



Chennai Express

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SATURDAY



DAY'S DIARY

Happy birthday!

Indian composer, singer-songwriter, music producer, musician and multi-instrumentalist AR Rahman was born on this day in 1967

MOZART, LITERALLY!

Rahman initially composed jingles for a line of watches that became very popular, including Titan Watches, in which he used the theme from Mozart's Symphony No 25



LOVE OVER ALL

"At my life, I had a choice of hate and love. I chose love, and I'm here," he said in his 2009 Academy Award speech



TAMIL GOES GLOBAL

Rahman also spoke in Tamil at the Oscars in 2009, saying 'Ela pupuzhavan rakunakule' meaning 'All praise to god', after receiving the best original musical score award for Slumdog Millionaire

Express Views on films that released this week

PGS 6&7

MOMENTS



I WANNA RIDE! An early morning drive on a cold morning is bliss for kids, but not for mothers. **Valabhav Dhanasekaran**

EVENTS

SHOP
Flat 50
Phoenix Market City will be having a Flat 50 sale for two weekends — till Jan 7 and Jan 13-21. Top 10 shoppers will receive a Phoenix gift card of ₹5,000. For details call: 66633007

ANIMATE
Workshop
E-Magic Animation Academy will organise a free seminar and a workshop on 3D animation by the Mahanagar team, today at 10 am. For details call: 994283258

FASHION
Exhibition
Subha Jagannathan is organising a two-day pop-up exhibition 'Petrolia Today at The English Varnam, Alwarpet, from 11 am to 6 pm. For details call: 984840055

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SMS or WhatsApp to 9003130103 if you find the rule breakers

A day after two videos of a group of youngsters on their motorbikes along with pillion riders dragging police barricades on Kamarajar Salai and Gandhi Mandapam Road, Kotturpuram, went viral on social networking sites, city police launched a helpline for the public to contact, if they identified the youth. A senior police official said that the public can send a SMS or WhatsApp message to 9003130103 if they identify the youngsters. They can also raise complaints regarding violation of traffic rules in future through this number.

- Sisters Boomija and Supraja may be residing in different continents, but unite in Chennai during Margazhi
- The dancer-duo, who are disciples of MR Krishna Murthy, are performing in the city today

Thushara Ann Mathew

Training since the age of seven, sisters Boomija and Supraja have carved a niche for themselves in Bharatanatyam. Training under the great guru MR Krishna Murthy, a direct disciple of the legendary Rukmini Devi Arundale, Kalkshetra, has not only moulded them into fine dancers but also imbued life skills in them, they claim. Balancing academics and dance, they have excelled in academics too — Boomija is currently doing her masters in mechanical and aerospace engineering in USA, while Supraja has begun her masters in molecular life sciences in Germany. We catch up with the prodigious siblings before their duet performance today at the Kartik Fine Arts for its 43rd Arts Festival.

Training under MR Krishnamurthy must have been a wonderful experience. Was he a strict or easy guru? **Bhoomija:** Kittu sir's motto has been to pass on the Kalakshetra bani in its pure form. So, during class, he would take us to task — be it *adavus*, a posture or *abhinaya*, he wouldn't let us go till we got it right. A true perfectionist indeed! **Supraja:** But outside class, he is gentle — like our grandfather. After classes, I'd sit in front of Kittu sir and we'd share fruits I brought from home, while he'd narrate mythological stories. He'd talk to us about our studies and how we must help our parents with household chores etc.

You've both performed solo, duet and even as part of a group. Which do you enjoy the most and why? **Bhoomija:** Solo performances are relatively easier as it requires minimal coordination and you are the king on stage. Each of us has our own spiritual experience when dancing solo. Group performances are lively and nice to watch though at times one has to practice at everyone's convenience and if the level of dance varies, it is obvious on stage. Duet requires us to coordinate with each other, which has now slightly become harder due to different time zones. The day we get a show, turns into a parliament session, as we keep on debating on what items to perform, what to wear, and who gets to perform which character in the dance piece etc! We love choreographing the *Sancharis* together and are able to have thematic presentations as a duet. On stage, the vibes are totally different and we enjoy each other's presence and are able to predict each other's

If not Bharatanatyam, which dance form?

Bhoomija: Ballet and Odissi
Supraja: Kathakali and Ballet too

If you can choreograph for movies, who would you like to work with?

Directors: Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Shankar, Prabhu Deva
Actors: Shahid Kapoor, Vijay, Vikram, Suriya, Tiger Shroff

TOGETHER IN EVERY STEP

MOST MEMORABLE PERFORMANCE?

BHOOMIJA

Our Doordarshan recording two years ago and Naadaneeranam at Tirupathi. It was a divine experience, dancing outside the main temple!

SUPRAJA

At Parthasarathy Sabha (2014) with the music ensemble from Kalkshetra. We grew up watching them perform in Bengaluru and it was a dream-come-true to work with them.



What are your favourite memories of Chennai? We were both born in Chennai. Our mother is from here and she was a dancer herself! *Pandi*, beaches and Kalkshetra are three things pulling us back here every year.

How does it feel to come here during the Margazhi season?

Margazhi season for us is filled with *Tiruppavali* recitations by our aunts and *appu* early mornings, a trip to Chennai to visit our past and cousins, numerous *Koili* visits and of course, the endless choices of music and dance *kutcheries* to absorb! We began performing in 2014 Margazhi season at Parthasarathy Sabha and have been dancing in Chennai and Bengaluru since then!

Bhoomija and Supraja will perform *Athar's Naatukanni* varnam along with a few more Kalkshetra compositions today at the Narada Gana Sabha mini hall at 7.30 pm. For details call: 24993201

Let's order-in and eat with just a click of an app

Be it early morning or late night, Swiggy, Zomato, UberEats ensure you are never hungry at any given time

Roshne Balasubramanian

From pizzas, biryanis, soups, starters, curries, tea to jars of sweet delicacies, Chennaites have now been constantly ordering in through delivery apps like Zomato, Swiggy and the new entrant in town — UberEats. In fact, having every day meals for consumers has evolved to a point where food delivery has become a must-have feature for every restaurant, big or small. "The delivery feature in restaurants improves customer satisfaction, increases reach, and also boosts profits for restaurant. Since we launched in Chennai, the number of restaurant partners on our platform has increased four-fold," says Bhavik Rathod, head, Uber Eats India. Deterred by urban challenges of long working hours, traffic and parking concerns, Chennaites, especially youngsters, are turning to delivery apps to enjoy a meal in the comforts of their homes and offices. "Chennai loves to order in. We have seen spikes in dinner orders on weekends but lunch orders are predominantly higher here. While lunch combos and mini meals are a hit during week-

days, biryani and varieties of dosas are a hit over the weekends," he shares.

"In an already tough restaurant landscape, where new restaurants emerge and disappear every month, technology has a growing role to play, changing the way people eat," shares the official spokesperson of Swiggy. Chennai is a key market for Swiggy. "We have consistently seen an increase in the number of daily orders, ever since we began operations in November 2015."

Today, over 2,200 restaurants in the city are digitally accessible to customers through Swiggy, and Chennaites have been able to savour food from a host of restaurants, ranging from QSRs, to popular eateries to trendy new cafes in the city, including Pantry of, Double Roti, Ciclo Cafe, Amethyst and

Chambers Cafe. Currently clocking three million orders a month across the country, Naren Devanathan, team

lead, online ordering, Zomato, shares, "We get over 50,000 unique users in Chennai on the Zomato app every day. The average user orders around four times a month. We've seen some customers order up to 50 times a month."

Another plus for these apps are customer-centric features like lightning fast delivery, no requirement on minimum order quantity, live order tracking (Swiggy), the optimisation to function in low connectivity, scheduling orders to be delivered at a particular time everyday (UberEats) and also delivering to external locations. "There's a steady increase in new customers, and loyal customers order as often as 15-20 times a month," says the official. According to Swiggy's order analysis for 2016, in addition

to traditional dishes like idli, dosa and pongal, Chennaites like chicken fried rice and paneer butter masala. "It also revealed Chennaites love to snack on chaats, sandwiches, shawarmas, momos, rolls and coffee," shares the spokesperson and highlights a recent report by Redseer, which showed that Chennai was the sixth city to cross the mark of 10,000 daily online food orders after Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Pune. Even home baking is picking up across Chennai, with more than 50 bakers operating out of homes and/or placing orders through such platforms. "Theobroma, cupcakes, brownies and anything to do with red velvet and cream cheese are extremely popular," shares Nithya, a popular blogger and adds about the 'Vegan diet'. "Ever since the vegan diet started trending in the city you have restaurant startups delivering to that niche crowd as well. People even order in juices and smoothies that are dairy-free and are substituted with nuts and almond milk."

Asmita Madhusudhanan, another city-based food blogger, suggests adding 'card payment on delivery' option. "This facility should be brought in," she opines.

Photo: Sunil P Surendran

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