he claimed Rajan was cheating him.

The customer was being charged Rs. 350 instead of Rs. 200.

Other employees had to help control the angry flare-up.

Rajesh said: "Ms. Sonia, Deputy Commissioner of Police South, closed the petrol station

for five days last month from September 22 - 27 after she started receiving complaints from customers that the petrol station is charging extra money from the customer."

DCP South, Sonia Narang, said: "Rajan was arrested on September 28 for stealing petrol and for charging the customers extra money."

She added: "Dinesh was not arrested as he had fled. My team and I are trying our best to arrest Dinesh."

The hearing for Rajan is scheduled for October 26 while Dinesh remains at bay.

Political parties declare state Bandh as protests erupt over Cauvery dispute judgement

Krishnaprasad S

THE conflict between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the river Cauvery sparked protests in the state.

The statewide bandh last week was supported by all political parties, trade unions, cinema industry and other organizations.

Karnataka is now waiting for the review of the petitions filed in the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court on September 28 directed Karnataka to release 9,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu till October 20.

Two petitions, one by state and the other by farmers in Mandya village have been filed in the Supreme Court to review the orders passed on September 28.

"Karnataka has witnessed its worst drought in 40 years.

When the state does not have enough water to drink and irrigate, how can they release water to Tamil Nadu.

We don't mind sharing water when there is enough water", said the agitators.

Karnataka counsel for the Cauvery River Authority, Fali S



Protestors at Gandhinagar.

Photo: Krishnaprasad S



Photo: Krishnaprasad S

Jaya Karnataka activists protesting near Race Course Road.

Nariman, said on behalf of Karnataka that it was impossible to physically release water to Tamil Nadu from Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) dam on Monday.

The study team deputed by the Centre visited some parts of the state for an on-the-spot assessment of drought conditions and of water levels in reservoirs.

They have been directed to submit a report to the Cauvery Water Tribunal.

"The Karnataka state being hit by a bad monsoon is facing shortage of water and it would be impossible for the state to release more water", said Nariman.

The Mandya Zilla Raita Hitakarsana Samiti (MZRHS) leader, G Madegowda, on October 9 decided to seek judicial help for the Cauvery crisis.

They formed a committee, consisting of senior advisors like

B V Acharya, Raviverma and Ashok Harnalli.

Meanwhile, Pondicherry has filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking the release of 48 TMC of water for its 2008 acres of agricultural land.

There was a total of 13,000 cusecs of inflow on October 9, according to sources from KRS dam.

Karnataka Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar who is in Delhi to meet the Prime Minister to discuss the crisis said: "I could not meet the Prime Minister.

I will shortly write another letter to PM describing the situation in Karnataka."

The protests united the opposition and the ruling party with both the parties participating in the bandh with equal intensity.

The IT companies which are generally not a part of the bandh were also forced to shut down.

Hydropower crisis after missing monsoon

By Sneha Banerjee

THIS year's deficit monsoon has slashed hydro-electricity production by almost 75 per cent.

The Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited (KREDL) has incurred a record low generation of hydro-electric power this year due to a monsoon failure.

The important power plant projects namely Sharavathy, Nagjhari and Varahi are badly affected.

K.Ramesh, Assistant General Manager of Hydel Power Department at KREDL said: "Even small capacity projects and canal based projects are affected as they completely depend on the natural course of the river."

"The release of water from Kaveri is going to be harmful for the state as that dam generates 154 Mega Watts (MW) of power.", he added.

Going by the recent statistics of the Karnataka Power Corporation (KPC), the generation of hyro-electric power till October 2012 has depreciated.

Assistant Executive Engineer of KPC, Mr. Umesh B.M. said:

that the state was planning to derive power from thermal power resources. The Raichur Thermal Power Units comprises of 8 power units with a capacity of 210 MW each.

Apart from this Bellary Thermal Power Unit is also being used exhaustively and their second unit is under trial for usage.

Apart from this, dependency on private power companies has also increased such as Jindal, Tata, Captive plants and others.

These firms charge Rs.7-8 per unit of electricity.

Umesh added: "Scarcity will result in higher electricity bills in the city."

The state government's supply of electricity to rural areas has also seemingly been affected with several complaints of power cuts pouring in from various districts.

Despite thermal power plants running at full force, the failure of the monsoon and release of Kaveri waters will continue to have adverse effects in the city's power supply.

Wind and solar power resources are also being utilized gradually to relieve the state from the power crisis.

Year	Generation of Hydro-electricity (In Mega-watts)
October 2010	2145.2
October 2011	2156.5
October 2012	542.2

Source: KPC

Negligence in organ donation leads to misinformation among the citizens

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THE role of the ZCKK is to allocate, to ensure legality in the transplantation procedure; to ensure no coercion takes place between the donor and the patient.

Any patient seeking an organ transplant has to be registered with the ZCKK.

"Honestly, no active work has been done in the last three to four years for organ donation, except in Chennai (because of MOHAN Foundation).

In Bangalore, it is only thanks to the regional traffic office," :said Reshma Budhia.

She added: "Only by talking to people directly and a lot of coverage by the media can awareness be created about organ donation."

"Organ donation needs a national level campaign like there is for eye donation.", she added

Gift Your Organ states with less than one-in-a-million organ donors in India and with over 3 million deaths since 2005 due to non-availability of organs, there is a great need to educate the citizens of our country about organ donation."

"It is a long shot but we are hoping to work with the government towards regulating the hospital monitoring system.

Often there is no classification of the person as 'brain dead'but simply as dead, thus

Brain bank accelerates vital research

By Nupur Gour

THE Brain Bank at NIMHANS is helping accelerate research on brain ailments.

The country's only brain bank is easing the research related to neurological disorders. The Brain Bank was set up on April 1, 2000.

Apart from NIMHANS, this bank is the sole supplier of brain tissues to other leading institutions of the country for brain research.

The Bank is funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research and the department of science and technology, government of India.

It is mainly focused on the long term research of brain tumors, AIDS and the genetics behind psychiatric disorders.

Dr. S.K. Shankar, the project coordinator said "It is impossible to misuse the donated brains like kidneys.

He further added " They are not transplanted into other humans and are used solely for research purposes."

there is no record of possible (cadaveric) donors. Also, there needs to be a council team that

He further added, "The brains are not bought and it is completely an act of philanthropy."

Dr. Shankar was also very confident about the progressive steps of the various ongoing research projects being undertaken all around the country.

He said "The donated brain can be stored in formalin for a period of 40-50 years."

Elaborating the procedure for the donation, he said "There is no force or pressure on anyone. It is done purely after an individual's and his close relatives' consent."

"If a dead body is not claimed, its brain is used only

after 72 hours."

"This is the time taken by the medical superintendent to clear the body for donation" he said.

The research programs are being undertaken in NIMHANS with the collaboration of premier institutes like Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASAR), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS).

He ended with a piece of advice "I urge people to stop fearing and hiding their disorders .

He added "I wish they work normally with it and this is the main motive of setting up the brain bank."



The brain museum at NIMHANS.

Photo:Nupur Gour

can talk to the family of the brain dead person and talk to them about donating organs,"said

Reshma Budhia.

"India lacks trained grief counselors. Families of the pat

-ients are emotionally disturbed and need to be counseled to deal with the situation and often to convince the family member for donation," said Mr. Gipson John, senior transplant coordinator, BGS Hospital.

He added: "Each family differs from another in various ways.

There are a lot of factors by which a family is governed – the family dynamics, family structure and their religious and cultural beliefs.

It is at times hard to convince family members to donate organs but so far we have been successful."

"There are only a handful of grief counselors in Bangalore which account for 90 percent of those in Karnataka.", he added.

As a state with over 60 million population, there are only a dozen trained grief counselors," said Dr. Asthana.

Mr. Bino James, from MOHAN Foundation said: "There is remarkable increase in the awareness level among the public about organ donation.

Though awareness on organ donation is improved in Cities the message has yet to reach to rural communities"

The foundation believes religious leaders and media have a large role to play in the country in educating the public on organ donation.

Ancient banyan tree left to rot in the city

By Krishanaprasad.S

ONE of the world's oldest trees needs urgent attention if it is to be saved against rampant deforestation.

The giant 400 year old, with a 3 acre wide tree canopy, located at Kethohalli which is 30 kilometers away from the Bangalore City, now wears a neglected look.

The tree which is the fourth biggest Banyan tree in the world is now a victim of entropy.

The Department of Horticulture has turned a blind eye in spite of repeated woes from the people and residents surrounding the Big Banyan Tree.

Heaps of plastic were also piled up in many places. When the officials from the Department of Horticulture were contacted, none of them were available at the Big Banyan Tree office.



Photo: Krishanaprasad.S

One of the oldest banyan trees in Ramohalli has turned into another dumping ground.

“There is no good maintenance here. A lot of couples come and spoil the environment by indulging in unlawful activities”, said a shopkeeper nearby.

Some of the tourists present, also complained about the rude behavior of some people who illegally extorted money from them, claiming to be officials from

the horticulture department.

The numbers of monkeys in and around Big Banyan tree have increased. The monkeys here snatch things from the people

who visit the place.

“These monkeys have to be controlled somehow otherwise it is a threat to everyone who visits this place. They snatch away everything from our hand and trouble us. Sometimes they also attack us,” said Kumar, a small wagon vendor next to the entrance of the park.

The Big Banyan Tree park also lacks parking facilities for tourists. “During weekends, due to more number of vehicles, the road gets blocked and creates chaos for people travelling on the stretch”, says Kumar.

This tree is a valuable part of the heritage, not only in Karnataka, but also of the world.

The colony is a habitat for numerous species of animals. If maintenance is not prompt, the animals may lose their habitat.

Railway station jail full of junk

By Debanti Roy

A police cell is being used as a storeroom, while detained suspects are chained up outside the prison.

Prisoners at the Bangalore City Railway Police Station are chained for days to benches, while the lockups are used to keep the belongings of the officers.

The authorities pay no heed to the requirements of the prisoners despite the government guidelines. They are even made to eat food and use the toilets while they are chained.

Ramesh, charged for pick pocketing, is chained to a bench for the last seven days in the police station.

This is against the law, as the convict should be produced in court within twenty-four hours of his/her arrest.

He said: “I have been chained here for the past ten days. Because we have criminal charges filed against us, the police do not treat us like humans.”

Another accused, Sushil said: “I have been charged for mobile theft. I did not commit any crime



Caricature: Debanti Roy

Storage in, prisoners out.

but I am being treated very badly. I have to eat and visit the toilet when I am chained. It is very unfair.”

He added: “It is my right to be produced in court within 24 hours but I have been chained for the past three days.”

The police officers complain that the government has done nothing for the hundred year-old building.

A. Ashok Kumar, police constable, said: “We do not have any box room facility to keep our luggage.”

An officer, said: “The criminals are perfectly alright staying like this.”

Ban on plastic threatens livelihood of small-scale vendors

By Pushkar Banakar

AN eco-friendly drive to ban plastic has left small traders fearing for their livelihoods.

The Indiranagar corporator, M Gautam, has banned the usage of plastic in his ward.

The small shop owners of the area are facing acute shortage of business due to the rule being imposed.

The flower sellers, petty hawkers and the laundry men are finding it very difficult to attract customers due to this rule being imposed.

Ramesh, a flower-seller said: “I used to make around Rs.500 before this rule was imposed but now I can hardly make Rs.100.”

He added: “I am the sole bread earner of the family and I do not know how my family can survive now.”

Another hawker who stated a similar fact was Shankar. He said: “Due to the ban on plastic, the customers who used to buy goods of 5kgs or more, now buy no more than 1kg. We are suffering huge losses.”

The corporator said: “It is our duty to impose a ban on plastic.

It is a step towards protecting the environment.”

He added: “It is sad that the small shopkeepers are being adversely affected. We will take steps shortly to make their business better.”

The more established shops sell goods and add the price of the cloth bag to the bill.

Throwing light on the issue, Kumar, the owner of Sri Krishna Provision stores, said: “We pack

the goods in plastic bags which come under the government regulations.”

He said: “If the customer wants cloth bag, we add an extra rupee or two in the bill.”

Another shopkeeper, Mahadev, said: “We are left with no choice but to charge a little extra. We anyways make a meager profit and now if we lose the customers we will not be able to sustain our families.”



Photo:Tulika Mall

Small-scale vendors affected by the ban on plastic bags

Water scarcity forces illegal borewells

ByDebanti Roy

LACK of water in Indira Gandhi slum is leading to numerous illegal bore wells being dug.

The poor yet again have to put up with the negligence of the authorities.

The people of the Indira Gandhi slum suffer from lack of water in the area. There are almost three hundred families in the slum and life is at its worst.

The health condition of the children is deteriorating at a fast pace.

Ganesh, a slum dweller said: “Our children do not even get water to drink at times.”

He added: “The stored water in pitchers is not safe for the children to drink, and because of this they often fall sick.”

Mrs. Violet says: “The mayor keeps changing and with them we listen to new versions of old promises of slum development.”

A child in the slum, Kishore said: “I do not play as after playing I feel thirsty and many times I do not get water to drink.”

The condition of the people in the slum is degrading with each

day, as they are forced to go to the nearby village to get water. There is a very high possibility for them to be turned down by the nearby villagers for water. It further deteriorates the situation, making it worse.

Only on alternate days do the slum dwellers get water and this has led to the boring of numerous illegal wells at Indira Gandhi slum.

The helpless condition of the slum dwellers remains at the mercy of the government till it takes necessary steps to help them.



Photo:Debanti Roy

One of the many illegal bore wells at Indira Gandhi slum

Privateers are pirates, claim bangaloreans

By Reshma Tarwani

AN advisor to the state govt on PPP fears widespread corruption among privateers vying for contracts.

Rabindra Kumar Sahoo, PPP Expert, Asian Development Bank and an advisor to the Government of Karnataka, said: “There may have been financial mismanagement in public-private partnership projects.”

He added: “Private sectors are quoting high prices from the public because they are trying to recover their invested amount from the public. We planned a lot but we lost our hope of development in between because private sectors invest less but expect more.”

Public private partnership projects (PPP) by infrastructure developers in the state are leaving citizens out of pocket on a daily basis.

Missed deadlines on several huge projects in the city have only increased the financial burden for most in terms of road toll and ticket costs.

There have been several

complaints of corruption on PPP where firms worked as private contractors for the public.

Rafique Ahmed, who works for minority casts, said: “Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) is one of the biggest infrastructure developments that comes under PPP cell.”

350 crore rupees have been spent on the BIAL project, according to Ahmed.

PPP was under the private investor's control until 2008.

Several projects come under the PPP's plan such as the new National Highway and Bangalore International Airport.

“High service charges and extra payment are demanded from the workers and people like me who can't afford this cost every time,” said Ahmed.

He added: “National Highway Authority collects extra toll charges every time and there is no fixed toll price, sometimes they demand more.”

“I travelled from Chennai and I often faced this problem, it is difficult for the daily commuters to travel,” he said.

Crackdown on child weddings working, state claims

By Aheli Raychaudhuri
A crackdown on child marriage seems to be working after the setting up of dedicated task forces.

The major thrust of the programmes of the Department of Women and Child Development is to ensure the all around development of children and empowerment of women.

The Report on Prevention of Child Marriages In the State of Karnataka says: "Causes of Child Marriage can be mainly attributed to illiteracy, ignorance and lack of awareness."

The existing reforms till 2011 did not suffice for those in need.

The State government then introduced two schemes namely- Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

These two schemes aim to abolish Child Marriage Act. Child Marriage has been in existence since the colonial times.

There have been numerous Acts to curtail this practice but to no avail. Child Marriage Act 2006 has managed to nullify child marriages.

Karnataka State Rules, 2008 has been more successful than its precedents.

According to Mrs. Indira of Women and Child Development and Welfare: "Awareness, stringent measures and timely action of NGOs have helped to bring down child marriages among the

citizens of Bangalore (Rural and Urban)."

According to the census 2001, the child population of the State is 41% of the total population.

The total number of child marriages prevented were 16 and the number of cases booked were 9, in the last two years.

The District Level Household and Facility Survey and Reproductive and Child Health (DLHS-RCH) of 2007-2008 states that nearly one-fourth of the girls in the state married before becoming adults.

In Bagalkote nearly half the girls married before 18 years and least cases were recorded in Uttar Kannada (1.7%)

NGOs also second the authenticity of the data given above.

Anita Sampath, The Concerned for Working Children

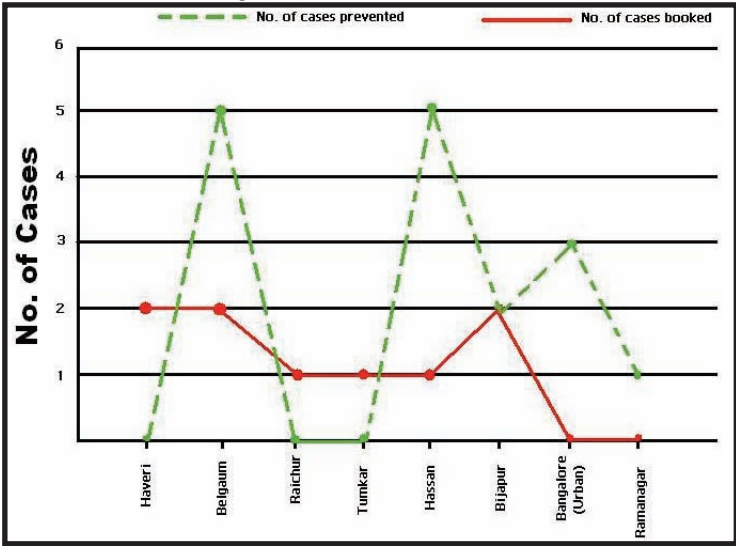
(CWC) said: "There are no child marriages in Bangalore."

She added: "The main reason is because street children especially girls cannot be lifted off the streets because they are the primary sources of livelihood to their parents."

The citizens of Bangalore can breathe a sigh of relief now as there is concrete proof to suggest that child marriage has finally been abolished.

For instance, the website of the Department of Women and Children maintained by the State of Karnataka says, the mean age of marriage in women is 20.4 years.

The Non Governmental Organizations and the government have accomplished a lot by working together and abolishing a social crime that has been occurring since the Colonial times.



Source: Report by Shivraj Patil

HIV patients too ashamed to claim rail fare price cuts



Photo: Satyajith GD

AIDS patients avoid revealing their identity owing to the crowd.

By Satyajith GD

A government scheme to slash rail travel for HIV patients is not being used as sufferers are too embarrassed to ask for it.

Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society (KSAPS) is funded by the central government.

According to the 2010 data 1,13,088 people were tested positive for HIV.

In May 2008, it was reported the government was providing a concession of 75 percent to those infected with HIV in the country.

This concession allows HIV/AIDS patients to get the benefit of travelling across the country in trains.

The Observer visited various railway counters in the city and could not find any concessions which were being used by HIV/AIDS patients.

"People do not want to reveal that they are carriers of the HIV virus. The people who are infected are considered by society

to be morally degraded," said Mukund Raj, a railway employee.

Karnataka is one of the five states in India where the HIV/AIDS infection rates are amongst the highest in India.

The Railway Booking Supervisor, Jaykumar said: "It was during my tenure of public service that the scheme was enacted."

He added: "I do not remember receiving any concession applications from AIDS patients during the period."

Prevention of Parent To Child Transmission (PPTCT) program coordinator, Bangalore, Mrs. Parimala said: "Most of the HIV patients do not know about government schemes."

She added: "Even the NGOs working for the cause are ignorant of the government schemes."

The Railway Commercial Branch Inspector, Bangalore, Sharvana said: "I believe the scheme will be more effective if infected patients could buy tickets away from public counters."

Cases of drug abuse peak in the city

By Shromona Bose
APPROXIMATELY 10,000 people were treated for drug addiction in the state last year.

There has been a drastic rise in drug abuse cases over the past few years.

The trend of youngsters turning to the de-addiction centers for getting rid of this addiction to drugs like marijuana and ganja has increased.

These can be easily rolled into a cigarettes. The use of substances like dendrite and whiteners has also been rising at an alarming rate.

According to the annual statistics produced by National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) a total of 9,200 patients were admitted to

apy session. Not only teenagers and youngsters even students

"Children as young as 10 are also bought to rehab by their parents," said Mr Sahai, one of the administrative head of NIMHANS.

"It is shocking as well as embarrassing for the parents when they come to know their children getting addicted to drugs so they try to be mum about the matter" said Sahai.

The rehab further claims that 70% of the victims are addicted to easily available drugs. While the rest are addicted to hardcore drugs and tablets containing steroids.

The duration for the treatment in the rehab thus varies on the



Photo: Shromona Bose

NIMHANS de-addiction center

the de-addiction center in 2010. While the following year, the number of patients admitted rose by 800, said Dr V. L Satish, Head Medical superintendent, NIMHANS.

The annual report for drug abuse cases in 2012 is still under preparation.

More than 40 patients everyday visit the de-addiction center of NIMHANS for their psychother-

basis of the condition of the patient. Every drug addict initially has to undergo a psychotherapy session.

If the case is very severe the patient is kept under thorough observation for a week and based on his improvement the total span of the treatment is decided.

Other patients who are easily curable are only prescribed medicines and are required to visit the out patient department regularly.

Cooperative banks dupe customers with false claims

By Krishnaprasad S
A co-operative bank made false claims to investors then fleeced them out of money, according to angry former customers.

A co-operative bank in Bangalore has made false promises to its customers regarding the lock out period saying the lock out period is three months for the customers to withdraw their money.

The incidents came to light when one of the victims Ramesh(name changed) told The Observer about the bank.

First, the customers were asked to pay a minimal amount of Rs 100- Rs 1000/- depending on their business as pigmy collection.

When the agents from the bank first met the customers, they briefed them that the lock out period for their money would be three months.

It was later found that the agents had given wrong information to the customers so as to get their businesses.

Ramesh said: "It is all fraud. They told me that the lock out period was three months when the agents came to me. Now my money is stuck in the bank and I have no where to go"

He added: "After three months when I went to the bank to withdraw my money, the manager in charge told me that the lock out period was one year and not three months."

Ramesh also talked about the other side of the business that these co-operative banks have been doing by cheating their customers.

The money collected from the pigmy collection was given to other people at an interest rate of 4% per annum while it was given at 5% for the people who opted for the pigmy.

The co-operative societies also ripped off their customers by making them pay Rs 375/- for a loan application.

The condition laid was their loan would be approved only if they would buy at least 10 shares from them at Rs 120/- per share for five years.

When asked about the detailed breakup of the shares, it was mentioned as Rs 100/- per share and the extra Rs 20/- was the service fee.

The agents also said that it was compulsory to have a pigmy account if you borrowed a loan from the bank.

Ramesh said: "They have been doing this since years. There are many victims of the same."

He added: "It is just that no one dares to ask them about their money because they are threatened and many fear that they won't get their money back."

The agents in the bank brushed aside the issue and did not comment on the issue.

Ramesh also added: "The same thing happens in most of the co-operative banks but no one is bothered about it because less number of people are affected by this."

An angry customer who did not wish to be named added "We cannot complain to the authorities on a regular basis as they do not pay heed to our regular complaints."

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