

Maharatna HPCL hits major milestone, commissions RUF at Visakh Refinery

Showcases unprecedented engineering scale, housing among world's heaviest three LC-Max reactors of 2,200 MT each

THE REFINERY STORY

- Critical project equipment were indigenously manufactured
- Houses world's heaviest three LC-Max reactors
- Refining margins to rise substantially
- Strong supply chain, and higher profitability

SANTOSH PATNAIK
VISAKHAPATNAM

MAHARATNA HPCL has successfully commissioned the Residue Upgradation Facility (RUF) at its Visakh Refinery here, marking a major milestone in India's deep-conversion refining capability and contributing meaningfully to national energy security. Aligning fully with the Prime Minister's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, several critical project equipment were indigenously manufactured, thereby, strengthening India's refining self-reliance. This first-of-its-kind facility in India showcases unprecedented engineering scale, housing among the world's heaviest three LC-Max reactors of approximately 2,200 MT each. According to the company spokesperson, with a



capacity of 3.55 MMTPA, RUF employs advanced LC-Max based residue hydrocracking technology to achieve about 93 per cent conversion of bottom oils into high-value products. Visakh Refinery will now have the capability of enhancing its distillate yield by up to 10 per cent (from pre-VRMP [Visakh Refinery Modernisation Project] levels). The Gross Refining Margins (GRMs) of the Visakh Refinery are set to increase substantially on account of superior product slate, flexibility to process many heavier or opportunity crudes, and higher value realisation per barrel. This significant increase in middle-distillate output helps HPCL to reduce the gap between its HSD marketing and refining volumes, lowers dependence on external sources,

strengthens the supply chain, and drives higher profitability through improved product realisation and margin capture. Improved heat integration and process efficiency reduced the Refinery's Energy Intensity Index (EII), lowering operating costs and further reinforcing profitability while advancing sustainability objectives. The Nelson Complexity Index of the Visakh Refinery now stands tall at an impressive 11.6, positioning it among India's most advanced deep-conversion refineries, supporting long-term profitability and global benchmarking of performance. Complementing the physical commissioning, HPCL has also deployed the RUF (LC-Max) Digital Suite — an Industry-first in Indian Refineries.

AP CM Naidu hails achievement

AMARAVATI: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday said Andhra Pradesh has now anchored another major milestone for Aatmanirbhar Bharat. He said on X: "As part of the three-stage Visakh Refinery Modernisation Project (VRMP), the refinery now hosts a new Residue Upgradation Facility featuring three of the heaviest reactors in the world. This upgrade will help meet regional fuel needs and boost socio-economic growth." Naidu said: "I sincerely thank Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji for his vision in strengthening Visakh Refinery to support the nation's energy security. With this, the East Coast also emerges as a world-class refining hub."

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preciation for all other key stakeholders, including project partners, licensors CLG, turnkey contractor L&T, PMC EIL, other vendors/contractors, and its dedicated teams, whose steadfast support, technical excellence, and collaborative efforts were instrumental in the successful commissioning of the RUF.

CM Revanth unveils official poster for Medaram Maha Jatara

The Ministers handed over official invitation cards to the dignitaries and requested them to attend the grand festival



BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
HYDERABAD

THE Telangana Legislative Assembly was on Monday filled with the vibrant spirit of the Medaram Maha Jatara festival. Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Seethakka; Minister for Endowments, Konda Surekha; Minister for SC and ST Welfare, Adhuri Laxman Kumar; and Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, accompanied by elected representatives from Warangal district and temple priests, convened with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in the Assembly to present him with invitations. On the occasion, the Chief Minister unveiled the poster for the Medaram Maha Jatara-2026. Furthermore, the Ministers extended invitations to Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti

Vikramarka, Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, and several other Ministers present in the Assembly. On the occasion, Medaram EO Veeraswamy, Sammakka-Saralamma Priests' Association President Siddaboyina Jaggarao, and several other priests, following the temple tradition, tied a sacred thread, presented a shawl, and offered gold, formally inviting them to the Medaram Jatara (festival). The Ministers handed over official invitation cards to the dignitaries and requested them to attend the grand festival. The Medaram Maha Jatara will be held from January 28 to 31. The State government has undertaken extensive development works in Medaram with an outlay of Rs230 crore. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will inaugurate the renovation works of the Sammakka-

Saralamma pedestals and the temple premises on January 19. The newly developed Medaram temple complex is being constructed entirely with stone structures, designed to last for another thousand years. The gateways and boundary walls have been designed to reflect the sacrifices of Sammakka and Saralamma, and the history of the tribal people. Medaram has been transformed into a blend of tribal culture, spirituality, and modernity. In view of lakhs of devotees visiting Medaram every year, Governor Jishnu Dev Varma, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Ministers and other dignitaries officially handed over the Medaram Maha Jatara invitations. The celebrities who received the invitation said that they will definitely attend the biggest fair of Adivasi.

Deccan Gold is debt-free after successful ₹314.70 crore Rights issue

The company is now working with the Hira Group to complete procedural formalities

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
VIJAYAWADA

DECCAN Gold Mines Ltd. (Deccan Gold), one of India's first and only listed gold and critical minerals exploration and mining company, on Monday announced that it has fully repaid all outstanding loans along with accrued interest following the successful closure of its Rs314.70 crore rights issue on December 26, 2025. With this repayment, the company has now become

fully debt-free, marking a major milestone in its journey toward financial resilience, operational scalability, and long-term value creation. The company stated that the repayments were made to the following lenders as below: Rs75 crore-Ardent Steels Private Limited, Rs120 crore-Godavari Power & Ispat Limited and Rs8 crore-Hira Ferro Alloys Limited. The accrued interest amounts up to January 2, 2026, have also been fully

settled. The company is now working with the Hira Group to complete procedural formalities, including filing satisfaction of charge and release of pledged shares of Geomysore Services (India) Pvt. Ltd. Deccan Gold stated that the loan repayment is expected to strengthen the balance sheet and improve capital efficiency, enhance financial flexibility for project execution and expansion and reinforce investor confidence and long-

term value creation. The development comes at a time when the company is advancing production-stage assets and progressing multiple projects into drilling and resource-development phases across gold and critical minerals. Commenting on the milestone, Dr Hanuma Prasad Modali, Managing Director, Deccan Gold Mines Ltd., said, "Becoming debt-free marks a strategic inflection point for Deccan Gold Mines.

Gas leak, fire at ONGC well triggers panic in Andhra village



AMARAVATI

HUGE flames following a gas leak from a well of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) in Andhra Pradesh's Ambedkar Konaseema district on Monday sent people in a state of panic, forcing authorities to evacuate residents of nearby villages. Panic gripped Irusumanda and surrounding villages in Malikipuram Mandal following a massive gas leak from a well of the ONGC. The crude-mixed gas suddenly erupted while repair works were underway using a workover rig after the well had temporarily halted production. A powerful blowout released a massive volume of gas mixed with crude oil, which shot high into the air. Local officials said the leaked gas soon caught fire, with flames erupting at the site. Thick clouds of gas and smoke spread across Irusumanda and the surrounding areas like dense fog, officials said. The authorities were evacuating people in a five-kilometer radius.



Massive flames spread rapidly engulfing the nearby coconut trees. About 500 trees were reduced to ashes. As a safety precaution, authorities issued announcements via loudspeakers instructing residents of three nearby villages to avoid using electricity, switching on appliances, or lighting stoves to prevent further ignition. An emergency response team of ONGC along with senior officials rushed to the village after they were alerted by revenue officials. Efforts were underway to cap the gas leak. There was chaos as the people left their homes in panic on seeing huge flames and hearing the loud explosions. Fire services personnel, police and officials of other departments rushed to the village. The District Collector and Superintendent of Police were monitoring the situation. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu enquired about the gas leak. He spoke to ministers K. Atchannaidu and Vasamsetti Subhash, and other officials.

IN BRIEF

Parliamentary panel on Railways visits VPA

VISAKHAPATNAM: The Members Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways were accorded a warm welcome when they visited Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) by its Deputy Chairperson Roshni Aparanji, along with the Heads of Departments. The committee members visited the port operational areas, wherein Aparanji, briefed the members on the overall operations of the port and various strategic initiatives undertaken by Visakhapatnam Port Authority. During the visit, the committee was apprised of the port's infrastructure facilities, cargo handling capacity, modernization and mechanization initiatives, covered storage facilities, solar power projects, and sewage treatment plant (STP) water recycling for industrial use. The VPA team also highlighted investment opportunities and potential avenues to enhance import-export activities through Visakhapatnam Port. The Standing Committee on Railways appreciated the warm reception extended by VPA.

2nd free mega medical camp conducted

HYDERABAD: The 2nd Free Mega Medical Camp, organised by Satya Sundar Helping Hands Foundation under the leadership of its Founder Thakur Gopal Singh, was successfully conducted on January 5 and 6, 2026, at Sanatan Dharam Bhavan, Chudi Bazar, Hyderabad, in association with MediCiti Hospital. The two-day camp witnessed strong participation from the local community, with over 1,000 people turning up on the first day alone, making it a highly successful healthcare outreach initiative. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Inish Merchant, CEO, MediCiti Hospitals, spoke about the importance of accessible healthcare and reaffirmed the hospital's commitment to extending comprehensive medical, diagnostic, and surgical support for patients identified during the camp. Thakur Gopal Singh, Founder, Satya Sundar Helping Hands Foundation, highlighted the Foundation's continued efforts in organising large-scale medical outreach programmes focused on early diagnosis, preventive care, and supporting economically weaker sections. Ranu Singh Rajput, Managing Director, Amara Land Securities, emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts between healthcare institutions, social organisations, and responsible corporate participation in strengthening community welfare initiatives.

AP continues good show in GST collection despite reforms

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
VIJAYAWADA

ANDHRA Pradesh Government has recorded growth in net collections in December 2025, despite rate reductions on major consumer essentials, consumer durables, pharmaceuticals, and cement, as well as the removal of GST on life insurance and medical insurance. The GST reforms effective from September 22, 2025 led to withdrawal of GST Compensation Cess on all liable items

except tobacco and tobacco products. According to an official release, the revenue collected in December 2025 related to business transactions conducted in November 2025. Increased consumption, driven by rate reductions, strategic policy initiatives, and enhanced compliance mechanisms, contributed to the state's sustained revenue growth, making December 2025 the highest collection in December since the GST regime was introduced in 2017.

Continental puts advance pacemaker in 87-yr patient

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
HYDERABAD

DOCTORS at Continental Hospital, here, recently achieved a major success in treating an 87-year-old man who was suffering from a life-threatening heart condition. Faced with the challenge of his age and other health issues, the medical team used a modern Retrievable Leadless Pacemaker—a small device that works without the wires or surgery required by traditional pacemakers. The patient's



had a combination of serious problems: an irregular heartbeat, a dangerously slow pulse, and heart stoppage. Because he was 87 years old and also had chronic kidney disease, a standard pacemaker surgery was considered too risky.

\$6-mn trout farm in Telangana pioneers cold-water aquaculture

Integrated farm features a 2-acre grow-out facility, a 5-acre hatchery producing 1.2 million fingerlings annually, processing plant for value-added trout products

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
HYDERABAD

SMARTGREEN Aquaculture (SGA), a Hyderabad-based startup, has inaugurated India's first state-of-the-art inland trout farming facility in Kandukur Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, Telangana. The \$6 million facility, built on a 7-acre campus, demonstrates that cold-water species like rainbow trout can be farmed successfully even in warmer regions such as the Deccan Plateau. The integrated farm features a 2-acre grow-out



facility, a 5-acre hatchery producing 1.2 million fingerlings annually, and a processing plant for value-added trout products. Operating on a sustainable Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS), the farm enables year-round production in a biosecure environment while minimising water usage and environmental impact. SGA plans to add a flexible-scale Microalgae Biorefinery by 2026-27, which will produce biomass for nutraceuticals, aquafeed, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and sustainable agriculture. The

facility will also serve as a skill development center for RAS technology, contributing to India's blue revolution mission. The inaugural event was attended by Union Ministers Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lalan Singh), G Kishan Reddy, S P Singh Baghel, and other dignitaries from government and aquaculture sectors. Lalan Singh praised SGA as "a shining example of innovation driving India's startup ecosystem," while Kishan Reddy highlighted the potential of specialised fish farming in warmer inland regions.

Founder and Managing Director Aditya Rithvik Narra said, "Our precision-engineered trout farm demonstrates that advanced closed-loop aquaculture technologies can bring premium rainbow trout closer to Indian consumers. By integrating hatcheries, farming, processing, and e-commerce, we ensure fresher products with full traceability and biosecurity." The farm's first phase, producing 360 metric tonnes, is nearing market readiness, while the second phase will expand total production to 1,200 metric

tonnes annually. SGA targets retail, hospitality, and institutional buyers, both online and offline, and aims to train local communities, provide employment for 200 people, and enable small-scale farmers to operate compact aquaculture units under buy-back arrangements. With India as the world's second-largest fish producer and global aquaculture projected to grow from \$296 billion in 2023 to \$421 billion by 2030, SGA's venture positions the country at the forefront of high-value, sustainable inland aquaculture.