

After five years, civic body's governing council draws its curtains down

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- With the completion of their full term, all elected representatives have now formally stepped down
- Given the current constraints, officials and public representatives anticipate that this arrangement may continue for about six months

VASU POTNURU
VISAKHAPATNAM



A view of Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation main building in Visakhapatnam

The tenure of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) governing council officially concluded on March 17 (Tuesday), marking 'the end' of a five-year-long chapter in the city's civic administration. Back on March 14, 2021, the GVMC elections were held and corporators took oath four days later on March 18.

With the completion of their full term, all elected representatives have now formally stepped down on Tuesday. However, despite the completion of the council's tenure, immediate elections could not be conducted due to ongoing academic commitments, including Class 10 and Intermediate examinations.

As a result, beginning from Wednesday, the GVMC will be administered under a Special Officer administration, with District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad appointed as a Special Officer to oversee the civic governance. Given the current constraints, officials and public representatives anticipate that this arrangement

may continue for about six months. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has already instructed public representatives to remain actively engaged with citizens and gear up for the ensuing local body elections. However, elections will only be scheduled after the completion of the examination period, finalisation

of reservation policies and conclusion of the ongoing caste census.

Government sources indicate that these exercises may take another two to three months. With elections across municipal bodies, including GVMC, the polls are expected in the next six months if timelines are met as planned.

Adding another layer of complexity, proposals are under consideration to expand GVMC's jurisdiction.

This includes the merger of remaining villages in Bheemunipatnam mandal, 72 villages from Anandapuram and Padmanabham mandals and rest of the areas of Pendurthi mandal.

Earlier, both Pendurthi and Bheemunipatnam MLAs Pachakarla Ramesh Babu and Ganta Srinivasa Rao have formally requested the government to approve these mergers. In response to their request, the government has directed the GVMC officials to study its feasibility and submit a detailed report. However, if the report favours expansion, officials caution that elections would face further delay as administrative restructuring needs to be completed before that.

Significant development witnessed in past 11 months: Mayor

- States that he was given an opportunity to achieve significant development in a short span of time
- Underlines that he had accorded equal priority to resolving issues across all wards of the corporation
- Adds that numerous developmental initiatives were brought to fruition through the collaborative efforts of officials and corporators

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Mayor Peela Srinivasa Rao

MAYOR Peela Srinivasa Rao expressed delight over the cooperation extended by the people of Visakhapatnam and termed it as an unforgettable experience during his 11-month-long tenure as Mayor that ended on March 17. Stating that it gave him immense satisfaction to serve as a Mayor at a media conference held on Tuesday marking the end of the GVMC Council body term, he mentioned that he was given an opportunity to achieve significant development in a short span of time.

He underlined that he had accorded equal priority to resolving issues across all wards of the corporation.

International events such as the G-20 Summit and the International Fleet Review (IFR) were successfully executed with the support of GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg, Srinivasa Rao stated.

Further, he stated that numerous developmental initiatives were brought to fruition through the collaborative efforts of the officials and corporators.

The Mayor highlighted that they had established a closer rapport with the city's residents through the 'Good Morning' initiative and were able to complete development works to the tune of Rs.760 crore. He emphasised that utmost priority was given to providing infrastructure for the public, and he clarified that the staff had made absolutely no compromise

regarding the 'Night Cleaning' operations undertaken along the Beach Road.

He recalled that while the YSRCP regime laid roads primarily to facilitate real estate business, the NDA government laid roads specifically to meet the requirements of the people. On the last day of his mayorship, he recalled that the duration of their governance was not critical but what truly mattered was whether they delivered a people-centric and welfare-oriented administration or not.

As the GVMC's administrative term officially concluded on Tuesday, Mayor Peela Srinivasa Rao extended gratitude to the stakeholders on behalf of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation.

Permanent solution likely for Gajuwaka garbage transfer station

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MINISTER for Municipal Administration and Urban Development P Narayana stated that a permanent solution will be executed for the issues related to Gajuwaka garbage transfer station and assured that residents need not to worry about it.

Inaugurating Alluri Sitarama Raju Park, developed over 4.75 acres in HB Colony, Gajuwaka on Tuesday, the Minister mentioned that Gajuwaka MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao had brought to his attention the hardships faced by residents due to foul smell emanating from the garbage transfer station and requested for a solution to it.

In response, the minister directed the officials to ensure that waste is transported promptly to waste-to-energy plants, eliminating the need for a dumping yard.

He also instructed GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg to undertake planned modernisation of the garbage transfer station without causing inconvenience to the public.

The minister stated that the park, developed at a cost of approximately Rs.10 crore facilitating modern amenities including an amphitheatre with gallery, skating rink, cricket net, cafeteria, toilet blocks, drainage system, security cabin, water fountain with statue, grand entrance arch, walking track, children's play equipment, greenery, flooring, modern gym equipment and compound wall.

Narayana added that tenders worth Rs.14,000 crore have been invited to provide drinking water to every household, and within the next two years, safe drinking water will be ensured across municipalities. He stated that drainage works worth Rs.5,000 crore have been undertaken, and an additional Rs.4,000 crore from the Central Government in 2026-27 will be used for



Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development P Narayana along with VMRDA officials, TDP state president Palla Srinivasa Rao during the inauguration of Alluri Sitarama Raju Park in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

drinking water, drainage, roads, and electricity infrastructure.

Speaking on the occasion, Gajuwaka MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao highlighted that Rs.250 crore has been spent on development in Gajuwaka over the past 20 months, compared to only Rs.90 crore in the previous five years. He emphasised that the long-pending dumping yard issue will be permanently resolved.

GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg stated that the civic body is preparing zonal-level development plans focusing on roads, drains, street lighting, and sanitation.

VMRDA Commissioner N Tej Bharat mentioned that several development works are being undertaken in Gajuwaka, including a sports village, a kalyana mandapam in Pedagantyada and cultural spaces to support the city's growth. Deputy Mayor Dalli Govindaraju, corporators, including Palla Srinivasa Rao, Routu Srinivasa Rao, Puli Lakshmi Bai, Stalin, Rajana Ramarao, Molli Mutyalu, Bonda Jagannadham, Mumma Devudu and Lella Koteswara Rao.

Founders Summit 2026 focuses on 70-plus startups

- The summit witnessed a diverse array of innovations, with startups presenting pitch decks across critical sectors
- Startups are not just businesses, they are the catalysts for the economic and social transformation

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Experts and participants at the 'Founders Summit 2026' that concluded at the campus in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

'FOUNDERS Summit 2026' served as an effective platform for over 70 startups from across India to showcase disruptive solutions aimed at solving real-world challenges.

The summit that concluded here on Tuesday witnessed a diverse array of innovations, with startups presenting pitch decks across critical sectors including AI-augmented farming and aquaculture, women's safety and social impact, cyber security and healthcare and next-gen beverages. The jury evaluated the participants on three core pillars -- innovation, scalability and societal impact.

Supported by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), GITAM inclusive Technology Business Incuba-

tor (iTBI) organised its flagship event. The institution's iTBI Project Principal Investigator P. Bharani Chandra Kumar informed that the iTBI is an initiative supported by the DST and focuses on nurturing early-stage startups through rigorous mentorship, technical support, and ecosystem networking to foster a culture of entrepreneurship.

He said that the iTBI's commitment to transforming Visakhapatnam into a premier startup hub. He highlighted the incubator's comprehensive support system, including dedicated mentorship, state-of-the-art infrastructure and vital funding pipelines.

The institution's School of Business dean Raja Pappu further elaborated on the institution's vibrant innovation culture, stating, "Our focus remains on interdisciplinary collaboration and consistent industry connect, ensuring

our budding entrepreneurs are industry-ready from day one."

Presenting the awards, Pro Vice-Chancellor Y. Gouthama Rao and Registrar D. Gunasekaran emphasised that the startup spirit is the engine behind the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, contributing significantly to national economic growth and technological sovereignty. Startups are not just businesses, they are the catalysts for the economic and social transformation of our nation, they expressed.

While Farm Vidya AI Tech Pvt Ltd and Cryptopix (OPC) Pvt Ltd secured the first and second places in best pitches category, Bharathi Photon Irrigation Systems Pvt Ltd and Sankara Neuro Devices secured the first and second places in the women/social impact category. Zenithzap Beverages Pvt Ltd and Ctoskyai Pvt Ltd got the third place in the summit.

Waltair Division holds surprise ticket checking drive

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THE ticket checking team of the Waltair Division achieved remarkable success onboard train no. 15629 during its journey from Visakhapatnam to Srikakulam Road.

By securing a special one-minute operational stoppage at Srikakulam Road station, the team conducted an intensive ticket checking drive, resulting in the realization of Rs.2,42,000 from 312

ticketless and irregular passengers.

This swift and effective action was completed within a span of two hours, demonstrating exceptional coordination, vigilance, and commitment of the ticket checking staff.

The division commends the proactive approach and dedication of the ticket checking team in effective crowd management, restricting the ticketless travel and ensuring compliance among passengers.



Ticket checking team of the Waltair Division at a railway station on Tuesday

CBI court sentences two persons to a five-year imprisonment

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THE CBI Court, Visakhapatnam convicted and sentenced Vempadapu Santhoshi Ramu, who worked as a clerk-cum-cashier of Andhra Bank, Cheepurupalli, Vizianagaram district, and dismissed from service,

and another person Mahanthi Ramana to imprisonment for five years with a fine of Rs.1,71,42,000 for their involvement in a bank fraud case.

The CBI registered the case in 2018 against the accused. It was alleged that the accused Vempadapu Santhoshi Ramu, entered

into a criminal conspiracy with Mahanthi Ramana and thereby committed criminal breach of trust and misappropriated funds to the tune of Rs.1,71,41,162 entrusted to him, which was to be deposited into the account of Cheepurupalli Rural Electric Co-operative Society Ltd., an organisation

entrusted with the job of collecting power consumption charges from remote consumers in Vizianagaram district.

Post the completion of investigation, the CBI filed a charge-sheet against the accused. After the trial, the court convicted and sentenced both the accused.

British Deputy High Commissioner visits VSEZ

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BRITISH Deputy High Commissioner Gareth Wynn Owen visited the Visakhapatnam Special Economic Zone (VSEZ) on Tuesday.

The visit was accompanied by a delegation of of-

icials and industry experts. Highlighting the key industries and businesses operating, Srinivas Muppala, Development Commissioner of VSEZ, provided an overview of the zone's operations.

Gareth Wynn Owen expressed the purpose of their visit, focusing on strengthening trade ties between UK

and India. He had shed light on the ongoing trade deal negotiations between the two governments, emphasising the potential benefits for businesses in both the countries.

The British delegation made a detailed presentation on investment and business opportunities available in

the UK, outlining incentives for industries looking to set up operations there.

This was followed by an engaging interactive session with exporters from VSEZ, where they explored possibilities for collaboration and growth. Later, the delegation planted saplings at the premises.

Demand for skilled professionals in hospitality industry brought to fore

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY HR LEADERS FOCUS ON STRENGTHENING MANPOWER

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THE current manpower requirement in the hospitality industry and the rising demand for skilled professionals in key operational roles such as food and beverage service associates, house-keeping associates, front office associates and south Indian chefs were brought to the fore by leaders of the hospitality industry.

At a meeting held in Vi-

sakhapatnam on Tuesday, hospitality industry HR leaders focused on strengthening manpower for the emerging tourism sector. Organised by Hotel and Restaurant Association of Andhra Pradesh (HRAAP), the meeting was chaired by HRAAP president MV Pavan Kartheek in the presence of AP Star Hotels Association (ASHA) vice president G. Venkata Krishna, HRAAP advisor S. Prashanth and treasurer R. Venkat, along with others.

They shared insights regarding recruitment trends, attrition patterns and challenges faced in sourcing trained manpower. With several new hospitality projects expected to commence operations in Visakhapatnam and across Andhra Pradesh in the coming years, the need for a strong and sustainable talent pipeline was highlighted as an important priority for the industry. Speaking on the occasion, MV Pavan Kartheek stated that the hospitality

industry plays a vital role in supporting tourism, employment generation and overall economic development of the region. He noted that with several new hospitality investments and tourism initiatives taking shape in Andhra Pradesh, the sector is poised for strong growth in the coming years.

Members noted that the hospitality sector in Andhra Pradesh is witnessing encouraging growth driven by increasing tourism, business



Representatives of HRAAP and ASHA at the meeting held in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

travel and new hotel developments. During discussions, it was suggested that the hospitality sector should actively collaborate with hotel management institutions, skill

development centres and training organisations to create structured training programmes that can prepare aspiring candidates for careers in the hospitality industry.

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