



**IN BRIEF**  
**HAL employees to strike work from today**  
BENGALURU  
The All-India HAL Trade Unions' Coordination Committee passed a resolution on Sunday that it would go ahead with its plan to launch an indefinite strike from Monday, demanding wage revision. Its chief convener Suryadevara Chandrashekar said over 20,000 HAL employees would take part in the strike.

**Srisailem dam gets huge inflows, 3 gates opened**  
KURNOOL  
With inflows to the Srisailem dam continuing above 1.5 lakh cusecs and the reservoir brimming at the full reservoir level of 885 feet on Sunday, Andhra Pradesh started releasing 84,225 cusecs by lifting three gates. The storage at Nagarjuna Sagar was 312.05 tmcft, with an outflow of 1.12 lakh cusecs.

# Nun from Kerala declared saint

Pope Francis canonises Sister Mariam Thresia at grand ceremony in Vatican

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
THRISSUR  
Sister Mariam Thresia, founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family, was declared a saint by Pope Francis at a grand ceremony in Vatican City on Sunday.  
The nun, who hailed from Thrissur district in Kerala, was canonised along with English Cardinal John Henry Newman, Swiss laywoman Marguerite Bays, Brazilian nun Dulce Lopes, and Italian nun Giuseppina Vannini.  
Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muralidharan led the Indian delegation, including T.N. Prathapan, MP; former Supreme Court judge Kurian Joseph; and family members of the saint, to Vatican. Around 300 nuns of the congregation too attended the function. Christopher, a boy from Thrissur, who was healed with the intercession of Sister Mariam Thresia, was also present.



**Joyous moment:** Nuns hold a picture of Mariam Thresia at the St. Peter's Square in the Vatican on Sunday. ■ AP

As the ceremony was going on in Vatican City, thousands of devotees prayed at her tomb at the Kuzhikkattussery shrine and at her birthplace at Puthenchira in Kerala. A Mass led by retired Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop George Panikulangam was held at Kuzhikkattussery. A crown, symbol of sainthood, was placed on the head of the saint's statue.  
"It's a blessed moment for Puthenchira, her birth place, the congregation, and the Indian Church. Her life should be a role model for us," said the Archbishop.  
**Beatified in 2000**  
Mariam Thresia was born in Puthenchira, a sleepy village in Thrissur district, on April 26, 1876 as the third daughter of Chiramel Mankidiyan

Thoma and Thanda. From an early age, she led a life of austerity and penance. Along with three of her friends, she helped the poor, nursed the sick and comforted lonely persons in her parish. In 1914, she found the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family. She served as a nun for 11 years.  
She died at Kuzhikkattussery on June 8, 1926 at the age of 50. She was declared venerable in June 1999 and beatified on April 9, 2000. Pope Francis approved the miracle attributed to her in 2009. A medical team from Vatican accepted on March 22, 2018 that a baby boy with life-threatening respiratory problems had been cured with her intercession.  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 'Mann Ki Baat' radio programme on September 29, had referred to Sister Mariam Thresia and said that was a matter of pride for every Indian.



Scientist R. Rajendran and VIT Chancellor G. Viswanathan with winners at graVITas19 in Vellore. ■ C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

## 'graVITas' 2019 draws to a close

'Make best use of innovations'

**T. MADHAVAN**  
VELLORE  
The three-day technical extravaganza 'graVITas' came to a close at the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) here on Sunday.  
Addressing the participants and academicians, R. Rajendran, Scientist G-Aircraft Projects Division at Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment, Defence Research and Development Organisation, Chennai, said, "Driven by the need for survival, man developed many technologies – first for food, shelter and clothing and then for enhancing health and comfort for his life. We live in a global village where knowledge that is generated instantly reaches all. The inquisitive nature of mankind will keep technological growth in an upward trajectory for a better future."

**'At crossroads'**  
He added, "We are at the crossroads of technologies that influence every moment of our life. We all know that knowledge without wisdom is dangerous. Technology leading to transformation must be ethically sound. This will only make us grow tall and make our country proud."

While distributing prizes to the winners, VIT's Founder-Chancellor G. Viswanathan said, "Innovations in technologies may be used for productive as well as destructive purposes. Being a citizen of a nation where people like Mahatma Gandhi lived, students should use them for productive purposes to address problems faced by society as well as the country. Our students are equipped to provide necessary solutions."  
While welcoming business ties with Chinese market leaders, Mr. Viswanathan said India's exports to China should increase, for which we need technology coupled with improvements in the product range.  
Anand Prithviraj, Managing Director, Deloitte Digital, Bengaluru, and M. Saravanan, Principal Researcher in Artificial Intelligence and Big Data, Ericsson India Global Services, Bengaluru, addressed the students.  
VIT's Pro Vice-Chancellor S. Narayanan, vice-president Sekar Viswanathan, executive director Sandhya Pentareddy, and convenor of 'graVITas 2019' K. Devedranath Ramkumar participated.

## 12 arrested in Kerala drive against child pornography

**G. ANAND**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
A middle-aged family man arrested here in Kerala on Sunday on the charge of trafficking in child porn had a clean police record and respectable standing in society.  
Investigators who raided his premises allegedly found explicit imagery of children on his mobile phones, laptop computers and storage devices.  
They included images of children photographed on mobile phones against the backdrop of beaches, swimming pools, water theme parks, playgrounds, popular eateries and weekend tourist destinations.

**From social media**  
The accused also harvested photographs of children from social media platforms. Investigators said he sourced child sex abuse content generated in other regions from the darknet, the hidden underbelly of the internet.  
He shared the child abuse material with friends on online platforms and private chatrooms.  
The police in January launched a cyber-surveillance and infiltration operation codenamed 'P-Hunt', to crack down on child pornography. Since April, the drive has led to the arrest of 32 persons, including 12 on Sunday.  
Additional Director General of Police Manoj Abraham, who headed the operation, said most of the accused shared a similar profile. They used a cover to hide 'deviant inclinations' and employed encryption software.  
State Police Chief Loknath Behera supervised P-Hunt.

# Telangana bus driver dies; strike enters ninth day

Political parties instigating union leaders: Minister

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
HYDERABAD  
A Telangana RTC driver died on Sunday, a day after he set himself ablaze, even as the strike by the transport employees entered the ninth day.  
D. Srinivas Reddy, 55, who was part of the group of employees on a State-wide strike for the last nine days, died of burns, hospital sources here said.  
He doused himself with kerosene and set himself ablaze near his house in Khammam, about 190 km from here, reportedly in



RTC staff and workers of various political parties staging a protest at Khammam in Telangana on Sunday. ■ G.N. RAO

protest against the government not acceding to the demands of the striking employees.  
However, the police said they were investigating the

Protests also broke out in different parts of the city and other places, with employees raising slogans and holding the State government responsible for Mr. Reddy's death.  
**TSRTC the employer**  
The employees are demanding merger of the RTC with the government and recruitment to various posts, among others.  
Mr. Reddy, who suffered around 90 per cent burns, was shifted to a hospital here on Saturday night from Khammam and succumbed at around noon on Sunday.  
Union Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy condoled the death and said the incident had pained him ve-

ry much. "Suicide is not the solution. Nobody should resort to such steps in future," he said. Leaders of the Opposition Congress and the BJP also condoled the death.  
Nearly 48,000 workers of employees and workers unions of the TSRTC began an indefinite strike from October 5 on a call by the Joint Action Committee of the TSRTC.  
On Sunday, Panchayat Raj Minister Dayakar Rao alleged that some political parties were instigating the union leaders.  
Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Saturday said there was no question of having talks with the striking employees or taking them back.

# Jolly's financial deals to be probed

More to be quizzed in Koodathayi case

**STAFF REPORTER**  
KOZHIKODE  
The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Koodathayi serial murder case has begun a separate inquiry into the suspicious financial transactions and land deals by Jolly Shaju, the prime suspect in the case.  
Around 20 persons identified by the investigating team will be interrogated to trace Jolly's financial sources as she had reportedly claimed to have a monthly income of over ₹30,000.  
She is accused of murdering her in-laws, husband, and three relatives at Koodathayi village in Kerala's Kozhikode between 2002 and 2016.  
Details of Jolly's bank transactions and the amount paid to buy a flat at Kunnamangalam will be examined. The Crime Branch

team's preliminary finding that she had maintained a close relationship with a BSNL employee for meeting her financial needs would be re-examined and the bank transactions of that person too would be collected.  
**Searches held**  
On Sunday, the SIT searched the house and shop of a local political party leader who allegedly maintained a close relationship with Jolly. His Call Detail Records had been cracked to support the probe. Crime Branch sources said Jolly was suspected of receiving unlawful support from a revenue official to get her late father-in-law's property registered in her name using a forged will. Some local panchayat officials were also suspected to be involved in the deals.

# Tiger trapped after five-day operation

Villagers distribute sweets to forest staff

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MYSURU  
After five days of intensive combing operations, the tiger, which is suspected to have killed two persons in the Chowdahalli-Hundipura area bordering the Bandipur National Park in Karnataka, was tranquilised and trapped on Sunday.  
The big cat is about four years old. The Forest Department's zeroed in on the animal's location based on pug marks, blood trails, and a few camera trap images recorded in the same place on Saturday. Besides, the tiger was not venturing too deep into the jungle and preferred to operate along the forest boundary.  
The local villagers had complained that as many as

16 head of cattle had been lost in the tiger attack in the last few weeks.  
Initially, the people were vehement in their demand that the tiger be shot dead and the Forest Department issued an advisory stating that it would be captured or put down. But later it announced that the tiger would be captured and rehabilitated.  
As the news of its capture spread, villagers distributed sweets to the forest staff and appreciated their work. A large crowd gathered around the cage to catch a glimpse of the tiger.  
Punati Sridhar, PCCF and Head of Forest Force, said the tiger would be shifted to the rehabilitation centre at Koorgalli in Mysuru.

**Timeline**

**September 1**  
Farmer Shivamadappa dies in tiger attack

**October 8**  
Shivalingappa killed in attack

**October 9**  
Combing operation launched, no trace of animal; photo captured

**October 10**  
Reinforcement of staff and deployment of additional staff and six elephants, led by Abhimanyu

**October 11**  
It was identified as a tiger from Nagarahole

**October 13**  
Animal was tranquilised

The tranquilised tiger being shifted to a vehicle at Bandipur on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

# Girl dies within days of marrying a Dalit

Parents hurriedly cremate her

**STAFF REPORTER**  
CHITTOOR  
Mystery shrouded the death of a 17-year-old girl at Redlapalle village in Andhra Pradesh's Kuppam Assembly constituency.  
According to information, the girl from a Backward Class community fell in love with a Dalit youth Nanda Kumar, 19, of a neighbouring village, a couple of years ago.  
Three days ago, the lovers reportedly got married with the help of friends. On Saturday evening, relatives of both sides met at the girl's village and reportedly reached an agreement on keeping the minor in the custody of her parents. The relatives of the boy posted the wedding photos on social media.  
The girl's parents said she had committed suicide by

hanging around midnight unable to bear the separation from her lover and was cremated. Before dawn on Sunday, the ashes, bones and burnt sticks were put in gunny sacks and dumped in a village tank which falls under Karnataka limits. Later, the cremation site was swept clean.  
Deputy SP (Palamaner) S. Arifullah, who visited the scene, told *The Hindu* that a case was registered under Section 174 IPC (suspicious death). The police recovered about seven gunny bags containing bones from the tank. They were sent for forensic examination.  
"The parents told us that their daughter had committed suicide and that they did the last rites immediately. After investigation, the Sections could be altered accordingly," he said.

# Merit students paid to block seats in NEET scam

Seats are blocked from students with lower ranks to make room for those who can pay more

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU  
A well-oiled, informal network of agents and managements of medical colleges in Karnataka have been part of what has come to be called the "NEET seat scam" that led to search and seizure operations on two medical institutions by the Income Tax Department last week.  
While seat blocking by some merit students, who take a small amount from the agents, has been happening for a few years now, the introduction of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) has increased seat blocking, sources say. With a vast pool of medical colleges available across the country, unscrupulous merit students get admission in

one medical college, but end up blocking seats on the advice of agents in several colleges or deemed universities.  
"Seats are blocked based on photostat copies of the documents and originals are returned. The lack of a network among colleges is used by agents and managements to block seats. If the student has already got admission, the other students will not know. On the last date, the students opt out of the admission process," said former principal of the Government Dental College D.R. Prithviraj.  
"In the meantime, managements through agents would have identified students who can purchase the seat and, citing lack of time for counselling, the seats are

**The lack of a network among colleges is used by agents and managements to block seats**  
**D.R. PRITHVIRAJ**  
Former Principal, Govt. Dental College  
allotted to those who would have paid [a high amount]," he said.  
**Highest bidder**  
Essentially, a merit student with good ranking blocks the seat from being taken up by students with lower ranks, but makes room for those who can pay a higher price for the seat, another source said. Sources said the donation for an undergraduate medical seat ranges from ₹30 lakh to ₹1 crore depend-

ing on the college, while the donation for postgraduate medical course can go as high as ₹3 crore to ₹4 crore depending on the college and specialisation.  
According to sources, agents acting on behalf of the managements, identify merit students willing to be part of the seat-blocking exercise.  
"Original document verification does not happen in the first round, but the students opt out leaving the seat vacant. They continue the same exercise during the second round and the mop-up round too. In the end, the student has to pay about ₹4 lakh as penalty, which is normally borne by the agent. The student gets paid too."  
Sources said most deemed universities follow a

similar practice, but the percentage of seats blocked varies. "The full amount collected as donation is not shown in the books. The agent will get his commission and the management shares a part of the donation," sources said. They added that a number of students involved in the racket come from northern States where some of the top NEET coaching centres operate.  
To overcome this loophole, Dr. Prithviraj said, a network should be created for NEET counselling, and an online mechanism put in place to find out if students have taken admission in more than one college. "Online admission and use of identities should help break the nexus," he added.

# Parameshwara PA's cellphone, suicide note sent to FSL

Kin seek CBI probe, say pressure after IT raid led to his death

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU  
The police, who are probing the death of Ramesh, personal assistant of Karnataka Congress leader G. Parameshwara, have sent his mobile phone and the suicide note recovered from his abandoned car to the Forensic Science Lab (FSL) for detailed analysis.  
The 40-year-old, who worked with the Congress leader for eight years, was found dead here on Saturday. He was interrogated by the I-T officials for nearly two days over the ongoing searches on properties belonging to Mr. Parameshwara.



The family members of Ramesh have demanded a CBI probe alleging that harassment by the Income Tax Department led to his death, but the I-T officials have denied raiding his house and questioning him.

The police, however, have recovered the CCTV footage showing a team of officials visiting Ramesh's house on October 10 and questioning him in detail regarding medical seats and money transfer involved in the alleged medical seat scam.  
Amid heart-rending scenes and outpouring of anger against the I-T Department, the body was cremated at his native village Melehalli in Ramanagaram district on Sunday. "The I-T Department has suddenly slowed down searches after his death and is trying to mislead people by saying it did not grill Ramesh," a relative told presspersons.