Parishad nominations begin amid widespread violence

- **Obstruction, attacks and destruction of nomination papers; 39 ZPTC seats in YSR Kadapa district see no nominations**
- **Clashes reported in Palnadu, Punganur, Chittoor, Kadapa, Kakinada, Nellore and other districts; police impose restrictions and detain leaders**
- **SEC seeks reports on urban polls as Supreme Court stays final nomination lists for 19 ULBs**

K Varaprasada Rao
Amaravati

THE first day of nominations for the second phase of local body elections in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday was marked by widespread clashes, allegations of intimidation, destruction of nomination papers and police restrictions across several districts. The violence, reported from Rayalaseema to coastal Andhra, disrupted the nomination process in multiple constituencies, with the YSRCP alleging that its candidates were being prevented from filing nominations and that papers had been torn up. Several former YSRCP MLAs, including Kasu Mahesh Reddy, Vidadala Rajini and Pindilli Ramakrishna Reddy, were reportedly placed under house arrest.

TDP activists reportedly obstructing YSRCP leader and former Dy CM K Narayana Swamy's car in Chittoor on Wednesday

The elections cover 10,488 positions, including more than 9,900 Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency (MPTC) seats, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency (ZPTC) seats, 659 mandal parishad president posts and zilla parishad chairperson positions. These are the first elections following the reorganisation into 28 zilla parishads. MPTC and ZPTC elections are being contested on party symbols, with webcasting introduced as part of the Election Commission's directions. Nominations will continue until October 23.

The situation was particularly tense in Palnadu district. Former YSRCP MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy staged a protest at Macherla, alleging that candidates were being prevented from filing their papers.

In Rompicherla, former MLA Gopireddy Srinivas Reddy clashed verbally with police while attempting to accompany YSRCP candidates to the nomination centre.

He staged a road protest for nearly three hours, demanding that his party's candidates be allowed to file nominations.

DSP Hanumantha Rao subsequently assured him that they could file their papers the following day under police protection. In Piduguralla, YSRCP ZPTC candidate Bharati and her husband Lakshma Reddy were allegedly attacked by unidentified persons, leaving Lakshma Reddy seriously injured. Punganur in Annamayya district witnessed some of the most serious violence. TDP and YSRCP supporters exchanged stones and blows near nomination centres, prompting police to resort to a lathicharge. A vehicle belonging to TDP leader Pavan Kumar Reddy was set on fire, while Mohan of Gopi Shetti Palle sustained critical injuries and was shifted to Madanapalle government hospital. Clashes were also reported in Sadum, where a vehicle was set ablaze.

YSR Kadapa district witnessed intense confrontations. YSRCP MP Y S Avinash Reddy and party leader Ravindranath Reddy were intercepted while arriving in a rally at the Zilla Parishad office. Stones were allegedly thrown at the group, triggering retaliation before police brought the situation under control.

Avinash Reddy staged a road protest for around six hours, while YSRCP candidates reportedly faced restrictions and could not reach nomination centres. The party claimed that not a single nomination was filed for any of the district's 39 ZPTC seats on the first day. An unidentified group also allegedly set a lorry on fire in Pulivendula.

In Kakinada district's Thondangi mandal, a confrontation involving former minister Dadisetti Raja and YSRCP candidates escalated into stone-pelting. The YSRCP alleged that its candidate Ganga Bhavani's nomination papers were snatched and torn up and that two supporters were injured.

Clashes were also reported in Railway Kodur, Srikalahasti, Pullalacheruvu, Singarayakonda, Raptadu, Chandragiri, Mantralayam, Gudur and Sullurpeta. CPM leaders in Kurnool alleged that TDP supporters obstructed their nomination for the Ulchala Mandal Parishad president's post and tore up documents.

In Chittoor, former deputy CM Narayana Swamy was allegedly attacked during nomination by party candidates at ZP office.

Meanwhile, the scrutiny of urban local body nominations concluded on Wednesday. The YSRCP approached the Supreme Court, which stayed the announcement of final nomination lists for 19 ULBs. The State Election Commission sought reports from district collectors and SPs and said it would examine the reports and webcasting footage before deciding on the matter. The SEC also held a video conference with collectors, police chiefs and commissioners, directing them to address law-and-order problems promptly.

Control prices of essential commodities, CM tells officials

Calls for faster implementation of PM Surya Ghar scheme, uninterrupted power supply

Hans News Service
Amaravati

CHIEF Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to take effective measures to control the prices of essential commodities and ensure that the impact of El Niño-related conditions does not burden consumers across the country.

During a review meeting on the performance of various government departments through the Real Time Governance Society (RTGS) on Wednesday, the Chief Minister stressed the need for close monitoring of the prices of rice, red gram, onions, cooking oil and sugar to prevent unreasonable increases.

Reviewing the sale of rice through Rythu Bazaars, Chandrababu Naidu enquired about the public response to the government's initiative. Officials informed him that the programme had received a good response, with encouraging sales.

The Chief Minister directed officials to explore the possibility of making fine-quality rice available at affordable prices through Rythu Bazaars during festivals such as Deepavali and Sankranti. He also instructed them to increase onion supplies to ensure that common people do not face any difficulties.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu reviews performence various departments at RTGS at the Secretariat on Wednesday

Emphasising the importance of uninterrupted electricity supply, he directed the officials concerned to take stringent measures to prevent disruptions under all circumstances.

The Chief Minister called for accelerating the installation of rooftop solar panels under the PM Surya Ghar scheme. Observing that Andhra Pradesh was currently ranked fourth nationally in implementation, he said efforts should be intensified to improve the State's position.

He pointed out that another nine lakh connections needed to be installed to achieve the target and instructed officials to prepare and implement an action plan to complete the installations as quickly as possible.

Chandrababu Naidu also directed officials to ensure smooth sand supplies without disruptions. He stressed the need to make full use of technology in governance, identify administrative shortcomings and rectify them immediately.

The Chief Minister called for better coordination among various government departments to improve service delivery and ensure the effective implementation of government programmes.

Chief secretary G Sai Prasad and senior officials from various departments attended the review meeting.

SC gave SEC free hand to SEC, says TDP

Hans News Service
Vijayawada

THE Supreme Court has not pulled up the Andhra Pradesh government or the State Election Commission (SEC) over the ongoing urban local body elections, but has merely empowered the poll body to independently examine complaints and ensure free, fair and peaceful elections, TDP legal advisor Posani Venkateswarlu said on Wednesday.

Speaking on the final day of publication of nominations for municipal corporations and municipalities, Venkateswarlu dismissed reports suggesting the apex court had found fault with the election process. He clarified that the court's order only authorises the SEC to scrutinise complaints from candidates who allegedly could not file nominations due to local law and order issues.

According to him, the Supreme Court directed

the SEC to assess each complaint on merit and determine whether genuine disruptions prevented candidates from entering the fray. If such claims are found valid, the commission has been instructed to provide another opportunity for filing nominations. The SEC has been asked to take a decision within a day, while constituencies where renominations are permitted will get a two-day extension in the election schedule to facilitate a peaceful process.

Rejecting claims that the court reprimanded either the government or the SEC, Venkateswarlu said the apex court neither blamed any political party nor specified the number of constituencies that may require intervention. He noted that while reports have referred to disturbances in around 19 locations, including several in Kadapa district, the court's focus remains solely on verifying the complaints before it.

Accusing some sections of distorting the court's order for political gains, Posani urged the public not to be misled by speculative narratives. He maintained that compared to the violence-marred local body elections of 2021, the current election process has remained largely peaceful.

"The Supreme Court's order is a safeguard to protect democratic participation and address genuine grievances, not an indictment of the election machinery," he asserted.

NAVARATRI BRAHMOTSAVAMS

TTD distributes 22.60 lakh Anna Prasadam packets

Chairman B R Naidu says a total of 6.46 lakh devotees had Srivari darshan from October 12 to 19

Pradeep Vennelakanti
& Dusi Venkateswara Rao
Tirumala

TTD distributed 22.60 lakh Anna Prasadam packets and sold 34.34 lakh laddus during the Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavams, which concluded successfully with sacred Chakrasnanam at Tirumala on Tuesday.

Addressing the media along with Executive Officer M Ravichandra and other officials at Annamayya Bhavan TTD chairman B R Naidu said, the mega event was conducted smoothly through the coordinated efforts of various departments. Devotees from across the world witnessed the Moola Virat and Vahana Sevas comfortably. Despite continuous heavy rain on Garuda Seva day, devotees participated in the sacred event with devotion, while officials and staff performed their duties wearing raincoats.

TTD chairman B R Naidu along with EO M Ravichandra and additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary speaking to the media in Tirumala on Tuesday

According to TTD, 6.46 lakh devotees had Srivari darshan between October 12 and 19, while hundi offerings amounted to Rs 25.79 crore. Around 2.44 lakh devotees offered tonsure during the period. The APSRTC operated 13,608 trips from Tirupati to Tirumala, carrying 4.01 lakh devotees, and 13,667 return trips, transporting five lakh devotees. TTD's transport wing deployed 39 electric buses and carried around seven lakh devotees in 6,900 trips over the ten-day period.

Naidu said the arrangements made for Garuda Seva received positive feedback from pilgrims. About 6,777 artistes from 252 troupes representing 26 states, along with Qatar and Dubai, presented cultural programmes before the Vahana Sevas. On Garuda Seva day, 863 artistes from 31 troupes representing 17 states performed. The TTD EO felicitated four outstanding cultural troupes every day.

He added that floral decorations in Tirumala used around 60 tonnes of flowers, five lakh cut flowers and 80,000 seasonal flowers. Electric illuminations in Tirumala and Tirupati attracted devotees, while 36 large digital screens helped pilgrims watch the Vahana Sevas. SVBC telecast the celebrations worldwide in enhanced quality, with commentary by eminent scholars.

Around 4,500 Srivari Seva volunteers rendered services during the nine-day festival. Medical arrangements included 75 doctors, 10 Srivari Arogya Seva doctors, 60 paramedical staff, 20 ambulances and four mobile clinics. Security was provided by 2,800 police personnel and 2,000 vigilance staff, with an additional 1,000 police personnel deployed on Garuda Seva day.

The chairman said TTD implemented safety measures for elephants, cows, horses and bulls participating in the Vahana Sevas. Devotees were prohibited from directly seeking blessings from elephants to ensure the safety of both pilgrims and animals.

Naidu said that around 600 TTD employees from various departments in Tirupati rendered special services during Garuda Seva. Sectoral and in-charge officers monitored pilgrim facilities round the clock. Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary, CVSO KV Murali Krishna and other officials were present at the media conference.

Don't turn local body polls into a farce: CPM to govt

Dasari Srinvasa Rao
Vijayawada

CPM state secretary V Srinivasa Rao warned the state government against turning local body elections into a farce, alleging that ruling coalition leaders had resorted to intimidation, attacks, kidnappings and destruction of nomination papers to prevent opposition candidates from contesting.

Addressing a press conference at Balotsav Bhavan here on Wednesday, along with CPM State secretariat members Y Venkateswara Rao and Central Committee Member D Ramadevi, he alleged that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu was encouraging undemocratic practices. He also accused the police of supporting ruling party leaders instead of protecting candidates. Questioning the ruling coalition's claims of unanimous victories, Srinivasa Rao asked why opposition candidates were allegedly prevented from filing nominations if the victories reflected genuine public support.

He alleged that several unanimous victories had been secured through coercion and said the practices followed by the TDP-led coalition resembled those of the previous YSRCP government.

CPM state secretary V Srinivasa Rao, along with party state secretariat member Y Venkateswara Rao and Central Committee member D Ramadevi, addressing a press conference at Balotsav Bhavan in Vijayawada on Wednesday Photo: Ch Venkata Mastan

Low-pressure likely, heavy rain forecast in coastal AP

Hans News Service
Amaravati

A low-pressure area is likely to form over the southeast and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal by Friday under the influence of a surface circulation entering the North Andaman Sea, Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) Managing Director Prakhar Jain said on Wednesday.

He said the system was likely to move northwestwards and intensify further over the subsequent three days. Under its influence, heavy rainfall is likely in the coastal Andhra Pradesh region during the coming week.

Prakhar Jain advised fishermen not to venture into the sea from Sunday onwards. Those who had already gone fishing were advised to return to shore before conditions deteriorated.

Meanwhile, scattered light to moderate rainfall accompanied by lightning is likely in Prakasam, Nellore and Tirupati districts on Thursday, he said.

The APSDMA is monitoring the developing weather system and has urged fishermen to follow official advisories and take necessary precautions in view of the possibility of worsening weather conditions over the Bay of Bengal.

National Saras Mela logs Rs 5 crore sales in Vijayawada

Hans News Service
Vijayawada

OVER 70,000 VISITORS THRONG PUNNAMI GHAT ON VIJAYADASHAMI; SINGLE-DAY SALES TOUCH RS 1.27 CR

THE National Saras Mela–2026, being held at Punnami Ghat here from October 13 to 31, recorded total sales of Rs 5 crore, with two lakh products sold as of October 20.

The fair witnessed an overwhelming response on Vijayadashami, with more than 70,000 visitors thronging the venue to celebrate the festive occasion and shop for products made by women from self-help groups (SHGs) across the country.

On October 20 alone, the mela recorded sales worth Rs 1.27 crore, with 48,370 products sold. The festive atmosphere, coupled with the arrival of large numbers of families and visitors, added to the buzz at Punnami Ghat.

Vijayadashami holds special religious and cultural significance in Vijayawada, home to the Sri Kanaka Durga temple atop Indrakeeladri. During the Dasara festivities, devotees from across Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring states visit the city to seek the blessings of the presiding deity. The festive spirit and influx of pilgrims have also boosted footfall at the National Saras Mela.

The mela offers visitors an opportunity to combine festive shopping with support for rural women entrepreneurs. Women from SHGs across different parts of the country are showcasing a wide range of products, including regional specialties, traditional handicrafts, handloom garments, textiles, food items and other locally made goods.

Visitors shop at the Saras Mela at Punnami Ghat in Vijayawada

The strong sales recorded on Vijayadashami reflect growing consumer interest in products made by SHG members. The response also highlights how festivals and large public gatherings can open up wider marketing opportunities for rural women and their enterprises.

By providing a platform for women to connect directly with consumers, the mela helps them expand their customer base, improve sales and increase their incomes.

The cumulative sales of Rs 5 crore and the sale of two lakh products by October 20 underline the importance of national-level marketing platforms in promoting women-led enterprises.

By bringing producers, SHGs and consumers from different parts of the country together, the mela is helping businesses grow, preserve traditional skills and strengthen sustainable rural livelihoods.

With the event scheduled to continue until October 31, participating women entrepreneurs will have further opportunities to reach new customers, explore markets and expand their businesses.

The National Saras Mela at Punnami Ghat has thus added an economic dimension to the spirit of Vijayadashami, bringing together devotion, cultural diversity, public participation and the achievements of rural women entrepreneurs on a single platform.