

TIRUMALA LADDU GHEE ROW

COUNCIL DEADLOCK ENDS, DEBATE SET FOR FEB 26

- Legislative Council proceedings stalled for five days amid YSRCP protests over alleged adulteration in Heritage Foods, Indapur Dairy, and Tirupati laddu
- Opposition members storm the podium, raise slogans and demand an immediate debate; TDP accused them of obstructing business
- Govt finally agrees to a detailed discussion on Feb 26, bringing relief after repeated disruptions

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

PROCEEDINGS of the Legislative Council were disrupted for the fifth consecutive day on Monday amid continuing protests by Opposition YSRCP members over the alleged adulteration controversy involving Heritage Foods, Indapur Dairy and the Tirupati laddu. The deadlock finally ended after the government agreed to hold a detailed discussion on the issue on February 26.

Soon after the House assembled at 10.03 am, members of the YSRCP, Dr Mondithoka Arun Kumar, Y Sivarami Reddy, and Suryanarayana Raju, submitted an adjournment motion seeking an immediate debate on the issue. However, Council

Chairman Koyye Moshen Raju rejected the notice and proceeded with Question Hour, triggering strong protests from the Opposition benches.

YSRCP members rushed into the well of the House, raised slogans, displayed placards and surrounded the Chairman's podium, demanding that the motion be admitted. Amid the uproar, health minister Y Satya Kumar Yadav completed his reply to a listed question before the Chairman adjourned the House briefly.

Before the adjournment, members of the TDP also rushed into the well of the House, alleging that the Opposition was deliberately obstructing Council proceedings. Some members attempted to display placards; however, civil supplies



minister Nadendla Manohar and finance minister Payyavula Keshav intervened and asked them to return to their seats. Amid the commotion, the Chairman adjourned the House briefly.

The Opposition later staged a protest in front of the Chairman's chamber, alleging that the government was avoiding a discussion on a matter of public concern. They also demanded the release of podium CCTV footage to counter certain media reports regarding their conduct inside the House.

In an effort to resolve the stalemate, the Chairman convened a Business Advisory Committee (BAC)

meeting. During the meeting, Leader of the Opposition Botsa Satyanarayana strongly pressed for a full-fledged debate on the issue.

After nearly two hours of deliberations, the government agreed to allocate time for a detailed discussion on the Tirupati Laddu adulteration controversy on February 26. Later, Leader of the Opposition Botsa Satyanarayana conveyed the government's assurance to the media at the media point. The decision brought relief to members across party lines, as repeated disruptions had stalled legislative business for several days. Following the consensus, the House reconvened

at 2.03 pm for Special Mentions before being adjourned for the day. The Chairman expressed hope that proceedings would continue smoothly in the coming days with the scheduled debate expected to address the concerns raised by the Opposition.

Meanwhile, BAC of the Council took several key issues and finalised the schedule for discussions. The Council will take up a debate on the home department on Tuesday (February 24) and the agriculture on Wednesday (February 25). A discussion on the alleged ghee adulteration in TTD laddus has been scheduled for February 26. The Council will remain on holiday on February 28 and resume its sittings on March 4. Leader of the Opposition Botsa Satyanarayana alleged that the ruling party was making contradictory statements in the BAC meeting and in the House.

Finance minister Keshav rejected the charge, stating that the government has consistently maintained its readiness for a debate on the issue and accused Opposition members of politicising it.

Govt positive on clemency for prisoners: Home Minister

- Says the state govt is taking a positive stand on granting clemency to prisoners and introduces amendments to the Prisons and Correctional Services Act during the Assembly Budget session
- The proposed reforms focus on rehabilitation over punishment, with improved educational opportunities for inmates and special Anganwadi centres inside prisons to support children of women prisoners

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE state government is taking a positive stand on granting clemency to prisoners, said home minister Vangalapati Anitha on Monday.

Speaking on the eighth day of the Assembly Budget session, the home minister introduced a Bill in the Assembly seeking amendments to the Prisons and Correctional Services Act. Addressing the House, she stated that the coalition government is committed to implementing meaningful reforms aimed at the transformation and rehabilitation of inmates.

Anitha said the government has already initiated several measures to reform prisoners and is implementing changes in line with the legislation introduced by the Centre. She emphasised that efforts are being made to improve educational opportunities for inmates, enabling them to pursue studies while serving their sentences.



Home Minister V Anitha introducing a Bill seeking amendments to the Prisons and Correctional Services Act in the Assembly on Monday

Highlighting the need for legislative changes to bring about behavioural transformation among prisoners, the minister said the proposed amendments would focus on rehabilitation rather than mere punishment.

She also announced that special Anganwadi centres are being set up inside prisons to cater to the children of women inmates, ensuring their welfare and early childhood care.

The home minister further explained that prisoners would be classified into categories based on their criminal history and conduct in jail. This classification would help in designing reform-oriented programmes tailored to individual needs.

To encourage psychological transformation and reintegration into society, the government is establishing open-air prisons. In these facilities, inmates will be allowed to engage in agriculture and other vocational activities, equipping them with skills for livelihood after their release.

Reiterating the government's reformatory approach, Anitha said the administration is focused on creating opportunities for change and rehabilitation, while maintaining law and order in the State.

Govt allocated Rs 51,00 cr for BC welfare, says Savitha

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

BC, EWS welfare, handlooms and textiles minister S Savitha announced that the new State Budget allocates a lion's share of funds for the welfare and empowerment of Backward Classes (BCs).

Speaking during the Assembly debate on the BC Welfare Department Budget, she said Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has accorded top priority to BC development.

Out of the total Budget exceeding Rs 3.32 lakh crore, Rs 51,020.56 crore has been

earmarked for backward classes. The Minister said Rs 250 crore has been allocated for the 'Nethanna Bharosa' scheme, under which weavers will receive Rs 25,000 annually. Another Rs 250 crore has been earmarked for the Nethanna Bharosa initiative, while Rs 150 crore has been set aside for power subsidy to weavers.

Savitha announced that 20 MJP BC residential schools will get permanent buildings at a cost of Rs 500 crore under the SASCI scheme. Six MJP schools are being upgraded into junior colleges, and IIT/NEET coaching centres will

be established at Simhachalam and Tekulodu schools. CCTV cameras, RO plants, UPS systems, mosquito-proofing, and improved food quality are being ensured in hostels and Gurukuls.

The minister said a dedicated commission under Rajiv Ranjan Mishra has been appointed to implement 34 per cent reservations for BCs in local bodies and nominated posts. The government is also finalising a BC Protection Act and has passed a resolution seeking 33 per cent reservations for BCs in legislatures.

She added that Rs 1,000



crore will be spent on Adarana 3.0, and sewing machines will soon be distributed to women trained under free tailoring programmes. Criticising the previous regime, Savitha alleged that BC welfare was neglected earlier. She asserted that BCs have received true political representation and empowerment only under Chandrababu Naidu's leadership.

TOUGH LAW ON THE CARDS TO CURB SOCIAL MEDIA MISINFORMATION

- HM informs House that Cabinet sub-committee has been formed to study measures against false propaganda and harmful online content
- 1,384 cases registered in 20 months; over 1,000 arrests made for objectionable posts

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE Assembly on Monday held a detailed discussion on regulating misinformation and harmful content on social media platforms.

Responding to a question raised by MLA Gouthu Sirisha, home minister Vangalapati Anitha said that the gov-

ernment has constituted a Cabinet sub-committee to examine measures to curb false propaganda and objectionable content online. The minister informed the House that the sub-committee has met twice so far and held extensive discussions on various aspects of social media regulation. She said the government has reviewed the measures being implemented in states such as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, as well as in other countries, to understand best practices.

"We are carefully examining what kind of legal and administrative measures would be most effective in our State," the Minister said. She emphasised that strict action is being taken against posts that are hateful, abusive, or intended to spread misinformation. Providing data on enforcement, Ani-

tha revealed that 1,384 cases have been registered in the State over the past 20 months in connection with objectionable social media posts. Of these, 1,067 individuals have been arrested and produced before the courts.

The home minister further stated that the government has initiated steps to bring in a new law aimed at effectively curbing the spread of false propaganda on social media platforms. She also said that the government is considering legislation to restrict school students from using social media, with the objective of safeguarding their well-being and academic focus. Reiterating the government's commitment, Anitha said that maintaining public order and preventing the misuse of digital platforms remain top priorities.

Over 88L unorganised workers register on e-Shram portal in AP

- Labour minister informs the Assembly that 88,16,453 unorganised workers have registered on the e-Shram portal, while 18,24,221 workers enrol with the AP Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board
- Says the state govt is accelerating registrations to ensure full coverage and extending benefits including free medical care, maternity aid of Rs 20,000, marriage assistance of Rs 40,000, Rs 60,000 natural death compensation and Rs 20,000 funeral support
- Scholarships for kids of construction workers and special skill development programmes are being implemented, besides comprehensive data collection to strengthen worker welfare and social security

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

AS many as 88,16,453 unorganised sector workers in the state have registered on the e-Shram portal, while 18,24,221 workers have enrolled with the Andhra Pradesh Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board, labour minister Vasamsetti Subhash informed the Assembly on Monday.

Responding to a question raised by MLA Dr Valmiki Partha Sarathi, the minister said the government under Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is firmly committed to

the welfare of unorganised labourers and is accelerating the registration process across the State to ensure comprehensive coverage. He said several welfare schemes are being implemented to provide financial security and social protection to workers.

Registered beneficiaries are being provided free medical services and periodic health check-ups.

The government is extending maternity assistance of Rs 20,000, marriage assistance of Rs 40,000, and financial aid of Rs 60,000 in case of natural death. An immediate assistance of Rs 20,000 is also provided to-

wards funeral expenses.

Scholarships are being offered to children of construction workers studying from Classes I to XII.

The Welfare Board is also organising special skill development programmes to enhance the capabilities of building and construction workers and improve their employment prospects.

The minister added that the government is undertaking comprehensive data collection to ensure complete coverage and safeguard the well-being of workers and their families.



MILK SCARE: MINISTER ORDERS PROBE, ASSURES SAFETY

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

IN the wake of the suspected adulterated milk incident in Rajamahendravaram, medical and health minister Y Satya Kumar Yadav directed officials to submit a detailed report on the collection and testing of milk and edible oil samples in the city.

On Monday, the minister instructed the Institute of Preventive Medicine (IPM - food safety wing) to provide comprehensive details regarding the samples collected for monitoring and the status of their laboratory results. He specifically asked IPM director Neelakanta Reddy and other senior officials to assess the functioning of the Food Safety Department in light of the recent incident.

The minister also held telephonic discussions with health secretary Saurabh Gaur, commissioner of health and family welfare Veerapandian, IPM director Neelakanta Reddy,

and other senior officials. He directed them to ensure that the victims undergoing treatment in hospitals receive the best possible medical care without any lapses. He emphasised continuous monitoring at all levels in coordination with district medical and other departmental authorities until the affected families are fully reassured. Satya Kumar informed the Assembly that samples collected from the accused milk supplier have been sent to laboratories and that results are expected within 72 hours. As a precautionary measure, blood samples have been collected from members of the 106 families supplied by the accused dairy operators. Samples from victims have been sent to laboratories in Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, and Hyderabad for detailed analysis. He explained that the laboratory findings would help determine the nature of the chemicals mixed in the milk and the method of adulteration. Doctors are providing

appropriate treatment based on the victims' pre-existing health conditions, medications, and current symptoms.

Following the minister's directions, senior officials Veerapandian and Neelakanta Reddy rushed to Rajamahendravaram to oversee the situation. Making a special statement in the Assembly, Minister Satya Kumar said the situation in Rajamahendravaram is under control and that the government is prepared to take strict action based on laboratory findings.

He added that samples of cattle feed, water, and fodder have also been collected and sent to laboratories in Vijayawada. Post-mortem samples are being forwarded to the Regional Forensic Laboratory for further examination.

Officials from the health, animal husbandry, police and other departments are working in close coordination to address the situation and ensure public safety, the Minister affirmed.

SC clears AP's one-man panel; says no clash with SIT probe

- The apex court refuses to hear a petition by former MP Subramanian Swamy challenging Dinesh Kumar panel
- A Bench led by CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi rules the state's review is administrative and separate from the earlier SIT criminal investigation

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI

THE Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a plea by former MP Dr Subramanian Swamy opposing the Andhra Pradesh government's move to set up a one-man panel to review administrative shortcomings linked to the Tirumala laddu ghee controversy.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said the State's exercise was administrative in nature and separate from the criminal probe earlier conducted by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) consti-

tuted under the Court's directions. The judges pointed out that the SIT had already completed its inquiry and that the new committee's role was confined to identifying accountability for procedural lapses highlighted during that investigation. With no overlap between the two processes, the Court said both could continue independently. Swamy had contended that initiating a fresh review after the SIT's work would weaken the credibility of its findings into alleged irregularities in the ghee procurement system of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. Representing him, senior

advocate Rajshekhar Rao argued that the move risked undermining the earlier probe and recalled that the Court had previously advised the Chief Minister to avoid public commentary while the matter was under scrutiny, adding that such remarks continued even after the investigation ended.

Appearing for the Centre, solicitor general Tushar Mehta told the Bench that the SIT's final report had already been filed and that it separately flagged certain administrative deficiencies unrelated to criminal wrongdoing. He said the State panel was tasked only with examining those issues. Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, for the State government, maintained that the petition largely relied on media reports and appeared intended to stall corrective administrative action. The dispute traces back to 2024, when Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu alleged that ghee supplied for Tirumala laddus



during the previous YSRCP administration had been contaminated with animal fat. During earlier hearings, the Supreme Court had ordered a SIT probe and noted that available lab tests did not initially indicate the presence of such material.

Subsequently, reports indicated that the SIT's final findings, submitted in January, ruled out animal fat but identified adulteration with other unsafe substances along with irregular procurement practices that enabled substandard ghee supply.

Acting on a separate SIT note flagging administrative lapses, the State recently constituted a one-member panel headed by former AP Chief Secretary Dinesh Kumar to fix accountability and recommend further action—a move that leaders of the YSRCP have strongly protested over the past few days.