

1) **Tholu Bommalata**, the traditional puppetry art form of Andhra Pradesh, has lost its sheen. Now, there are only a few artisans to carry forward the art. Years ago, the art was active in the four districts of **Rayalaseema**, especially in the border villages of Karnataka and **Andhra Pradesh**. However currently, there are only 6-8 troops left in all those areas that are still taking up the leather puppetry as the prime livelihood. Tholu Bommalata is the shadow puppet theatre tradition of the state of Andhra Pradesh

2) **Nathu La** pass has been reopened for the annual Kailash Mansarovar Yatra. China had shut down the Nathu La pass in Sikkim and denied entry to the Kailash Mansarovar (located in Tibet) pilgrims last year due to the standoff in Doklam between troops of India and China at the border on account of security reasons. **Nathu La** is a mountain pass in the Himalayas. It connects the Indian state of Sikkim with China's Tibet Autonomous Region

3) In a step that would spare animals from suffering due to drug experiments, the **Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission** has approved modern, animal-free tests for drug manufacturers. In its latest guidelines on tests for drugs manufactured and marketed in India, the IPC has replaced the pyrogen test carried out on rabbits and the abnormal toxicity test carried out on guinea **pigs and mice** with tests that can be done in test tubes.

**The pyrogen test** is carried out to check impurity or substance that can cause adverse side-effects. For the test, the drug is injected into a rabbit and the animal is closely observed for feverish symptoms.

**The abnormal toxicity test** is carried out to check potential hazardous biological contamination in vaccine formulations. Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) is an Autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

4) Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation (**TRIFED**) of Ministry of Tribal Affairs has operationalised **Retail Inventory Software (RIS)** in all its Tribes India Outlets, Regional Offices and Head Office for inventory control.

**TRIFED** is an apex organisation at National Level and functioning under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

5) The parliamentary panel on **Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)** funds has recommended that amounts donated by lawmakers for rehabilitation work after natural disasters be disbursed within two weeks. It was launched in December, 1993, to provide a mechanism for the Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature for creation of durable community assets and for provision of basic facilities including community infrastructure, based on locally felt needs.

6) The third edition of the United Nations Peacekeeping Course for African Partners (**UNPCAP**) is being held in **New Delhi**. The course is conducted by the **Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping in India (CUNPK)** in partnership with the US, the Indian Army said in a statement.

7) Business sentiment among micro and small enterprises (MSE) improved in the January-March quarter as the **sentiment index** rose by 14 points in the quarter, according to the **CriSidEx** survey. **CriSidEx** is a composite index based on a diffusion index of 8 parameters and measures MSE business sentiment on a scale of 0 (extremely negative) to 200 (extremely positive). CriSidEx will have **2 indices**, one for the '**survey quarter**' and another for the '**next quarter**' once a trend emerges after few rounds of the survey,

providing independent time series data.

8) The government is augmenting the airport capacity of various airports as part of **NABH (NextGen Airports for BHarat)** Nirman initiative. The government in February announced a new initiative NABH Nirman under which it proposes to expand airport capacity in the country by more than five times to handle a billion trips a year.

9) Scientists at the **Central Sheep and Wool Research Institute (CSWRI), Avikanagar**, have come up with a new laparoscope-assisted insemination technique for sheep. The minor invasive laparoscopic technique involves passing a rigid **fibre-optic laparoscope** into the abdomen through a small incision. The reproductive tract is located through camera and the frozen semen is deposited into the uterus.

**ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED**

**[www.thecatalystgroup.info](http://www.thecatalystgroup.info)**

**7014891411**