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#PLASTICGOTTAGO

C'MON, CHENNAI, CHUCK THE PLASTIC!

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While the battle cry against plastic has been sounded, the war will take longer to win, if one is to go by ground realities as we step into week two of the plastic ban. *Chennai Times* went event-hopping to check how seriously the ban was being enforced, and we came back with a mixed bag (thankfully, not plastic!) of views. There were events where one would be hard put to spot the beleaguered plastic, or the offending plastic, and others where the organisers were seen observing the ban in breach. And still others, where plastic made a peep show, hoping others wouldn't see this trespassing! Here, then, is our plastic watch story..

GRAMIYA THIRUVIZHA

At the NABARD Gramiya Thiruvizha held at JYM Kalyana Mandapam, Venkatnarayna Road, T Nagar, the venue looked totally eco-friendly from the outside. One of the organisers told us, "Before the event, we had sent messages to all the participants that the state is going plastic-free from January 1, and we will try our best to keep plastic away from the exhibition's premises. We are just the host; our job is to provide them an infrastructure. We also asked the visitors to bring their own bags and not to have plastic in the venue." Padma Raghunathan, chief general manager, Tamil Nadu regional office NABARD. However, on visiting the various stalls, we spotted many plastic bottles, wrappers, covers... and the vendors had their

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side of the story... G Gunavathy, who makes paper quilling jewellery, said that it is very difficult to display them if wrapped in paper: "If they are not transparent like plastic packets, how can we display our jewellery?" she asked. Nallasamy, who was displaying silk saris, had a similar issue. "How do we display saris if we wrap them in paper packets? There has to be an alternative that can take the role of plastic. Until then, we have to keep going with it," he said. Manickam Anchetty from Krishnagiri district, who sells millet rice, also echoed his views, and said, "Plastic is very convenient and it costs less. Until an efficient alternative comes in, we don't have an option."

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