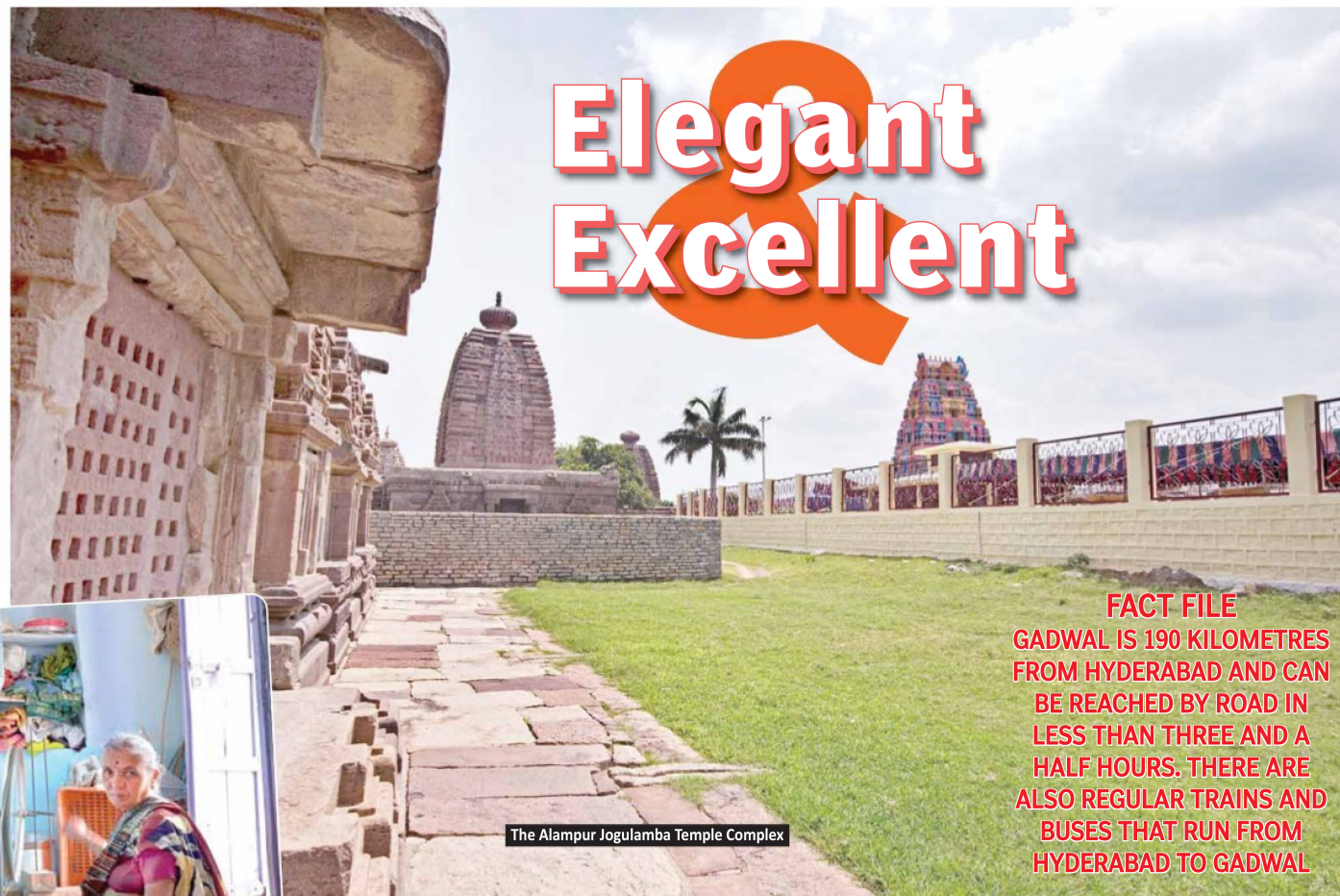


The textile town of Gadwal in Mahbubnagar, Telangana has more than just handloom sarees on offer for those looking for a quick weekend getaway from the hustle and bustle of the city

NEEHARIKA SATYAVADA

One has more often than not heard of Gadwal, in the context of the famous handloom sarees that come from here. Yes, the very same ones which can be folded to fit into a tiny little matchbox. These sarees which go by the same name as the town of their origin, Gadwal, are striking in terms of the contrasting colours and textures that are used to handcraft them. For, while the body of a Gadwal Cheera (saree) is made of cotton, the pallu and border are made of silk and zari and always in a contrasting colour. A lot goes into making these unique handloom sarees. From the temperature of the boiled water in which the yarn is dyed – which determines the longevity of the colour to the thread count that goes into its making – which decides the softness of this finely woven saree. And, the artisan's attention to detail doesn't end with that, for once the saree has been hand woven on the loom, the silk border and pallu need to be attached as that final finishing touch. These Gadwal sarees are also sometimes known as Kuttu Sarees, because of this very traditional style of weaving that is locally called 'Kuttu'.

Besides this rich legacy in textile, there is yet another historic significance attached to this region in Telangana. For Gadwal was once a feudal kingdom under the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Gadwal Samsthanam as it was known



The Alampur Jogulamba Temple Complex

Elegant & Excellent

FACT FILE

GADWAL IS 190 KILOMETRES FROM HYDERABAD AND CAN BE REACHED BY ROAD IN LESS THAN THREE AND A HALF HOURS. THERE ARE ALSO REGULAR TRAINS AND BUSES THAT RUN FROM HYDERABAD TO GADWAL



Spinning the dyed yarn onto bobbins

Kesava Swamy Temple is the most prominent and definitely worth a visit.

There are also the nearby towns of Alampur and Pillalamarri that one can add to the itinerary when visiting Gadwal.

Only an hour away from Gadwal is the temple town of Alampur. Alampur is renowned not just for its Ashtadasa Shakti Peetham, the Jogulamba Temple, but is also believed to be the Western gateway to Srisailem, one of the important pilgrimages centres for Shaivites in the country. This is owing, probably, to the sheer number of Shiva Lingams that there are in Alampur and not necessarily always enshrined in a temple.

A little further away, just outside the city of Mahbubnagar, is Pillalamarri. Pillalamarri (Telugu for banyan tree and its children) isn't just the name of a famous Banyan Tree but also of the village where it stands. And, over the years it has come to be so popular with

the tourists, that there are now

a deer park and a science museum here for the children who come to see the famous seven-hundred-year-old Giant Banyan Tree that has spread its roots across four acres of land.

Other nearby places like the Sri Raganayaka Swamy Temple along with the Ratna Pushkarni Lake adjoining it make for a picturesque detour. While the Jurala Dam on River Krishna is the perfect spot to spend an evening, with the murmur of the river and the setting sun as a backdrop.



Inside an artisan's house in Gadwal