

# Decision on Nandi awards, theatre festival soon

- Cinematography minister Durgesh says a formal decision on reviving the Nandi Awards and Nandi Theatre Festival will be made soon
- Reiterates the govt's goal to develop Amara-vati as a major film hub on par with Hyderabad, with full support to cinema and creative industries
- At the AP Short Film Festival-2026 felicitation, 'Mahavriksham' won first prize among 203 entries, highlighting strong grassroots talent across the state

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

CINEMATOGRAPHY minister Kandula Durgesh on Tuesday said that the co-alition government is fully committed to the development of the Telugu film industry in Andhra Pradesh and would begin a structured action plan from April. He also announced that dis-



Cinematography minister Kandula Durgesh with the award winners of short films in Vijayawada on Tuesday

cussions are underway with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and a formal announcement on the revival of the prestigious Nandi Awards and Nandi Theatre Festival would be made soon.

The minister was speaking after felicitating the winners of the Andhra Pradesh Short Film Festival-2026, organised under the banner of Maa-AP, at his chamber in the Secretariat's second block at Velagapudi. He presented mementos and cash

awards to the awardees and congratulated young directors, technicians and artists who created socially conscious short films.

Durgesh appreciated the efforts of the festival organiser, Maa-AP founder and film director Dilip Raja, for successfully conducting the state-level festival on January 11 at Tenali without charging any entry fee. He said such initiatives play a key role in nurturing grassroots talent and strengthening the film ecosystem in the State.

Addressing the gathering, the minister stated that the government aims to develop Amaravati into a major hub for the film industry on par with Hyderabad.

He reiterated that the state government would extend all necessary support for the growth of cinema and creative industries in Andhra Pradesh.

As many as 203 short films were received from across the state for the festival, with nearly 2,000 actors participating. The first prize was won by 'Mahavriksham'

directed by Chandrasekhar Sakunalas from Visakhapatnam, while 'Simhadri Appanna' by Srinivasa Rao from Srikakulam secured second place and 'Abaddam vs Nijam' by Naveen Kumar from Palakollu bagged the third prize. Cash awards of Rs 1 lakh were presented to the top three winners.

Special awards were also presented to Sujitha (Best Actress-Manam), Sai Prakash (Best Character Actress-Abaddam vs Nijam), Pawan Sarma (Mannu-Minnu), child artist Harshat-hunnisa, young talent Rithvik Reddy (Astra), debut director Trivikram, villain Meesala Bhaskar, and Telugu script reviewers Manjula Lakshmapathi Master and Jagadish, among others.

Speaking on the occasion, director Dilip Raja said government encouragement would enable Andhra Pradesh youth to achieve remarkable success and noted that the Short Film Festival had infused new confidence and determination among aspiring filmmakers.

# CPM demands immediate increase in RTC buses

- Party's two-day state committee meet flags overcrowding, commuter hardships after Stree Shakti scheme implementation

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VIJAYAWADA

THE CPM state committee, which met on February 2 and 3 at MB Vignana Kendram in Vijayawada, demanded an immediate increase in RTC buses in view of the sharp rise in passenger traffic following the implementation of the Stree Shakti free bus travel scheme for women. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of party central committee member K Lokanatham and was attended by politburo members B Raghavulu and U Vasuki, along with state secretary V Srinivasa Rao. The committee unanimously adopted a resolution highlighting the severe inconvenience being faced by passengers due to overcrowding. Party state secretary Srinivasa Rao released the resolution to the media here on Tuesday. He said that RTC occupancy has increased dramatically from 67 per cent to 98 per cent after the launch of the Stree Shakti scheme. However, the government failed to deploy additional buses to meet the growing demand, he said. As a result, buses are running beyond capacity, skipping stops, and frequently breaking down due to poor maintenance and ageing fleets, he commented.

Further, he said the two-day state committee meeting expressed its concern over harassment faced by women passengers and the difficulties encountered by students who are unable to reach schools and colleges on time. The party also pointed out that RTC staff



Picture for representational purpose only

are under heavy pressure, with workload rising by over 30 per cent, leading to an increase in in-service deaths, he said. Despite the corporation seeking permission to recruit 11,000 staff, the government has not responded, he noted. Meanwhile, he said his party urged the government to ensure RTC services in villages still lacking bus connectivity, strictly regulate private buses, allow digital Aadhaar verification for women passengers, and immediately strengthen the public transport system to safeguard the Stree Shakti scheme and commuter safety.

# Nunna farmers seek development of road

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VIJAYAWADA

FARMERS' leaders from Nunna — Avuthu Sivaa Reddy, Kurra Narasimha Reddy, Bonthula Srinivas Reddy, and Bhumula Balasekhar Reddy — along with Nunna Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society (PACS) President Kalakoti Srinivas Reddy, submitted a representation to Government Whip and Gannavaram MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao, seeking immediate development of the Panchayat Raj road connecting the Vijayawada West Bypass with the Mustabad-Ramavarappadu Ring Road. The representation was submitted at Nunna near Vijayawada on Tuesday while the MLA was launching various development programmes.

The leaders explained



Farmers' leaders felicitating Government Whip and Gannavaram MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao after submitting a representation seeking construction of a BT road linking the Vijayawada West Bypass with the Mustabad-Ramavarappadu Ring Road at Nunna near Vijayawada on Tuesday

that the road, passing over the Gollapudi Pumping Lift Irrigation Canal, connects Nunna village in Vijayawada Rural mandal with Mustabad village in Gannavaram mandal and serves as a crucial

link for farmers and residents. With the establishment of a wholesale vegetable market and several warehouses in the area, traffic movement on the road has increased significantly.

They pointed out that around 1.5 kms of the stretch remains a metal road, causing severe inconvenience during the rainy season. Farmers face difficulties transporting agricultural produce, while youth from Nunna, Patapadu, Madalavarigudem, Chanupallivarigudem, and nearby habitations depend on this route to reach Ramavarappadu Ring Road and Autonagar for employment.

The farmers thanked the MLA for securing nearly Rs 5 crore for the development of the Nunna Bypass Road and the Vijayawada - Nuzvid State Highway.

However, they urged him to take steps to upgrade the remaining Panchayat Raj road stretch into a BT road from Vijayawada West Bypass up to the Mustabad-Ramavarappadu Ring Road.

# Kidnapping of student union leaders condemned

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MANGALAGIRI

FOUNDER national president of Girijana Praja Samakhya (GPS) and Girijana Vidyarthi Samakhya (GVS) Vadiya Sankar Naik has strongly condemned the alleged attack and kidnapping of student union leaders at Mohan Babu University in Tirupati district and demanded immediate action against those responsible.

Sankar Naik said he met the chairman of the AP State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE) at his office here on Tuesday and submitted a detailed representation on what he described as an inhuman incident. He said



Founder national president of Girijana Praja Samakhya (GPS) and Girijana Vidyarthi Samakhya (GVS) Vadiya Sankar Naik submitting a memorandum to the chairman of APSCHE at Mangalagiri on Tuesday

that APSCHE had earlier confirmed that the university management illegally collected about Rs 26 crore as excess fees from students and ordered the amount to be refunded. APSCHE had also imposed a penalty of Rs 16

lakh for withholding students' certificates. However, he alleged that the management continued its unlawful practices despite these directions. He said student organisations AISE, SFI and NSUI had called for a peaceful protest at

the Tirupati Collectorate demanding action against these irregularities. During the protest, around 40 bouncers and alleged associates of the university, arriving in several cars, reportedly attacked SFI District Secretary Akbar and district leader Vinod, pushed down their two-wheeler, assaulted them and forcibly abducted them in a car.

Calling the incident extremely heinous, Sankar Naik warned that attacks and kidnappings of those questioning violations in defence of students' rights pose a serious threat to the education system. He held the university management fully responsible for any harm to the student leaders.

## Sucharita demands president's rule in AP

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GUNTUR

FORMER minister Mekathoti Sucharita said a regime of oppression is continuing in the state and demanded the Centre to impose President's rule in AP. Speaking to the media here on Tuesday, she said that for the first time, an attack was carried out on the house of former minister Ambati Rambabu. She wondered who appreciated or supported such intimidation. Rambabu's family has still not come out of fear and panic, she said. She said former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit the residence of Rambabu on Wednesday. In view of Jagan's visit, the police tried to remove the burnt vehicles, she said.

## ‘DELAYED DIAGNOSIS REASON FOR CANCER DEATHS’

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
ONGOLE

DR RV Raghunandhan, senior consultant radiation oncologist at HCG MNR Cancer Centre here, has stressed that changing lifestyles and dietary habits are leading to a sharp rise in cancer cases among both men and women, with no age or gender distinction. He noted that globally, cancer cases among people below 50 years of age have increased by nearly 79 percent over the last three decades.

Explaining that cancer can affect any part of the body, Dr Raghunandhan said uncontrolled cell division leads to the formation of



Dr RV Raghunandhan

tumours, which can spread to other organs through blood and lymph, resulting in metastatic cancer. He attributed many cancer-related deaths to lack of awareness and delayed diagnosis.

He outlined major cancer types

including carcinoma, sarcoma, leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and brain and spinal cord cancers, and said most cancers progress through four stages. Common warning signs include unexplained weight loss, persistent cough, abnormal bleeding, lumps, and difficulty swallowing.

Dr Raghunandhan said advanced treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, immunotherapy, and targeted therapy are available, and early detection through tests can significantly reduce mortality. He emphasised that healthy lifestyles and timely screening are key to cancer prevention and control.

## MLC decries 'Red Book' rule

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GUNTUR

MLC Lella Appireddy criticised that after the coalition government came to power in the state, Ambedkar's Constitution was not being implemented. Speaking to the media here on Tuesday, he said everywhere in the state, "Red Book governance" is continuing. He said, "AP is being made a permanent address for injustice."

Ambati Rambabu has served twice as an MLA and once as a minister. In the history of the state, many parties and many governments have been in power and in opposition. The coalition government will not remain in power permanently."

He said YSRCP leaders Ambati

Rambabu and Jogi Ramesh are not people who will be silenced. No matter how many false cases are filed or how many troubles are created, once they come out, they will work with double the strength. Coalition leaders have become arrogant with power.

He said, "No matter how much we are provoked, we will move forward only in a peaceful and democratic manner" and added that Ambati Rambabu's family is still living in fear.

The police should cooperate with Jagan's visit on Wednesday. He warned that until justice is done, "we will knock on the doors of the High Court and continue the legal fight. Rambabu did not speak secretly, he himself stated in front of all media that the way he spoke was wrong."

# Tiger movement triggers anxiety in EG villages

- The tiger was initially believed to have taken shelter in a banana plantation at Thorredu, which was declared the first shelter zone
- Around 30 forest personnel and 10 police personnel are currently engaged in search operations

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RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

FEAR continues to prevail among residents of several villages in Seethanagaram, Rajanagaram and Rajamahendravaram Rural mandals following the confirmed movement of a tiger in the region. Though forest officials have verified the animal's presence through pugmarks,

its exact location remains unknown, leaving both villagers and officials on edge.

The tiger was initially believed to have taken shelter in a banana plantation at Thorredu, which was declared the first shelter zone. However, officials were unable to determine when and how the animal moved out of the area. Despite deploying trap cameras and drone surveillance, forest staff are yet to ascertain the tiger's direction of movement or current hiding place.

Explaining the animal's behaviour, Forest Range Officer N David Raju said tigers are generally solitary and establish their own habitats, largely confining themselves to a defined territory. The tiger currently moving through the region is estimated to be



The forest staff inspecting tiger's pugmarks in Seethanagaram mandal

travelling more than 15 km a day. He said that the predominance of horticulture

plantations rather than dense forests in the area may be causing some disorientation

for the animal. According to officials, the tiger's movement is suspect-

ed to be towards Venkatanagaram, with the possibility of it crossing the Godavari river to the other side. Tigers, after reaching the age of two or three years, usually separate from their mothers and venture out to establish their own territory through marking, which can range between 2,000 and 5,000 hectares. They typically rest during the day and prefer to move during the night.

Forest officials said there was a strong possibility that the tiger may return on its own if left undisturbed. They advised people to remain alert in areas where the animal has been sighted but cautioned against creating panic or disturbances.

The tiger is believed to have moved from Chhattisgarh into the Koyyalagudem

area of Eluru district on January 20 and crossed the Godavari River near the Pattiseema project on January 30 to enter East Godavari district. Forest officials installed trap cameras and cages near Chinnakondepudi in Seethanagaram mandal to track it. From there, the animal reportedly travelled nearly 15 kms to reach Thorredu, with pugmarks later found up to Venkatanagaram. Beyond a canal in that area, its trail went cold.

Officials said that despite installing six trap cameras and deploying drones on Monday, no fresh clues were obtained. Around 30 forest personnel and 10 police personnel are currently engaged in search operations. Reports that the tiger had returned to Kolamuru and Gadala areas

on Tuesday were dismissed by officials as rumours.

Forest authorities have advised residents of Thorredu and Venkatanagaram and surrounding villages not to venture into fields during early morning and evening hours. They have also urged people to install bright lights around cattle sheds at night and avoid moving alone.

Meanwhile, District Forest Officer V Prabhakar Rao said on Tuesday that the tiger's movement was confirmed in the agricultural fields of Kondepudi village in Seethanagaram mandal. He said continuous patrolling was underway and that pugmarks had been verified. Officials believe the tiger may eventually move towards the Rampachodavaram forest region.