

CST TURNS BLUE FOR A CAUSE

Uma Kadam



Saturday night saw CST turn on its blue lights for World Autism Awareness Day, which will be observed on Sunday. CR, in collaboration with a parents' support group, Forum For Autism, will hold awareness programmes on Sunday. An audio-visual programme about autism will be screened at the terminus throughout April. An art exhibition will also be held at CST where paintings made by autistic children and youths will be on display

Youths defy autism to earn bread, butter & self-respect

Many With The Disorder Show Grit At Work

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: March 31 will be a special day for Dadar resident Vidhula Bhatt as her son Viraj took, for the first time, a circuitous flight from Varanasi to Kolkata to Bengaluru. Viraj isn't a teenager, but all of 29 years old. What is different about him is the fact that he has autism and is among the few with the disorder who has a steady job.

"He works with SAP India in Bengaluru and his seniors are happy with his work," said Vidhula.

Autism is a neurological disorder characterized by uneven development and poor social skills, among others. So while Viraj is a self-taught computer geek, he had trouble picking up lessons at school.

As Indian workplaces seem to be warming up to people with autism, Viraj isn't the only one. Juhu resident Aarti Nagarkar (30) recently won a cooking competition organized by chef Sajeev Kapoor's Yellow Chilli chain of restaurants. "She goes for once-a-month training session to the chain's Andheri office to learn new recipes and dishes," said her mother Sushma Nagarkar. At the end of these training sessions, she hopes that there will be an internship for Aarti.

Kapoor, who has been a supporter of the Forum For Autism (FFA) a parents' support group, said he has been offering short stints at his TV shows and workshops as well as internships to people with autism. "I have run the Mumbai Marathon for them for 10 years now. My support will be permanent," he said.

On the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day on Sunday, a press release sent by FFA said that parents are working to create job opportunities for young adults with autism. "FFA has been engaging with various organizations such as Kshitij, Anchorage, Arpan, Sols Arc, Together Foundation, Yellow Chilli

TODAY IS WORLD AUTISM DAY

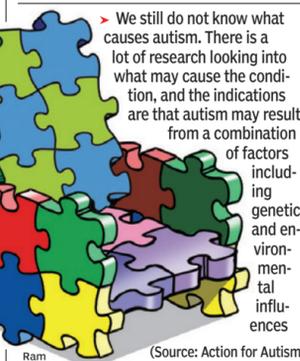
WHAT IS AUTISM

Autism is a lifelong neurological condition, a developmental disorder, that typically occurs in the first three years of life. Children with autism have difficulty in: communication (verbal and non-verbal), social interactions and imagination, which can be seen in repetitive and restricted play or leisure activities

Autism is not a rare or uncommon disorder. It is the third most-common developmental disorder, more common than Down's syndrome

Recent international studies show that about one in 68 people have autism and the overall incidence of autism is believed to be consistent around the globe (CDC, 2014). This means that there are over 18 million people with autism in India

We still do not know what causes autism. There is a lot of research looking into what may cause the condition, and the indications are that autism may result from a combination of factors including genetic and environmental influences



Ram (Source: Action for Autism)

restaurants to ensure opportunities for young adults beyond their schooling years," the press release said.

As autism is a spectrum disorder (some persons have very high IQ and are called savants), FFA members have worked towards creating job opportunities in international companies like J.P. Morgan, SAP and HPCL. "JP Morgan has offered internships to two Mumbai youngsters with autism. After training, they stand a chance of getting absorbed in the company," said Chitra Iyer of FFA.

In Delhi, Merry Barua of Action for Autism said the Lemon Grass chain of hotels had employed two persons with autism. "One is in the housekeeping and another in the café," she said, adding that more companies need to open up.

WISH LIST OF FORUM FOR AUTISM, (a parents' group)

Gardens for special adults incorporating sensory integration needs.

Ease of certificates to be issued for children

Availability of therapy centres in country or Mumbai to begin with

Priority at community places

Schools to accept children with autism and not throw them out following diagnosis

Boards to follow concession guidelines and ensure implementation

More internship opportunities from workplaces for young adults on the spectrum

More opportunities for jobs from entrepreneurs for young adults across the spectrum

In the West, companies like Microsoft employ autistic persons; some firms say they are focused, committed and less likely to leave after learning the job (autistic people like structured activities that follow a pattern).

So what has brought about this change? Parul Kumtha, a parent and FFA founder, believes it is opportunity to study that has helped. "Previously, our children could never complete a degree as they were never offered concessions. But now concessions are offered right up to degree level," she said. As persons with autism pick up degrees and skills, they are ready to be employed, she added.

Barua said there is a still a long way to go. "In the West, companies have a policy to hire autistic persons, but the same company here won't do that," she said.

No patchwork, BMC to re-lay 110 crater roads by May 15

These Spots Have Potholes Every Monsoon

Vijay V. Singh
@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Learning its lesson from last monsoon, the BMC has decided to resurface road stretches that have multiple potholes, instead of doing a patch work by fixing the craters on by one. The civic body is focussing on 110 road stretches that altogether had 430 potholes last year, and is working to fix them by May 15.

At his monthly meeting with ward officers on Saturday, civic chief Ajoy Mehta reviewed work on these chronic road patches and directed the officials to complete the remaining work on a priority. An official said the civic chief is trying to minimize pothole-related problems this monsoon.

To start with, civic engineers were earlier asked to identify spots that have several potholes. They identified these 110 road patches. Officials said these spots were found to have a large number of potholes during every monsoons for several

80% WORK OVER, SAY OFFICIALS

- > 110 chronic pothole road patches in city
- > 430 potholes in these patches during last monsoon
- > Civic officials say 80% of patches already repaired
- > Work on remaining 20% to be over by May 15



WORST-HIT WARDS

- > K-East (Andheri (E) and Jogeshwari (East)) | 12 chronic pothole road patches
- > R-South (Kandivli West) | 11
- > N- (Ghatkopar-Vikhroli) | 10
- > M-East (Deonar-Mankhurd) | 9
- > R-Central (Borivli) | 8

FATAL ROADS

SEPT 2016 | Rizwan Khan (21) died after his bike hit a huge pothole near JJ Hospital. Rizwan was riding without a helmet

JULY, 2015 | Prakash Bihore (16) was killed when the bike on which he was riding ploughed into a pothole on Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road. His cousin who was riding the bike sustained serious injuries

REDA ALERT | A recently concluded inquiry of 200 city roads found that in six roads, contractors had not put base layer that takes vehicles load

claimed that they had already repaired 80% of the spots patches and remaining 20% work would be completed by May 15.

Filmmaker and activist Ashoke Pandit said, "Entire city witnesses potholes during monsoon, so on what basis is BMC saying there are just 110 stretches? We see

Assembly passes bill to increase prison term for attack on babus, netas to 5 years

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The assembly on Saturday passed a bill amending criminal laws to increase the prison term to five years for those found guilty of hurting or assaulting a public servant — officials and elected representatives — discharging duty.

The prison term for those found guilty of "hurting" a public servant performing his duty under the Indian Penal Code has been increased to five years from 3 years. The prison term for those found guilty of "assaulting" a public servant to deter him from performing job has been in-

creased to five years from two years under the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said stricter punishment was required since the number of such cases was on

OFFENCES ON RISE, NEED STRICTER PUNISHMENT: CM

the rise. The state recorded 17,682 such cases between 2011 and 2016, he said. BJP MLA Ashish Shelar had criticised the bill saying there are enough safeguards for officials and they will use the new law against citizens who come to them for work.

Several MLAs, including Shiv Sena's Jaiprakash Mundada, had asked for more time to debate the bill. "This may create the impression that the government is trying to shield officials. Also, we need to consider why the public wants to assault officials. It is often because they feel their work is not being done," said Mundada.

However, Fadnis said the main offenders were not members of the public but contractors. "In many cases, the offenders were those involved in sand mining. We are not trying to shield officials and public representatives but the right people should get protection," he said.

Class owner gets jail for abusing ex-CM

Ahmed Ali@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Machindra Chate, the owner of Chate Classes, has been convicted and sentenced to two months' simple imprisonment in a 16-year-old offence where he had used abusive words.

The Esplanade Metropolitan Magistrate B U Choudhary on Thursday convicted Chate under Section 294 (obscene act or song) of the IPC. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 5,000. Failure to pay the fine would mean an additional 15 days in jail for Chate, said

id public prosecutor Rajendra Suryavanshi.

In 2000, there was a major controversy over politicisation of private coaching classes. Congress leaders had made serious allegations against Chate classes. It was in this context that Chate organised a press conference at Marathi Patrakar Sangh at Azad Maidan on June 1, 2000.

The police said that in the press conference Chate used abusive words against the then CM Vilasrao Deshmukh. Sources said Chate was likely to go in appeal.

'Drug addict' turns violent, attacks patient and hosp staff

Thane: An alleged drug-addict who was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Khopat area of Thane, suddenly turned violent and attacked hospital staff and another patient with a scissor late on Saturday, the police said.

It is learnt that Abid Mirza Beg, who was being treated for a fractured hand, was attacked with the scissor and suffered serious injuries in his ribs and chest. He was moved to Jupiter Hospital for further treatment.

DCP Abhishek Trimukhe told TOI that the drug addict, identified as Kismat Ali, turned violent as he did not get his regular dose and attacked the staff. "The hospital staffers suffered minor injuries," said Trimukhe.

Stop all 'illegal' construction at Aarey: Citizens

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Citizens from across Mumbai marched to the Aarey police station on Saturday and registered a formal complaint against Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL) for alleged illegal construction in the Aarey Colony.

In their complaint the group of 38 men and women said Aarey Colony is a notified

'METRO SHED WORK IS NOT AUTHORIZED'

ed No Development Zone. "The government's proposal to convert Aarey from NDZ to Metro shed/commercial zone has not yet been sanctioned. No work of any nature including soil testing work is permitted in an NDZ," reads the letter.

The complaint further states that on March 30, MMRCL had entered Unit 19 inside Aarey and started

unauthorised soil testing under police protection. "It is respectfully submitted that police department are supposed to stop illegal activities and not protect such illegal acts."

The citizens also submitted the urban development department's plan that clearly shows current NDZ area and proposal (which is not yet sanctioned). The complaint also informs that the National Green Tribunal has passed status quo orders on August 19 last year as well as on March 17 this year prohibiting any construction or prohibitory activity by MMRCL inside Aarey.

They requested that their First Information Report against MMRCL, its officers and contractors for carrying out illegal work be registered. They also demanded the police implement the NGT order by immediately putting a stop to the work in the colony and to withdraw the police protection given for the illegal activity.

₹1.2cr power theft detected in Dharavi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: BEST's flying squad on Saturday raided residences, commercial and factory establishments in Dharavi to unearth a power theft worth Rs 1.2 crore by five consumers for over the last two years.

According to BEST's vigilance wing the early morning raid on a small plastic-moulding industrial unit of Iiyas Magru and caught him red-handed using direct supply bypassing the 50 kw-load meter. Similar were the cases of others.

"The factory was using almost 20,000 units of power every month for over last two years. If considered the billing and that of the theft by four others in the vicinity, value of theft comes to over Rs 1.2 crore," said a BEST official.

According to officials a first information report has been registered with the local police station and a penal action would be taken against the culprits as per the relevant sections of law after producing the evidences.

Girl hit by tava suffers skull fracture, docs wait & watch

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Several medical experts, including neurosurgeons, on Saturday checked on the eight-year-old girl who sustained skull fracture after a nearly 2kg tava landed on her in Nagpada on Friday morning. As Hazequa's condition is critical, doctors have not been able to do any intervention.

On Friday morning, when the class III student of St Joseph's school in Agridpada was returning home from tuitions, a

STILL CRITICAL

Hazequa has been on ventilator support in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Nair Hospital since she was brought unconscious on Friday morning

"She has a skull fracture and internal bleeding as well, but

we haven't yet been able to do any intervention because of her critical condition,"

said Dr Ramesh

Bharmal, dean of Nair Hospital

"If the building had the occupancy certificate, residents would have erected safety grilles," said Pathan, who visited the girl in hospital

griddle fell on her from the 20-storey Danish Villa, a recently constructed building in Madanpura. It is not clear how the griddle fell off. The Nagpada police visited the spot and tried to recreate the incident to figure out from which floor the griddle fell. Police sources said that around a dozen people residing facing front side of the building are under the scanner.

"Our teams have been recording statements of residents to probe as to how the griddle fell," said Yashwant Baswat, senior inspector of Nagpada police station.

Meanwhile, Hazequa's father, Faizan Ansari, said he was ready to forgive the person responsible for if s/he admits the mistake.

Captured A Neat Idea In A Cartoon? We're Looking For You...

Times Cartoonist Hunt
For the next legendary cartoonist

THE CONTEST PROMISES TO BE KEEN...

1,000+ entries from aspiring cartoonists from **53 cities** in India & from across the world including **New York**

Check out the website www.toicartoonisthunt.com

1 Lakh+ visitors to date

200 cities | Page visits from over 200 cities across India and **74 countries**

70% visitors below **34 years**

44% Of participants are women

1.45 Lakh+ | Page views

PHASE 1 (Last Date: April 5)

Aspiring cartoonists (can even be a team) send in entries through a microsite

www.toicartoonisthunt.com or email us at toicartoons@gmail.com

PHASE 2 (April 6 - April 19)

Entries will be judged in a two-step process, first by a regional jury and then a national jury

- Regional juries will shortlist 200 to 300 best entries in each region
- The national jury will then select 400-500 finalists who will go on to participate in phase 3

PHASE 3

An on-the-spot test at 18 publishing centres where the finalists will be asked to draw to a certain brief. The national jury chooses the final winners

Winners will be announced on World Cartoonist Day on May 5

HOT TOPICS

UP CM Yogi Swachh Bharat
Meat ban Reservation/Quota system
De-monetisation/Modi Board exams
Regional politics Corruption Donald Trump

The words you write today, Can send a girl to school tomorrow.



The Times Group & Nestlé India have come together for the 1st edition of **Power of Print**, an award instituted to celebrate creativity in print.

Inviting the best creative minds to create a powerful print campaign for **#EducateTheGirlChild**, an initiative committed to sending more girls to school. The winning entry will be released with a multi-crore budget in the Times of India group publications.

The winning team will receive the 'Power of Print' award at The Kyoorius Creative Awards and a fully-paid trip to the Cannes Lions.

Send in your entry by April 29th, 2017. For details, visit www.timespowerofprint.com

THE JURY: Praseon Joshi • Bobby Pawar • KV Sridhar • Kainaz Karmakar • Arun Iyer • Agnello Dias • Swati Bhattacharya • Raj Kamble • Senthil Kumar • Shrijeet Mishra • Chandrasekar Radhakrishnan

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