

# Lokesh accuses Jagan of divisive politics

- Minister alleges that YSRCP chief was attempting to create communal divisions and mislead the public for political gain
- Urges party workers to stay alert against political provocations and claimed those behind unlawful acts would face action

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JAMMALAMADUGU  
YSR KADAPA

MINISTER for education and IT Nara Lokesh on Friday launched a sharp attack on former Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing him of attempting to create divisions among communities and misleading the public for political gain.

Addressing a coordination meeting with TDP leaders and cadre at Dattaluru village in Kondapuram mandal of Jammalamadugu constituency, Lokesh alleged



TDP working president and minister Nara Lokesh addressing the party cadre at Jammalamadugu in YSR Kadapa district on Friday

that conspiracies were being hatched to create tension between religious groups. He asserted that those responsible for unlawful activities would not be spared.

Before the meeting, the minister paid floral tributes to the statue of N T Rama Rao.

During his speech, Lokesh praised local TDP leaders

and party workers for standing by the party during difficult political periods and credited them for the party's strong performance in the recent elections.

The minister criticised the previous YSRCP government over governance and political issues, alleging that false narratives and political "dramas" had been used to

gain public sympathy. Referring to recent incidents in Kadapa district, he claimed attempts were being made to disturb communal harmony and urged party workers to remain alert against political provocations.

Highlighting the coalition government's welfare measures, Lokesh said the administration was continu-

ing development and welfare programmes despite financial constraints.

He stated that pensions for senior citizens had been increased to Rs 4,000, while differently-abled persons were receiving Rs 6,000 and bedridden beneficiaries Rs 15,000. He also referred to schemes such as free bus travel for women, free LPG cylinders under the Deepam scheme and financial assistance for students under the Talliki Vandanam programme.

Lokesh said the government had filled 16,000 teacher posts and 6,000 constable vacancies and had released a job calendar for 10,000 additional positions. He emphasised that the TDP believed in recognising dedicated party workers and cited the introduction of the 'My TDP' application for that purpose.

District In-charge Minister S Savitha, TDP constituency in-charge Ch Bhupesh Reddy and other party leaders attended the meeting.

# Traffic cops to get heatwave shield

- DGP sanctions Rs 48 lakh for protective gear and welfare materials for traffic police working in extreme summer temperatures ranging from 42°C to 46°C
- As many as 3,192 traffic personnel across the state will receive UV protection goggles, white caps, ORS packets, water bottles and face masks to safeguard them from heat, dehydration, dust and pollution

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VIJAYAWADA

WITH temperatures rising sharply across Andhra Pradesh and several towns recording between 42 and 46 degrees Celsius, director general of police Harish Kumar Gupta has initiated special welfare measures to protect traffic police personnel who are working for long hours under extreme heat conditions.

Recognising the health



risks faced by traffic personnel managing roads and junctions in scorching temperatures, the DGP has sanctioned nearly Rs.48 lakh for the immediate procurement of protective equipment and welfare materials for traffic police staff across the state.

The funds are being released from the police department budget, and instructions have already been issued to the finance wing for immediate allocation. Harish Kumar Gupta stated that the health and safety of police personnel on duty are of utmost importance and assured that there would be no compromise in ensuring their welfare and protection.

Under this initiative, traffic personnel will be provided with UV protection goggles to shield their eyes from harmful ultraviolet rays, white caps

to reduce direct heat exposure on the head, ORS packets to replenish salts and fluids lost due to excessive sweating, water bottles to prevent dehydration, and face masks to protect them from dust and pollution emitted by vehicles.

A total of 3,192 traffic personnel across Andhra Pradesh are expected to benefit from the programme. The beneficiaries include traffic constables, head constables and sub-inspectors deployed at busy traffic junctions, national highways, bus stands, railway stations and major urban centres.

The DGP directed all police commissionerates and district SPs to immediately utilise the sanctioned funds, complete the procurement process on priority and ensure quick distribution of the materials to all units. Senior officers have been entrusted with monitoring the implementation of the programme.

Traffic police personnel have welcomed the initiative and expressed gratitude towards the DGP for recognising the difficulties faced by field staff during the intense summer season.

# Major schemes likely to be launched on TG Formation Day

## Today's Cabinet meet to take call on insurance for every family, enhanced pensions, housing for more sections

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HYDERABAD

THE state government is likely to announce the launch of major schemes on June 2, the State Formation Day, for which crucial decisions would be taken at the Cabinet meeting convened by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Saturday. The items topping the agenda of the Cabinet meeting include two lakh new pensions, Indiramma family insurance scheme for all families in the state, and housing for more sections.

Considering that the Chief Minister has already decided to hand over Indiramma houses in Adilabad district on June 2, officials said the Cabinet would review the implementation of the housing scheme and take some

decisions to expedite the construction of the houses and the release of funds to the beneficiaries on a fast track. The applications received for pensions have been scrutinised and their approval is under progress in the districts. The Cabinet will ratify a proposal to sanction two lakh pensions on the State Formation Day. The enhancement of the pension amount would also be discussed.

The Chief Minister will take a call on the specifics of the foregoing key schemes in view of the financial challenges in the current financial year. The Cabinet sub-committee on Rs 5 lakh family insurance scheme for every Telangana family, headed by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, would submit its report, following which the Cabinet will



work out the modalities of launching the scheme. The state government is keen on launching the scheme on June 2.

In the wake of the opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi party's strong criticism on the slow pace of paddy procurement, the Chief Minister and Ministers will review the status of

the procurement and take some corrective measures. The situation with regard to maize procurement would also be reviewed at the Cabinet meeting. The construction of irrigation projects, integrated residential educational institutions as well as road development projects would also be reviewed.

# Sankara Eye Foundation gets Asia Book of Records honour

GUNTUR

The Asia Book of Records has recognised Sankara Eye Foundation India for conducting the maximum number of free eye surgeries under a single vision programme by an organisation. Between March 2004 and March 31, 2026, the foundation provided free eye care to over 30 lakh patients across India, restoring sight to underserved communities. Founder and managing trustee Dr R V Ramani said the recognition reflects the trust of millions and the foundation's commitment to eliminating curable blindness. The organisation currently performs nearly 1,000 surgeries daily through 14 centres spread across 10 states.



## CM orders state-wide steps to tackle heat emergency

Continued from P1

Reviewing drinking water availability, the Chief Minister instructed departments to ensure there is no shortage in either rural or urban regions and directed immediate tanker supply to water-stressed habitations. The government is also setting up emergency response centres across multiple districts to strengthen heatwave preparedness and medical response systems. During the

review, officials recalled that Andhra Pradesh had recorded a peak temperature of 50.1 degree centigrade during the 2015 El Nino year and warned that current weather conditions were again showing severe El Nino-linked patterns.

Naidu directed officials to intensify plantation and groundwater recharge efforts, stating that improved green cover could help reduce long-term heat intensity.

## SC questions quota benefits for BC creamy layer

Continued from P1

Earlier in January 2025, the top court in a separate case had refused to entertain a plea seeking the exclusion of children of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers from Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) reservation benefits in

Madhya Pradesh.

It said the reference to the exclusion of the creamy layer from SC and ST quotas in a seven-judge Constitution bench's August 2024 ruling in the State of Punjab versus the Davinder Singh case was only a view and the legislature has to decide in this regard.

## CJP swings into action, demands Pradhan's scalp

Continued from P1

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke urged followers to support an online petition demanding Pradhan's resignation. "How are you cockroaches? Everyone is saying you are doing great on the internet, but I think now it is time to do some real work. Today, we are starting a petition demanding the resignation of the education minister," Dipke said in a video message.

# Centre will make NEET re-test 100 pc error-free, says Pradhan

Continued from P1

"Twenty-two lakh children have gone through immense mental anguish. Understanding that anguish and taking responsibility, I am saying this today, we had to take some tough decisions," he said.

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) for admissions in medical courses held on May 3 was cancelled by the National Testing Agency (NTA) recently amid allegations of paper leak. The matter is being probed by

the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and a re-test is scheduled to be held on June 21. Pradhan said the government decided to cancel the examination after finding that "some assessments had been compromised". "We did not want even a single student to be deprived of their rightful seat because of the conspiracy of those involved in irregularities in the education system and the examination mafia," he said. The minister acknowledged the criticism over the handling of the issue but said the gov-

ernment is prepared to face the challenge. "We are facing criticism and challenges, and I accept that. But it is our responsibility to set the system right. It is not our duty to shut our eyes and turn away from the problem," he said.

The education minister further said the government is committed to ensuring a smoother conduct of the re-examination scheduled on June 21. "For the examination scheduled on June 21, it is our responsibility to ensure that it is 100 per cent error-free," he said.

## NEETGATE: More skeletons more tumble out of closet

Continued from P1

The agency alleged that Havaladar was involved in the NEET UG process after being appointed an expert by the National Testing Agency (NTA). "She had complete access to the physics question paper. In April, she shared some of the questions with co-accused Manisha Mandhare," the statement said.

The CBI arrested Mandhare, a botany teacher from Pune, in connection with the NEET paper leak on May 16.

The agency found that the questions Havaladar shared with the aspirants tallied with the physics paper of NEET UG 2026.

"The CBI conducted searches at various locations across the country and seized several incriminating documents, laptops, bank statements and mobile phones. A detailed analysis of the seized items is underway," the agency said.

# EC announces polls for 26 RS seats on June 18

Continued from P1

Besides, one seat each in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu will also go to the polls on June 18. The last date for filing of nominations is June 8, according to the EC. In a separate notification, the EC also announced by-elections to fill the vacancies created by the NCP's Sunetra Pawar in Maharashtra and the AI-ADMK's C Ve Shanmugam in Tamil Nadu following their resignations after they were elected to the state assemblies.

While the NDA is set to bag Pawar's seat, going by its strength in the state assembly, the TVK is likely to get the lone Rajya Sabha seat from Tamil Nadu going for a bypoll.

The tenure of Pawar's seat will be till July 4, 2028 while that for the Tamil Nadu seat will be till June 29, 2028. In

Andhra Pradesh, the TDP will win all the four seats for the Council of States and the BJP will bag all four seats in Gujarat.

In Jharkhand, the JMM-Congress alliance is likely to win both the seats, but the BJP which has 21 seats of its own may try to bag one seat with the help of cross-voting by four opposition members.

In Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Congress will get one seat each while the BJP will win two seats in each of the states, going by their current numbers. In Karnataka, the Congress will win three seats and the BJP will get only one seat.

Among those who are retiring from the Rajya Sabha are Gowda, Congress president Kharage (both from Karnataka), Union ministers Ravneet Singh (Ra-

jasthan) and George Kurian (Madhya Pradesh), former chief minister Digvijay Singh, and Congress leader Shaktisinh Gohil. Besides Ravneet Singh, the members whose tenure is ending in Rajasthan are Neeraj Dangi of the Congress and Rajendra Gehlot of the BJP. Rajasthan has a total of 10 Rajya Sabha seats.

The BJP and the Congress currently have five members each. Given the present strength of parties in the 200-member Rajasthan Assembly, the BJP is expected to win two of the three seats, while the Congress is likely to secure one. The BJP has 118 MLAs in the Assembly, while the Congress has 67 members. The BSP has two MLAs, the Bharat Adivasi Party four, the Rashtriya Lok Dal one, and Independents eight.

# AP will export clean energy in future: Lokesh

Continued from P1

Lokesh said the SAEL project - SAEL Solar MHP1 and SAEL Solar MHP2 - was completed in a record time of just 11 months due to the cooperation of local farmers, youth, and officials. He stated that the entire state is now looking towards Jammalamadugu as a model for industrial and renewable energy development.

He highlighted that the government had already established a mega solar park in the region and brought in several major projects, including those of Adani group, Chintia Green, and the Genco-NTPC pumped storage projects.

The Minister said Andhra Pradesh's success in attracting investments and industries is driven by three key fac-

tors: the global credibility of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, the government's "Speed of Doing Business" approach and the support of the NDA government at the Centre.

Lokesh said Andhra Pradesh's growth had accelerated with the support of the NDA government, describing the current administration as a "double-engine government" driving rapid development across the state. He observed that investors are now eager to enter Andhra Pradesh because of the state's leadership and fast decision-making process.

Lokesh said Andhra Pradesh is building 22 specialised growth clusters in sectors such as electronics, green energy, drones, food

processing, software, pharma, and advanced manufacturing to create globally competitive ecosystems.

Recalling his first interaction with the SAEL leadership in Delhi, Lokesh said he immediately recognised the company's long-term vision and commitment towards renewable energy. He appreciated the company for integrating closely with local communities, farmers, officials, engineers and workers during the project execution.

The project, spread across more than 2,400 acres, includes two major 300 MW facilities constructed using over 1.2 million advanced TOP-Con bifacial solar modules manufactured at SAEL plants in Punjab and Rajasthan.

Lokesh said the project generated direct and indirect employment for over 1,000 people during construction, with nearly 80 per cent of them being locals. Around 760 farmers and their families also benefited through long-term land lease agreements.

The Minister further stated that SAEL's biomass-based energy initiatives across Andhra Pradesh are expected to generate nearly 200 MW of electricity from agricultural waste, creating additional income opportunities for farmers and thousands of jobs in the renewable energy sector.

Energy Minister G Ravi Kumar said the government was implementing reforms and renewable energy projects to achieve its target of creating 20 lakh jobs.

# India, Cyprus boost ties to a strategic partnership

Continued from P1

The two leaders also deliberated on the West Asia crisis as well as the Ukraine conflict, with PM Modi saying New Delhi supports all efforts for an early end to the hostilities. "Over the past decade, investment from Cyprus to India has nearly doubled. Trust between the two countries has increased, and with the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement, nu-

merous new possibilities have emerged," Modi said in his media statement. Taking advantage of this, we are targeting to double this investment again in the next five years, he said. "And to realise this resolve, today we are elevating our trusted relationship to a strategic partnership," he added.

The prime minister also noted that the friendship between India and Cyprus is

both "strong and futuristic" as he elaborated on various aspects of his talks with Christodoulides. "We also discussed global issues. Whether it is Ukraine or West Asia, we will continue to support efforts for the early end of the conflict and for peace," Modi said. "We are also unanimous on the view that reform of global institutions is urgent and important for resolving the growing global challeng-

es," he said. The prime minister said the two countries also decided to expand cooperation in areas of maritime security and counter-terrorism.

In his remarks, Christodoulides said India and Cyprus decided to set up a joint task force for cooperation in key sectors such as infrastructure and shipping. Christodoulides kick-started his three-day visit to India on Wednesday.