

Bhogapuram Airport set to propel north Andhra growth

- PM to inaugurate Bhogapuram International Airport on tomorrow
- Project is expected to boost investment, tourism, exports and employment
- Aerocity, logistics hubs and future expansion planned to drive long-term growth

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE state government on Thursday said the upcoming inauguration of the Bhogapuram International Airport will mark a major milestone in the state's infrastructure development and is expected to accelerate economic growth, investment, tourism and employment opportunities in north Andhra.

In a statement, the government said the project, to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 1, Saturday, is the realisation of a vision conceived more than a decade ago by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to meet the



region's future aviation and infrastructure needs.

According to the government, the airport, located near Visakhapatnam, is expected to transform the Visakhapatnam-Bhogapuram corridor into a major investment destination on India's east coast. It said the region is likely to attract investments in information technology, manufacturing, logistics,

that industry estimates suggest these developments could attract private investments worth thousands of crores of rupees over the next decade.

The statement said the airport's connectivity with Visakhapatnam Port, Ganavaram Port, national highways and the railway network would strengthen North Andhra's logistics ecosystem by improving cargo movement and reducing transportation costs. This, it said, would support exports of pharmaceuticals, marine products, agricultural and horticultural produce, fresh fruits, flowers, handicrafts and electronics.

Improved air connectivity is expected to boost tourism by providing easier access to destinations such as Visakhapatnam beaches, Araku Valley, Borra Caves, Bheemunipatnam, Yarada Beach, Kailasagiri, Thotlakonda, Bavitonda and the Simhachalam temple. It said the increased tourist flow would benefit hotels, resorts, transport operators, travel agencies, restaurants and local artisans. The airport project is expected to create signifi-

cant employment opportunities. Besides direct jobs in airport operations, ground handling, cargo services, aviation engineering, maintenance, security and air traffic management, it said indirect employment would be generated in hospitality, tourism, logistics, retail, warehousing, transport and event management.

According to the government, the airport is being developed over about 2,200 acres at an estimated Phase-I cost of Rs 4,500 crore to Rs 5,000 crore. It said the airport will initially have the capacity to handle six million passengers annually, with future expansion planned to increase capacity to 18 million passengers.

Describing the project as a landmark in Andhra Pradesh's development journey, the government said the Bhogapuram International Airport would strengthen the state's global connectivity, attract investments, promote industrial growth, boost exports and tourism, and contribute to its vision of building a prosperous and investment-friendly 'Swarna Andhra.

Centre sanctions 61,084 PMAY houses to state

- To provide Rs 882 cr assistance
- 12,370 houses approved for 107 cities in latest sanction meeting
- Says Amaravati land-pooling farmers not covered under special beneficiary category

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AMARAVATI

THE Centre has sanctioned 61,084 houses for Andhra Pradesh under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0, with a Central assistance of Rs 882.32 crore, the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs informed Parliament on Thursday.

Replying to a starred question by MP Maddila Gurumoorthy in the Lok Sabha, Union housing and urban affairs minister Manohar Lal said that 16.20 lakh houses have been sanctioned nationwide under PMAY-U 2.0 with Central assistance of Rs 23,383 crore. Of these, Andhra Pradesh received approval for 61,084 houses.

The minister said that in the latest Central Sanctioning and



Monitoring Committee (CSMC) meeting held on June 17, 2026, Andhra Pradesh was sanctioned 12,370 houses across 107 urban local bodies, with Central assistance of Rs 185.55 crore.

Providing details of the scheme's implementation in the State, the Centre said that 19.07 lakh houses had been sanctioned under the earlier PMAY-U programme. Of these, 3.71 lakh were non-starter houses, while 15.36 lakh houses were taken up for construction. So far, 11.38 lakh houses have been completed, and 10.75 lakh houses are occupied, the Minister informed.

Under PMAY-U 2.0, 43,947 houses have already been grounded in Andhra Pradesh, while 1,980 houses have been completed

and handed over to beneficiaries, according to the reply.

On the demand to extend PMAY-U 2.0 benefits to Amaravati land-pooling farmers, the Centre clarified that they are not included in the Special Focus Group identified under the scheme.

The Minister explained that PMAY-U 2.0 gives priority to beneficiaries belonging to categories such as PM SVANidhi street vendors, Safai Karmis, PM Vishwakarma artisans, Anganwadi workers, construction workers, and slum residents. Since land-pooling farmers do not fall under these notified categories, they are currently not eligible for benefits under the special focus group provisions of the scheme.

Jagan denied meeting with Appalaraju in jail

- Former minister's request rejected after visiting hours ended
- Prison authorities cite jail manual; refuse to relax rules
- YSRCP chief accuses the state govt of pursuing 'vindictive politics', vows support to Appalaraju's family

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AMARAVATI

YSRCP president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and former minister Seediri Appalaraju were unable to meet in jail on Wednesday after prison authorities denied permission, citing prison regulations.

According to prison officials, YSRCP leaders sought permission for Appalaraju to meet Jagan after 5 pm. However, the request was rejected as prison rules permit visitors only during the prescribed visiting hours, which end before 5 pm. After consulting higher authorities, the jail administration decided that no exception could be made and denied the meeting.

The development comes days after Appalaraju was arrested by the Kasibugga police in Srikakulam district on July 22. He was named as an accused in a case alleging that he conspired to tamper with evidence and cover up



YSRCP president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy with wife and son of former minister Seediri Appalaraju at district jail in Srikakulam on Thursday

his son's involvement in a road accident. The refusal to allow the meeting has triggered political discussion, with the YSRCP seeking to facilitate interaction between its chief and the former minister, while prison authorities maintained that the decision was taken strictly in accordance with jail rules. Later, speaking to media along with family members of Appalaraju, Jagan Mohan Reddy accused the Chandrababu Naidu-led government of conspiring against the family of former minister. He alleged that an accidental case involving Raju's son was deliberately turned into a murder charge to target the family.

Jagan said the incident reflected "vindictive politics" in the state. He claimed Raju's son, an 18-year-old student aspiring to become a doctor, was involved in an accident but tried to help the victim by calling

emergency services and performing CPR. Despite this, the case was twisted into a murder conspiracy, Jagan alleged.

He questioned whether similar action would have been taken if the accident had involved ruling party legislators. Jagan accused the government of sowing divisions among communities and misusing the system to harass political opponents. He also criticized Naidu for failing to support fishermen and BC communities, alleging that welfare schemes were being neglected while false cases were filed against rivals.

Jagan asserted that the YSRCP stood firmly with Appalaraju's family and expressed confidence that justice would prevail. "Appalaraju will soon walk free," he said, condemning what he described as attempts to destroy the career and reputation of a leader from a humble background.

Rs 2,714.78 cr released for Aug Bharosa pensions

- Rs 514.42 crore will be disbursed early in north Andhra in view of PM visit to Bhogapuram

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AMARAVATI

THE state government released Rs 2,714.78 crore towards NTR Bharosa pensions for 62,07,573 beneficiaries across the state for the month of August, according to minister for MSME, rural poverty alleviation Konnapalli Srinivas.

In a statement here on Thursday, the minister said that pension payments in the six districts of north Andhra would be made a day in advance, on July 31, in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to dedicate the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Greenfield Airport to the nation on August 1.

A total of 11,98,044 beneficiaries in the

six north Andhra districts will receive Rs 514.42 crore on Thursday. The remaining 50,09,529 pensioners across the rest of the state will receive Rs 2,198.31 crore on August 1, he said.

The minister said that since the coalition government assumed office, it has spent a record Rs 70,907.41 crore on pension payments, reflecting its commitment to the welfare of senior citizens, persons with disabilities, widows, and other vulnerable sections of society.

Srinivas reiterated that the government is committed to ensuring the timely disbursement of NTR Bharosa pensions, with beneficiaries receiving their pensions on the first day of every month.

He said the initiative reflects the coalition government's focus on social security and the welfare of the poor, elderly, and underprivileged families across Andhra Pradesh.

Govt rolls out 'Nethannala Sevalo', weavers to get Rs 25K annual aid

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AMARAVATI

THE state government has launched 'Nethannala Sevalo' scheme, under which Below Poverty Line (BPL) handloom weaver families will receive Rs 25,000 per household annually from the 2026-27 financial year to strengthen the handloom sector and improve the livelihoods of traditional weavers.

According to officials, the financial assistance will be provided to all active handloom weaver households irrespective of the age of the beneficiary or the number of looms owned, with one benefit per eligible family.

The scheme is intended to help weavers meet expenses on yarn, dyes, chemicals, loom modernization, replacement of worn-out equipment and repairs, enabling them to improve productivity, increase income and compete more effectively with the power loom sector.

The government approved detailed implementation guidelines submitted by the commissioner of handlooms and textiles for rolling out the scheme across the State.

As per the eligibility conditions, the Rs 25,000 assistance will be credited to the head of the handloom weaver household. However, only one member of a weaver family will be eligible, irrespective of the number of handlooms owned. The beneficiary family must also belong to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category.

CUSTODIAL DEATH CASE

SIT grills accused Nagaraju after SC go-ahead

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VIJAYAWADA

THE Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged custodial death of 25-year-old Gade Sai Krishna here on Thursday took circle inspector (CI) S S VV Nagaraju into custody for questioning.

After the Supreme Court granted seven days of police custody to interrogate the suspended police officer, who is the main accused in the alleged custodial death case, the SIT took him into custody from Rajamahendravaram Central Prison and shifted him to Vijayawada.

- Takes suspended CI into seven-day police custody for questioning
- Apex court eased custody restrictions, allowing interrogation in Vijayawada instead of in jail
- Probe focuses on tracing victim's body and recovering missing CCTV hard disks

As per the direction of the Supreme Court, the SIT produced him before the court in Vijayawada before taking him



Main accused S S V V Nagaraju

into custody for questioning.

The SIT, headed by IG M Ravi Prakash, had arrested Nagaraju and four constables on charges of wrongful confinement, torture, custodial death and destroying evidence in the case.

The Supreme Court on Monday relaxed several conditions imposed by the

Andhra Pradesh High Court on the custodial interrogation of Nagaraju.

Allowing an appeal filed by the state government, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta had held that restricting interrogation to Rajamahendravaram central prison is unworkable and unjustified. The court observed that this will hamper the investigation. SIT had submitted to the apex court that as the victim's body is yet to be traced and CCTV hard disks are yet to be recovered, key facts may come to light during the interrogation.

The bench observed that SIT must be free to take the

accessed to relevant locations rather than questioning at a prison 160 km away from the crime scene.

The apex court allowed SIT to interrogate the accused at its designated interrogation centre or any other secure facility in Vijayawada.

Sai Krishna had died of alleged torture in police custody at Krishna Lanka police station of NTR Police Commissionerate in May this year. His mother, Gade Vijaya Lakshmi, alleged that her son was illegally detained, tortured severely, and beaten to death. Later, police cremated the body and destroyed the evidence, she alleged.

Fake websites emerge to dupe Tirumala pilgrims

- A fake website, 'ttdevasthanam.online', falsely claimed to offer darshan and seva tickets for August, September and October
- 32 fake websites posing as Tirumala guest houses and accommodation providers are identified and taken down
- TTD lodges a complaint against SCP Developers over social media claims that plot buyers would get 'lifetime VIP Break Darshan'

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI

FAKE websites and misleading social media campaigns are targeting devotees planning to visit Tirumala, prompting the Tirupati dis-

trict police and the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) to warn pilgrims against online fraud. Police have urged devotees to make darshan, accommodation and seva ticket bookings only through the official TTD



website and mobile app.

According to the police, cyber criminals have been creating fake websites, mobile apps and social media links that closely resemble TTD's official platforms to cheat devotees. A fake website, 'ttdevasthanam.online',

has recently been circulating on social media, falsely claiming that darshan and seva tickets for August, September and October are available. The website attempts to collect money from devotees through fraudulent bookings.

TTD provides darshan, accommodation, Special Entry Darshan and seva tickets only through its official website and mobile application. Any other website or app offering these services should be treated with suspicion, officials said.

The Tirupati district police, in coordination with the TTD Vigilance Department, are monitoring fake websites, suspicious social media links and other online activities.

With the help of domain service providers, officials have identified and removed 32 fake websites created in the names of Tirumala guest houses and accommodation

facilities. However, police cautioned that cyber criminals may continue launching new fake websites under different names and domain addresses.

Tirupati Superintendent of Police I. Subba Rayudu said the safety and convenience of devotees remain the district police's top priority. Police are maintaining constant surveillance on cyber criminals who misuse the faith of pilgrims and are working closely with the TTD Vigilance Department to identify and act against fake websites and online fraud.

He appealed to devotees to remain alert, use only official

TTD platforms and avoid attractive offers circulated on social media.

Police advised devotees to verify website addresses before making any booking and not to click on unknown links received through social media or WhatsApp. They also warned pilgrims against trusting agents or websites promising low-cost rooms, instant darshan, special entry or seva tickets.

Suspicious websites, mobile apps and social media links should be reported immediately to the police or the TTD Vigilance Department, while victims of cyber fraud should file complaints

without delay. Meanwhile, TTD has lodged a police complaint against SCP Developers over social media reels claiming that buyers of its plots on the Tirupati highway would receive 'lifetime VIP Break Darshan'.

TTD clarified that it has no connection with the campaign and that no private company or individual has the authority to promise VIP Break Darshan or any other temple service.

It urged devotees not to believe such advertisements or promotional claims and to rely only on official TTD sources for information and bookings.