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A tale of two railways – Nizams then, Metro now

Tabletop calendar chronicles two iconic projects

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Coinciding with the celebration of the 425th anniversary of Hyderabad city, Hyderabad Metro Rail Ltd, has brought out a theme-based table calendar for 2016, highlighting two iconic rail projects – one under development and the other that was developed by the Nizam in the 19th century.

The calendar juxtaposes

the Nizam Gauranteed State Railway (NGSR), which was started in 1870, and the mega Hyderabad Metro project, scheduled for part opening this year.

Both the railways – NGSR and HMR – are examples of path-breaking attempts at funding of an infrastructural facility.

The Nizam built the Nizam State Railway, running 1,373 km across the length and breadth of his kingdom, entirely from his private funds, then costing a whopping ₹7 crore. This was supposed to have taken the British Empire by surprise.

HMR, on the other hand, is attempting to develop a 72-km elevated rail network with private investment of over ₹14,000 crore for the first time in the public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

Many similarities

Both projects were greeted with scepticism but their progress made even the doubters sit up and take notice. They have many other similarities, including using the latest technology, multi-modal integration, environment-friendly features and the larger objective of giving an economic impetus.

The calendar features rare pictures of Nizam-era rail engines, Secunderabad, Nampally and Kachiguda railway stations alongside those of ultra-modern metro rail coaches and stations.

Each month has a catchy title – 'A tale of two railways', 'Grand old ladies and elegant debutantes', 'Sprawling rail corridors', 'Efficient feeder networks', 'Investing for a better future' and 'Engines of growth'.

The calendar was conceived and designed by NVS Reddy, Managing Director of HMR, and Kali Konduri, an art curator.