

ASR Airport launch

Visakhapatnam goes into celebration mode!

• City organises a number of activities highlighting the significance of the new airport

• The Dhimsa dance presentation is expected to gain an entry into the Guinness World Records for the largest participation

• Along with other regional attractions, efforts are underway to promote the globally-popular Araku coffee

RANI DEVALLA
VISAKHAPATNAM

AS the countdown for the inauguration of Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport commences, Visakhapatnam breaks into a celebration mode.

For the past few weeks, the new airport in Bhogapuram has been hogging the lime-light for apparent reasons.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi arriving to inaugurate the Greenfield airport on August 1 (Saturday), an army of ministers, public representatives and Collectors from North Andhra



A full-dress rehearsal of the Dhimsa dance organised in Bhogapuram

districts got on their toes to pull out all stops to ensure smooth execution of the inaugural.

Emphasising the significance of the Greenfield airport and its economic impact on the region cultural programmes, a beach walk and a flash mob under the theme 'Proudly Vizag,' and a 5-K run were featured in Visakhapatnam.

In addition, an impressive drone show highlighting the airport was featured at the Beach Road.

Customised vehicles with digital screens highlighting Bhogapuram Airport were seen at various places in the city. Among other features, north Andhra's tradition and culture are set to take centre stage during the air-

port inauguration. While 200 Classical dancers will welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the terminal, as many as 13,000 tribal women will perform the mammoth Dhimsa at the venue.

Along with the Dhimsa dance presentation, which is expected to gain an entry into the Guinness World Records for the largest participation, authorities concerned are also focusing on promoting regional attractions, including the globally-popular Araku coffee.

Extensive transport arrangements are in place to mobilise people for the 'public sabha' that will follow the inaugural ceremony. Parking space has been arranged to station around 1,400

buses. Food arrangements have been made for close to 73,000 people.

Arrangements related to drinking water, traffic management and parking lots have been wrapped up.

With Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu keen on highlighting North Andhra tradition, a wide awareness campaign has been initiated with the theme focusing on 'wings to the dreams of North Andhra'.

Meanwhile, schools have been declared holiday both in Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram on August 1.

On the eve of the Prime Minister's visit to Bhogapuram for the airport launch, Visakhapatnam exuded a festive charm.

Bhogapuram opens gateway to north Andhra's economic revolution

VARAPRASADA RAO K

AMARAVATI: The inauguration of the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday marks a major milestone in Andhra Pradesh's infrastructure development and is expected to strengthen North Andhra's position as an emerging industrial, technology and logistics hub.

The new airport is expected to provide direct international connectivity to the region, reducing dependence on airports in Hyderabad, Chennai and Delhi for overseas travel and cargo movement.

The improved connectivity is likely to lower logistics costs, facilitate exports and enhance passenger convenience, supporting the region's growing industrial base.

The airport comes at a time when north Andhra is witnessing significant investments across multiple sectors.

The Visakhapatnam Economic Region accounts for a substantial share of

• Beyond aviation, the project unlocks a new economic geography for North Andhra

• From exports and AI to tourism, semiconductors, manufacturing and logistics, the region prepares for liftoff

• Bhogapuram ends North Andhra's dependence on Hyderabad, Chennai and Delhi for global connectivity

the state's proposed investments, driven by projects in information technology, data centres, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, renewable energy and heavy industries.

Major investments announced in recent years include hyperscale data centres, artificial intelligence infrastructure, steel manufacturing, pharmaceutical expansion and green hydrogen projects.

Bhogapuram Airport is expected to serve as a key gateway for these industries by improving global connectivity for businesses, investors and skilled professionals.

Besides passenger services, the airport has been equipped with a modern

cargo terminal featuring temperature-controlled cold-chain facilities with an annual handling capacity of about 25,000 metric tonnes. This is expected to benefit exporters of pharmaceuticals, marine products, processed foods, textiles and garments by enabling faster access to international markets.

The project also includes plans for an integrated aviation ecosystem comprising an aviation hub, Aviation Edu-City, aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility, logistics parks, Aerocity development and commercial infrastructure.

These projects are expected to attract further investments and create sub-

stantial employment opportunities in the region.

The airport will complement other major infrastructure initiatives underway in North Andhra, including the Mulapeta Port, the proposed Visakhapatnam-Rajahmundry High-Speed Rail Corridor, the Visakhapatnam Seafront Corridor and the Vizag Bay City project, strengthening the region's role as a key economic corridor.

The improved connectivity is also expected to boost tourism by providing easier access to destinations such as Araku Valley, Lambasingi, Borra Caves, Kailasagiri, Visakhapatnam's beaches and Buddhist heritage sites.

The state government has highlighted that the airport terminal reflects Andhra Pradesh's cultural heritage through displays of Etikoppaka handicrafts, leather puppetry and the Bobbili Veena. Thousands of tribal artists are scheduled to perform the traditional Dhimsa dance to welcome the Prime Minister during the inauguration ceremony.

DGP reviews security for PM's visit

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIZIANAGARAM

DIRECTOR general of police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta on Friday reviewed the security and bandobast arrangements for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bhogapuram on August 1, Saturday, where he will dedicate the newly constructed Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport to the nation.

The DGP inspected the Integrated Command and Control Centre, the airport terminal building, the public



DGP Harish Kumar Gupta inspecting security arrangements at Bhogapuram airport on Friday as

meeting venue, and the area designated for the traditional Dhimsa dance performance.

During the inspection, EAGLE IG Ake Ravi Krishna informed the DGP that

nearly 3,000 CCTV cameras had been installed across strategic locations and integrated with the Command and Control Centre to monitor crowd movement, traffic, parking areas and the public meeting venue in real time.

District SP A R Damodar briefed the DGP on the security arrangements made by the district police. The DGP directed senior officers to ensure close coordination with field personnel for effective security, traffic management and crowd control. He instructed officials to allow entry to the venue

only after thorough security checks and to ensure the safe dispersal of the public after the event.

The DGP also directed officials to install large sign boards along the National Highway leading to the airport to guide motorists to designated parking areas.

Additional DGP (law & order) N Madhusudan Reddy, Greyhounds and OCTOPUS IG Srikanth, Visakhapatnam range IG Gopinath Jetty, SP A R Damodar and other senior police officers accompanied the DGP during the inspection.

State govt dissolves governing bodies of 19 universities

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE state government has initiated a major overhaul of university administration by dissolving the governing bodies of 19 state universities and removing the nominated members appointed during the previous YSRCP government's tenure.

Official orders issued on Friday said the decision applies to members appointed under the nominated category. However, the government

• Nominated members appointed during previous regime removed

clarified that there will be no change in the status of ex-officio members, who will continue in their positions.

The move marks the beginning of a broader restructuring of governance in higher education institutions across the State. As part of the exercise, the government has

already constituted a new governing body for Andhra University (AU), with similar reconstitution expected for the remaining universities in the coming weeks.

Officials said the restructuring is aimed at reorganising the administrative framework of universities through the appointment of new governing bodies in accordance with the government's policy. The process of constituting fresh governing bodies for other state universities is now underway.

Yeleru lifeline secured amid drought: Nimmala

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KAKINADA

DESPITE the looming impact of Super El Nino and severe drought conditions, the government is ensuring irrigation water to the Yeleru ayacut, water resources minister Nimmala Ramanaidu said on Friday.

During his tour in Kakinada district, the minister inspected water levels in canals under the Yeleru ayacut. Jaggampeta MLA Jyothula Nehru and Prathipadu MLA Varupula Satya Prabha accompanied him.

Ramanaidu directed irrigation officials to immediately utilise operation and maintenance funds for de-

silting and urgent repairs to the Yeleru Project Main Canal. He said the reservoir was originally designed to depend on local water sources, but prevailing drought conditions have made irrigation through Yeleru waters alone impossible.

To address the situation, the government will divert Godavari waters into the Yeleru reservoir through the Pushkara Lift Irrigation Scheme and the left canal. He said Yeleru would not have received even a drop of water without the Pushkara scheme and credited its conception to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

The minister said Chief Minister Chandrababu

Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan had directed officials to give special attention to farmers in the Yeleru and Pithapuram Branch Canal ayacuts. He urged farmers to cultivate less water-intensive crops, adopt water conservation measures, prioritise drinking water and insure their crops.

Later, the minister inspected bridge construction works at NH crossings near Bendapudi in Tondangi mandal and Arempudi in Sankhavar mandal under Tuni constituency.

Ramanaidu said the government is accelerating Polavaram Left Canal works to fulfil the long-pending dream of north Andhra.

YSRCP seeks CBI probe into DSC-2025, justice for youth

Submits representations to district collectors across state

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TADEPALLI

THE YSRCP on Friday submitted representations to district collectors, joint collectors and DROs across the state, demanding a CBI probe into the alleged irregularities in DSC-2025 teacher recruitment and raising several issues concerning students and unemployed youth.

The statewide programme was held on the call of YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The party demanded that education minister Nara Lokesh resign, taking moral responsibility for the alleged

irregularities in the recruitment process. It also sought a comprehensive CBI investigation into all allegations, including the reported question paper leak, changes in rules and government orders, and alleged irregularities in sports quota appointments. Party leaders questioned why the government was unwilling to order a CBI inquiry if it believed the recruitment process had been fair and transparent.

The representations also urged the government to immediately clear the pending Vidya Deevana, Vasathi Deevana and fee reimburse-

ment dues. The party further demanded implementation of the election promise of providing an unemployment allowance of Rs. 3,000 per month to every eligible unemployed youth.

YSRCP leaders submitted representations in all districts of the State, including Srikakulam, Parvathipuram Manyam, Kakinada, Dr B R Ambedkar Konaseema, East Godavari, West Godavari, Eluru, Krishna, NTR, Guntur, Palnadu, Prakasam, SPSR Nellore, YSR Kadapa, Annamayya, Anantapur, Tirupati and Chittoor.

Senior leaders, former



YSRCP leaders submitting a memorandum to the collector on alleged DSC scam in Vijayawada on Friday

ministers, MLAs, MLCs, former MPs, district presidents and constituency coordinators participated in the programme.

In Anantapur, party leaders

also handed over a pen drive containing a video that they claimed was related to alleged irregularities in the DSC merit list and sports quota appointments.

Godavari flood levels rise; alert in six districts

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

STATE Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) has sounded an alert as flood levels in the Godavari River continue to rise following heavy rainfall in the upstream catchment areas. Officials warned that the river is likely to reach the first danger warning level by Friday night and the second danger warning level by Saturday.

APSDMA managing director Prakhar Jain said the administrative machinery in East Godavari, Konaseema, Kakinada, West Godavari, Eluru and the Polavaram region has been placed on high alert. A total of three NDRF and three SDRF

• Second danger warning likely on Saturday as upstream inflows continue to increase

• Residents of low-lying and Lanka villages advised to move to safer locations

teams have been stationed at Amalapuram, Rajamahendravaram, Chinturu, VR Puram and Jangaredygudem for emergency response.

As of 7 pm on Friday, the Godavari water level stood at 49.8 feet at Bhadrachalam, 16.35 metres at Kuna-



Godavari river at Rajamahendravaram on Friday (Photo M Krishna)

varam and 10.26 metres at Polavaram, while inflow and outflow at the Dowleswaram Cotton Barrage were recorded at 5.39 lakh cusecs.

With flood levels expected to rise further, Prakhar Jain directed officials to evacuate residents of low-lying areas and Lanka (river island)

villages to safer locations and rehabilitation centres as a precautionary measure. "The situation is being monitored round the clock. People should avoid crossing flooded roads, streams, culverts and causeways, and stay away from the river for bathing, swimming or fishing," he said.

The DMA also forecast light to moderate rainfall in isolated parts of Manyam, Alluri, Polavaram, Anakapalli, Kakinada, Konaseema, East Godavari, West Godavari, Eluru and Tirupati districts on Saturday.

The public has been advised to remain vigilant and contact the emergency helplines 112, 1070, or 1800-425-0101 for assistance if required.

HC orders removal of barricades at Venkatayapalem toll exit

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

JUSTICE Ravi Cheemalapati of the Andhra Pradesh High Court has directed the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the toll management to remove barricades erected at the exit point connecting the Vijayawada West Bypass National Highway to the Seed Access Road near the Venkatayapalem toll plaza, providing relief to commuters, including advocates, court staff and local residents.

The issue arose after the toll operator installed barricades at the exit leading to the Seed Access Road, preventing vehicles from directly accessing it. Commuters alleged that they were being forced to pass through the toll plaza, make a U-turn on the highway and cross the toll gate again before reaching the service road. When motorists questioned the arrangement, police personnel deployed at the site allegedly diverted vehicles through the toll plaza. Aggrieved by the restrictions, advocate Sriram Jaswanth of

• Directs NHAI and toll management to remove barricades blocking access from Vijayawada West Bypass to the Seed Access Road

• Court found a prima facie case against the restrictions, rejecting the proposal to allow access only during specified time slots

Gollapudi filed a writ petition before the High Court. Senior counsel Y V Raviprasad, appearing for the petitioner and instructed by Mangena Sri Ramarao, argued that the Venkatayapalem toll plaza had been established only about 17 km from the Kaza toll plaza, contrary to Rule 8 of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008, which generally prescribes a minimum distance of 60 kilometres between toll plazas. He further contended that Venkatayapalem falls within the notified capital region and that erecting a toll plaza in such an area was legally questionable.