

Atchannaidu for demand-based, sustainable farming

- Agriculture minister urges farmers to adopt demand-driven crops and organic farming for better incomes and soil health
- Warns against excessive chemical use; govt offering training, subsidies, and dedicated markets for organic produce
- Highlights success of Maruteru paddy varieties; calls for village-level awareness and alignment with changing food habits



Agriculture minister K Atchannaidu inaugurated Kisan Mela at the Maruteru Agricultural Research Station in West Godavari district on Wednesday.

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RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

AGRICULTURE minister K Atchannaidu called upon farmers to shift towards demand-based crop cultivation and adopt sustainable farming practices to improve incomes and protect soil health.

Speaking at a Kisan Mela at the agricultural research station in Maruteru of Penumantra mandal in Achanta constituency of

West Godavari district on Wednesday, the minister said organic farming offers higher returns with lower input costs while ensuring healthier food for consumers. The event focused on the theme 'Changing Climate Conditions-Sustainable Paddy Cultivation.'

The minister inspected laboratories at the research station and interacted with scientists to understand

the latest developments in paddy varieties.

He also visited stalls set up by Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University and private companies, showcasing modern farm machinery and technologies.

Addressing the gathering, he expressed concern over the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which he said is

degrading soil quality and increasing cultivation costs.

He stated that the government is providing training, subsidies and marketing support to encourage farmers to shift towards organic farming. Steps are also being taken to establish dedicated markets to ensure better prices for organic produce.

He noted that paddy varieties developed at the

Maruteru research centre are achieving high yields in several states across the country and appreciated the efforts of agricultural scientists. With changing food habits among people, he advised farmers to align crop choices with market demand.

He directed officials and scientists to create awareness at the village level about suitable crops for different regions. Raja Sabha MP Paka Venkata Satyanarayana stressed the importance of soil testing awareness among farmers and said interlinking of rivers in the state would help address irrigation challenges.

District collector Chadalavada Nagarani said a target of 7.25 lakh metric tonnes has been set for rabi procurement in the district.

Achanta MLA Pitani Satyanarayana, Tanuku MLA Arimilli Radhakrishna, Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University vice-chancellor Dr R Sharada Jayalakshmi Devi, Horticulture University vice-chancellor Dhanujaya Rao were among those present.

Botcha flags Rs 20,500 cr debt gap, seeks Gov's intervention

- Opposition leader in Council in a letter to the Governor alleges that finance dept understated borrowings for 2024-25 and 2025-26 by omitting key components
- Claims actual liabilities are Rs 81,082 cr versus the reported Rs 60,485 cr, citing CAG-audited accounts
- Accuses govt of hiding off-budget loans and inconsistent reporting, urging transparency to restore public trust



YSRCP MLC Botcha Satyanarayana

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VISAKHAPATNAM

EXPRESSING concern over debts mobilised by the NDA government, particularly in the past two years, YSRCP MLC Botcha Satyanarayana dashed off a letter to Governor S Abdul Nazeer alleging that the state finance department presented inaccurate details regarding government borrowings for 2024-25 and 2025-26 in the Legislative Council.

Satyanarayana said the response given by the principal finance secretary to a 'starred' question in the February 2026 session understated the actual borrowings, omitting 'key' components.

The leader of Opposition in Legislative Council requested the Governor's intervention in

convincing the state government to provide the real picture of the data to the legislature. "The finance department stated that total borrowings for 2024-25 were Rs 60,485 crore. However, the CAG-audited finance accounts clearly indicate that the actual net liabilities are about Rs. 81,082 crore. This leaves a gap of more than Rs. 20,500 crore which needs attention," he demanded.

Pointing out that three major components would have possibly been omitted, the MLC said, "Borrowings under Ways and Means Advances from RBI were not included, even though they have been classified as internal debt in official records. Net liabilities under public account such as deposits and reserve funds were excluded. Also, adjustments related to GST compensation loans were reduced without valid justification."

He underlined that when the fiscal deficit itself is over Rs 81,000 crore, presenting a much lower borrowing fig-

ure paints a 'different' picture of the state's finances. "Such omissions create a false impression that the government's debt burden is lower than it actually is," he criticised.

Raising another issue, Satyanarayana said the government's claim that there were no off-budget borrowings in 2025-26 is incorrect. "Government backed corporations like MARKFED and Civil Supplies Corporation have been allowed to raise loans with state guarantees. These entities depend on government support and such borrowings clearly fall under off budget liabilities as per Government of India guidelines," he said.

Pointing to alleged inconsistency in the finance department's approach, Satyanarayana said that when details were sought for borrowings from 2014-2024, both public debt and public account were included. However, public account was excluded in the past two years. He expressed that this raises serious concerns.

Stating that officials are expected to present facts in a transparent manner, he stressed that any deviation from this principle affects the credibility of the finance department and weakens public trust. The MLC requested the Governor to intervene and ensure corrective action is taken with immediate effect.

ELEPHANT RAIDS

Solar fencing brings hope to farmers in Chittoor region

- Tirupati East forest division installed a hanging solar-powered fence covering about five kilometres in Pulicherla mandal

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI



FARMERS across several mandals of the erstwhile Chittoor district are beginning to see hope after years of crop destruction caused by recurring elephant incursions, with forest authorities rolling out a solar-powered fencing system aimed at keeping herds away from agricultural lands.

For nearly a decade, villages located along forest fringes in Pulicherla, Somala, Sadum, Palamaner, Punganur and Kallur mandals have witnessed frequent elephant movement. The animals often strayed into cultivated fields, damaging crops across vast stretches and destroying farm equipment, leaving cultivators struggling with mounting losses. The persistent threat forced many farmers to either reduce cultivation or shift to less vulnerable farming practices.

In an effort to address the issue, officials of the Tirupati East forest division have installed a hanging solar-powered fence covering nearly five kilometres, stretching from

Gantavaripalle village in Pulicherla mandal up to the Kallurghat road. The project, implemented at a cost of Rs 49 lakh, has been completed and is set to undergo trial operations shortly. Forest authorities noted that a similar fencing system introduced earlier in the Palamaner range had yielded positive outcomes.

Elephant activity has been particularly intense in villages such as Pathapeta, Palem, Devalampeta, Kammappalle, Rayavaripalle, Challavaripalle and Ellankivariipalle. Farmers in these regions reported heavy losses to crops including paddy, tomato, brinjal and banana. Mango orchards and fodder crops were also affected, prompting several cultivators to cut down on agricultural operations due to uncertainty and financial strain.

Forest department officials said the fence installed earlier along the forest boundary at Palyam in Pulicherla mandal has begun yielding

favourable outcomes. In the month following its installation, elephant herds attempting to enter nearby farmlands have reportedly turned back upon reaching the barrier, providing relief to local farming communities.

Officials explained that the fencing system operates using solar-powered batteries to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply. During summer months, when elephants frequently venture out searching for food and water, power is maintained round the clock. The fence delivers a mild, non-lethal electric shock that deters the animals without causing harm. In the monsoon season, however, the power supply will function between 6 pm and 6 am, aligning with peak elephant movement hours.

Forest authorities expressed optimism that the new measure would significantly reduce human-elephant conflict in the region and help farmers regain confidence in cultivation.

Focus on uninterrupted power supply, farmer welfare: Energy minister

Inaugurates APCPDCL corporate office in Vijayawada

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ENERGY minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar said the government's primary goal is to provide quality and uninterrupted power supply while enhancing services to the public.

The minister inaugurated the new corporate office of Andhra Pradesh Central Power Distribution Corporation Limited (APCPDCL) at Gunadala, Vijayawada, in the presence of MP Kesineni Sivanath, MLA Gadde Ramamohan Rao, energy special chief secretary K Vijayanand and CMD P Pulla Reddy.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister expressed happiness over the inauguration of the modern office, built at an estimated cost of Rs 35-40 crore with a total area of 65,000 square feet. He credited the collective efforts of the department staff for earning a good reputation for the power sector.

He said that construction of new substations is progressing rapidly across the state. Following the directions of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the government is focused on providing uninterrupted quality power supply without increasing electricity tariffs. He emphasised that there should be no power disruptions or low-voltage issues, and officials are working dili-



Energy minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar inaugurates the new corporate office of APCPDCL at Gunadala in Vijayawada on Wednesday

gently to achieve this.

The minister further stated that the department aims to improve public perception from the current 80 per cent to over 95 per cent. Under the PM Kusum scheme, tenders have been completed to provide free daytime electricity to farmers, and works will commence soon.

Highlighting achievements, he noted that the state has recorded unprecedented levels of power generation using modern techniques. By purchasing power during low-demand daytime and generating electricity during peak evening hours, the state is ensuring no shortages.

Renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and pumped storage projects (PSPs) are being expanded, and tenders have already been invited at 10 locations for battery storage systems.

He also praised electricity staff for their tireless service during disasters. Recalling past floods and cyclones, es-

pecially in Visakhapatnam, he said around 1,500-2,000 personnel restored nearly 20,000 electric poles within 24 hours, ensuring quick restoration of power supply.

Vijayanand said that advanced, human-independent software is being used to ensure transparency in power purchase and sales. He added that the state successfully managed a record peak load of 14,009 mw this year and supplied 275 million units of power without interruption during the summer. The efficiency of APGenco plants has been increased to 85-90 per cent.

He further noted that the APCPDCL building has been developed with a 'Net Zero' concept, incorporating solar energy and green technologies to reduce power consumption and achieve carbon neutrality.

CMD Pulla Reddy urged discom officials to continue delivering better services to consumers.

Endowments woman official sent to custody

- Assistant commissioner Kalingiri Shanti remanded till April 21 after ACB arrest over alleged disproportionate assets



Kalingiri Shanti (file picture)

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A city court on Wednesday sent an endowments department official to judicial custody in a disproportionate assets case. Kalingiri Shanti, assistant commissioner in the endowments department, was produced before the ACB court, which sent her to judicial custody till April 21. She was subsequently shifted to the Vijayawada district jail.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) arrested Shanti after simultaneous raids at premises linked to her on Tuesday. The anti-graft agency took the action following information that she allegedly amassed wealth beyond her known sources of income.

ACB officials conduct searches for 10 hours in different locations, including Tadepalli, Undavalli, and Visakhapatnam. The searches were conducted at four places in Tadepalli, including her residence, a garment shop belonging to her mother, and her sister's residence.

They seized incriminating documents and unearthened assets, including a residential flat in Visakhapatnam, a G+2 building at Kunchanapalli,

776 grams of gold ornaments, nearly 3 kg of silver articles, cash worth Rs 1.15 lakh, bank balances of about Rs 3 lakh, a Volkswagen Polo car, a motorcycle, and electronic gadgets. Following the searches, the ACB registered a Disproportionate Assets (DA) case against the Assistant Commissioner under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The official was also found to have a locker in a bank in Vijayawada. Further searches and valuation of assets were in progress. Shanti was appointed as Assistant Commissioner in the Endowments Department through the Andhra Pradesh State Public Service Commission (APPSC) in 2020, and worked in Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada. After the TDP-led coalition government came to power in 2024, Shanti was suspended for over an allegation of irregularities. She was under suspension from July 2024 to March 2026. The Endowments Department had initiated a departmental inquiry into the allegations against Shanti. The government had seriously taken the allegations against Shanti, including her recruitment procedure itself.

The suspension was lifted in March, and she was waiting for a posting.

Lokesh cracks whip on inactive TDP MLAs

- Pulls up several legislators for failing to hold cadre meetings and grievance programmes for four weeks; directs staff to seek explanations
- Warns against negligence, stresses performance-based recognition; honours top 'My TDP' app performers
- Conducts 87th 'Prajadarbar', receives public petitions on railway depot relocation, bus operators' losses, and land dispute issues

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Education minister Nara Lokesh honours top 10 performers on My TDP app, at the party state office in Mangalagiri on Wednesday

lack of organisational activity in recent weeks by some legislators.

During a review meeting with party leaders at the party office, Lokesh pulled up several leaders for failing to conduct cadre meetings and grievance redressal pro-

grammes for four consecutive weeks. He expressed concern over the inaction of Mydukur MLA Putta Sudhakar Yadav, Kadapa MLA R Madhavi Reddy and Prodatur MLA Varadarajulu Reddy, and directed party office staff to seek explana-

tions from them. He also voiced anger at Pulivendula in-charge B Tech Ravi, Kamalapuram MLA Chaitanya Reddy and Dharmavaram in-charge Paritala Sriram for not holding the mandated programmes. Lokesh warned that negligence would not be tolerated and instructed leaders to strictly implement party directives.

Reiterating that the TDP recognises and rewards hard work, Lokesh said the party's growth was driven by the performance of its leaders. He emphasised that consistent execution of party programmes would ensure its long-term strength. He also interacted with the top 10 performers of the 'My TDP' app and honoured them for effectively promoting party ideology.

Later, Lokesh conducted

the 'Prajadarbar' public grievance programme at the TDP central office in Mangalagiri, marking its 87th day. He received petitions from people across the state, including party workers and leaders, and assured them of action after carefully hearing their concerns.

Among the issues raised were requests from loco pilots to prevent the relocation of the gala depot in Vijayawada during the proposed South Coast Railway formation, appeals from private bus owners for replacement support after Covid-related losses, and a land dispute complaint from a Kurnool district resident seeking justice over alleged encroachment of ancestral property. Lokesh assured all petitioners that their grievances would be examined and addressed.

World Bank sees strong investment potential in Amaravati

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A delegation from the World Bank met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the State Secretariat on Wednesday and expressed optimism about the vast investment opportunities in Amaravati.

The World Bank representatives appreciated the progress of Amaravati's construction and highlighted that the city's rapidly developing infrastructure, along with reforms in the IT and power sectors, is expected to attract significant international investments. They opined that Amaravati has the potential to emerge as the growth engine of Andhra Pradesh. The delegation further noted that with the ongoing development of

CM outlines comprehensive development plans



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu with World Bank delegation at the Secretariat on Wednesday

world-class infrastructure, Amaravati is likely to become a major hub for commercial and economic activities in the state.

During the meeting, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu briefed the delegation on the government's vision of building a world-class capital while ensuring balanced and inclusive development across

the state. He explained that the government is working on comprehensive plans to promote growth in all regions. The Chief Minister also informed the delegation that strategies are being formulated to develop Andhra Pradesh across three regions, aiming for equitable progress and sustainable economic expansion.