Zero Budget Natural Farming

In 2015, the Government of Andhra Pradesh instituted the Rythu Sadhikara Samstha to introduce ZBNF practices to all farmers in the State. Now recognised globally, ZBNF in AP is attempting to develop a unique community-based dissemination of ZBNF.
The State IT and Panchayati Raj Minister Nara Lokesh has been taking forward the vision of Chief Minister in reinvigorating villages. He initiated several measures to improve the quality of landscapes through eco-friendly practices in select villages. Under the initiative, a ‘best out of waste’ unit was set up in Nimmada village in Kotabommali mandal of Srikakulam district. The project yielded good results and the village park in Nimmada totally transformed. The ‘best out of waste’ unit with segregated dry and wet waste has emerged as a model for the neighboring villages to adapt and learn from. The vermicompost produced from the unit is used as manure in the parks to enhance their growth. The natural manure is also supplied to farmers in the district to swap chemical-laden pesticides. A new unit was also set up in Prakasam district at Vaddipadu village of Donakonda mandal. A solid waste management unit was set up from where vermicompost is sourced. After obtaining great results, the eco-friendly practice is being implemented across other districts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Natural Farming can create wonders: CM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As part of efforts to create awareness on natural farming among farmers, a nine-day training programme on the progressive practice was organised by the State Government in Guntur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>AP to serve as model in energy efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>TCL, world's largest TV panel maker, comes to Tirupati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>AP Shortchanged in Bifurcation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Five Pvt Varsities to come up in State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tech &amp; Timely action mitigated Phethai cyclone loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ramco Cements to set up a green field cement plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>CM unveils first crest gate of Polavaram project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Lulu global convention centre in Vizag in three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>CM inaugurates Vijayawada's first Five-star hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Amaravati Knowledge City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Happening Andhra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various developments across the state of Andhra Pradesh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>10 Telugu Films To Watch Out For In 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>AP signs MoU with KIA Motors India</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let's have a healthy debate

In an important move, the Andhra Pradesh Government has decided to release White Papers on the progress and development in the State during the last four and half years in the face of almost insurmountable challenges and uncertainties.

A White Paper is an authoritative and concise statement issued by the government on a specific matter to let people understand the facts behind an issue. Thus the AP Government has begun releasing reports on State bifurcation, State financial status and growth rate, welfare of farmers, social empowerment, human resources development, industries and employment and good governance with a view for providing a holistic perspective on these issues.

This is an opportunity for the people as well as political parties to evaluate the performance of the Government after 2014 and appreciate the legacy issues that it had to contend with in order to make meaningful progress.

For example, the White Paper on the implementation of Bifurcation Act once again highlighted the glaring anomalies in the bifurcation process. That AP received only 46 per cent of the estimated revenues of the combined State while accounting for 58 per cent of its population remains a blatant act of injustice committed against the residual State. The list of promises made by the Central Government which were yet to be fulfilled, as enumerated by the White Paper, should be troubling to all impartial observers.

Despite such arduous beginnings, the Chandrababu Naidu Government has been able to make a difference to the fledgling State through many radical initiatives. For example, the White Paper on Agriculture disclosed that compared to 3.55 per cent growth rate in agriculture and allied sectors during 2014-15, Andhra Pradesh achieved 17.76 percent growth rate in 2017-18. Another White Paper on “Good Governance” throws light on the various technology-enabled initiatives adopted by the Government to facilitate easy interface for the citizens to avail a range of services.

The White Papers are intended to spark a debate on both the challenges faced and the achievements recorded by the Government. The Opposition Parties have an opportunity to make a critical assessment of the performance of the Government. However, it is important that all the stakeholders stand united in putting pressure on the Centre for the full implementation of the promises made in the Reorganisation Act.

Lack of unanimity on this score has already caused immense loss to our State. The more apathetic we are to this crucial issue, the more would Andhra Pradesh suffer in its economic growth.
The efforts of Andhra Pradesh Government to create a silicon valley in the Rayalaseema region are bearing fruit. China-based global consumer electronics brand TCL, one of the world's largest TV panel makers, performed the ground-breaking ceremony for its upcoming manufacturing plant at Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, on December 20. The State Government has provided 158 acres for the proposed factory.

TCL Industries Holdings (Hong Kong) Limited chairman Li Dongsheng and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu along with IT Minister Nara Lokesh among others were present for the ground-breaking ceremony. TCL proposes to invest Rs 22 billion (Rs 2,200 Crore) on Tirupati plant, over a period of time.

TCL had signed a MoU with AP’s IT department on their proposed investment in the state. The company has assured employment to 8000 people in a phased manner. The manufacturing plant will be set up in a record eight months time and will have a capacity to manufacture six million TV sets annually when fully operational, according to the company officials.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, CM said that Tirupati, the temple town will be attracting more than 300 billion investments in electronics hardware industry in the near future. “It will be a major landmark in the country. We welcome outstanding Chinese companies such as TCL to participate in the development of Andhra Pradesh and we will work to create a favorable business environment here for them. We look forward to our people enjoying the brand’s industry-leading products.”

The State Government has named Tirupati and adjoining region as silicon corridor in its efforts to make it the hub of manufacturing of every important component of electronics and mobile phone equipment. The primary facility of the industrial park is the panel module factory, which is the first overseas production unit of TCL’s panel subsidiary Shenzhen China Star Optoelectronics Technology Co., Ltd (CSOT). TCL said the industrial park is scheduled to commence manufacturing in the fourth quarter of 2019.

The CSOT panel module factory will produce screens for TVs and mobile phones, with a designed production capacity of eight million 22-inch to 55-inch, large-sized TV screens and 30 million 3.5-inch to 8-inch, small-sized mobile screens per year.

Chairman and CEO of TCL Corporation, Tomson Li said, “India is a strategic market for TCL. The project will strengthen our supply chain integration capabilities in India and in turn will benefit our local consumers, providing them with superior quality products at greater value,” he added.

Among the upcoming investments, Reliance Group had recently announced to establish an electronics hardware park in 150 acres at Tirupati for making mobile phones, TV sets among other devices at a cumulative investment of Rs 150 billion. The Chinese mobile phone brand Xiaomi’s manufacturing partner Holitech is also setting up a manufacturing facility to produce mobile phone camera modules and TV panels at Tirupati.
The Andhra Pradesh Government has released a series of white papers to highlight the achievements during the last four years despite enormous amount of challenges faced by the State.

The first of these white papers was the cloak-and-dagger manner in which the AP Reorganisation Act was drafted and its non-implementation in several respects.

The bifurcation of the undivided state was "unscientific" and it resulted in AP losing the economic powerhouse and capital - Hyderabad, thus losing a large-scale industrial base, the white paper read.

"Lack of adequate and serious consultations with key stakeholders, absence of consensus amongst key political parties, lack of transparency, despite series of agitations from people, scant regard was shown to their feelings/aspirations. Lack of transparency surrounding the reorganisation process and the frenetic pace with which the process was carried out by the then UPA led central government had caused serious disenchantment amongst people of Andhra Pradesh," it read.

It said that in the bifurcation, the State received only 46 per cent of the estimated revenues of the combined state while accounting for 58 per cent of its population. Assets were allocated on location basis whereas debt liabilities were distributed on population basis, it said. "Refund of taxes is to be shared between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on population basis (58.32 : 41.68) whereas deferred tax collections have been allocated on location basis. This has caused a loss of about Rs 3,800 Crore. It also has no capital city for the residuary state of Andhra Pradesh," it read.

The white paper listed the promises made by the central government which were yet to be fulfilled. These include the establishment of greyhounds training centre, increase of seats in the AP Legislative Assembly, development grant for seven backward districts covering Rayalaseema and north coastal region, Polavaram irrigation project, tax incentives, central support for creation of new capital city, creation of educational institutions etc. The paper said that the state government would continue to put pressure on the Centre till all provisions of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 and the assurances of the Prime Minister are achieved. Details of the White Paper:

Unscientific Division of Andhra Pradesh State

Lack of adequate and serious consultations with the key stakeholders, absence of consensus amongst key political parties, lack of transparency and cloak and dagger mode of drafting the Bill characterised the process of enactment. Despite series of agitations from the people, scant regard was shown to their feelings/aspirations. Lack of transparency surrounding the reorganisation process and the frenetic pace with which the process was carried out by the then UPA led central government had caused serious disenchantment amongst people of Andhra Pradesh.

The bifurcation of State resulted in Andhra Pradesh losing the economic powerhouse and capital Hyderabad developed by successive Governments for nearly seven decades, lack of large scale industrial base, absence of central institutions and left a deep sense of hurt and anguish in the 5 crore population of Andhra Pradesh.

Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014 – Injustices done to Andhra Pradesh

The inconsistencies in the Re-organisation Act and the actions of the Government of India causing injustice to the state of Andhra Pradesh are:

• The State received only 46% of the estimated revenues of the combined State while accounting for the 58% of its population which was also confirmed by the 14th Finance Commission.
• Assets were allocated on location basis whereas debt liabilities were distributed on population basis.
• In power sector, power consumption has been adopted as the basis of distribution which is detrimental to AP state.
• Refund of taxes is to be shared between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on population basis (58.32 : 41.68) whereas deferred tax collections have been allocated on location basis. This has caused a loss of about Rs.3,800 Crores.
• No capital city for the residuary State of Andhra Pradesh
• Undivided loan liability of more than Rs.33,478 Crore has been put in the books of accounts of Andhra Pradesh, burdening the State with discharge of liability along with interest, pending division. This has adversely impacted FRBM limits of Andhra Pradesh as well.
• Despite Singareni Collieries being a Schedule IX Company, Telangana State has been allocated 51% equity of the company on location basis.

Main Sections of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014

There are 14 assurances in the main sections of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.

- Fully implemented – 0
- Partly implemented – 5 (Special Development Package for 7 districts; Polavaram; Educational Institutions and Infrastructure Projects; Tax incentives, Support for Capital)
- Not implemented – 9 (Greyhounds; APLA seats; Division of properties of A.P. Bhavan; Apportionment of Tax arrears, loans and refunds; Government of India reference under Sec. 66; Apportionment of Schedule IX Government Companies and Corporations; Bifurcation of Schedule X Institutions; Bifurcation of Schedule X Institutions; River Management Boards)

Establishment of Greyhounds Training Centre [Section 9]

Detailed proposal costing Rs. 858.37 Crore sent to Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India for replication of existing Greyhound infrastructure and training facilities in Andhra Pradesh. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (M/o E,F&CC), Government of India granted In-Principle approval of the Stage –I Clearance for diversion of 2087.09 hectares of land for establishment of Greyhounds Training Centre etc. State Government has sent compliance report for the diversion land to M/o E,F&CC, Government of India. The M/o E,F&CC, Government of India was requested to accord early approval for Stage-II, since it is said that Government of India will release the approved amount of Rs. 219.16 Crore after handing over possession of the land.

Increase of Seats in A.P. State Legislative Assembly [Section 26]

Section-26 of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 provides for increase of existing seats from 175 to 225 in the A.P. Legislative Assembly. Proposals were furnished on 29.09.2016. This issue is pending for a long time with Government of India. Changing its stand that constitutional amendment is in process the Government of India has now informed that till the year 2026 this increase cannot be done.

Development Grant for 7 backward districts of the State covering Rayalaseema and North Coastal Region [Section 46(2) & (3) and 94(2)]

The then Hon’ble Prime Minister assured on the floor of Rajya Sabha on 20.02.2014 for providing backward areas of Andhra Pradesh, a special development package on the lines of K-B-K and Bundelkhand model. A proposal for Rs.24,350 Crores was submitted to Govt. of India in October 2014, after consultations with the then Planning Commission, implementable for 5 years. However, the Govt. of India has agreed to give Rs.350 Crores every year @ Rs.50 Crore per each of the 7 districts. The Government of India has so far released Rs.1050 Crores for the years 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17. Govt. of India had released Rs.350 crores on 09.02.2018 but took back the same unilaterally on 15.02.2018 without consulting State Government. Further, no funds under Special Development Package have been released to Andhra Pradesh in 2017-18 and 2018-19 so far, in spite of specific request made by Govt. of Andhra Pradesh for release of Rs.700 Crore for the years 2017-18 and 2018-19 and recommendation from NITI Aayog to Union Finance Ministry (vide OM No.014015/18/2015-SP-S, dt.08.11.2018) to release the same, to keep up the pace of works already grounded.

The Government of India has recently released Rs.450 Crores to Telangana Government under Special Development Package. Government of India was requested to immediately release the Rs.700 Crores for the years 2017-18 and 2018-19 to keep up the pace of works already grounded, as 25,007 works costing Rs.1641.50 crores are taken up, of which 14,512 are completed, 5,364 works are in progress and Utilisation Certificates for an amount of
Rs.1049.34 Crores are submitted to Government of India.

Polavaram Project [Section 90]

Polavaram is the life line of AP People and as of now, 62.53 percent of the work has been completed and strenuous efforts are being made to complete the project by 2019. Total expenditure incurred on Polavaram project under National Project upto 15th December 2018 is Rs.10,069.66 Crores. Out of this, an amount of Rs.6727.26 Cr has been released to Govt. of Andhra Pradesh by Government of India. The balance amount of Rs.3,342.40 Cr is still to be reimbursed by the Government of India. No funds are released for the last four months by Government of India towards reimbursement of funds already spent by the State Government resulting in strained State finances. As per the orders issued by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India Vide F.No.1(2)/PF-1/2014(pt), Dt.30.09.2016, revised cost of the Project at the price level as on 01.04.2014 has been submitted to Central Water Commission (CWC) on 16.08.2017. Government of India in reply to Rajya Sabha Question No.788 has answered on 17.12.2018 that “As informed by the Central Water Commission, State Government had submitted the second revised Estimate of Polavaram Irrigation Project (PIP) amounting to Rs.57940.86 crore at 2013-14 PL. Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LA, R&R) are part of irrigation component of the Project. Provision for LA, R&R in revised estimate of the project is based on Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. Actual rise in cost on account of LA and R&R over previously approved cost depends upon finalisation of revised cost estimates of the project.” Government of India has been requested to approve revised cost estimates for Rs.57,940.86 Crores expeditiously and ensure seamless reimbursement of money spent by the State Government to avoid interest burden.

Tax incentives [Section 94 (1) and (2)]

A proposal seeking special package of incentives, to promote industrialisation and economic growth was submitted to Govt. of India under Section 94(1) of AP Reorganisation, Act 2014 on 26.06.2014 and till date no action is taken on this.

Government of India vide CBDT Notification issued in September 2016, notified seven districts for availing tax incentives - 15% of higher additional depreciation and 15% of investment allowance on the cost of plant and machinery acquired under section 32 (1)(iia) and section 32AD of the Income-tax Act, in respect of any manufacturing undertaking set up during the period from 01.04.2015 to 31.03.2020. However, these incentives come under Section 94 (2) of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. These benefits given under Income tax Act have been extended for development of backward areas across various States like Telangana (9 Districts) West Bengal (11 Districts) and Bihar (17 Districts), that too before giving the benefit to 7 backward districts of Andhra Pradesh. Moreover, it is common knowledge that these incentives do not attract industrial investments and the orders issued by Government of India are mere eyewash.

State Government requested Government of India to give Tax incentives proposed in letters of Hon’ble Chief Minister addressed to Union Finance Minister and Union Commerce Minister separately on 26.06.2014, to ensure speedy industrial growth and give fillip to economy. These incentives include 1. GST-Reimbursement up to the extent of Central Govt. share of CGST and IGST for 5 Years; 2. Reimbursement of Centre’s share of income tax for first 5 years; 3. 30% of the investment in Plant & Machinery with an upper limit of Rs.5 Crore; 4. 3% on working capital credit advanced; 5. Reimbursement of 100% insurance premium on insurance for 5 years; and 6. Transport and Employment subsidy etc. These incentives are being provided to all the 11 Special category States. There is no positive response so far from Government of India.

Central Support for creation of new Capital City [Section 6 and 94(3) & (4)]

Under a unique ‘Land Pooling Scheme’ devised by Government of Andhra Pradesh, farmers handed over 33,000 Acres of land valued at more than Rs.50,000 Cr for the construction of greenfield capital Amaravati. Provisional estimates indicate that it would require about Rs.1,09,023 Cr to construct Greenfield Amaravati City including the Raj Bhavan, Secretariat, High Court, Legislative Assembly and Council along with trunk infrastructure and land development. Detailed Project Report for the Amaravati Government Complex and Infrastructure including the Legislative Assembly, High Court, Raj Bhavan, residential quarters for Ministers, Secretariat, Government housing for employees and other infrastructure for a total of Rs.39,937 Cr was submitted to Government of India, for release of funds under Section 94(3) of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. Currently, 56 projects costing Rs.48,115 Crores are taken up in the Capital City region and 32 projects costing Rs.26,600 Crore are under execution, 6 projects costing Rs.10,167 Crore are at tendering stage and 18 projects costing Rs.11,352 Crore are at pre-tender stage. Government of India has released Rs.1,500 Cr during the years 2014-17 and no funds were released in 2017-18. Even the assured amount of Rs.1000 Crore more is not released so far. State Govt. submitted utilisation certificates for Rs.1632.48 Crore. Government of India was requested to provide adequate funds for the development of Capital city of Amaravati as there is a statutory duty cast on it under section 94(3) of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.
The Andhra Pradesh State Cabinet approved AP Wind, Solar Hybrid Power Policy 2018. The policy is aimed at encouraging hybrid renewal energy projects in the State and thus generate 18,000 MW renewable energy by 2021-22. The Government has set a target that Andhra Pradesh should be able to generate 10% of the total renewable energy generated in the country.

The Cabinet also decided to bring out a new policy to replace the existing AP Wind Policy-2015, AP Solar Policy 2015 with a focus on clean energy. The proposed policy aims at achieving 5,000 MW of solar power in the next five years. The Cabinet approved Industrial Development Policy 2015-20 to promote mega projects by providing incentives.

Disclosing the details of the meeting, Information and Public Relations (I&PR) Minister Kalyana Srinivasulu said that the Cabinet decided to increase the subsidy under Adarana II from the existing 70% to 90%. Over eight lakh families would stand to benefit. It would impose a burden of Rs 195 crore on the government. The Cabinet also approved amendments to beneficiaries’ eligibility, he said.

The Cabinet cleared the proposal for establishing five private universities in the State. With this, the total number of private universities would touch 16 in the State. Apollo University at Murakambattu in Chittoor district, Global University at Tirupati by the Centre for Developmental Education, Techno India University by Techno India Group at Kapulupada in Visakhapatnam, Anisha Rubica United World University in Intelligent Global Hub for Digital Pedagogies by Anisha United Education Society at Visakhapatnam, Om Sri Gayatri Viswakarma University by VED Society at Ongole were approved.

In addition, AP Fisheries and Oceanography University would come up at Bhimavaram under public-private partnership, he said.

**Maritime Infra Corporation**

The Minister said that AP Maritime Infrastructure Development Corporation would be established to develop ports and shipyards. The government would send a proposal to the Central government for encouraging zero budget natural farming at a cost of Rs 2,046 crore in the State, he said.

Upgrading the post of 610 grade II language pundits as school assistants, promotions to 2,585 police constables (civil) as head constables, 2,019 head constables and 566 ASIs and creation of three categories of posts numbering 35 for the implementation of Andhra Pradesh Irrigation and livelihood improvement project Phase II were some of the other decisions, he added.

**Five Pvt Varsities to come up in State**

Cabinet approves hybrid energy policy
Phethai cyclone losses were mitigated in Andhra Pradesh because of effective use of technology, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said. Better preparedness with accurate and timely information has helped in preventing loss of life and minimising damage to property, he pointed out. He appreciated Real Time Governance Society (RTGS) for its accurate forecast and coordination and officials in districts for effectively handling the situation.

The CM conducted an aerial survey of cyclone Phethai-hit East Godavari, West Godavari, and Visakhapatnam districts. After the visit, the CM said losses to a maximum extent were avoided with advance preparation and preventive measures in place.

Paddy crop in 2,189 hectare and horticulture in 30 hectare were affected. As regard to total crop loss, he said it is being assessed and a clear picture will emerge soon. “Compensation will be paid as per norm and that too in real-time, without delay. I have asked the officials to do the needful,” he assured.

He said there was 16 cm average rainfall between December 17 and 18 and more than 6 cm rainfall was recorded at 172 places with highest being in Araku Valley (25.9 cm) followed by Tallarevu (17 cm). The Chief Minister said 17 mandals were affected in the district and normalcy was restored in these mandals in a very short time. Damaged cell towers and roads were also restored within a short duration, he added.

He pointed out that heavy rains under the influence of Phethai has, in fact, helped Visakhapatnam, which is facing a drinking water problem. He said Yeleru reservoir was full to the brim like never before — water from the Godavari river in cyclone affected area and the rain helped in making the miracle possible.

“There is no compromise with regard to extending help to the affected people. We are going to hand over assistance to the tune of Rs 2,000 each to fishermen who are unable to venture into the sea and build pre-fabricated houses for those who have lost their shelter,” he said while interacting with fishermen from Bhairavapalem in Polavaram mandal.

The CM recalled that he was the first to respond when a major cyclone hit the district way back in 1996. “Even now, I have conducted teleconferences with the officials and issued instant orders to minimise the losses. We are the only government that reaches out to the victims on time during calamities,” he said.

Observing that the RTGS provided accurate information about the cyclone as compared to the India Meteorological Department, the CM said that the government was able to make optimum use of the technology. Construction of about 200 pre-fabricated houses and distribution of the financial help would begin very soon, the CM said. The Chief Minister distributed relief kits to fishermen from Uppada Kothapalli at a programme held at Suryaraopeta community hall.

Krishna suffers extensive crop loss

Standing crop on about 9,400 hectares, including paddy on 5,267 hectares, has been badly affected across Krishna district due to cyclone Phethai that hit the Kakinada coast. The Hindu quoted District Agriculture Department Joint Director T. Mohana Rao that ground-level staff had been deployed for enumeration of crop loss.

Maize crop on 2,000 hectares, tobacco on 276 hectares and cotton on 270 hectares and groundnut on 135 hectares have been damaged, according to information received till date. Horticulture Department Assistant Director B. Dayakar Babu, quoting preliminary reports, said horticulture crops, including banana, have been damaged on more than 1,500 hectares.

Heavy rains batter Srikakulam

Heavy rains caused by Cyclone Phethai battered most of Srikakulam district, causing much distress in a region that is yet to fully recover from the destruction caused by Cyclone Titli in mid-October. Power supply was cut to parts of Srikakulam town, Tekkali, Itchapuram and Amadalavalasa among others. Officials were relieved as there was no loss of life or extensive damage to property. The district received 249.2 mm of rainfall. Among the 13 divisions of Palakonda, Vangara received 44.8 mm of rain-
fall. Regidi Amadalavalasa received 14.8 mm rainfall. Out of 13 mandals in Srikakulam division, Ranasthalam received 11.2 mm rainfall. In Tekkali division, Kotabommali received 5.8 mm and Jalumuru received 5.2 mm of rainfall. The other 10 mandals received rainfall ranging between 2 and 4 mm. The district headquarters received 6.6 mm of rainfall between 8.30 am and 4 pm.

**Heavy rain in Guntur**

Heavy rain caused by Cyclone Phethai pounded most parts of the district, bringing life to a standstill. District Collector Kona Sasidhar said the district received 18.9 cm of rainfall. Tsundur mandal received the highest rainfall of 9.3 cm followed by Pittalavanipalem (8.6 cm) and Vemuru (8.7 cm). Sixteen mandals received rainfall in excess of 5 cm. Paddy farmers near Tenali were distraught after their crop which was nearing harvest was inundated by the rains.

Coastal mandals of Bapatla, Repalle, and Nizampatnam bore the brunt of the cyclone. Over 20 families living in a colony at Mangalagiri were evacuated following inundation. About 80 fishermen from Tamil Nadu were rescued by local marine police at Repalle and were lodged at a cyclone shelter in Lankavanidibba village.

**Prakasam benefits**

Cyclone Phethai has spared the Prakasam coast of devastation, but the weather system has brought the much-needed rains to the coastal mandals bringing cheer to farmers in the district, which has been reeling under drought for the fifth year in succession. The prospects for a good winter crop have brightened, thanks to rains induced by Gaja and Phethai and a low pressure in between,” officials said. The coastal mandals on an average received 20 cm rainfall giving impetus to cultivation of, among other winter crops, bengal gram, tobacco and black gram, he said after taking stock of the post-Phethai situation.
Visakhapatnam is set to emerge as a major hub for manufacture of medical devices in the country. The Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone Ltd (AMTZ), an ultra modern medical equipment manufacturing & testing facility, open to manufacturers & innovators was formally launched in December by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

The MedTech Zone will meet the requirements of the domestic market as well as the export market, according to the Chief Minister. Speaking at the inaugural session of the fourth WHO Global Forum on Medical Devices after dedicating the AP Medtech Zone to the nation, he said 80-90 per cent of the medical devices in the country were imported and most of them could be manufactured at the AP Medtech Zone and even exports could be taken up at a later stage.

The park will give a tremendous boost to the medical devices segment in the healthcare industry, he added. He complimented CEO Jitendar Sharma for his hard work in completing the first phase of the park in a year’s time.

AMTZ envisions to put India on the global map of high end medical equipment production and make health care products affordable and accessible not only for India but for also world at large.

The CM said it was the first time the WHO Global Forum on Medical devices was being held in the country and he thanked the WHO representative Henk Bekedam for choosing Visakhapatnam and AP Medtech Zone for the purpose. He offered to host it the next time as well.

The zone will provide for capital intensive scientific facilities required by most medical device manufacturers and more than 200 modern state of the art independent manufacturing units. The AMTZ, in 270 acres in two phases, will be a hub for manufacturing medical devices in the country. The first phase has been completed at a cost of Rs 450 Crore and the second phase will be completed at a cost of Rs 110 Crore.

From thermometer to CT scan machines, all medical tools will be manufactured and tested at the AMTZ. The facilities include the largest 3D printing centre, bio-material testing, X-ray tube testing, pro- typing, rapid tooling, CT Scan tube, largest gamma sterilisation plant for medical devices, R&D specialists and skill specialists. The

Around 240 companies will manufacture medical equipment at the Andhra Pradesh Medtech Zone (AMTZ), generating 25,000 jobs, after its completion. The first phase of the AMTZ was inaugurated by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at Pedagantyada in Visakhapatnam in December 2018.
The AMTZ, in 270 acres in two phases, will be a hub for manufacturing medical devices in the country. The first phase has been completed at a cost of Rs 450 Crore and the second phase will be completed at a cost of Rs 110 Crore.

AMTZ also has two world-class incubation facilities for innovators and start-ups in the field. Also 18 laboratories will be set up.

With good scope for manufacturing of medical equipment, by 2030 India will have chances of getting $40 billion marketing opportunities. Addressing representatives from 90 countries, Naidu urged them to invest in the AMTZ. As per the National Medical Devices Manufacturing Policy 2015, he said investors in the AMTZ would get permissions through single window process.

Union Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Chowbey congratulated the AP government for setting up the Medtech Zone and said the Centre had also played its part in setting up two incubation centres in the zone. He said the NDA government was giving a lot of importance to healthcare and it had taken up the Ayushman Bharat insurance scheme for the poorer sections.

Poonam Malakondaiah, Principal Secretary, Health, AP, said all facilities had been set up in the park for manufacturing, testing, and certification of medical devices in the park and from a simple thermometer to CT scans could be manufactured there. She said the product rollout from the park would begin next month.

Jitendar Sharma, CEO and MD of AP Medtech, said that in a little over a year’s time the first phase of the park had been completed, as the Chief Minister had given all cooperation and cleared all the hurdles in the construction of the park. He said India is importing medical devices worth Rs 30,000 Crore a year and the park would play a big role in import substitution. Later, exports could also be taken up.

The greatest emphasis would be on quality control, with 18 high-end industrial labs in the park. Eighty units, including 17 start-ups, have already started functioning, he added.

AMTZ organised a mega business conference meeting ‘MedAsia Business Forum’ attended by over 200 medical device manufacturers, OEM facilitators, MSMEs, innovators, start-ups, design solutions, venture fund managers and government entities. The brand ambassador for AMTZ, Indian Cricketer Virender Sehwag roped by the AP Government, was present in the conference and offered his support to the initiatives of Andhra Pradesh. AMTZ signed two MoUs one with BioRx Ventures for promoting innovations, prototypes and all intellectual property in MedTech and Inkoolu Private Limited, a design solutions entity for medical technologies at AMTZ.

India’s first government funded medical devices manufacturing park inked formal agreements with two companies for which layout has been approved and construction has started. The park which also houses four medical device testing centres with 18 different types of testing facilities under one roof booked 28 companies out of total 45 companies in the first phase.
Andhra Pradesh is leading the country in innovative energy efficiency management. Recognising the State’s initiatives in this regard, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) is now taking the help of Andhra Pradesh to implement its five-pronged strategy to make India an energy efficient country.

The BEE has invited AP to showcase its best practices in first-ever energy efficiency training week for India in collaboration with (IEA) in Delhi. The programme is aimed at building capacity among Indian policy makers at all levels of governance.

Abhay Bhakre, director-general of BEE, has praised AP for its “excellent performance on energy efficiency front at national level. The primary energy demand in India is expected to increase from 770 million toe (tonne of oil equivalent) in 2012 to 1500 million toe by 2030.

According to an official release, Abhay Bhakre invited Andhra Pradesh to participate and showcase its best practices on the energy efficiency front. In a teleconference with principal secretary for Energy Ajay Jain and other officials, Bhakre said that as a front runner state in energy efficiency index, Andhra Pradesh was exhibiting excellent performance at national level.

“AP is working with a passion towards implementing energy efficiency measures and has become a role model for other states by implementing programmes. We are inviting AP to participate in the first-ever energy efficiency training week for India and asking to share its best practices with others,” Bhakre said.

Stressing the need of implementing energy efficiency measures on a priority basis in all states, Bhakre said the primary energy demand in India has grown from about 450 million tons of oil equivalent (toe) in 2000 to about 770 million toe in 2012. It is expected to increase to somewhere between 1250 (estimated by IEA) and 1500 million toe by 2030, he said. The average annual energy supply in India in 2011 was only 0.6 toe per capita, whereas the global average was 1.88 toe per capita. In this connection, he said, the BEE had drawn a 3-year action plan in the past to present a set of concrete activities which would enhance the energy savings to 10% by 2018.

LED street lighting in all villages of State

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed the officials concerned to take steps to complete the 100 per cent retrofit of street lights with LEDs in all villages in the State by Sankranti.

In a teleconference with Energy and Panchayat Raj departments during the recent District Collectors’ conference, the Chief Minister said that the government was working to create a world record in LED street lighting by completing installation of around 27 lakh lights.

Stating that the State started the new LED revolution in the country by starting an LED programme in Visakhapatnam after cyclone Hud-Hud, the CM said, “We are champions at the national level by completing the project in more than 50 per cent of the villages in the State. We have created a record of sorts by completing the LED street lighting programme in six districts — East Godavari, West Godavari, Vizianagaram, Chittoor, Kadapa, and Anantapur,” he said, appreciating Panchayat Raj, Municipal Administration and Energy departments for scaling up the LED programme.

Panchayat Raj minister Nara Lokesh said the State stood as the front-runner with 33 per cent of streetlights in the national LED map (both urban and rural) followed by Rajasthan, Gujarat, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi. AP alone has retrofitted 18.81 lakh LED streetlights in villages till date. He also said the State would achieve an annual energy saving of 300 million units with a monetary benefit of Rs 180 crore per annum by completing all the 27 lakh LED street lighting in village panchayats.
The Ramco Cements Ltd, a prominent cement producer in the country, would set up a 3.15 MTPA green field cement plant in Andhra Pradesh. The company would invest around Rs 1500 crore in the new plant. The company is also making another Rs 2.5 billion in its grinding capacity in the state. Total capex, including these projects, would be around Rs 3430 Crore by end of 2020, said company officials.

With investments, the capacity in Andhra Pradesh would be close to 10 MTPA, making the company the largest Cement Manufacturer in Andhra Pradesh. Foundation stone for the new plant was laid by Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Chandrababu Naidu in December, 2018. The plant will come at Kalavatala, Kolimigundla Mandal, Kurnool District at an investment of around Rs 1500 Crore.

The company proposes to expand its clinker capacity from 3.10 MTPA to 4.60 MTPA along with Waste Heat Recovery System (WHRS) of 27 MW at its Jayanthipuram plant in Krishna District at a cost of Rs 740 crore. This project is expected to be commissioned in March 2020.

The company is also expanding its grinding capacity at Vizag by another 1 MTPA with the investment of Rs 250 crore for increasing the capacity from 0.9 MTPA to 2 MTPA. It is expected to be commissioned in March 2020. The company said that environment clearance has been obtained for the proposed plant. The required mining lease for the proposed plant is in place. This project is expected to generate direct employment of 300 people and indirect employment of around 1000 people.

The company is also embarking upon its expansion of its grinding capacities in Eastern States viz., Odisha and West Bengal. In Odisha, the company is establishing a green field grinding plant with a capacity of 0.9 MTPA at a cost of Rs 515 Crore with Railway siding facility. This is expected to be commissioned by September 2019. The company is also expanding its grinding capacity in Kolaghat, East Midnapore district, West Bengal from 0.9 MTPA to 2 MTPA at a cost of Rs 425 crore with Railway siding facility. This unit is expected to be commissioned in April 2019.

With the above capital expenditure plan of Rs 34.30 billion, the Ramco Cements Limited is set to reach the cement capacity of 20 MTPA by end of year 2020. The proposed capex is expected to be funded largely through internal accruals and balance through borrowings.
Congratulations to @Pvsindhu1 for making history and becoming the first Indian to win the BWF World Tour Finals held at Guangzhou, China. You have made the nation proud.

#BWFWorldTourFinals

11:53 PM - 15 Dec 2018

T 3028 - YEEEAHHH !!!
PV SINDHU World Champion at Badminton Championship in China ... so so proud of you ... well done PV ... you have fought your way back to the top ... never gave up ... never ever DO ... MADE INDIA IMMENSELY PROUD ...

11:51 PM - 15 Dec 2018 from Hingara, India
Olympic silver medallist and Telugu sports icon PV Sindhu made history by becoming the first Indian to win the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals. The Indian superstar beat a familiar foe in Nozomi Okuhara of Japan 21-19, 21-17 in the final to claim her first title of the year. Sindhu had a tough time until the end of 2018, unable to win even a single tournament but the Indian shuttler was in top form and ended the tournament unbeaten.

An emotional P.V. Sindhu finally got her hands on gold at badminton’s season-ending World Tour Finals on Dec 16. The 23-year-old Indian Sindhu has suffered a series of near-misses in recent years, winning silver at the 2016 Rio Olympics, and again at the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games this year.

The world number six, renowned for her never-say-die attitude, has also twice lost in the final of the World Championships and was runner-up in last year’s season finale.

But she put all that heartbreak behind her in the Chinese city of Guangzhou, beating the fifth-ranked Nozomi Okuhara of Japan 21-19, 21-17 in the women's final in just over an hour.

Sindhu, who was always in control of the match, sealed the championship with a forehand smash, before collapsing to the court floor on her hands and knees, physically and emotionally exhausted.

"I'm really proud, the year has ended on a beautiful note," said Sindhu.

"People have been asking me the same question, I think the question won't come again - asking why I always lose in the final", she remarked.

For her exploits in Guangzhou, China that have made the country proud, Badminton Association of India (BAI) have decided to give her a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh.

"It's a great year-ending for Indian badminton. Sindhu winning the Tours Final and defeating the best players to achieve the historic feat indicates the leap Indian badminton has taken. I congratulate both Sindhu and Sameer on behalf of entire Badminton Association of India," BAI president Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Leader of Opposition Y S Jaganmohan Reddy congratulated P V Sindhu on winning the BWF Tour title.

In a statement, the CM expressed happiness over Sindhu's historic victory and wished her many such successes in future. The opposition leader, in a separate message, conveyed congratulations to Sindhu on winning her maiden BWF title by defeating Nozomi Okuhara of Japan in straight sets in the finals. The Leader of Opposition said the brilliance of P V Sindhu made the year 2018 memorable.

This win is special: Coach Gopichand

Coach Gopichand lauded his ward for not just winning the final but beating quality players. “Beating them all in one week is special. She finishes the year on a high, she’s had medals at the big events which was the target this year: Worlds, Asiad, CWG and Tour finals,” he said.

The coach hadn’t been unduly bothered by her string of final losses, saying it was important only for her own confidence, and not to prove to the world. “There’s been a lot of talk about her not winning the finals. So it was important, not for anybody else, but for Sindhu’s mind – that she locked in the final with confidence,” he said. Speaking on the future, he added, “2020 will be the big one and 2022 Asian Games and CWG are important for us. Having said that, the All England will be our target the next year,” he declared.

Film fraternity members led by megastar Amitabh Bachchan extended hearty congratulations to P.V. Sindhu on her historic win at the season finale at the BWF World Tour Finals 2018.
Andhra Pradesh government has targeted to achieve cent per cent Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) in AP in the coming six years. Towards this end, the government organised a 9-day training programme near Acharya Nagarjuna University in Guntur district from December 8 to 16 to encourage farmers to take up ZBNF for getting good returns at lesser investment.

Inaugurating the programme, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said that wonders could be created by bringing together technology and nature. He said that AP would lead the world in adopting ZBNF for a healthy lifestyle. Disclosing that presently 5.38 lakh farmers adopted natural farming in 5 lakh acres in the state, he said that the State Government is targeting that 60 lakh farmers follow the natural farming practices in 2 Crore acres by 2024.

The training programme, conducted by Subhash Palekar, known as the father of ZBNF, was attended by over 9,000 farmers from 3,100 villages in the State. In addition, about 500 people including agriculture department staff, farmers from other States and representatives from abroad participated.

At a time when the farming sector was in crisis and the farmer was burdened with low yields and rise in investments, the Andhra Pradesh government has begun promoting natural farming. Natural farming proponent Subhash Palekar led the training programmes holding classes on soils, mulching practices and use of natural nutrients to enrich the soils. T. Vijaya Kumar, advisor, Agriculture and Cooperation Department and co-vice chairman, Rythu Sadhikara Samstha’s Zero Budget Natural Farming division, said that ZBNF could revolutionise farming in a big way.

Palekar spoke on the cultivation of paddy and ragi in wet lands and dry lands. Stating that paddy belongs to the grass family which can grow throughout our country, he said that paddy is from C4 (Carbon 4) family which utilises the energy created through photosynthesis for development of plant and pod creation. He explained that the paddy has a potential of giving yield up to 120 quintals per acre. “But to get the yield, there should be 2.5% of carbon in the soil which is only 0.2% at present, the nitrogen and oxygen ratio should be 10:1 and the sunlight should be 10,000-12,000 foot candles (FC),” he said. He said that due to application of chemical fertilizers and insecticides, soil carbon levels have been coming down.

“Paddy can be grown in dry lands if cultivated under ZBNF methods by taking intercrops with pulses in paddy. As paddy belongs to grass family monopod plant, it can withstand both drought and heavy rain conditions;” he said.

Software engineers who returned from the US, agricultural graduates and engineers have started nature
farming. An IT engineer who returned to India to take up nature farming and others from various other fields spoke at the event.

ITC came forward to spend Rs 150 crore on Nature Farming in the state under the Corporate Social Responsibility.” The Chief Minister directed the adviser to the government on nature farming P Vijaya Kumar to appoint a Chief Executive to provide marketing facilities for farmers and a technical expert to provide technology to the farmers.

Subhash Palekar said that Zero Budget Nature Farming was good for maintaining ecological balance and to check the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. He felt that there was a need to shift more farmers to the nature farming. In Karnataka about 25,000 farmers attended training classes on nature farming while in AP about 9000 farmers participated in the meeting. He urged the government and farmers to create awareness on nature farming to more farmers to shift to the nature farming.

Minister for Agriculture Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy said the government was giving top priority for nature farming and implementing recommendations of Vijaya Kumar. He urged the farmers who attended the meeting motivate another one hundred farmers to start nature farming. Minister for Civil Supplies Prattpati Pulla Rao, Minister for Social Welfare Nakka Anand Babu, Special Chief Secretary (Agriculture) B Rajasekahar, were among those who participated.

ZBNF, a holistic alternative

Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP), Department of Agriculture (DoA) is implementing Zero-Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) Programme, through the Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS), a not-for-profit organization established by GoAP. The programme has been initiated in 2015 -16 with multiple objectives of enhancing farmers’ welfare, consumer welfare and for conservation of environment.

ZBNF is a holistic alternative to the present paradigm of high cost chemical inputs-based agriculture and to address the negative and uncertain impacts of climate change. ZBNF principles are in sync with the principles of Agro ecology, a world wide movement. Its greatest strength is that it is based on the latest scientific discoveries in Agriculture, and, at the same time it is rooted in Indian tradition. The FAO has recently as April, 2018 urged all countries to move towards the adoption of Agro ecology to meet the twin goals of global food security and conservation of the environment.

The programme invests heavily in building the capacities of farmers and their continuous handholding. The crucial innovation and the strength of the programme is the farmer-to-farmer knowledge dissemination strategy. The trainers are the best practicing ZBNF farmers, called Community Resource Persons (CRPs). They are highly motivated and strongly committed to ZBNF as their own lives have been transformed by their practicing ZBNF in their own fields. It is their dedicated work that has resulted in new farmers in the programme villages switching over to ZBNF. They are the true heroes of this unique movement.

A woman farmer with a child in her lap making notes on natural farming.
Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is confident that the Polavaram project would be completed expeditiously. Addressing the farmers after launching the erection of first gate of project at Polavaram in December, he said the project works would be completed by May 2019 and water would be released through gravity through right and left main canals by December 2019.

All the crest gates, each weighting 300 tons, would be erected by May 2019. The coffer dam works would be completed on war-footing, he stated. Describing the taking up of Polavaram project as a divine opportunity for him, the Chief Minister said the project set several global records. The concrete works to be taken up on January 6 would enter Guinness book of world records by completing 30000 cubic metres. The China and USA held the records by completing 21,500 cubic metres concrete works.

He had personally inspected the project works 29 times by December and conducted virtual review for 83 times. Despite of opposition party’s false campaign, the State government was able to complete 63 per cent of project works so far, he said.

The Chief Minister said that he had insisted on merger of seven villages of Telangana in Andhra Pradesh for speedy completion of project works. By completing the Pattiseema lift irrigation scheme, the Krishna delta ayacut was stabilised, he said.

Andhra Pradesh had achieved 11 per cent growth rate, he noted, adding that priority would be given for horticulture and aqua sectors.

Centre retracts statement before SC
The Centre retracted its previous statement to the Supreme Court that it was ready to appoint an independent agency for public hearings in Chhattisgarh and Odisha on the Indira Sagar Polavaram Project on the Godavari river in Andhra Pradesh.

In an affidavit filed before a bench of Justices Madan B Lokur, S Abdul Nazeer and Deepak Gupta, the government has said that statement given on November 29 before the court was “inadvertently communicated” to the counsel appearing on its behalf.

"The inadvertent communication, made without obtaining instructions from senior officers, to the counsel may kindly be considered and condoned,” the Centre said in its affidavit.

SC rejects Odisha’s plea for stay
The Supreme Court rejected the State government’s plea to stop the ongoing work on the controversial Polavaram dam in Andhra Pradesh.

A three-member bench of the apex court, while hearing the plea, refused to order a stay on the Indira Sagar Polavaram Project on the Godavari river in AP. This apart, the Supreme Court directed the Centre to ask Odisha and Chhattisgarh to submit complete details about the exact amount of areas which would be submerged due to the Polavaram project. In addition, the top court said the public hearing can be conducted in these two states only after it received information about the total number of people to be affected by the proposed project along with compensation and rehabilitation of the affected people.
**Lulu global convention centre in Vizag**

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu said that the proposed Lulu International shopping mall coming up in Visakhapatnam should be built with the best global designs.

He emphasized upon the need to make sure that the complex provides an amazing sea view with a unique underpass or overpass extending from the complex to the beach. The LuLu international shopping mall and mega international convention center is coming up in 13.83 acres of land in Visakhapatnam, at a cost of Rs. 1,500 Crore. The project’s components include a 6 Lakh sqft mega commercial complex, convention center cum exhibition hall with a seating capacity of 5,000, five star hotel with 220 rooms, along with other facilities.

He said that the Lulu international convention center and shopping mall should be built with modern and unique design. Suggesting a few changes to the designs submitted, he said that the building should be an iconic structure with an incredible view of the beach from all sides.

The UAE-based LuLu Group design team met Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for discussing designs of the mega construction. The design team, led by Design International CEO Davide Padoa met the CM at Secretariat on December 7. The CM asked the team to plan for 800 rooms with 5 to 7-star facilities. Priority should be given to sea view from every point of the mega shopping mall. He asked them to improve the designs to meet the expectations of people.

The construction of the mall is expected to be completed within 30 months and would provide direct employment to 5000 people and to another 5000 indirectly. The convention centre will have a seating capacity of 7000 pax at a time and the mall will be built in a sprawling 20 lakh square feet, under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

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**Patanjali Ayurved Limited’s manufacturing unit in Vizianagaram**

The Patanjali Food and Herbal Park Private Limited is going to set up a food park in Andhra Pradesh at Chinnarapalli village, Vizianagaram. In this connection, Indian Yoga guru known for his work in Ayurveda, Baba Ramdev, met Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu at Secretariat on December 6.

They discussed the proposed Patanjali mega food park to be built in the Vizianagaram district at a budget of Rs 634 Crore. The establishment of the project would be operated and promoted solely by Patanjali Ayurved Limited.

The Patanjali Food and Herbal Park Pvt Ltd is going to come up in 172.84 acres and is aimed at providing employment opportunity to about 33,400 people. The mega food park will process the agriculture produce and manufacture respective products for consumption. As part of the unit, Core processing facilities including IQF freezer for fruits and vegetables, aseptic filling and pulping line, pre-cooling and ripening chambers, cold storage with blast freezer, drying, grinding, grading, packing facility for spices and grains and a dry warehouse will be set up.

The products would be sold under Patanjali brand across the country. It is setting up processing units strategically close to the places of agriculture crops it would like to procure as part of its food business. Crops including Barley, Rice, Sesame, Maize, Jowar, Pomegranate, Mango, Chilli, Onion, Ginger, Peas, Potato, Turmeric, Pulses, Red Gram and Papaya will be processed in the proposed unit. The anchor unit will be the juice extraction unit with a capacity of 1,500 MT per day, proposed with a total investment of Rs. 45.20 Crore. Processing unit of juice, biscuits, noodles, frozen vegetables and spices will be set up to benefit the farmers of the region and provide employment to the locals.

The company plans to develop the facility with an initial capacity of 200,000 tonnes per annum, which would be further expandable to 300,000 tonnes, at an investment of Rs 500 Crore.
When it comes to the top 10 cities for economic growth, India is set to dominate over the next two decades, according to Oxford Economics. But more interestingly, a city that has just begun its journey on the path of development, Vijayawada figures in this list.

Andhra Pradesh does not have a big metropolis following the bifurcation of the state. However, after the residual AP was formed, Vijayawada economy has been growing thanks to the multi-pronged activities undertaken by the State Government.

Businesses, real estate, trading, hospitality industries are growing at a fast pace. The Government’s efforts at beautifying the city and improving civic facilities has made a difference. The recent F1H20 event has further improved the profile of the city.

Surat, a diamond processing and trading center in the western state of Gujarat, will see the fastest expansion through 2035, averaging more than 9 percent, Richard Holt, Oxford’s head of global cities research, wrote in a report. All of the 10 fastest over that period will be in India. While economic output in many of those Indian cities will remain rather small in comparison to the world’s biggest metropolises, aggregated gross domestic product of all Asian cities will exceed that of all North American and European urban centers combined in 2027. By 2035, it will be 17 percent higher, with the largest contribution coming from Chinese cities.

Little will change at the top of the list of the world’s biggest cities between now and 2035. New York, Tokyo, Los Angeles and London will defend their spots as Shanghai and Beijing - each boasting more than 20 million people - surpass Paris and Chicago. Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Southern China will also make the top 10, crowding out Hong Kong.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
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<th>Average annual growth (%)</th>
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<tr>
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AP High Court to shift to Vijayawada from January

Andhra Pradesh High Court will shift to Vijayawada from January 1, 2019. CM Chandrababu Naidu directed CRDA officials to complete construction of City Court Building at Amaravati by January 20. Before that, eight court halls will be provided at CM camp office in Vijayawada. The High Court has holidays from January 5 to 20. Justice Chagari Praveen Kumar has been appointed as the Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh with effect from January 1. The appointment was made by President Ram Nath Kovind. He has been selected from a pool of 16 judges who were shifted to the newly formed Andhra Pradesh High court. Justice Chagari Praveen Kumar is the senior-most Judge of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh. He is the son of late Chagari Padmanabha Reddy, a prominent criminal advocate in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh.

The notification that came through the Union Law Ministry read, “Consequent upon the constitution of separate High Court for the State of Andhra Pradesh by the President vide notification dated 26.12.2018, and in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 223 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice Chagari Praveen Kumar, senior-most Judge of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, to perform the duties of the office of the Chief Justice of that High Court with effect 01.01.2019.”

The Union Law Ministry issued an order signed by President Ram Nath Kovind, which said that Andhra Pradesh will have its own High Court from January 1 next year at its capital Amaravati and the High Court at Hyderabad shall become the High Court for Telangana. The order also allocated judges to the two high courts.

However, lawyers affiliated to the Andhra Pradesh High court have been seeking an extension of stay at the present premises until March next year. The lawyers staged a dharna before the Hyderabad High Court demanding an extension. The lawyers argue that three days were not enough to shift to Amaravati, when the construction of the temporary Andhra Pradesh High Court was yet to be completed.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister has said that the court could function out of his camp office in the capital region until January 4. As there would be a holiday period of 20 days starting from January 5, the CM assured that the judicial complex at Amaravati would be completed by then.

CM inaugurates Vijayawada’s first Five-star hotel

Vijayawada’s first ever five star category hotel, Novotel Varun, was inaugurated by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu near Bharathi Nagar on December 10. Partnered with Accor Hotels, Varun Group has come up with the facility, which reflects the importance of the region for business and leisure travelers.

Speaking on the inaugural event, CM said, “Bringing luxurious hotels to Vijayawada will help boost the hospitality sector in the capital region along with attracting big investments”. “We want to see 1 Lac hotel rooms in Andhra Pradesh. Amaravati, Tirupati, Vizag and Vijayawada are major growth centers,” he maintained.

The property is deemed to be the first internationally branded hotel to open in Andhra Pradesh’s commercial center. Vijayawada’s proximity to the upcoming smart city Amaravati makes Vijayawada an important destination for corporate travelers. The property is deemed to be the first internationally branded hotel to open in Andhra Pradesh’s commercial center.

Designed with the theme of four seasons in a year, Novotel Vijayawada Varun’s well-equipped rooms are spacious. All living areas include ergonomic workspaces and signature in-room amenities offering a convenient, comfortable and seamless environment ideally designed for business, leisure travelers and families. There’s a roof-top swimming pool, signature spa, fitness center and a 202 meters jogging track. Guests traveling for business and meetings can choose from seven well-appointed meeting rooms and a 10,000 square feet banquet hall. On the F&B front, the hotel caters to their guests with four dining options with an eclectic choice of cuisines and food and beverage options.
Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu envisioned Amaravati to be one of the Happiest cities encompassing the highest standards of livability, infrastructure with a thriving economic environment.

Amaravati is being developed as a complete city. It is well-connected to key markets and suppliers by road, rail, port, waterways and air and bounded by two National Highways. With an extent of 217 Sq Km and road network of 1,604 km, the city is expected to have 1.5 million workforce by 2050 and 3.5 million population by 2050 in its 9 theme cities.

Amaravati is defining "happiness" through various path-breaking initiatives which include human-centric urban planning and design, Green-blue network, responsiveness and sustainability ensure. Amaravati is based on trust and partnership. World’s largest successful voluntary land pooling, with 27,956 farmers offering 33,920 acres was the beginning of the city. The Land Pooling Scheme is now widely acknowledged as a global best practice.

A city-wide green-blue network was planned under which 30% blue-green space is earmarked in city with 80 km inland canals, 100 plus parks at each neighborhood and 21 km riverfront public space. Amaravati is the first city to be rated "Platinum" under IGBC Green Cities Rating. Nine sub-cities will act as economic pillars, creating 1.5 million jobs and $35 billion GDP. The city has partnered with the global best across domains to help realize the vision. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has put in focused efforts on building the city. Not surprisingly, Amaravati has developed faster than other Indian and global greenfield cities. Over 90% of the total works (Rs. 48,115 Cr) have been tendered out. City wide infrastructure and major road network to be completed by Jan-2019. Housing for 4,000 officials will be completed by Feb-2019. Tier II - neighbourhood infrastructure will be completed by Jun-2019. Start-up area development project already grounded to kick-start the economy. Also, world’s best social infrastructure has already been created to make Amaravati destination for global talent. Here is a presentation by AP CRDA Commissioner Dr Cherukuri Sridhar on the vision for developing Amaravati Knowledge City.
Amaravati has already attracted leading universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
<th>Courses Offered</th>
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<tr>
<td>Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT)</td>
<td>- 65,009 students by Y20</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary: engineering, medical, liberal arts, commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRM University</td>
<td>- 44,000 students by Y20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amrita Vishwa Vidhyapeetham</td>
<td>- 25,300 students enrolled</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary and focus on healthcare: engineering, medical, liberal arts, commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Institute of Design</td>
<td>- 17,000 students by Y20</td>
<td>Focus on industry design, fine arts, photography and related fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XURI)</td>
<td>- 10,000 students by Y20</td>
<td>Management, business, policy, Rural management, law, International studies, commerce and related</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other notable universities – NIFT, IGNOU, Central Institute of Tool Design

Amaravati will improve inclusivity by catering to the growing skill development sector

- Setting up a Skills university in consultation with private industry
- Engage with public and private universities to provide certifications
- Centre of Excellence for skill development
- Larsen and Toubro have been allocated land for setting up a Construction Skill Training Institute (CSTI)

Global Schools in Amaravati

- Higher Education Institutes
- Corporate, Public Sector and University R&D
- Skill Development Institutes
- Start-up hub: accelerators/incubators/start-ups

The opportunity going forward

- Higher Education Institutes
- Corporate, Public Sector and University R&D
- Skill Development Institutes
- Start-up hub: accelerators/incubators/start-ups

An innovation eco-system is emerging at Amaravati

- Private investors
- Public entities

A phase-wise plan for Amaravati Knowledge City

**Phase 1** (2017-2022)
- 4 Universities
- 1 Skills University
- 1 Entrepreneurship Development Institute  
- 25 R&D companies
- 50 start-ups

**Phase 2** (2023-2037)
- 6-8 Universities
- 1 Skills University
- 1 Entrepreneurship Development Institute
- 350 R&D companies
- 1,400 start-ups
The State government signed a memorandum of understanding with China-based Sunny Opotech Technology (SOT) Company Limited (Sunny Opotech), a leading manufacturer of integrated optical devices and optical imaging system solutions, for setting up a unit in Tirupati. The unit is estimated to be an investment of Rs 500 Crore and is expected to generate around 4,000 jobs.

The MoU was exchanged between IT Secretary Vijayanand, Andhra Pradesh Information Technology Academy CEO Bhaskar Reddy with the China-based company delegation Executive Vice President Wang Wenjie, Ningbo (Sunny Opotech) CEO David Wang in the presence of IT Minister Nara Lokesh at Secretariat.

Minister Lokesh took the opportunity to explain the various measures that were taken by the State government to develop electronics manufacturing sector in AP. “We are probably the only State in India, which introduced unique policies to attract large, medium and small scale manufacturers. Andhra Pradesh has recently been ranked Number 1 in ‘Ease of Doing Business’. Special incentives given by us are a hit with investors. They have shifted their perception of seeing India from a destination of assembling electronics parts to working towards establishing the State as a state-of-the-art hub for manufacturing industry,” Lokesh said. He further elaborated on the efforts that are afoot to manufacture Plastics, PCB, Chip Design, Batteries, Camera Modules, and others with three electronic clusters in AP.

Companies such as Foxconn, Celkon, Karbonn and Dixon have already set shop in the State. “Holitech, Flex and Reliance Jio will soon be joining this fast-growing industry. The State’s long-term vision towards which the government is working is to create an electronics manufacturing industry valued at $250 billion by 2024, approximately half of the total $ 500 billion market of India,” he said. Sunny Opotech has products ranging from industrial, cell phones, teaching support, life science, non-contact measuring, optical imaging products automotive opticals among others.

CEO of SOT, David Wang, said by August 2019 the company would start manufacturing a huge number of camera modules, lenses, vehicle camera modules, augmented reality and virtual reality products. AP had the ecosystem required for companies to sustain which was the reason behind the company’s move to invest in India for the first time.

Minister Lokesh said that 30 out of every 100 mobile phones being manufactured in India were coming from AP which was growing as a hub of electronics manufacturing units. He thanked the management of SOT for choosing AP and assured all support for their establishment in Tirupati, SriCity or any other place. More such companies were in the pipeline to set up units in the State, which targeted at bringing in companies that could altogether make 200 types of electronic components.

- Sunny Opotech to set up a unit in Tirupati with an estimated budget of Rs 500 Crore.
- The unit, for which MoU exchanged by CEO of Sunny Opotech, David Wang, assures to generate about 4000 jobs.
Andhra Pradesh has been the leader in exports of marine products in the country and it can continue to be supreme in the position by taking up value addition. The marine products’ exports from Andhra Pradesh has touched a new high, surpassing all targets and this is made possible, thanks to the strict adherence of quality norms set by European Union which had imposed sanctions with respect to quality of products.

Andhra Pradesh continues to be the highest exporter of marine products in the country and while India’s exports during 2017-18 last year increased to Rs.45,107 crore, AP accounted for a whopping Rs.20,600 crore. In fact, the growth has been steady, with the exception of the year 2015-16. The growth will be phenomenal if value addition is taken up by the exporters in the State. However, value addition to marine products is critical if India is to compete in the international market, as at present mostly only raw material is being exported, according to experts who were in Visakhapatnam late December for a one-day workshop on the subject organised by the Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA). Value addition should be taken up on large scale and bigger exporters should take the lead utilising the Government schemes, national president of Seafood Exporters’ Association of India (SEAI) V. Padmanabham says.

There is need to accord agriculture status to fisheries which is a long-pending demand, and other pending issues should also be addressed. Director (Marketing), MPEDA T. Dola Sankar points out that in India only 6 per cent value addition is being done, in comparison with 65 per cent in Thailand. A lot of ground is left to be covered and India has made not much of headway in the past decade.

“Andhra Pradesh leads in marine exports and AP exporters and processors should take the initiative in the matter;” he opined, adding that there were a lot of schemes launched by the MPEDA and the Government of India for the purpose to help exporters and processors. The NDA Government had allocated Rs 3,000 crore under the umbrella blue revolution scheme to assist the marine sector and it should be used by exporters and processors of marine food, notes the Development Commissioner (Fisheries) in the Union Ministry of Agriculture P. Paul Pandian. The Government has also set up Fisheries Infrastructure Development Fund with Rs 7,500 crore to assist them and the guidelines are being formulated to release funds to various units. CEO of AP Food Processing Society, a State Government organisation, YS Prasad, notes the AP Government had released Rs 160 crore subsidy to 30 new processing units in the sector during the past four years, adding capacity of 1.5 lakh tonnes.

At present, there are 67 marine processing units in the State. Two mega aqua parks are also coming up in the State. There is also the need for introducing ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat seafoods into the Indian market as well as the export market. According to official figures, India’s exports of marine products during 2010-11 was Rs.12,901 crore out of which Andhra Pradesh’s contribution alone was Rs.2400 crore. During the next year 2011-12, the country exports were worth Rs.16,597 crore and AP’s share was Rs.2,727 crore. In 2012-13, India’s exports were Rs.18,856 crore of which AP accounted for Rs.3,125 crore.

The next year 2013-14 saw tremendous increase in AP’s contribution at Rs.12,000 crore, out of India’s total exports of Rs.30,213 crore which was a new record. The trend continued in 2014-15 with AP’s share remaining the same with Rs.15,000 crore out of national figure of Rs.33,441 crore, which was nearly 50 per cent of the country’s production. This dropped marginally during 2015-16 and AP’s share remained the same with Rs.13,500 crore to India’s Rs.30,421 crore. However, the State bounced back in 2016-17 with exports to the tune of Rs.17,000 crore against the country’s Rs.37,821 crore. For the current year 2018-19, the national production so far is Rs.19,079 crore of which Andhra Pradesh has accounted for Rs.7,875 crore. With still seven months left, there is a lot of scope for large-scale increase in marine products and march for creating new records. What matters is that Andhra Pradesh continues to be the biggest contributor in marine products from India, a pride of place which others may find difficult to achieve. And Andhra Pradesh can draw ahead by a distance once value addition to marine products is taken up on a large scale, which may increase its earnings by nearly 200 to 300 per cent, experts say.

- B Prabhakara Sarma

Photo Courtesy: The Hindu
With big budget films like NTR's biopic, Maharshi, and Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy gearing up for release in 2019, Telugu cinema has plenty to offer to the audiences. And only time will tell which among them will emerge the winner at the box-office. Here’s a list of some of the most awaited films of the year.

**NTR’s Biopic**

NTR’s biopic and the hype surrounding it needs no introduction. For the past few months, the film has been making waves for its star cast, led by Nandamuri Balakrishna, who’ll be playing the role of his father, the iconic actor and former CM, NT Rama Rao. Directed by Krish Jagarlamudi, the film explores the life of NT Rama Rao, and his journey from being a movie star to that of being the founder of Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which went on to change the course of politics in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Apart from Balakrishna, the film has a galaxy of stars including Kalyanram, Vidya Balan, Rana Daggubati, Sumanth, Rakul Preet, Nithya Menen, Hansika to name a few. Incidentally, during the course of its making, the team decided to narrate the story of NTR in two parts. While NTR’s Kathanyakudu will focus on his journey as an actor, the second part, titled as NTR’s Mahanayakudu, will predominantly narrate the story of what led to his foray into politics and becoming the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Needless to say, everyone’s waiting with bated breath to see how well Balakrishna has portrayed the role of his father, whose aura and influence continues to shape Telugu identity across the world. NTR’s Kathanyakudu is slated for release on January 9, 2019.

**Vinaya Vidheya Rama**

Post the blockbuster success of Rangasthalam, Ram Charan’s popularity is at an all-time high. His upcoming film, Vinaya Vidheya Rama, marks his first collaboration with popular filmmaker Boyapati Sreenu. Known for his action dramas, Boyapati Sreenu’s latest film is expected to be a high octane action film which builds upon Ram Charan’s mass appeal and action hero image. The film narrates the story of five brothers and how they take on their rivals. Buzz is that the film will draw parallels between the fight between Pandavas and Kauravas; however, it remains to be seen how Boyapati Sreenu has moulded the story to deliver what Ram Charan’s fans expect from him. Kiara Advani, who made her Telugu film debut with Bharat Ane Nenu, has played Ram Charan’s romantic interest, and it also stars Prashanth and Aryan Rajesh in key roles. The film is expected to release on January 11.

**Mr Majnu**

Akhil Akkineni’s last two films, including Akhil and Hello, met with moderate success; however, that hasn’t dampened the youngster’s spirits. He collaborated with director Venky Atluri, who shot to fame with Varun Tej starrer Tholi Prema, for his third feature film, Mr Majnu, and contrary to what the title suggests, Akhil will be seen as a casanova, who is the cynosure of all eyes. The romantic drama is being seen as Akhil’s best bet to cement the actor’s image as a romantic hero, and with almost five actresses, including Nidhhi Agerwal, in the cast, it might be the romantic film that Akhil and his fans have been waiting for a while now. Mr Majnu will release in theatres on January 25.
Yatra

Close to the heels of NTR’s biopic is another biopic of Congress leader and former CM, YS Rajasekhar Reddy. Titled as ‘Yatra’, the film explores YSR’s padayatra, which turned the tide in his favour in the 2004 Andhra Pradesh Assembly election. The padayatra, where YSR travelled to every nook and corner of Andhra Pradesh, is widely credited to be the turning point in the former politician’s life and it led to his victory in the elections, and also changed him as a person. Directed by Mahi V Raghav, the film has popular Malayalam actor, Mammootty playing the role of YSR. The film is expected to release on February 8.

Maharshi

Ever since Mahesh Babu scored a huge hit with Bharat Ane Nenu, there has been a lot of speculation about what the theme of his next film is going to be. After a short break from work, the actor began working on his next film, Maharshi, in which he’ll reportedly be playing an US-based businessman, who returns to India. Although rumours have been rife that the film tackles the subject of organic farming, director Vamshi Paidipally has kept everyone guessing about what sort of film he’s making with Mahesh Babu. The film also has Allari Naresh and Pooja Hegde in lead roles, and it has been shot in Hyderabad, USA, and Dehradun. Maharshi is going to be the first of the big-budget Telugu films to hit the screens in the summer of 2019.

Saaho

With Saaho, Prabhas is all set to dazzle the screens after a gap of more than two years since Baahubali: The Conclusion’s release. Directed by Sujeeth, Saaho is said to be an adrenaline-pumping action drama with several big technicians attached to the project, including, Kenny Bates, acclaimed action choreographer from Hollywood. Apart from Prabhas, the film also has Shraddha Kapoor and Neil Nitin Mukesh in lead roles, and it’s going to release in Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi. The big question on everyone’s mind is whether the film will repeat the success of Baahubali beyond the border of the two Telugu speaking states; however, with Prabhas’ star power and popularity across the country, it could spring a big surprise. The film will arrive in screens on August 15.

Majili

For the first time since their wedding in 2017, Naga Chaitanya and Samantha will be seen together in an upcoming drama titled, Majili. Directed by Shiva Nirvana, who had previously made Ninnu Kori, the film is said to be a realistic take on different stages of marriage, and it stars the duo in two different avatars, including one which is set in the ’80s. The film is being shot in Vizag and Hyderabad, and it’ll be interesting to see the chemistry which the couple share onscreen once again.

Jersey

2019 will also see Nani in a brand new avatar; thanks to his latest film, Jersey. The film, directed by Gautham Tinnanuri, delves into the life of a cricket player who realises his potential way past his youth. Nani plays the role of a middle-aged cricketer, and the film is expected to be an inspiring tale about following one’s dream. Shraddha Srinath is the lead actress in this drama which will hit the screens in April. Incidentally, Nani will also be teaming up with filmmaker Vikram Kumar for the first time and their untitled film will hit the floors in February.

Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy

Megastar Chiranjeevi’s much-awaited period drama, Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy has been in the making for a long time now. Directed by Surender Reddy, the film explores the life of freedom fighter Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy, who led a rebellion against the Britishers in the mid 19th century. Produced by Ram Charan, the film has a mammoth cast including the likes of Amitabh Bachchan, Nayanthara, Vijay Sethupathi, Taman - naah, Jagapathi Babu, and Sudeep. And it promises to be an epic film in every sense. Most part of the film has been shot in Hyderabad, and the team also shot a significant portion in Georgia. Amit Trivedi is scoring the music and Ratnavelu is the cinematographer of the film, which could hit the screens in late summer of 2019.

Dear Comrade

If Arjun Reddy made Vijay Deverakonda an actor to reckon with, he turned into a star post the blockbuster success of Geetha Govindam in 2018. It’s little wonder that there’s a lot of anticipation about his next film, Dear Comrade. Directed by newcomer Bharat Kamma, the film stars the Geetha Govindam duo Vijay and Rashmika in lead roles, and it’s said to be an action-packed love story which unfolds in Kakinada. Vijay will be seen as a college student, whereas Rashmika will be seen as a cricket player. Given Vijay Deverakonda’s charisma and his ability to stir up intense emotions on screen, Dear Comrade could be the dark horse of 2019.
Thanks to the determination of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the long-delayed Kadapa Steel Plant has become a reality. Following the negative response from the Centre, the State Government took upon itself to build the plant. CM has laid the foundation stone at Maremma Kambaladinne village in Mylavaram mandal in YSR Kadapa district, for the construction of the steel plant. The laying of the plant’s foundation assumes importance not only because it is being taken up by the State Government instead of the Centre, but also due to the friction between both governments over the unkept assurance regarding ‘special status’ for the State. The construction of the steel plant was part of the assurances made post the bifurcation of the state in 2014. The CM said that this move and the commencement of work at Amaravati for the State Secretariat buildings were two important landmarks during his tenure. While seeking cooperation from local leaders for land acquisition, he said work at the plant will commence within three months.

Earlier, the State Cabinet had approved the setting up of the steel plant named Rayalaseema Steels, as the Centre did not respond to the State’s request. The Centre’s lukewarm response was reportedly due to the lack of feasibility for such a project in the current global scenario and the slack in demand for steel. Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MP CM Ramesh went on a ‘fast unto death’ demanding the Centre to set up the steel plant as assured during the bifurcation.

To be part of the Andhra Pradesh Mineral development Corporation, Rayalaseema Steels would have to be built on a 3,500 acre government site and require an outlay of about Rs 18,000-20,000 Crore for a unit that has a capacity of three million tonnes per annum. The Government of Andhra Pradesh earlier issued an order constituting Rayalaseema Steel Corporation Limited as a private limited company and with P. Madhusudan (former CMD of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant) as chairman and managing director, and Director of Mines and Geology and Special Secretary (Finance) and A.P. Mineral Development Corporation (APMDC) Vice-Chairman and Managing Director (VC&MD) as directors. The RSCL will have an authorized paid-up capital of Rs 2 Crore divided into 2000000 shares of Rs 10 each held by the Governor represented by the Assistant Secretary (mines) to the GoAP, Director of Mines of GoAP and RSCL CMD in 19999998:1:1 ratio.

**Metro Rail**

The cabinet also decided to go ahead with the Metro Rail in Visakhapatnam, another long-pending proposal, under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode, besides allotting close to 2,400 acres of land to the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) to develop a mega industrial park in Prakasam district. The three-corridor Vizag Metro would be built over a stretch of 42.55 km at a cost of Rs 8,300 Crore. “If the Centre is willing, the State will extend its full cooperation. Otherwise, the state will take up construction with private partnership,” Andhra Information and Public Relations Minister Kalva Srinivasulu.
Work on the heart of Amaravati Government district have begun. Nearly five years after the State’s bifurcation, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu in December laid the foundation stone for Andhra Pradesh’s new government office complex in Amaravati. The complex will house the state Secretariat, Assembly and High Court, besides a host of government departments.

The Amaravati capital region is being built across parts of the metropolitan areas of Guntur and Vijayawada. The government office complex will be constructed at the Rayapudi village of Guntur district.

There were several delays along the way due to several changes in the design of the main buildings, including the High Court and state Assembly.

“Start of the work on the heart of Amaravati Government district have begun. Nearly five years after the State’s bifurcation, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu in December laid the foundation stone for Andhra Pradesh’s new government office complex in Amaravati.

The secretariat complex will be constructed on 41 acres to accommodate 145 departments and enable better efficiency in work flow and interaction between different departments. The built-in area is around 56 lakh sq. feet, with a 1.3 lakh sq. feet parking facility, which can accommodate 4,000 cars,” said the CM.

British architecture firm Foster and Partners was appointed as the master architect for Amaravati. AP Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) has been tasked with building the government township.

In 2017, the state government had said that the AP high court will resemble a Buddhist stupa while the legislative assembly will be built after the Kohinoor diamond. Accordingly, the British firm had submitted the designs of the two buildings, but the idea was later junked.

“The new capital will have five main towers, housing important buildings such as the secretariat and high court,” said an AP CRDA executive. The final designs for the five towers were finalized by the CM. “The designs were changed to include the local Pedana Kalamkari design, which represents the local craft of the Krishna district. The internal designs will have the artwork,” he added.

The AP government had announced plans to build a new capital after the state’s bifurcation from Telangana, and began shifting to Amaravati from mid-2015, but with little infrastructure. As of now, the secretariat, assembly and the state departments are functioning from a temporary complex comprising five buildings at Velagapudi village.

Amaravati’s core city area is being built over 217 sq. km, while the entire capital region will spread across of 8,603 sq. km. Of the 58,000 acres land required to build the township, about 36,000 acres are private-held agricultural land. Around 33,000 acres have already been acquired, while the rest is government land.

Thanking the farmers for their “generous attitude” in offering land for the capital’s development, the CM said that the secretariat and the government head of departments (HOD) complex will comprise the five tallest towers that will be built. “Four of them will have 40 storeys and the fifth one will have 50 storeys, and will be the tallest one at 225 meters.”

According to the website of Foster and Partners, Amaravati’s designs have been “inspired by Lutyens’ New Delhi and New York’s Central Park, a clearly defined green spine runs through its length, providing the foundation of the master plan’s environmental strategy, where at least 60% of the area is occupied by greenery or water”. The designs have also been made to align closely with Vaastu principles.
APPSC to recruit 1,000 Panchayat Secretaries

The Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) has issued a notification seeking applications for more than 1000 Grade IV Panchayat Secretary post from eligible candidates on its official website, psc.ap.gov.in. Those who are interested can apply for the posts online on the link made available on the official website. Candidates should know that they have to first register them on APPSC to proceed further to complete the formalities. According to the APPSC notification, the last date to pay application fee is January 18. Interested candidates should first register on the official website through One Time Profile Registration (OTPR) and get an OTPR ID.

Vijayawada Indoor stadium gets a face lift

The government gave administrative sanction for a sum of Rs 13.73 Crore to the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) for renovation of Chennupati Ramakotaiah Municipal Indoor Stadium, revival of a bio-methanisation plant at Ajit Singh Nagar and preparation of a detailed project report for cleaning up Ryves, Eluru and Bandar canals. The VMC is keen on city beautification and cleaning up of canals was on top of their list. The indoor stadium will have new amenities as part of the sanction.

Hill festivals at Kotappakonda and Kondaveedu

Special focus has been laid on developing hill shrines in the State, in a bid to promote temple tourism and attract tourists. Accordingly, the Tourism department of the State has now planned to organize a three days long hill festival on Kotappakonda, the abode of Sri Trikoteswara Swamy and at Kondaveedu Fort. The festival at Kotappakonda will begin from January 19. Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu will inaugurate the event touted as one of a kind in the country. While taking part in the festivities of the temple, one can go around the hill shrine which comprises of a mini zoo, kids area and a cafeteria. The theme of the event is based on temple tourism and protection of environment and health. A ropeway is under construction and is expected to function from March, 2019. Later, the Kondaveedu Fort festival would be held for two days from February 2. Trekking, planting drives and cultural programmes would be organised at the fort.

TTD to open Kanyakumari temple on January 27

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) will formally declare open the Sri Venkateswara temple at Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu) on 'Maha Kumbhabhishekam' on January 27. TTD Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal has directed officials to speed up the preparation- silk ‘vastrams’ required for the ceremonial opening. Gardens, electrical illumination, construction of restrooms and door-frame metal detectors among other things were being put up at the temple.

Dr. Dangs Lab in Amaravati soon

Director and founder of New Delhi-based Dr Dangs Lab, Dr Navin Dang and the lab’s associate director Arjun Dang met APCRDA Commissioner Ch Sreedhar and expressed interest in setting up a high-end pathology laboratory in Amaravati at an estimated cost of Rs 30 Crore. Dr Navin told the CRDA chief that he was also keen on establishing Research & Development wing besides skill development centres.

AIIMS will be fully functional by Sept 2020

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Mangalagiri will be fully functional by September 2020, according to a written reply given by Minister of Health and Family Welfare Jagat Prakash Nadda in the Rajya Sabha to a question on the status of the buildings and the infrastructure. The Minister said the Union Cabinet had approved the Institute at an estimated Rs 1,618 crore on October 10, 2015. The time-frame for completion was September 2020. The institute would be devel-

Minister Lokesh receives SR Nathan Fellowship

IT and Panchayati Raj minister Nara Lokesh has been selected for the SR Nathan fellowship award by Singapore government. Interestingly, Lokesh is the youngest of all public figures so far, to have been bestowed with the honour. Singapore foreign affairs Minister Vivian Balakrishnan sent an official invite stating the same to the minister who responded in positive. Singapore government instituted the fellowship in memory of SR Nathan, its past and longest served president for encouraging public leaders to take up study of various issues and their tackling. Lokesh, who left for Singapore on Christmas Day to receive the fellowship has tweeted a picture of him and expressed glad for traveling in the first international flight from Vijayawada to Singapore. During his three-day visit, Lokesh has also made plans to meet up with several entrepreneurs, industrialists and businessmen besides ministers of the island nation. Meanwhile, Lokesh also attended a meet and greet with Telugus in Singapore, arranged by APNRT.
 Expedited in two phases. Work in the first phase on the OPD Block and the Residential Complex began on September 2017 to be completed in 18 months and 45.05% of it had already been completed. The second phase involved work on the hospital and the academic campus. It began in March and 14.45% had been completed. The Centre had released Rs 231.02 crore to the executing agency of which Rs 156.43 crore had been utilised till date.

Electric buses in Kakinada soon

The Kakinada Municipal Corporation (KMC) is all set to operate city service buses offering an economic mode of transport to the denizens to travel within the city. Electric buses are being roped in for the purpose and will be operated in four different routes initially. Around 20 vehicles will be used for the purpose and the civic body is preparing Detailed Project Report to introduce the city bus service. “The new service will come under the Smart City initiative. It is aimed at providing pollution-free commute to people at affordable fares. Once the project gets the clearance, the Central government will release the funds for procuring the electric buses,” said K Ramesh, Commissioner of the KMC.

Agriculture income has doubled in last 4 years

There was a tremendous potential for growth in agriculture and allied sectors, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu told the Collector and heads of line departments at a weekly teleconference held recently. The income of farmers had doubled in the last four years. The growth in agriculture and allied sectors had been tremendous in the first two quarters of this financial year. There was a 22.36% growth in aquaculture against the target of 26.6%. Similarly, growth of 15.93% was registered in horticulture and 15.34% in animal husbandry. All this was achieved even though the State recorded deficit rainfall. The State registered a growth rate of 22.14% in agriculture and allied sectors, the Chief Minister said. He added that Andhra Pradesh was able to reduce its loan burden by 10% of the GSDP last year.

900 Happy Nest flats sold in 2 hours

The prestigious project of APCRDA’s ‘Happy Nest’, first government’s neighborhood flats were sold out like hot cakes in a record time. The APCRDA has opened second phase bookings for as many as 900 flats at the housing project at Nelapadu in Guntur district. Owing to the impressive public response, entire flats were sold off in two hours and ten minutes time. The online booking began at 9 a.m. and the process of allotment on first-come-first-served basis was over by 11.10 a.m. According to an official release, 600 flats were booked in the first 15 minutes and it went up to 724 in half an hour. Commissioner Cherukuri Sreedhar said that the CRDA is contemplating coming up with Happy Nest series 2 and 3. Tenders for construction of the towers would be called soon and the project will be completed in 24 months.

Flight training centre to be set up at Donakonda

Chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu asked AP Drone Corporation officials to initiate steps to develop a flight training organisation (FTO) at Donakonda airstrip. He said facilities for testing of drones and flight training should be provided at the centre. AP Drones Corporation signed an MoU with University of Texas for S3M Solutions for developing drones during CM’s visit to the USA recently. AP Drone Corporation chief executive Officer K Ravindra Reddy said a drone research centre was set up at KL University. Five different models of drones were developed, he said.

NTPC’s New 25 MW Floating Solar Project

The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) issued a tender to develop a 25 MW floating solar project at NTPC Simhadri, located in Andhra Pradesh. The tender allows for the project’s solar cells and modules to be sourced from anywhere in the world. The brief scope of work includes the supply of floaters, installation, anchoring, fixing of floaters, pathways corresponding to 35 MW (minimum) along with the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) of the project based on open category PV modules and cells. The last date for bid submission is January 22, 2018. The techno-commercial bid will open on January 23, 2018.

CM assures SC Christians their due

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said that he would stand by the Christian community till the SC Christians are accorded the status of Scheduled Castes. Speaking at the Christmas celebrations held at Lutheran English Medium School, the CM said that Dalit Christians have lost many opportunities as they do not have reservations. He praised the services rendered by the Christian missionary schools and hospitals. “Our children are able to speak fluent English due to the Christian missionary schools. Missionaries started hospitals and schools paving the way for development of society,” the CM said. He promised that he would allot Rs 6 crore for completing Christian Bhavan in the city.
Andhra Pradesh State government has entered into a MoU with KIA Motors India to collaborate on ‘Partnership for Future Eco Mobility’. The latest MoU states that Kia Motors has committed to support Andhra Pradesh for increasing the uptake of electric vehicles and developing a local EV infrastructure.

The manufacturing giant presented three hybrid electric cars- Niro Hybrid, Niro Plug-in Hybrid and Niro EV- to the Andhra Pradesh government. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu in this connection has launched an electric charging station set up by Kia Motors for electric cars- at the Secretariat on December 6. The charging station will help employees to charge their new environment friendly fleet of vehicles. Kia Motors has set a high record with the production of vehicles in AP manufacturing unit and the first car is likely to be out by February 2019.

As the State Government is developing 14 smart cities, Kia Motors is working with it to design a new generation of transportation systems that best serve the citizens in each of these cities. This is part of a wider plan by Kia to offer alternative mobility within the Indian market. Kia Motors plans to offer 16 electrified vehicles by 2025. The Korean company continues to invest in the development and commercialisation of autonomous driving and eco-friendly vehicles.

Speaking on the occasion, CM said that there is a need for new approach in order to improve transport quality by promoting electric vehicles. An environment-friendly transport system should be introduced in the State. "The cost of solar energy has come down to Rs 4 per unit. 7,500 garbage collection electric tricycles will be introduced in Andhra Pradesh by January 2019. The introduction of electric vehicles will majorly help with curbing air pollution," he added. He also called upon Kia Motors India to act as an ambassador to Andhra Pradesh in order to help AP attract more investments from South Korea. "With the prevailing industry-friendly atmosphere, an increasing number of international companies like Isuzu, Hero MotoCorp, Apollo Tyres, Ashok Leyland, Amar Raja Batteries are coming forward to set up units in Andhra Pradesh. The State government is focusing on developing Andhra Pradesh as an automobile hub of India," said CM addressing the gathering.

KIA Motors MD Kookhyun Shim said that the cars would be produced in 15 variants. "Future mobility will be defined by connected and sustainable technologies that play an important role in bringing customer lifestyles and what’s good for the environment together." About 3 Lakh cars would be produced from the Anantapur manufacturing plant, providing employment to around 11,000 people. The KIA EV variant car would travel up to 455 Km with a single charge.

The three Niro vehicles given to the Andhra Pradesh Government include the new Niro EV – a fully electric crossover capable of travelling 455 kilometres on a single charge by worldwide harmonised light vehicle test procedure (WLTP) combined test cycle.

The Niro Hybrid and Niro Plug-in Hybrid are already among the best-selling hybrid vehicles globally, employing parallel hybrid powertrains which switch between petrol and electric power – or offer a combination of both, recharging their batteries whenever possible to maximise electric vehicle range.
Pic 1: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu addressing Jnana Bheri Programme conducted at Yogi Vemana University, YSR Kadapa district.

Pic 2: The CM participated in Christmas Celebrations & High Tea at LEM High School Grounds, Guntur.

Pic 3: AP CM Chandrababu Naidu attended the swearing in ceremony of Ashok Gehlot as Chief Minister of Rajasthan.

Pic 4: Chief Minister attended the statue unveiling of late M. Karunanidhi at Anna Arivalayam, Chennai.

Pic 5: AP CM speaking at the India Today Conclave South 2018 at Visakhapatnam in an interaction with journalist Rajdeep Sardesai.

Pic 6: CM inaugurated the Padipeta Housing Colony consisting of 3,216 houses in Tirupati and distributed land documents to beneficiaries of Cooperative Joint Farming Society (CJFS).

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