Welfare services planned for registered tea-stall owners

LICENSES/ DOCUMENTATION/ LIAISING

Assistance in obtaining municipal permissions, Health licenses etc
Help with other municipalty and government formalities

MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Making available Mediclaim facilities
Provide information and expertise on maintaining hygienic conditions at the stall location

LOANS

Help in availing educational loans for children

SUBSIDIES

Provide subsidized tea powder and other ingredients

TIMESCLASSIFIEDS
name you can use

BUSINESS PROPOSALS

✔ WESTERLY 1 BHK, 650 Sq.ft., Holly-Godrej Edenwoods, Thane. Only Genuine Buyers Call: 9821667049 / 9320121110

BUSINESS

Nilesh Patil

The ubiquitous cutting chaiwala by the roadside is going in for a corporate makeover. If all things work well, the chaiwalas of Thane could come together under an umbrella organisation and form a union, possibly the first such, not just in Thane, but the entire country!

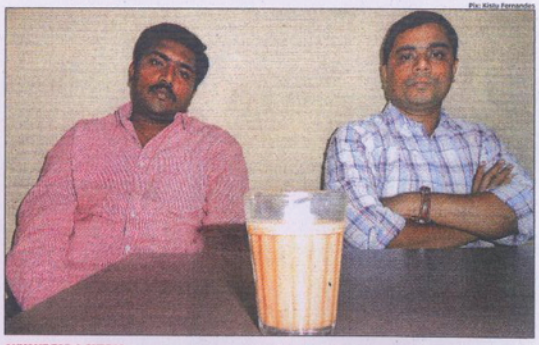
A group has been founded in Thane, called the Maharashtra Tea Stall Holders Welfare Association (MTSHWA) recently. It is the brainchild of Biju Nair, a Thaneite, who, for a long time, wondered why the tea stall owners were a scattered lot and seeing their plight daily he thought it was time someone did something for them. "We needed to wake up to the reality that the condition of these people today is pitiable - taking into consideration their work conditions, living conditions etc. We are taking up the cudgels to help evolve and develop these people into an organised sector so that they can also dream of a better tomorrow for themselves and their family and also develop themselves as an asset to the society," says Nair about the tea vendors.

Interestingly, the chaiwalas, who you find at every possible nook and corner of the city are quite enthused by this move. The numbers tell an upbeat story. The MTSHWA has already enrolled 450 tea vendors and are well on their way to many more aboard soon. "We will enroll only those vendors who have been in this business for over ten years. That way, we will be able to keep aside the fly-by-night operators," says Nair who sees a massive potential in this unorganized sector.

The association understands their (the sector's) potential in terms of providing employment to the lower strata of society - albeit, unofficial and unrecognised, it is in its own different way, undoubtedly a contribution to the nation's growth. "The sale of tea to these vendors is in tonnes and amounts to a significant part of daily commerce. Streamlining this could make them a big asset in terms of contribution to the exchequer. The unfortunate part is, all these facts are unnoticed by our society and its administrators," rues Nair.

With lakhs of chaiwalas spread across the length and breadth of the country, this is a small but significant beginning. According to rough estimates by the MTSHWA, there are some 2 lakh such vendors in Maharashtra alone. Getting them organised under one umbrella is going to be quite a task. "Yes, we are aware of it and are working hard to get all of them enrolled in this association. It will give us the strength to fight for their rights," says Nair.

Pic: Kirtu Fernandes



ANYONE FOR A CUPPA?: President Biju Nair (R) and secretary Ram Yenkure of the new association for tea vendors pose for **Thane Plus** in their office (seen on top)