

Ongole Utsavam organised

- Former Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu asks people to keep water bodies and roads free of encroachment
- Odisha Governor K Haribabu praised the civic body for a waste segregation drive in about 80,000 houses on a single day

HANS NEWS SERVICE
ONGOLE

THE 150th anniversary of Ongole Municipality was celebrated with daylong programmes at Mini Stadium here on Wednesday. Former Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu and Odisha Governor Kambhampati Haribabu attended 'Ongole Utsavam' as chief guests. Students performed cultural programmes, and dignitaries felicitated several achievers. In the evening, about 150 Ongole Bulls were paraded through the main roads and centres of the town.

Ongole became a Municipality on September 30, 1876, and the town grew into a Municipal Corporation by January 25, 2012. Recalling his long bond with Ongole, Venkaiah Naidu said his political journey began here in 1977 when he



Former Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, Odisha Governor K Haribabu, Collector P Raja Babu, MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, MLA D Janardhana Rao and others felicitating farmers' leader Ch Rangarao in Ongole on Wednesday

contested from Ongole Parliament seat. He said people welcomed him warmly as a young man from a farming family, who had fought against the Emergency. He noted that voters walked with him and donated Rs 200 and Rs 300 during his jeep campaign.

Speaking about his time as Union Minister, Venkaiah Naidu said he pushed for Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana so that every village gets a proper road. He urged people to choose leaders based on character, calibre, capacity and conduct, not money, caste or region. He advised youth to work hard with discipline and asked

people to keep water bodies and roads free of encroachment and to love nature. He also called for protection of the famed Ongole bull breed and praised a book on Ongole history written by R Mallikarjuna Rao.

Odisha Governor K Haribabu said city growth means more than tall buildings and roads. He said people must get drinking water, sanitation, housing, health care and civic services. He said public participation is the real strength of city development, and both the government and every citizen share this duty. He praised the civic body for a waste segregation drive in about

80,000 houses on a single day, which was recorded as a world record. He called for special steps to develop water resources in Ongole. He also wanted Ongole to grow as Viksit Ongole, laying the foundation for Viksit Andhra Pradesh and Viksit Bharat.

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar said Ongole has a proud history and many freedom fighters and poets. He added that Ongole once belonged to Nellore district and that old inscriptions from Addanki rulers mention the town. Social Welfare Minister Dr Dola Sree Bala Veeranjanya Swamy congratulated Haribabu,

who was born in Ongole. He praised MLA Damacharla Janardhan Rao for taking the name of Ongole to the world. He said 150 medical camps were held on a single day to mark the 150 years.

MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy thanked Venkaiah Naidu for sanctioning a large number of TIDCO houses and for AMRUT scheme. Rajya Sabha member

Bashyam Ramakrishna praised Venkaiah Naidu as an ideal leader. MLA Janardhan Rao said 20 statues of famous personalities have been installed. He said 6,000 TIDCO houses will be opened soon.

Collector P Raja Babu said big industries like BPCL and Indosul will come to the district and create jobs. He said Kothapatnam harbour, a Reliance biogas plant and the Ramayapatnam port are also being set up. He hoped Ongole would grow into another metropolitan city.

Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, MLAs Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy, BN Vijay Kumar and Inturi Nageswara Rao, 20 Point Programme Chairman Lanka Dinakar, OUDA Chairman Shaik Reyaz, AP Cultural Commission Chairperson Podapati Tejaswini, Minority Affairs adviser MA Sharif, and other public representatives also took part in the celebrations.

Onions to be sold at Rs 35 a kg all over state

- Civil supplies minster Manohar launches subsidised onion scheme in Vijayawada
- Each consumer can buy two kg by producing Aadhaar

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CIVIL Supplies Minister Nandendla Manohar on Wednesday launched a subsidised onion sale programme at Rythu Bazaar here, under which onions will be sold at Rs 35 a kg with the support of the Centre and the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation (NCCF).

Speaking on the occasion, Manohar said rising prices in the open market were not confined to Andhra Pradesh, attributing the trend to global factors, including the impact of wars, the oil crisis and El Niño. He said the coalition government was closely monitoring market prices and taking measures to keep essential commodities affordable.

The Minister said the government had already started selling BPT super-fine rice at Rs 48 and Rs 52 a kg through 400 special counters after noticing an increase in rice prices. As onion prices



Civil Supplies Minister Nandendla Manohar launches sale of subsidised onions at Rythu Bazaar in Vijayawada on Wednesday

crossed Rs 70 a kg in the open market, subsidised onions would be made available at all 115 Rythu Bazaars across the state. Each consumer would be entitled to two kg of onions on production of Aadhaar.

Manohar said efforts were also being made to supply red gram and palm oil at subsidised prices through ration shops. The Centre had agreed to supply 1.20 lakh metric tonnes of red gram to AP.

The Minister said there was no shortage of rice in the country and adequate stocks were available for the next three years. He appealed to people not to believe rumours circulating on social media about rice shortages. He said the State had set a

target of procuring 37 lakh metric tonnes of paddy during the coming kharif season, with scope for revision depending on future conditions. Vigilance had also been intensified against attempts to divert foodgrains and essential commodities to the black market by citing El Niño.

Manohar said some quality issues were noticed in the first consignment of onions and the stock would be graded before sale. Measures would be taken to ensure better quality in subsequent consignments.

Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rammohan Rao and Civil Supplies Commissioner Kanna Babu were also present.

Quarter-final race takes shape at Sub-Junior Nationals

HANS NEW SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE quarter-final picture at the 51st Sub-Junior National Basketball Championship, being conducted in Vijayawada, became clearer on Day 4, with several teams officially securing their places in the knockout stage after impressive performances in the league phase.

The tournament is being conducted at Maris Stella College, Chennupati Ramakotaiah Municipal Corporation Indoor Stadium, and KBC ZPH School at Patamata in Vijayawada. In the boys' section, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have secured their places in the quarter-finals. In the girls' section, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh have confirmed their quarter-final berths.

In boys Group A, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan confirmed their quarter-final berths. Rajasthan produced one of the day's closest contests, edging past Uttar Pradesh 73-71 in a thrilling



Action during the match between Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh boys at Maris Stella College in Vijayawada on Wednesday

encounter. Harshwardhan Singh led Rajasthan with 21 points, while Robin Dhanka and Rajath Vyas contributed 19 and 18 points respectively. For Uttar Pradesh, Ayushman Kumar scored 14 points, while Vanish Tomar and Sahil Kumar added 12 each.

In boys Group B, Karnataka, Delhi and Maharashtra booked their places in the knockout stage. Delhi registered a convincing 72-29 victory over Karnataka, with Vanish Dalal scoring 17 points and Karthik adding 16. De-

spite the defeat, Karnataka had already done enough in the league phase to secure its quarter-final spot.

In the girls' section, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu confirmed their quarter-final berths from Group A. Tamil Nadu strengthened its position with a dominant 62-17 victory over Telangana. V Anshika led the scoring with 13 points, followed by Dhanya M with 12 and Kavya IK with 10.

Maharashtra were among the standout performers of the day in Girls Group B,

overpowering Kerala 103-45 to secure their place in the quarter-finals. Netra Damke was the star performer with a game-high 36 points, while Aarohi Kamble added 15 and Maitri Sha contributed 12.

Kerala and Madhya Pradesh have also confirmed their places in the Girls Group B quarter-final lineup. Kerala, despite its defeat to Maharashtra, had accumulated enough results during the league phase to progress to the knockout stage.

The Level 2 Boys competition also witnessed several high-scoring victories. Telangana defeated Goa 107-29, Chhattisgarh beat Tamil Nadu 82-19, West Bengal crossed the century mark with a 100-29 victory over Chandigarh, while Kerala defeated Puducherry 76-17.

With one day of league action remaining, the battle for the remaining quarter-final places and final group positions is set to reach a decisive stage. Teams will look to finish the league phase strongly and carry their momentum into the knockout rounds.

Samagra Shiksha SPD Srinivasa Rao honoured with 'Indian Humanitarian Award'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

IN recognition of innovative initiatives undertaken by Samagra Shiksha for children with special needs in Andhra Pradesh, and its efforts to promote equal educational opportunities and empowerment, the Indian Book of Records has conferred 'Indian Humanitarian Award' on B Srinivasa Rao, State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh. The award was presented by Indian Book of Records Adjudicator Tulasiram. Under the leadership of B Srinivasa Rao, Samagra Shiksha has undertaken several initiatives aimed at supporting children with special needs, including strengthening rehabilitation services, enhancing their participation in education, promoting the use of assistive technology and ensuring equitable educational opportunities.

The award particularly recognised 'Project Drushti',



Samagra Shiksha State Project Director B Srinivasa Rao being honoured with the 'Indian Humanitarian Award' by Indian Book of Records Adjudicator Tulasiram in Vijayawada

under which 21 students with special needs successfully reached the Mount Everest Base Camp. The initiative demonstrated that with appropriate encouragement, support and equal opportunities, children with special needs can pursue and achieve ambitious goals, including in para-sports and inclusive sporting

activities. The recognition is also seen as an acknowledgement of the continued efforts of Samagra Shiksha to strengthen an inclusive education system and ensure equal opportunities for every child with special needs. Speaking on the occasion, B Srinivasa Rao said the award was an honour for the dedicated team

members of Samagra Shiksha working for the welfare and educational advancement of children with special needs, as well as for their parents.

He said Samagra Shiksha would continue its efforts to provide inclusive, equitable and quality educational opportunities to every student across the State.

Vaad-Vivaad 2026 semi-finals held

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NAMBUR
(GUNTUR DISTRICT)

THE semi-finals of Vaad-Vivaad 2026, a bilingual debate competition, were held at VVIT College here on Wednesday, with 60 shortlisted students competing on issues concerning India's role and identity in the emerging global order.

The competition is being organised by AE Foundation, Amaravati Chapter, in collaboration with Rotary Club Vijayawada Mid Town and MY Bharat, AP Ministry of Youth Affairs.

The organisers said Vaad-Vivaad seeks to encourage young people to move from 'social media to social thinking' by providing a platform to articulate their views on national issues, understand constitutional values and develop logical thinking, public speaking and leadership skills. The initiative is also aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

Vaad-Vivaad was launched in Hyderabad in 2025 as the flagship initiative of the AE Foundation with the theme 'Youth Ki Soch, Rashtra Ka Nirman'.



Participants at the semi-finals of 'Vaad-Vivaad 2026' at VVIT College in Nambur on Wednesday

This year, the competition was expanded to Amaravati region.

Three preliminary rounds were conducted at Andhra Loyola College, KL University and KBN College, with students from more than 15 colleges in Vijayawada, Guntur and Amaravati participating. The organisers said more than 200 registrations were received, from which 60

best debaters were short-listed for the semi-finals.

The semi-finals were conducted in two rounds under the theme 'India in the 21st Century: Redefining Our Nation's Identity in the Emerging World Order.' In the individual power round, participants were given one minute to prepare and one minute to present their views on a given topic. In the second

round, participants were divided into teams of three to debate, counter opposing arguments and present a collective perspective.

The competition was conducted in both Telugu and English. Commissioner of Youth Services S Bharani was the chief guest. The Vice-Chancellor of VVIT College was the guest of honour, while MY Bharat State Head Venkat Ujwal

attended as an esteemed guest.

The jury included Suresh Kocchatil, Dilip Kilaru and other educationists, media personalities and social leaders. The organisers said 20 to 25 participants would be selected from the semi-finalists for the grand finale in Hyderabad, where the Amaravati finalists will compete with finalists from Hyderabad.

MP INSPECTS RLY WORKS



MP Putta Mahesh Kumar inspecting the progress of railway works at Eluru railway station on Wednesday

'Data interpretation key to informed decisions'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

PROF Gadde Srinivasa Rao, Professor of Statistics, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Dodoma, Tanzania, said that proper interpretation of data was crucial for identifying patterns, recognising opportunities and making informed decisions in today's data-driven world. He was speaking as the chief guest at the inauguration of 'Sankhya 2026', the annual statistical festival organised by Department of Statistics, Andhra Loyola College (Autonomous) here on Wednesday.

Prof Srinivasa Rao stressed the growing importance of data, statistical analysis and



Prof Gadde Srinivasa Rao being felicitated at Andhra Loyola College in Vijayawada on Wednesday

interpretation across various fields. He encouraged students to move beyond theoretical learning and acquire practical skills in data analysis and statistical software, which are increasingly relevant in science, commerce, business, technology and other professional sectors.

He urged students to make effective use of platforms such

as Sankhya to develop analytical thinking, problem-solving skills and confidence.

Principal Fr Dr S Melchior, Dr KNRV Lakshmi, Head of Department of Statistics, Dr N Srinivasa Rao, faculty members and students participated in the inaugural programme. Dr N Srinivasa Rao recalled the origin and growth of Sankhya as a platform for students to explore Statistics beyond the classroom. The principal emphasised the relevance of statistical thinking across academic disciplines and professional fields.

The two-day festival has attracted a large number of registrations for various competitions, with students from several colleges participating in the event.