US tariff cut brings cheer to aqua sector: Atchchanna

- Minister says tariff on Indian seafood exports to US reduced from 25% to 18%, easing burden on aquaculture sector.
- Export volumes expected to rebound by 10–15% with profit margins recovering to 7–8%
- Andhra Pradesh set to benefit with higher farmer incomes, employment and sectoral growth

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THE reduction of the United States tariff on Indian seafood exports from 25 per cent to 18 per cent has come as a major relief to exporters and the aquaculture sector in Andhra Pradesh, said minister for agriculture, cooperation, marketing, animal husbandry, dairy development and fisheries K Atchannaidu said on Monday.

Welcoming the decision, taken under the India–US trade agreement, the minister said the tariff cut would significantly ease the burden on seafood exporters, particularly those engaged in aquaculture. He recalled that earlier, Indian seafood exports to the US were subjected not only to a 25 per cent tariff but also additional punitive duties, pushing the total tariff burden to 50–58 per cent.

As a result, between April and November 2025, India's seafood exports to the US fell by about 15 per cent in volume to 2.01 lakh metric tonnes, while export value declined by 6.3 per cent to 1.72 billion dollars.

Frozen shrimp, India's principal seafood export to the US, was the worst hit during this period, the minister noted. With the

tariff now reduced to 18 per cent, the competitiveness of Indian seafood products in the US market has improved considerably. Stalled export orders are being revived, and favourable conditions have emerged for releasing consignments held up in bonded warehouses.

Atchannaidu said seafood exports to the US are expected to grow by 10–15 per cent in the coming months, with export volumes likely to return to pre-tariff levels by the second half of 2025–26.

Profit margins in the seafood processing sector, which had shrunk to 5–5.5 per cent during the high-tariff phase, are also expected to recover to 7–8 per cent following the tariff reduction. Duty concessions on key inputs announced in the Union Budget 2026 would provide additional support to the sector, he added.

While the US market shows signs of revival, exports to non-US markets such as the European Union, China, Vietnam, Russia and the United Kingdom have remained stable. In early 2025–26, non-US markets accounted for around 57 per cent of shrimp exports, reflecting effective market diversification.

For Andhra Pradesh, the country's leading seafood-producing state, the tariff cut is a boon, the minister said. The recovery in exports will enhance income stability for farmers and fishermen, create more employment opportunities, and improve gross value addition (GVA) in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Citing MPEDA estimates, he said India's total seafood exports are likely to reach 14–15 lakh metric tonnes in 2025–26, underlining the significance of the US tariff reduction for the sustainable growth of the sector.

Dy CM warns liquor shops against overcharging

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- Orders strict surveillance and action against liquor outlets selling above MRP, citing complaints from Kakinada and elsewhere
- Says overpricing violates rules and tarnishes the government's image; directs shopkeepers to strictly follow excise norms
- Directions come amid YSRCP allegations of rampant illegal liquor sales, even as the Cabinet's recent Rs 10 per bottle hike aims to boost state revenue

DEPUTY Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday directed the excise officials to maintain continuous surveillance on liquor shops and take action against those selling booze at inflated prices.

The Deputy Chief Minister received complaints that liquor is being sold at prices higher than the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) across the state. He asked liquor shops not to bring a bad name to the government by selling liquor at higher prices.

According to a statement from the Deputy Chief Minister, complaints are coming in from Kakinada district and other parts of the state. After examining the complaints, he stated that selling liquor at inflated prices is against the rules. It also brings a bad name to the government.

The Jana Sena leader said shopkeepers must strictly adhere to the regulations regarding liquor sales.

Opposition YSRCP has been targeting the coalition government over illegal liquor sales. Its leaders alleged that the government is allowing rampant violations.

According to YSRCP leaders, the shopkeepers are selling liquor at inflated prices.

The state Cabinet in January decided to increase the maximum retail price of all sizes of India-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) brands and foreign liquor by Rs 10 per bottle, while withdrawing additional retail excise tax imposed on bars.

It was announced that the increase of Rs 10 per bottle will not be applicable to cheaper liquor (180 ml bottle costing Rs 99), beer, wine and ready-to-drink (RTD) varieties.

The Cabinet also decided to increase the retailer margin by approximately 1 per cent of the MRP on IMFL and FL, including 180 ml IMFL bottles, beer, wine and RTDs. The price hike is expected to generate approximately Rs 1,391 crore in additional annual revenue for the state. At the same time, the withdrawal of additional retail excise tax will reduce the financial burden on bars by about Rs 340 crore a year.

Home minister slams Jagan, stresses TDP's discipline

- Anitha says Naidu's governance is incomparable to Jagan's, highlighting restraint among TDP cadres
- Accuses YSRCP chief of inciting violence and abusive language, contrasting it with TDP's focus on development
- Warns of strict police action against YSRCP attempts to create unrest, promising a tough stance on political rowdies

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HOME minister Vangalapudi Anitha on Tuesday said there was no comparison between the governance of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and that of former chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, asserting that people were closely watching recent developments in the state.

Speaking to the media during an informal interaction at the Secretariat, Anitha said the government had taken steps to ensure that party cadres exercised restraint and did not allow anger to spill over, keeping the state's development as the top priority. She said leaders were briefed on facts and reminded of development goals to prevent them from falling into what she termed the "YSRCP trap."

The home minister claimed that TDP cadres had been kept under control for the past 20 months, which helped maintain a positive atmosphere in the State. While acknowledging the frustration among party workers, she said Chief Minister Naidu had consistently counselled them against unlawful actions and guided them at the right time.

Recalling past incidents, Anitha alleged that Jagan had provoked attacks on the TDP office by giving obscene meaning to 'bosadike', and later justified the outrage among his supporters by citing their anger. She said that despite continued use of offensive language by YSRCP leaders, the TDP leadership was still advising restraint.

Accusing Jagan of promoting violence and vandalism to intimidate people, Anitha questioned whether he had ever reprimanded his leaders for abusive language or violent acts. She said people had understood the difference between what she described as "criminal thinking" and "visionary thinking."

Warning of strict action, the home minister said any attempt by the YSRCP to create unrest in the state would be dealt with firmly under the law.

She cautioned that the police would adopt a tough approach against political rowdies, adding that such deterrent action would ensure that even the thought of wrongdoing instilled fear.

Mohan Babu, Vishnu booked for SFI leaders abduction

- Tension prevails after SFI leaders Akbar and Vinod were attacked and abducted while heading for a protest against Mohan Babu University
- Police rescue the two student leaders within an hour and take the accused and vehicles used into custody

Pradeep Vennelakanti
Tirupati

CPM leaders protesting before Tiruchanoor police station on Tuesday

TIRUPATI witnessed tension on Tuesday after two student leaders were allegedly attacked and abducted while they were on their way to the Collectorate to stage a protest against alleged irregularities at Mohan Babu University (MBU). About 30 persons reportedly attacked SFI district general secretary Akbar and SFI SV University leader Vinod and took them away in vehicles. The incident led to the filing of cases against Cine action Manchu Mohan Babu and Manchu Vishnu along with others.

The sudden incident shocked SFI students. CITU state vice president Kandarapu Murali immediately brought the matter to the notice of district SP L Subba Rayudu and ASP Ravi Manoharachari.

Murali warned that any threat to student leaders would lead to serious consequences and demanded strict action from the police and the state government. He questioned whether violence was the answer when students were only seeking correction of alleged wrongdoings.

Police acted swiftly and rescued the two SFI leaders

SFI leaders Akbar and Vinod

within an hour of the incident. The accused were taken into custody and the vehicles used for the abduction were seized. SP Subba Rayudu said criminal cases would be registered not only against those who carried out the abduction but also against those who planned it. He assured a comprehensive investigation and stated that no one would be spared for taking the law into their own hands.

Meanwhile, Tiruchanuru police have registered a case against those involved in the abduction of SFI student leaders Akbar and Vinod. The case has been booked as Crime No 23/2026 under Sections 191(2), 115(2), 140(1), 126(2), 351(2) R/w 190 and 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at Tiruchanoor police station.

The accused named in the case include A1 Satheesh, A2 Mohan Babu and A3 Manchu Vishnu Babu. In addition to them, cases have also been registered against around 20 other persons in connection with the incident.

Student organisations have been raising concerns for the past several months over alleged irregularities at Mohan Babu University, particularly regarding fee collections. They had submitted several representations to the state government seeking an inquiry and justice for students. Citing no response, SFI had called for a protest at the collectorate demanding immediate government action and criminal cases against the university management. CPM leaders alleged that the protest was deliberately foiled by a group of assailants allegedly employed by the university.

CPM state secretary V Srinivasa Rao demanded stringent punishment for those involved in the attack and abduction. He recalled that the higher education department had issued notices to the university earlier, but no effective action was taken. He condemned the alleged use of criminal elements to intimidate students and demanded that the university be blacklisted.

Congress Tirupati city president Gowdaperu Chittibabu condemned the abduction and said intimidating students to protect vested interests was unacceptable. CPI Tirupati city secretary J Viswanath also demanded immediate action and warned that protests against the alleged irregularities would continue.

AP Parents Association state president S Narahari condemned the attack and urged the Chief Minister to intervene. He demanded implementation of APHERMC inquiry committee recommendations, cancellation of university permissions, refund of Rs 26.17 crore allegedly collected illegally from students, enforcement of the Rs 15 lakh penalty, and withdrawal of false cases against parents and students.

NTRUHS to launch India's first AI-based medical edu system

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- AI-enabled platform to strengthen competency-based medical training

NTR University of Health Sciences (NTRUHS) will soon introduce India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) system, marking a major step towards modernising medical education in Andhra Pradesh, vice-chancellor Dr P Chandrasekhar said on Tuesday.

Addressing a WebEx meeting with principals, vice-principals, professors and students from 38 medical colleges across the state, Chandrasekhar said the initiative would provide world-class, technology-enabled learning infrastructure for medical students.

He said the university, in collaboration with EdMedAI developed by Dr Chandrasekhar Bondugula, a US-based medical professional with over 25 years of experience, was working to implement structured competency tracking, continuous assessment and digital learning modules. These measures are in line with the Competency-Based Medical Education framework mandated by the National Medical Commission (NMC).

Chandrasekhar noted that the NMC has stressed the adoption of AI-driven and technology-enabled learning methods to enhance the quality and effectiveness of medical training in India.

Speaking during the webinar, Dr Chandrasekhar Bondugula, creator of EdMedAI and Chairman of the Graduate Medical Education Committee in the United States, said he was committed to contributing to India's medical education system. He said the AI-powered application was designed to prepare future-ready and highly competent doctors capable of meeting global healthcare standards.

Principal secretary for health department Saurabh Gaur said the State government was keen on promoting Artificial Intelligence in healthcare and education. He stated that AI-based services could significantly improve knowledge acquisition and precision in medical training and added that the government would soon frame comprehensive policies and guidelines in this regard.

NTRUHS registrar Dr Sai Sudheer, director (R&D) Dr Srilakshmi Suryaprabha, director (publications) Dr K Sudha, medical education advisor Dr Lokesh Idara and AI team members from SHC Technologies Private Limited.

JSP's Bolisetty quits party role over environmental PIL

Vasu Potnuru
Visakhapatnam

- Steps down from all party responsibilities citing conflict of interest with ongoing pollution-related PIL in AP High Court
- Notes that Pawan Kalyan, now holding the environment portfolio, is a prime respondent in the case
- Says the move ensures impartiality in judicial proceedings and keeps the environmental cause free from political complexity

IN a move to ensure that political commitments should not come in the way of fighting for the people and society, general secretary (environment) of the Jana Sena Party (JSP) and national convenor of Jal Biradari, Bolisetty Satyanarayana decided to step down from all party-affiliated responsibilities with immediate effect.

Citing ethical and legal considerations linked to ongoing environmental public interest litigation, the announcement was made in this regard.

In a letter addressed to the JSP high command, Satyanarayana said his decision was made following a meeting with key leaders of the party and thoughtful deliberation regarding his dual responsibilities as a senior party functionary and the petitioner in WP (PIL) No. 248/2020, which is currently before the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

Satyanarayana wrote to JSP chief Pawan Kalyan that the PIL, filed in 2020, concerns critical pollution issues, including untreated sewage, pharmaceutical effluents and industrial contamination in north coastal Andhra Pradesh.

He noted that while the petition was initiated during the previous YSRCP's regime, the present political context has changed with the formation of the NDA

Jana Sena Party senior leader and national convenor of Jal Biradari Bolisetty Satyanarayana

government and Jana Sena as a key alliance partner.

Satyanarayana pointed out that the state government and the ministry of environment are prime respondents in the case, and that the party president, Pawan Kalyan, now holds the environment portfolio.

Further, Satyanarayana stated that continuing in a high-ranking party position while pursuing litigation against the state government could lead to a perceived conflict of interest, potentially compromise the impartiality of judicial proceedings.

Being associated with the political party, he added that such circumstances could divert attention from the core objective of environmental protection.

Emphasising his commitment towards political ethics, Satyanarayana said he had chosen to step aside from the political responsibilities to ensure that the 'cause of the environment' remained free from political complexity. However, he clarified that the move was temporarily intended to remain in force until the final judicial purpose of the PIL.

While extending his support to the ideology of JSP, Satyanarayana said that his responsibilities as a petitioner and as national convenor of Jal Biradari required him to maintain a distance from formal party roles to ensure that justice was served without prejudice. He expressed confidence in the present government and in Pawan Kalyan's leadership that it would deliver positive environmental outcomes.

Satyanarayana expressed gratitude to the party leadership's continued support for environmental causes and confirmed that the non-political initiative 'Mana Nudi Mana Nadi' would continue.

He added that his decision would enable him to engage with the public and the media on constitutional issues freely, including environmental degradation and human rights without political constraints.