

WHAT ALL NAGARAJ HAS DONE *Tracking Vatal Nagaraj*



The formidable Vatal Nagaraj, famous for painting over English language signs across town because they didn't have accompanying Kannada text, is

contesting elections from the Chamrajanagara constituency. Here's what the 60-year-old leader of the Kannada Chaluwali Vatal Paksha has done so far.

1962 Staged a violent protest in front of the Kempe Gowda statue, for Kannada films to be shown in Bangalore theatres.

Apr '07 Menacingly brandished newspapers, demanding stern action against Infosys for not playing the national anthem on a visit by then President APJ Abdul Kalam.

Jul '07 Led a drum-beating protest for reforms in election laws.

Mar '08 Led a protest march of buffaloes, donkeys and camels, against the widening of roads to the airport.

Apr '08 Demanded an apology from actor Rajinikanth over

comments favouring the Hogenakkal project.

May '08 Included "donkey welfare" in his party manifesto.

May '08 Lost his seat in the elections so badly, he couldn't get his deposit back.

Aug '08 Marked his 2,000-th protest in 40 years, and celebrated a career-best 1,300 arrests.

Feb '09 Threatened to urinate on the Chief Minister's house, demanding funds for the construction of public toilets.

Feb '09 Conducted a mock wedding of two donkeys, Rati and Manmata, at the Legislature House.

Mar '99 Disrupted a joint session of the Karnataka legislature on the opening day of the Budget session by repeatedly clanging cymbals.

METROPOLIS

Strange tales from our international brethren

Time Out New York



In New York, you can now unleash your inner Yoda as you burn off last night's Big Mac. New York Jedi, a

lightsabre-wielding workout group, lets *Star Wars* geeks get together to play with their glowing rods under the guise of a choreographed exercise routine. Co-founder Mike Zhang even awards the title of Master to those who've used the force well enough to teach others. Can't be seen with a lightsabre in public? Bring your broom handle.

OPINION by Shyam Bhat

Nobody knows the new rules

Unlike the rule of law, the rules of social conduct are often strictly obeyed. These "rules", obviously unwritten and silent, dictate the gamut of social behaviour, from socially appropriate body language, to gestures, mannerisms, pitch of voice in a particular social context, to clothing, dress, etiquette, and accent.

Normally, the majority of people in any group or culture know the rules. But sometimes they don't. Which brings us to Bangalore. Pardon the hyperbole, but never before have so many people, made such a big transition, in such a short time: in our city of about seven million people, about half are immigrants in the sense of having moved to the city within the last 15 years and the other half have seen Bangalore change so much in the last 15 years, that it's not home anymore.

From an emotional perspective, we are all immigrants.

In this new, emerging culture, the rulebook is up for grabs. Each group or subculture tries to influence the direction of the

culture, writing rules, so to speak. In its most egregious form, the lack of social consensus about these new rules allows such things as attacks on women for wearing western attire. If the majority were in consensus - that women have every right to wear whatever they want and go to pubs if they choose to - it's doubtful that the attacks would have even occurred.

It is the lack of social consensus about what's right that allows people to do what's wrong.

In one way or the other, every group and subculture is in the process of negotiating and understanding its own rules: organisations and employees, politicians and constituents, employees and employers, parents and children, between-in-laws, friends, and husbands and wives, and sometimes, shopkeepers and customers.

Recently, I was at an upmarket shoe shop in the centre of Bangalore.

By way of piped music, they were playing unexpurgated Eminem "Yo motherf*****."

"Does your manager know

you are playing this?" I asked the man behind the cash counter.

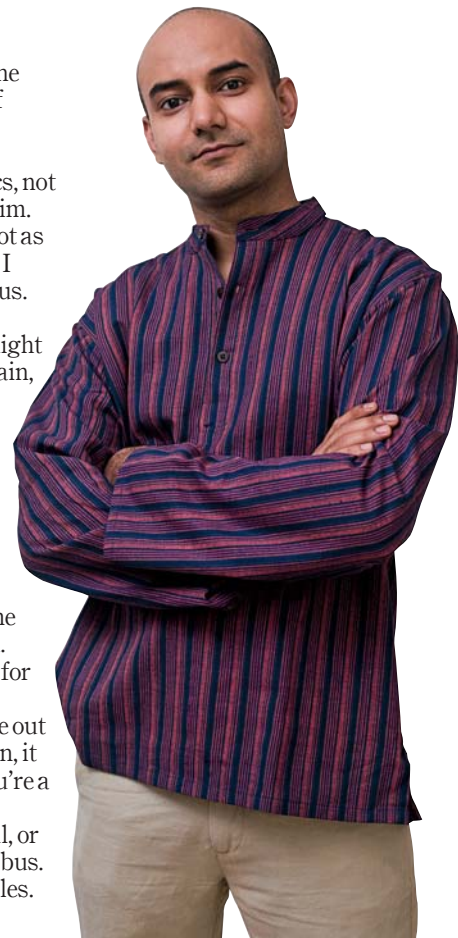
"I am the manager, Sir," he said. And added, by way of explanation, "This is rap music."

My issue is with the lyrics, not the genre, I wanted to tell him. But what's the point? It's not as if I don't listen to Eminem - I happen to think he's a genius. I just thought it was inappropriate in a shop I might bring my child to. Then again, the two other customers in the shop, women in their fifties, seemed unconcerned as they leisurely browsed through the shoes. Why was I suddenly indulging in moral policing?

"You want me to put some other music, Sir?" he asked.

"No," I said. "Thank you for asking."

We will eventually figure out the new rules. But until then, it doesn't matter whether you're a tourist or a long time Bangalorean, son of the soil, or fresh off the plane, boat, or bus. You don't know the new rules. Nobody does.



Overheard in Café Coffee Day, Koramangala: "I thought it was Jimi and Rix. He's one person?"