



YOY NEWS

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Back to school

Schools reopen for senior classes

The schools were shut in March 2020 due to COVID-19. After about 17 months, the schools reopen for students of classes 9 to 12. However, students are not forced to come to school and are given an option to continue with online classes until they are comfortable to get back to school.

Guidelines

Safety rules

Wear a
mask



Sanitise
at entry



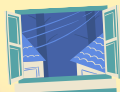
No sharing
of food



Wash hands
often



Ensure
ventilation



Symptoms?
Stay away!



Keep
safe
distance



*How does it feel
like to get back
to school?*

YOCee's student reporters
share their experience >>>



A new beginning with a new normal

Hear, O hear the buzz around cities across India as the feet of eager children scuffle, bags are packed, pages are hurriedly filled and clothes are tidied – the 'Back to School' season has returned with new hopes after more than 17 months!

Mustafa Topiwala



This picture is of the class I attended last, before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

Wearing the well-aged uniform and the preparation for offline classes did certainly provide a sense of purpose, and help tackle the languorous vibes offered by the four walls of my bedroom. Masks, gloves, sanitizers – going to school with all these necessary evils felt both casual and different at the same time; even though we have been wearing masks and gloves for a long time now, some experiences cannot just change, right?

Due to a plethora of reasonable explanations, it was not physically possible for a majority of students (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th graders) to attend school, but it was really exciting meeting my peers and teachers. The live interaction and in-person communication that online classes were significantly devoid of, the classic chalkboard teaching – sitting in the 'actual' classroom seemed to be a dream turn true.

It did feel weird yet wholesome meeting my teachers who had been

teaching through Zoom for months, and I was constantly worried whether my inactiveness in online classes would be questioned! Unsurprisingly, all my teachers were extremely considerate and welcoming, which just made attending physical school way better. Attending 4-5 hours of physical schooling didn't seem to be as taxing and mentally tiresome as online classes, and it was a major break from all the gadgets.

But of course, all students and teachers were expected to wear masks and gloves throughout, and all students were seated in a socially distanced order. It was visibly straining to an extent for both teachers and students to teach and speak (when asked a question) loudly due to the two layers of thick face masks. It was also difficult for students to stay put in one place with respect to the restrictions and safety measures imposed, as most of them had been acclimatized to the comfy ambience that our homes offer.

Nevertheless, I indubitably had an amazing experience, learning became fun once again, and I got to people multiple friends!

Hopefully, the 'normal' classes remain permanently, and we are not forced to go back to the online mode of education. Maybe the term "new normal" became widely used by people in a short span of time to show their acceptance of the situation, but quite frankly, no one is ready to transition to a whole new life from something that they have lived for longer.

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Back at school while the pandemic has not ended yet

The morning was special. Excitement mingled with the nostalgic familiarity of past experiences, and the anticipation of what was about to happen added an element of surprise that had been missing for quite some time now.

Mustafa Topiwala

There was no waking up from bed at the eleventh hour today. Nor was there last-minute login into classes only to stare at a screen all day long. Rather, the nostalgic clanking of the tiffin and a dusty schoolbag lying packed in a corner convinced me enough that school was, in fact, re-opening after what seemed like a decade.

School didn't feel like school, though. With all of them having donned masks and various precautionary measures put in place, and with the regular clicks of sanitizer bottles being heard, this was not the kind of school that I, or anybody for that matter, had experienced. Yet, undoubtedly, it felt amazing to be back to school again. Meeting my teachers and getting back in touch with friends was highly rejuvenating.

If someone asked me my preference between online and physical schooling, I would undoubtedly choose the latter. Going to school today made me realise how much I missed the very atmosphere of learning, encouragement, healthy competition and socializing one gets to experience in offline education.



Overall, it was satisfying to see school reopen and experience a day in the 'normal' that most of us had been used to – with a few precautionary tweaks, of course.

Mental wellness - a perennial need

by Sreekumar

As many schools have reopened and many students have returned to school, there is pressure on the parents, who are yet to make up their mind to send their child to school. The same is with the children who have opted for online classes for some more time.

As their peers attend school, students who thought of continuing online classes are now in a dilemma when to be back at school or not. Some have elderly grandparents at home and some have parents or siblings who just recovered COVID-19.

Uma Kedar, a parent of a 14-year-old is not yet ready for

sending her child to school. She says, "It's okay to miss a few classes as I do not want to take a risk at this stage." Kedar is however concerned about the child's mental wellbeing. He says, "I can see that missing the fun of attending the in-person classes and meeting friends creating a lot of stress in my child."

Have your say!

MAIL TO - editor@yocee.in



MARK YOUR CALENDAR



WORLD FOOD DAY POSTER CONTEST

If you're between the ages 5 to 19, we want you to use your imagination and create a poster of a food journey.

Take a photo or scan your poster and submit your entry by filling out the form on our website. The deadline is Nov. 5, 2021.

Three winners in each age category will be selected by our jury and announced here in December. Winners will be promoted by FAO offices around the world and receive a surprise gift bag and Certificate of Recognition.

Participants can be from anywhere around the world.

Visit: <http://www.fao.org/world-food-day/youth/contest>

FEED BY ART - COMPETITION

LAST DAY FOR SUBMISSIONS: SEP. 25, 2021

Neighbourhood Foundation, a Chennai-based NGO dedicated to health, education and other social causes, is conducting 'Feed by Art', an art competition for school students to raise funds for its hunger relief efforts.

This virtual competition will accept submissions of entries until September 25, 2021.

The art competition is being organised to mark World Food Day 2021, which falls on October 16. Submissions are invited under four categories, 'No Junk Food' (class I -III), 'Don't Waste Food' (class IV and V), 'Healthy Food, Healthy Planet' (VI-VIII) and 'Hunger-Free Nation' (class IX-XII).

The registration can be made over the phone or WhatsApp to the phone number 7200741106. The website <https://nhf-global.org/feedbyart/> also accepts registration.

The registration fee of Rs.100 will go towards the foundation's project, says the foundation.

SHAASTRA JUNIORS ONLINE TECH FEST



SEP. 24 - 26 AND OCT. 1- 3, 2021

Shastra is the annual tech fest of IIT Madras. Shastra Juniors is the first-ever completely online Tech fest specially aimed at spreading technical awareness among school students from Classes 1 - 12.

Two fun-filled weekends with events, shows, lectures and workshops will be online educative entertainment for children. There are also competitions and championships across the weekends.

To register and participate, visit <https://juniors.shastra.org>

Garbage-ridden street gets a new life

Sthuthi Arun



Abusing public spaces is one of the biggest community issues of the era. Everywhere we go, we see garbage strewn on the roads, careless parking of vehicles, walls all dirty and covered with posters, and just mayhem. Someone needs to take action and fix this, right?

Shivkumar and Umamaheswari, husband and wife, take up this seemingly impossible task and make a difference to the users of public spaces.

S. Shivkumar, the founder of an organisation called *Karam Korpom* (roughly translates as 'Let's join hands'), is a professional in designing and eLearning with more than 30 years of experience. He studied Mechanical Engineering and did his Masters in Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay. His wife V. Umamaheswari, a Civil Engineer holds an MBA in HR (Human Resources). She is also a joint secretary of the Mylapore Welfare Association and is an expert in sustainable waste management and water conservation.

Karam Korpom

Karam Korpom is a non-profit, volunteer-driven organization based in Chennai that aims to protect the environment through various activities such as wall arts, awareness programs among many others. They invite the local community to participate in their frequent wall art events in various localities in Chennai, to make the public feel the ownership of their neighbourhood. Everyone, from all age groups, comes together to paint the walls. Stop Abusing Public Spaces (SAPS) is an activity under the control of the Karam Korpom Foundation which identifies abused public spaces and works towards cleaning them up.



The organization has completed nearly 55 projects so far and has transformed about 80 lakh square meters of the area into clean space.

The Wall Art on Kalvi Varu street, Mylapore, Chennai

Earlier this year, in May, the NGO assembled in Kalvi Varu street in the Mylapore neighbourhood of Chennai with buckets of paints and a bundle of paintbrushes. They were all set to paint the 400-meter long compound wall behind Vidya Mandir School and in front of the Buckingham Canal, now not in use and hence is full of filth. "Kalvi Varu Street was a heavily abused street," says Shivkumar. "There was a school on one side and a canal on the other. And no one took proper care of it. It was like a 'free-for-all kind' of situation."

How they maintain it:

Painting the walls is one thing. But maintaining them is a whole another. But luckily, this is not a major problem. "We don't face any issues when it comes to maintenance of the walls," says Shivakumar. "The locals are accountable for their creation. And we believe that if the painting is nice and colourful, it will automatically be less prone to abuse."

Watch the video and interviews at :
tinyurl.com/kvstreet

11-year-old Manya turns vegetable waste into paper

Daya Lakshmi Mukundan



Manya Harsha is just 11-year old, and she is inspiring our generation to take action against our behaviour that has been ravaging the Earth.

Manya is very passionate about the environment and humanity's effect on it; she has been rallying since she was 6 years old. Her work on the Markonalli Dam water bed has been extolled by the United Nations Water! At age 8, she led a children's walkathon in her community to increase awareness concerning saving water. She has also handed out paper bags to local shopkeepers as an alternative to the plastic bags that make up so much of our world's waste.

Manya now turns kitchen waste into papers. These papers are eco-friendly, act just like regular papers, and will decompose if you place them in the soil!

If you'd like something to do with the extra vegetable/kitchen waste you have, you can make two or three A4 sheets of paper out of 10 onion peels, using Manya's method.

She recommends using these over the regular paper, which goes through extensive processing including chemicals and large

amounts of water wastage. She recently made an Indian national flag using different colours of paper stuck together for India's Independence Day on August 15, to motivate people to use such recycled papers in various ways.

Fact — 1 ton of paper is made out of 17-20 trees, and processing it uses 26,000-28,000 litres of water!

AN INTERVIEW WITH MANYA HARSHA

Q: Does your method of making paper out of vegetable peels work with fruit peels (like oranges, mangoes, dragonfruit, etc.)?

A: Yes, I have tried it out with pomegranate and orange peels. There are a few more experiments going on. The main content needed for paper making is cellulose; if the pulp is rich in fibre,

we can make fine papers out of it (with an appropriate binding agent, which depends on each type of peel used).

Q: Also, does it work with flower petals (like the ones used in Pookalams) or banana leaves (like those used in *Sadhya*)?

A: Yes, definitely. I have tried with

rose petals, marigolds, definitely banana leaves, betel leaves, etc. The thing is, banana leaves are rich in fibre; we need to nicely pulp them. Then, add appropriate binding agents (which is different from other peels) and then go ahead with the process, otherwise, it ends up in a disaster.

Full interview at:
tinyurl.com/vegwastepaper

Tapping rainwater to recharge the groundwater



Maitreyi Aravindan

As we see the groundwater level is receding every summer and there is a scarcity of water in many places especially in large cities. At the same time, people also wonder what happens to the rainwater that flows away from the terraces and driveways in our homes and big apartment complexes.

In recent times, Bengaluru city has been experiencing flash floods due to rainwater flowing through the roads. According to the study 'Climate change scenario in Karnataka: A detailed parametric assessment' conducted by the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) in June 2020, Bangalore's rainfall patterns have been changing over the years, which points to the reason as climate change.

Also, the downpour during the monsoon gushes out onto the roads as only a meagre percentage of rainwater "seeps into natural aquifers that hold water underground."

Can this rainwater get back to the ground and increase the level of the groundwater table? Yes, rainwater is available for free, and it is natural. One does not need to pay for it. We need to only see how we can harvest rainwater, recharge our wells and borewells and help nature revive its own resources.



Here is one such effort by the residents of GR Grand Residency, one of the apartments in Bangalore that has implemented a rainwater harvesting system. In the video report, the people who initiated the project talk about their views and experiences in installing the system and using it to resolve their water problems.

Watch the video and interviews at :
tinyurl.com/saverainwater

Do you know?

India has the largest network of Ramsar sites in South Asia!

Ramsar sites are wetlands considered to be of international importance.

The international convention which forms the basis for their identification is commonly referred to as the 'Ramsar Convention' after the city in Iran where the convention was signed in 1971.

In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the first Indian wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

With the latest addition of four more sites, India has now 46 Ramsar sites.

Wetlands are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and sustaining human life.

Community comes together for tackling the war against waste

Medha R

Residents Of Kasturbanagar Association (ROKA) is a residents' welfare association based in Kasturba Nagar, Adyar in Chennai city. A couple of like-minded people formed a group taking waste management seriously. They went door to door educating people about waste management. The group started with solid waste management, segregating waste into three types – dry, wet and reject waste

.While collecting the solid waste using the battery-operated vehicle, there were many batteries and e-waste accumulated in homes, and people were incognizant of disposal of the e-waste. Though it was only a small miscellaneous collection of e-waste at each house, the association decided to solely organise a drive to collect electronic waste in 2019.

This initiative was appreciated by the Greater Chennai Corporation, which supported the effort. The e-waste collection drive was a phenomenal success, according to the organisers. They had collected about 750kgs of e-waste and had handed it over to the corporation for proper disposal.

Since then many began contacting the association and requested to conduct more such drives to hand over their e-waste. Before organising the drive, the association did some groundwork and wanted to make sure that the e-waste goes into the hands of the right recycler. After locating the right recycler, they organised their second e-waste drive in January 2021 and about 1.3 metric tons of e-waste was collected.



The contributors of the e-waste had tattered clothes that were not in usable condition. They had requested the association to organise a drive for discarded items like old torn clothes, slippers, cushions, mattresses, etc. so that they can be recycled properly. Acknowledging this request, they had conducted a drive for collection and disposal of clothes in March 2021.

Despite the lockdown, they had received a humongous collection of clothes that is close to 10 metric tonnes. There were many clothes that could be worn so they decided to handover them to a charitable institution. The mattresses and slippers collected were handed over to an empanelled aggregator and recycler appointed by the Greater Chennai Corporation. And the rest of the collected waste was sent for proper disposal.

The Association's drives became popular in the community that people who had missed the previous drives were calling the association on a daily basis requesting them to conduct another e-waste drive. And due to the pandemic, the usage of electronics and gadgets shot up and so did the e-waste. So they decided to conduct a bi-annual e-waste drive for the ones who missed the previous ones.

The second drive of their bi-annual e-waste drive was organised at the end of July where they collected about 4 metric tons! Though their association is based at Kasturba Nagar, Adyar, people across Chennai city can hand over their e-waste collections.

Here is an excerpt from the interview with Janani Venkitesh, secretary of ROKA:

Why should e-waste not be mixed with regular waste?

The e-waste when not recycled properly ends up in landfills, but it has a number of harmful chemicals like Lithium, Cadmium, Lead, Argentum, Aurum. Due to natural calamities and weather conditions, they start to reach the soil and pollute it which eventually makes the soil lose its nutrients. Even if it's a battery or a small gadget, it causes a lot of pollution to the soil and pollutes the environment. So, we always need to make sure that the e-waste is recycled properly.

Full interview at:
<https://tinyurl.com/clear-ewaste>