Andhra Pradesh has found traction at the World Economic Forum, thanks to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, who has been a regular visitor to the world’s biggest corporate club. His bullish vision for AP, branded as India’s Sunrise State, has attracted wide attention.
Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu played an engineer when he met Director of Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS), V V Bosekar, in Pune. He surprised the host with his deep knowledge of building hydraulic structures. CWPRS created three-dimensional model of the Polavaram Project in one acre at its premises. To the wonderment of Ms Bosekar, who is an authority on River Hydraulics, the CM went into minute details to find out whether the model was equipped with suitable inlet and outlet arrangements including discharge measurement system. Since many issues could be understood and finalised based on the results of model studies, the CM showed a lot of interest during his visit along with his cabinet colleague and Water Resources Ministry, Devineni Umamaheswara Rao, Principal Secretary Shashi Bhushan Kumar and Engineer-in-Chief M Venkateswara Rao.
Unveiling State’s Potential at Davos

Rubbing shoulders with who’s who of the corporate world at Davos, CM Chandrababu Naidu successfully showcased the State’s investment climate at 25 tripartite meetings.

CM Foresees His Dream

CM seeks PM’s intervention

Cabinet Nod to Water Grid

Apollo Tyres sets up new facility in AP

Dassault System to train 1 lakh Andhra Students

High In Path Of Progress

Waning Readership for Telugu Novel

International trade, tech hub for women in Vizag

SpiceJet to Fly With Araku Aroma

Relax FRBM Norms for AP: CM

AP needs more fiscal space

CM’s Social Network

Happening Andhra

Various developments across the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Cinema You & Change Factor!

Only Hinayana stupa in India
In its birth, the truncated Andhra Pradesh was left a dispossessed state, divested of all resources that were built up over a period of nearly sixty years. However, as some kind of a palliative, the AP Reorganization Act assured a slew of supportive measures that would rescue the fledgling state from an imminent disaster.

"It is a fact that no State in our country is more dependent on the generosity of the central government for its financial health than Andhra Pradesh."

Finance Minister Y Ramakrishunudu had to remind the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in a recent missive.

During the last three-and-a-half years, the Government headed by Chandrababu Naidu has left no stone unturned to secure what was promised on the floor of the Parliament. Despite the best efforts of the State, the Centre has not been forthcoming on several commitments made in the Act.

The infamous story of the Special Category Status is by now well-known. Even in the face of mounting political pressure, the Chief Minister agreed to accept a special package in lieu of the Special Category, in the fond hope that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush.

However, there has been less than satisfactory progress on what is due from the Centre. Despite the best efforts of the CM, Polavaram is stuck, the railway zone is nowhere in sight and the financial assistance for the new capital is coming in trickles. Revenue deficit grants are being released piecemeal. Financial and institutional assistance from the Central government to attract investments, stimulate industrial development and revitalise the economy have not been very encouraging either.

As a result, there has been a widespread perception in the State that Andhra Pradesh has been receiving a raw deal, despite the good relations between the ruling parties in both the State and the Centre.

What the State has been pressing for is only a level-playing field, and not any special treatment. It is true that the Chief Minister, known for his result-oriented work culture, has been able to salvage the State's fragile economy by a relentless pursuit of investments and focussed efforts on good governance, resulting in an upward swing in the outlook.

However, this cannot be used against the State, as NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar did when he hinted that Andhra Pradesh required neither “handholding” nor special category status given its economic growth story. This is nothing but adding insult to injury. Andhra Pradesh has every right to realise its potential and its destiny; and for that, the State should get what is due for the historical injustice done to it.

Ramesh Babu Kandula
Editor
Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu visiting the three-dimensional model of the Polavaram Project was like walking into his dream project. The model of Polavaram project, created at the Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS) in Pune, showed that Polavaram project would be not only an amazing piece of engineering, but also a cultural symbol of the State. Director of the Institute and authority on River Hydraulics V.V. Bosekar received the CM and his team and explained the significance of the Hydraulic physical model.

Bosekar explained how CWPRS provides specialised services through physical and mathematical model studies in river construction training and flood control, hydraulic structures, harbours, coastal protection, foundation engineering, construction materials, pumps and turbines, ship hydro-dynamics, hydraulic design of bridges, environmental studies, earth sciences and cooling water intakes.

"Scaled model is used for replicating flow and evaluating the performance of hydraulic structures. An advantage of a hydraulic model is its potential capacity to replicate many features of a complicated flow situation," Bosekar told CM, referring to the model of Polavaram.

**Miniature Dream in An Acre**

A geometrically similar 1:140 scale model of spillway and power intake of Polavaram Irrigation Project, was built in about one acre by by CWPRS, one of the foremost organisations in the world in the field of or hydraulics and allied research. The model was created at the cost of Rs 40 lakh.

Entire geography of river portion was plastered in cement plaster after consolidating moorum beneath. River cross sections were incorporated up to 4800 m upstream and 3700 m downstream of dam axis. Approach channel of length 2310 m, spill channel of length 2780 m, pilot channel of length 660 m and tailrace channel were also reproduced with cement plaster. Earth dams and Earth Cum Rock fill Dam (ECRF) were constructed with templates and using bricks and cement plaster. Water Resources Minister Devineni Uma Maheswara Rao, Principal Secretary Shashi Bhushan Kumar and Engineer-in-Chief M Venkateswara Rao accompanied the Chief Minister. Bosekar presented the Chief Minister a book on the history and achievements of CWPRS on the occasion.
Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has been able to consecutively project Andhra Pradesh as an investment destination at the 4-day World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos. He once again showcased business opportunities in ‘Sunrise State’ (new emerging Andhra Pradesh), besides the State’s heritage to global chief executives during his interactions with them. With his power-point presentations on ‘progressing AP’, talks and interactions, he brought down the house that included chief executives of the world’s most important companies, top business leaders and bankers of the world and leaders from different walks of lives.

While making his presence felt in Davos, the venue where top decision makers converge, Naidu was successful in portraying AP in right perspective and getting inbound investment. He participated in various sessions on issues like next generation industrial strategies, infrastructure acceleration and fourth industrial revolution being implemented in Andhra Pradesh under his aegis. The unprecedented consistency of AP in ease of doing business was one of the major issues that made global investors such Alibaba and Vedanta groups, evince interest in investing in various industrial and infrastructure projects of AP.

**Sister-State Agreement**

One of the major accomplishments of CM’s Davos tour was the sister-state agreement with the Canton of Zurich. AP Government had entered into the agreement, as a Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed by Yanamala Ramakrishnudu, Minister for Finance, and Car-

One of the very few state leaders who have been regular visitors to Davos, CM Chandrababu Naidu once again successfully networked with the who’s who of world’s business leaders, getting them interested in AP’s growth story.

**AP Pavilion a big hit**

**DAZZLING AT DAVOS**

Global investors Alibaba, Vedanta keen on State
With the sister-state agreement between AP and the Canton of Zurich, there would be collaborations through industry-specific programmes and projects, joint cooperation plans, exchange of experience and information.

---

Pacts and Probabilities

- After his bilateral meeting with the Chairman of Vedanta Resources, Anil Agarwal, the Vedanta Group showed interest to establish a copper smelter and build a commercial complex and twin towers -Vedanta towers on the land in its possession in Visakhapatnam.
- In a significant move, the Chinese company Alibaba Group showed keen interest to establish a data centre, which would be the second facility in India after the one in Mumbai. Responding to the convincing invitation by the CM, Alibaba Cloud President Simon Hu made up his mind to come up with establishing the data center in AP.
- Susan Silbermann, the President of Pfizer Vaccines, called on the CM during the WEF in Davos to get permissions for pneumonia vaccine in AP. The Chief Minister agreed to immediately clear permissions to introduce a vaccine by Pfizer for pneumonia.
- Lixil Group was a sanitary ware and ceramic products manufacturing company and looking for a right choice to enter into Indian market for both manufacturing and exporting. The Chief Minister struck a responsive chord while referring to his vision for Amaravati to the CEO, Lixil Group, Kinya Seto.

“We want to build Amaravati into a hub for construction materials,” the CM told Seto. The CM, in turn, was apprised of the advanced aqua ceramic technology of Lixil, for manufacturing.

The Chief Minister invited the officials to AP and assured them that they would be provided with all the facilities and cooperation, including in training the manpower through the Skill Development Corporation.

- On the third day of the WEF summit, the Chief Minister met Anand Mahindra, Chairman Mahindra Group, which is now marketing Araku coffee in Paris successfully.

“I want a good presence of Mahindra in AP, a would-be model state not only for India, but also for the world, in a few years”, the CM told Mahindra.

On being apprised of Mahindra’s plan to set up a world class industrial city as SEZ, the CM asked him to send his team to AP to find a
suitable location for their operations. Naidu also asked Mahindra for his support in the planning and construction of Amaravati as well as his assistance for electric vehicles for the city. The company also offered to initiate skill development programs in AP.

During his meeting with Raheja Group president Ravi Raheja, the CM invited the group to set up Mindspace, on the lines of Raheja Mindspace in Hyderabad, in Amaravati, Visakhapatnam and Hindupur. Echelons of Raheja agreed to visit AP soon to check land and other infrastructure.

Naidu met Dr Tobias Dauth from Fraunhofer IMW, a Leipzig-based technology research organisation that offers market analytics to hundreds of medium and large companies in Germany and Europe. BMW and Bosch were two among many clients of Fraunhofer IMW that were exploring possibilities in India. The meeting was fruitful with the CM’s assurance on collaboration with Fraunhofer IMW.

The CM assured firm support in providing facilities to Dirk Hoke, CEO of Airbus Defense and Space, which is already ventured 'Make in India' initiative. The representatives of Airbus had already met the APEDB officials last year and has been in constant touch with them. Overwhelmed by CM’s reception, Hoke invited him to their manufacturing units in different countries. Hoke also confirmed on the possible execution of the project in AP soon in 2018.

Naidu met Ron Pal, Founding Partner and Chairman of Pioneering Ventures. The firm has a presence in Kuppam and Nanded in Maharashtra and is looking for expansion in AP. The CM assured Ron Pal every possible support for their expansion plan. The company already spent Rs 1,000 crore in the agriculture sector in India and planning to invest Rs. 5,000 crore in horticulture and dairy in the next five years. Appreciating the expansion plans of Pioneering Ventures, the CM promised for a small airport in Kuppam that would largely contribute to their cargo movement and travel.

The meeting with Dr. Chunyuan Gu, AMEA Region President and Member of the ABB Executive Committee, was one of the CM’s many bilateral meetings with world leaders and entrepreneurs, that aimed to bring in investors to AP. ABB is a Swedish Swiss multinational corporation headquartered in Zurich, operating through four divisions namely Electrification Products, Robotics and Motion, Industrial Automation, and Power Grids.

The CM explained him about the various initiatives taken in the power sector to promote clean energy, solar, wind and their hybrid. He invited Gu to explore possibilities of locating manufacturing facilities in AP.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu met with Hitachi President Toshiaki Higashihara. An MoU was signed in his presence between APEDB Chairman J. Krishna Kishore and Toshiaki Higashihara focusing on future collaboration. The signing of MoU will facilitate the development of the Hitachi MGRM Citizen Lifecycle E-Governance platform in Andhra Pradesh. Hitachi also committed to input its strengths and advantages in terms of technology to create novel solutions to social problems.
The Chief Minister also had a few fruitful bilateral meetings with Tulsi Tanti, CMD of Suzlon, Mohan Chainani, Board Member of Mantra Data Centres, Tarek Sultan Al Essa, CEO of Agility Logistics and Director Eugene Mayne, Dr. Felix Gre-sard, Chairman of Medtech Innovation, Rajnish Kumar, SBI chairman, Said Hadrami, the Vice President (International Operations) of Saudi Aramco.

**Mutual Knowledge Sharing**

- During his meeting with Peter Selfridge, Global Head of Digital Government, SAP, the CM sought for support SAP on development of a system that enables the government to have predictive analytics of state revenue and expenditure. The well-known name in the field of skill development and smart cities, SAP, is presently supporting AP government with financial management system for the Finance Department. As a result, the echelon of SAP was ready to device AP Revenue System and SAP will be on track from end of March this year.

- In another important meeting, the CM and Bernard Charles, President and CEO of Dassault Systèmes, a renowned name for aerospace and defense solutions, shared their experiences mutually.

Owing to the implementation of our technologies, there were zero accidents in air transportation last year. Our technologies could be transferred from aerospace to other domains, by applying the same science,” Charles told Naidu. The Chief Minister asked him to bring those technologies to Amaravati.

“Send a team to Amaravati, and you can study what systems can be introduced,” he said.

- Naidu met Nanyang Technological University (NTU) president Dr. Subra Suresh and explained him the initiatives such as connecting remote areas with Free Space Optical Communication (FSOC), e-Pragati and Real Time Governance. He also explained establishing 6,000 virtual class rooms and use of drones and sensors in various fields. Dr. Suresh invited the CM to visit their campus in Singapore.

- The Chief Minister met with Jai Shroff, Global CEO, UPL Ltd, a global player in the crop protection space with its portfolio ranging from patented, proprietary, and post-patented products. During the interactive session, the CM invited representatives of UPL Ltd to demonstrate the effectiveness of a product which they claimed can retain and release 2,000 litres of water per acre. Shroff told the CM that the firm had a product that could absorb water in fields and slowly release it during dry spells. They are also keen on introducing India to a product which blends and mixes with fertilisers to prevent it from getting washed away in the rain and reduces the consumption of fertilisers by about 30 per cent.

- The Chief Minister met with Stephan Nigro, President HP 3D printing and CEO Dion Weisler on the second day of World Economic Forum. The CM asked the HP officials to set up an experience centre in AP which could be used to demonstrate the process of 3D printing to the people. When he asked HP authorities to set up their institute of excellence, they agreed.

- During his interaction with Hari Bhartia, who is founder and Co-Chairman of Jubilant Bhartia Group and also chairs the Board of Governors for the Indian Institute of Management in Visakhapatnam, the CM requested him to set up an Artificial Intelligence Institute in Andhra Pradesh.
CM seeks PM’s intervention
Naidu appeals to Modi for speedy implementation of AP Reorganisation Act

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on January 12 and urged him to fulfil all the commitments made in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act. During the hour-long meeting, the CM discussed with Modi unfulfilled promises under the Act and submitted a 17-page memorandum. Though the Government of Andhra Pradesh is in continuous touch with the Central Government and as well as respective Ministries, the progress of implementation of the assurances mentioned in the A.P. Reorganisation Act, 2014 as well as the assurances of the then Prime Minister on the floor of the Rajya Sabha and the announcement of Special Assistance Measure need to be speeded up and in this connection, the intervention of the Hon’ble Prime Minister is requested, the CM’s letter said. The following, among others, are a few of the issues raised by the CM:

- It is requested to make substantial budget allocation for Capital construction in the ensuing Union Budget in 2018-19.
- Section-26 of the A.P. 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 and the matter is being pursued regularly. Hon’ble Chief Minister has also addressed letter on 24.07.2017 to Hon’ble Prime Minister in this regard. The same is pending with Govt. of India. This may be expedited.
- It is submitted with regret that the assurance relating to establishment of a new Railway Zone in the successor State of Andhra Pradesh remained unfulfilled so far. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Govt. of India for formation of a new Railway Zone with Visakhapatnam as headquarters. The Railway Board has constituted a Committee to examine the feasibility in this regard. This is a long pending decades old request and hence, there is an immediate need to fulfil this assurance by sanctioning a separate Railway Zone with Visakhapatnam as headquarters.
- Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested Government of India to amend relevant provisions regarding matters dealing with taxation (Section-50, 51 & 56 of A.P. Reorganisation Act) to rectify anomaly and action in this regard is still pending. If the amendment is not made to the Act immediately, the state would be put to a loss of Rs. 3,820 crore.
- A Cracker and Petrochemical Complex is proposed to be established by the GAIL-HPCL consortium at Kakinada as per Schedule XIII of the APR Act, 2014. The Government of India is requested to fund the viability gap for this prestigious project by way of a Capital Grant of Rs.5,615 crore.
- The progress on establishment of institutions and projects under Schedule-XIII of the A.P. Reorganisation Act, 2014 is that out of 11 institutions mentioned in Schedule-XIII, 9 have been sanctioned so far. The Government of India is yet to establish Central University in Anantapur district and Tribal University in Vizianagaram district. For the 9 sanctioned institutions, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has provided nearly 2,900 acres of valuable lands, at an estimated value of about Rs. 11,600 crores. Further, the Andhra Pradesh Government has released an amount of Rs. 130 crores for construction of compound walls to protect the land that has been allotted to the said 9 institutions. Against the estimated project cost of Rs. 11,673 crores, the Government of India has so far released around Rs. 421 crores only. Thus, there is a huge gap in providing funds to these institutions by the Government of India and unless and until larger budgetary allocations are made by the Government of India during
the financial year 2018-19, there is no scope to complete the civil works and ensure the functioning of these institutions in their respective campuses. The contribution of State Government and Govt. of India for the 11 educational institutions mentioned in Schedule-XIII of the Act is given below:

- The other assurances made in Schedule-XIII regarding are establishment of Integrated Steel Plant at Kadapa, establishment of Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor, establishment of Rapid Road & Rail Connectivity from New Capital and Metro Rail Facility in Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada, also need to be fulfilled. A specific road map has to be drawn by each of the Departments concerned and action plan to be drawn and implemented for the purpose of fulfilling these assurances without further loss of time. The action plan drawn up needs to be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals at the highest level.

- In addition to the above, the division of assets, liabilities and employees of 89 corporations and companies in Schedule-IX and 142 institutions in Schedule-X to the Act is pending even after 3 ½ years after bifurcation.

- Though there is very clear provision regarding division of properties of A P Bhawan located at New Delhi and Ministry of Home has already clarified that these properties are divisible, the same is yet to take place. This needs to be expedited.

Since the division is forced on the State, there is a duty on the part of the Ministry of Home Affairs to regularly review all the above issues and resolve the pending disputes, the Chief Minister said.

As irrigation and drinking water are priority areas for the Government, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu resolved to develop a smart water grid to provide safe and assured drinking water to every corner of the State. Accordingly, the State Cabinet, under his chairmanship, recently approved an ambitious water grid project with the objective to provide safe drinking water to every household in the State. Water grid is one of the five grids envisaged by the Chandrababu Naidu when he took the reins of the State.

Speaking to the media after cabinet’s nod on water grid, the CM said it (water grid) was the most significant decision taken as it would benefit lakhs of people in the state. “Ensuring water security for the rural areas is prime focus of our government. As per 2017 statistics, 3.65 crore people live in rural areas and they must be the main beneficiaries of water grid,” he said.

According to him, it was determined to develop water grid in four districts of Rayalaseema (Kadapa, Kurnool, Anantapur, Chittoor) and Nellore district in PPP (Hybrid Annuity Model) mode at the cost of Rs 9,400 crore and in the remaining 8 districts it would be taken up with government funding and bank loans at a cost of Rs 6,000 crore. “Banks like Vijaya Bank, Punjab and Sindh Bank, Canara Bank, Andhra Bank, Corporation Bank have come forward to lend while 25 companies have given their expression of interest. APCOST has prepared DPR for Srikakulam, Godavari districts, Krishna,” he said and added that there was no compromise on the quality.

The CM asserted that the utmost priority was to ensure water security for the state. Accordingly, water resources and irrigation projects would be completed and developed at a fast pace, he said. Government would spend Rs 52,000 crore and more, if necessary. He said the target was to ensure construction of 6-7 reservoirs per district as a permanent solution for water problems.
Apollo Tyres laid the foundation stone for a Rs 1,800-crore tyre factory in Andhra Pradesh. The unit will be its seventh globally and will come up over a 200-acre site in Chinnapandur village near Sri City in Chittoor district. The factory will provide direct employment to 700 people. The foundation stone was laid by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, in the presence of Onkar S Kanwar, Chairman, and Neeraj Kanwar, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, Apollo Tyres. The facility will produce passenger car radial (PCR) tyres initially. The initial capacity will be about 5.5 million tyres per year and will serve both domestic and export markets. The construction work will start within the next six months, and the factory is expected to be up and running in the following 24 months.

“In Chennai, we are producing about 900 tonnes per day. But in this new unit in Andhra Pradesh, we will be producing 180-200 tonnes a day in the first phase,” he said.

The company’s chairman Onkar S Kanwar said that the per day production capacity will be around 16,000 passenger car radial tyres. The planned facility is located in Chinnapandur village, Chittoor district. The facility, Onkar said, will be utilised to meet both domestic and export demand. “It is going to be a long-term relationship with the AP government and this will be another modern and great factory. It is only the beginning and based on further demand, the company will invest more (taking the total investments to Rs 5,000 crore over the next few years),” he added. The plant will generate employment for 700 people in the first phase. “While planning for this state-of-the-art manufacturing facility, we have provisioned for the future capacity expansion requirements in India for the next 5 years and more. We are thankful to the AP Govt for excellent cooperation received from them so far,” Onkar said.

We chose AP to set up a new plant, because it is fast becoming an attractive investment destination, Neeraj Kanwar said. Apollo Tyres currently has four manufacturing facilities in the country — two (including a leased facility) in Kerala, and one each in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. It has a factory each in the Netherlands and Hungary.

Chandrababu Naidu, while assuring Apollo Tyres of his government’s full support in completing the first phase as early as possible, asked the company to look at investments in the state’s proposed logistics park as well as in the healthcare sector. Naidu further asked them to look at the educational sector in the state.

Naidu said the state is aiming to become one of the top three states, as far as investments are concerned by 2020, and the top state by 2029. The state is planning to create a conducive atmosphere to develop an auto cluster around Chittoor. With the entry of Hero MotoCorp, Kia Motors of Korea, Isuzu of Japan and Bharat Forge, the proposed Apollo Tyres plant will make the AP the right choice for investors who plan to manufacture, he pointed out.

AP is turning into an auto hub with a slew of companies including Hero MotoCorp, Kia Motors of Korea, Isuzu of Japan and Bharat Forge setting up plants. The latest entrant is Apollo Tyres.
In the endeavor to transform Andhra Pradesh into a globally competitive and happy society, Chief Minister embarked on scripting Vision 2029 document. It would no more be a vision, but would be a dream come true very soon, according to Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft and trustee of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

“The fastest growing Andhra Pradesh will soon emerge ideal for the rest of the world,” he said in a recent letter to the CM. Weeks after attending the AP AgTech Summit-2017 in Visakhapatnam, Gates sent a 2-page letter to the CM appreciating his vision to bring technology to small holder farmers and to establish AP as innovation hub for agriculture technologies.

“The scale of the AgTech summit certainly manifests the scale of your vision,” Gates said.

He, in his letter, requested the CM to ensure that the progress in agri-inventions is followed up on the Core Dashboard, which is monitored by the CMO directly.

"I look forward to following our collaboration's progress, and to seeing how these transformative shifts are reflected on your dashboard," he said.

Gates also hinted the CM be in touch with Dr Purvi Mehta, who co-chairs Agricultural Transformation Steering Committee. The American business magnate turned philanthropist said he enjoyed the discussions during the summit.

He reiterated their enthusiasm to provide support for farming practices in addition to land mapping and farming. As the Foundation joined as knowledge partner and helps in realising the plans of the State for inclusive agriculture transformation, Gates affirmed the foundation’s commitment to work with the government’s ongoing collaborative areas.

In his letter, Gates also referred to the reforms carried out in the health sector by Chandrababu Naidu. He appreciated the management of urban health centres in the neighbouring services system. “Andhra Pradesh has been in the forefront of India in providing insurance to the majority of the people. The dedication of Andhra Pradesh for the development should be ideal for many,” he said.

Following Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu’s efforts, a European multinational software company Dassault Systems of France agreed to train 1 lakh Andhra Students with their training center. Foreseeing the scope in high end manufacturing industry and initiating to make students ‘industry ready’, the CM asked Dassault Systems to help Andhra in preparing youth. Consequently, Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DS to provide training to one lakh students in three years starting from 2018-19.

Speaking on the occasion, the CM averred that talented manpower was need of the hour in the State along with best infrastructure.

“I suppose the training programme will definitely help to increase the talented manpower in the State. Obviously it will be useful in attracting investments as the investors were asking for talented workforce,” he said. The training programme will offer 85 courses with world class standards. Investors can utilise the trained people productively as it reduces their hiring and training costs, he added.

According to APSSDC MD K Sambasiva Rao, the cost of the project is Rs. 309 crores over a period of three years and AP government will provide Rs 36 crores in three instalments while the DS will invest Rs. 273 crores to establish the Experience Centre and to offer the product and service at a subsidised price for the students. Dassault Systems(DS) will establish an Experience Centre (EC) in 5,000 square feet space. The DS has vast experience in offering training through designing software CATIA, manufacturing software DELMIA and Analysis software SIMULIA. The training programmes would enable the students to find jobs in aerospace, defense, automotive and ship building sectors.
The festival spirit was all pervasive across Andhra Pradesh for a good ten days from January 2. Janma Bhoomi – Maa Vooru round witnessed daily discussions on as many as nine topics – Health and happiness, Swachh Andhra, education and enlightenment, basic infrastructural facilities, natural resources and development, development of agriculture and allied sectors, good governance and use of technology, vision swarnandhrapradesh and alleviation of poverty. And on the final day, those who displayed talents were felicitated and given away prizes.

Janma Bhoomi – then and now

Janma Bhoomi which was started on January 1, 1997 by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu during his earlier term in the office, is now written in letters of gold in the annals of Telugu history. Janma Bhoomi is a programme involving the people and spreading awareness in every village. All the people do their bit individually and collectively towards development during the programme aimed to strengthen a society with the lofty ideals of sacrifice, hard work, self-respect, equality, active participation, transparency and accountability is the hallmark of Janma Bhoomi which is not merely a government programme but something continuously done with people’s partnership.

After the bifurcation of the State, Chandrababu Naidu who took the reins as Chief Minister, launched Janma Bhoomi once again with a few changes and organized it for the fifth time with great success. During Janma Bhoomi, gram sabhas are conducted in every village, town and city wards to identify the people’s needs and take them up on priority basis to resolve all issues. That no other state in India has taken up such a programme to take governance to the door step of the people, reflects the democratic approach of Andhra Pradesh government.

As many as 175 nodal officers worked hard to make Janma Bhoomi meetings a success in 13,000 villages. Discussing people’s issues – social and economic aspects - in gram sabhas and creating awareness is testimony to the sincerity of the Government in resolving people’s problems.

A people’s movement

The Janma Bhoomi – Maa Vooru programme was
organized like a great movement for ten days till January 11 with people’s representatives, self-help groups, and official machinery making themselves available to the people. The Government spent Rs 1 crore for the programme in each district and wherever it was needed, up to another Rs.50 lakh was spent. While the people questioned the officials and people’s representatives in the past, they are now adopting a friendly approach which can be termed a revolutionary change and a great achievement in itself.

It is found that the people’s satisfactory level which was at 58 per cent by January 1, had risen to 65 per cent through the Janma Bhoomi – Maa Vooru programme. Real time governance indices show that the percentage of people’s satisfaction was Guntur 73, Kurnool 70, West Godavari 69, Visakhapatnam 61, Anantapur 60, for an overall average of 65.

According to figures, the number of gram sabhas held during the programme was 17,496, people took part 67,36,416; new ration cards distributed 2,00,037; new pensions 1,20,849; new scholarships for SC, ST, BCs 12,20,832; health camps 16,802; patients treated 11,56,044; animal husbandry medical camps 24,180, cattle treated 14,67,251; memoranda from people 12,37,338; awards and rewards 2,35,970; house-sites distributed 1,98,351; and tool-kits distributed 57,151.

State-level awards were given away by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for officials who displayed merit. Besides, awards for best panchayats, wards, mandals, and municipalities along with self-help groups, and cultural troupes were also given away by the Chief Minister. In all, 131 awards were presented in 17 wings. Chandranna Beema scheme won the first prize while Woman and Child Welfare department and pension scheme won the second and third prizes respectively. Krishna, Visakhapatnam and Anantapur district were adjudged the first, second and third among the districts. In settlement of financial issues, Krishna was first followed by Kurnool and Nellore in that order while in non-financial aspects, Krishna topped again followed by Visakhapatnam and West Godavari in second and third places. Employees G. Varmarajum, S. Srinivasarao (Vizianagaram), Sk.M. Shah (Visakhapatnam), K. Posiah (Rajahmundry), M. Madhuri, and S. Hari-nath (Krishna) received prizes.

Crowd-puller

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu was the centre of attraction as people swarmed his meetings wherever he went as part of the Janma Bhoomi programme. Inaugurating the programme on January 2 at Darsi in Prakasam district, he pointed how Andhra Pradesh was the only State in the country to have achieved double-digit growth and nowhere in India did any State give away pensions to 50 lakh people. Also, Andhra Pradesh stood as a role model in loan waiver and other states like Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh were trying to emulate it. Thanks to right fiscal policies, the standard of living of the people had risen during the past three and a half years and welfare measures were being implemented to achieve 80 per cent satisfactory levels from people. Four lakh Saadhikara Mitras would be set up in the State to supervise the implementation of
various schemes, he said.

On the second day, the Chief Minister addressed meeting in Pulivendula of Kadapa district. He sought people’s cooperation for developing Rayalaseema as ‘Ratanalaseema’. He said he had kept his promise by providing water for irrigation in Pulivendula ahead of his own constituency of Kuppam in Chittoor district. He toured Pulivendula and Lingala mandals and unveiled a pylon at Parnappale in Lingala mandal and inaugurated the Gandikota and Chitravati lift irrigation schemes. He was glad to see flowing water in Rayalaseema which was thirsting for it since ages. In this context, he said that people scorned at him when he said he would supply water to Rayalaseema and he now proved himself. He also said 19 lakh houses were being constructed in the entire state.

Touring Ichchapuram in Srikakulam district on the third day, he said top priority was being accorded to Swachchhandrapradesh programme. Andhra Pradesh would be made open defecation free (ODF) by March 31 this year. He also administered Swachchhandhra Pradesh pledge to the people at gram sabha and promised to complete the Vamsadhara reservoir project to provide irrigation water up to Ichchapuram in drought-hit areas. Also, payment of second pension in a family which is eligible would be considered and sanction of pension to unmarried single women was also under examination, he disclosed. Resorts at a cost of Rs.200 crore and construction of jetty projects with Rs.43 crore would be taken up in Kalingapatnam and coconut and coir industry being established in Srikakulam, he revealed.

The Chief Minister participated in the programmes at Dharmasagar of Narsipatnam mandal in Visakhapatnam district and Bobbili of Vizianagaram district on the fourth day. He was fulfilling a commitment when he sanctioned 50 lakh pensions since he had promised during the elections that he would serve the people as their eldest son, he recalled. He clarified that any complaint coming up in Jamna Bhoomi progress would be resolved. "We have provided fiber net connections to one lakh households with facilities such as 15 Mbps speed internet, 500 channels and three telephone wifi, bringing knowledge to your door-step. Rs.50,000 crore is spent to build 19 lakh houses. And 100 per cent literacy will be achieved by the end of the year 2019,” he said.

At Kodurupadu in Nellore district, he said that plans to provide protected water supply to villages at a cost of Rs.25,000 crore were already prepared. In Atmakur of Kurnool district, he inaugurated the Rs.116 crore Budda Vengala Reddy Siddhapuram lift irrigation scheme. He told a public meeting that over Rs.50,000 crore were spent on water resources and it would change the face of Rayalaseema as it would help Chittoor store get 4 tmc, Anapatur 25 tmc, Kadapa 73 tmc and Kurnool 43 tmc ft of water.

Addressing a meeting at Vegeswarapuram in Tallapudi mandal of West Godavari district, Chandrababu Naidu said that 450 NRIs had arrived to participate in Janma Bhoomi programme and he was proud of them as they were spending crores of rupees of their hard earned money to develop villages in Andhra Pradesh.

At C.H. Gunnapalli in Mummidivaram mandal of East Godavari district, the Chief Minister said efforts were on to ensure Rs.10,000 income per month to every family in the State. Implements were being provided to two lakh ST, SC, BC beneficiaries. People could call 1100 on any issue which would be resolved immediately, he said. Also, cement roads to an extent of 15,000 km. were laid in the State and if required, the power charges would be reduced, he stated.

In Dharmavaram of Anapatur district, the Chief Minister said he was prepared to spend any amount of money to drive away famine in Rayalaseema. The state was implementing several welfare schemes for the people which were not found elsewhere, he said.

**NTR Bharosa milestone**

The biggest social security scheme in India –NTR Bharosa – has achieved a major milestone during the fifth round of Janma Bhoomi –Maa Vooru programme organized in the first half of January. The State Government’s target of providing pension to 2000 more persons in every constituency in Andhra Pradesh to achieve 50 lakh mark was reached.

The Chief Minister also clarified that the additional 2000 was not a hard and fast rule and more could be sanctioned for the eligible and deserving, basing on the applications. If the number was less in a particular constituency, it could be adjusted to accommodate more in another segment, he pointed out.
Waning readership and market for Telugu novel is a topic that I have been interested for a long time. It is my observation that kids who grow up in Telugu environments (meaning outside the rarefied air of middle and upper middle class of Hyderabad English medium education) seem to be interested in reading stuff in Telugu that is age-appropriate. I saw them reading the children’s pages of newspaper supplements. However, for them to inculcate a reading habit, they need to have attractive reading material that should be in continuous supply. I think that is where we failed in the 1990s and the 2000s. As TV was taking hold in the households with Chota Bheem and other attractive kids fare, and there are colourful English books available for children, the supply of books in Telugu for children went dry.

Only in the last decade have we seen more and more books available for children (thank you Manchipustakam and Kottapalli). If you want to gift a book to a child and visit a few book shops, you would find plenty of books in English appropriate for all age levels from pre-kindergarten to young adults, all of them printed and packaged attractively. What can you find in Telugu? Particularly for the pre-high school kids? So, a kid that is interested in reading and is being educated in English medium has plenty to read in English and not enough in Telugu. That is one of the problems.

A second problem is that children and young adults start with 'fun stuff'. However, in Telugu, good writers disdain writing 'fun stuff'. Once the kids go through the phase of adventure fantasies and mythology, there isn't much fun stuff that they can read - which then makes it difficult to go to the next step of mature reading.

An issue particularly relevant to novels is the lack of publication space for the serious writer. The time for monthly serials is over; the weeklies are not interested in lengthy (or serious novels); and if either the author or a publisher goes ahead and publishes a novel - there is no space to discuss or publicise them. The truth is that a serious reader in a non-urban environment does not know what is being published and what is available for him/her to read. We have huge lacunae in publication and distribution. Frankly, I think the publication and distribution sectors are under-serving the Telugu readers creating a vicious cycle of diminishing returns. Whenever I am involved in publishing, I ask for a print run of 2,000 copies and I get enormous resistance. However, every time we printed 2,000 copies, we sold them out.

Another thing that I would note is that there is also a dearth of mature writing. When we conducted competitions for novels and short stories, we saw some good works in the first few years. After that initial excellence was exhausted, the quality dropped precipitously. The well seems to have dried out and we were forced to abandon the competitions. Now that we revived the novel competition after a decade, we had a better outcome. But, I am concerned what will happen if we have another competition next year.

In summary, I think our critical first step should be increasing the supply of reading materials for children and young adults in a massive way, and then follow-up with efforts to enhance the market for ‘popular’ reading and provide the publishing space and distribution mechanisms for mature writing.

- Dr. V Chowdary Jampala
  Former President, TANA
  Head TANA Publishing Division
Andhra Pradesh Government has made a radical move to encourage women entrepreneurs in a big way. What is in the offing is an international trade and technology hub for women entrepreneurs being established in Visakhapatnam district on five acres allotted by the State Government. The hub will stimulate entrepreneurship among women in the State and the country. The announcement was made by the Chief Minister in mid-January during the three-day women entrepreneurs’ conference, organised by the Association of Lady Entrepreneurs of Andhra Pradesh (ALEAP) in association with the AP Government. The theme of the conference - innovation, incubation and industrialisation - was very apt, he observed and underscored the need for empowerment of women in all sectors and fostering entrepreneurship among them. Two decades ago during his first stint as the Chief Minister of the State, Naidu had launched a movement to set up the self-help groups of women and now they are playing a very key role at the grassroots level in empowering women. During the next phase, they will also stimulate entrepreneurship among women. It is his aim to ensure that each family in the state has a minimum income of Rs 10,000 per month and it can only be achieved with empowerment of women. Equal opportunities have to be given to women, both in employment and entrepreneurship, he pointed out. Amzad Hussain B Sial, the Secretary-General of SAARC, said the trade and tech hub coming up in Vizag would be of great help not only to women in AP and India, but to the women in the whole SAARC region. According to K. Ramadevi, the president of the ALEAP, industrial parks are being set up at Rajahmundry and Nellore exclusively for women within one month and six more in the State within the next two years or so. ALEAP will make all efforts to protect environment while encouraging industrialisation. A memorandum of understanding was signed by AP Industries Minister Amarnath Reddy and Rama Devi and Pramila Acharya Rijal, the president of South Asian Women Development Forum, Nepal, for setting up the trade centre and tech hub for women entrepreneurs in Vizag district. Women have proved their mettle in the IT industry and other fields and the State Government will go out of the way to ensure inclusive development, he assured and urged the delegates from SAARC countries to establish their units in Visakhapatnam since AP has been ranked by the World Bank as No.1 in ease of doing business. In this context, the Chief Minister cited the instances of his own family members – wife Bhuvaneswari and daughter-in-law Brahmani who have become successful entrepreneurs. During the last couple of years, the State had signed MoUs envisaging investments to the tune of Rs.13.47 crore and generating about 30 lakh jobs. The State was encouraging MSMEs in particular because of their vast employment potential, he pointed out. To encourage women
entrepreneurs, the Government will provide 50 acres of land at Gidijala in Anandapuram mandal of Visakhapatnam district where ALEAP will set up a green industrial park. There were discussions on interesting topics during the three-day conference. Lectures were arranged on disruptive technologies, marketing and business development, views about women in a male dominated film industry, how Indian startup scenario can be improved, incubators, accelerators and best practices, initiatives for promotion of rural women entrepreneurship by AP Government, Government of India initiatives in IT sector, industrialisation and emerging opportunities for women entrepreneurs, innovations in the funding landscape, Golden fiber and its applications, recycle and reuse of industrial waste, perspective of entrepreneurship through education, innovative finance, access to finance, besides presentations from each country regarding the potential products for export. Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development, Andhra Pradesh, Roopa Maganti, has put it rightly when she said that change in the mindset away from traditional thinking and towards self-employment is essential for women to become successful entrepreneurs. The traditional thinking that only a job with a monthly salary is a safe option should go, she feels. The IT sector, which was till recently viewed as a safe and secure option without any risk, is no longer considered so. Sustainable growth can only be achieved when one takes risks. Entrepreneurship is not something that can be acquired through training alone, the zeal should be there in us, opined Roopa, who is also MD of Serendipity Consultancy Services Private Limited, Hyderabad. Asked about the advantage India enjoyed, compared to other SAARC countries, she says that India is blessed with abundant natural resources unlike its neighbors in the region. There is still hesitation among most women to take risks and feel that the Tatas and Birlas would not have been what they are today had they not taken calculated risks at the time of starting their companies.

The number of women entrepreneurs in AP will also be the highest in the country as the 19 lakh self-help groups (SHG) formed by women will be converted into self-business groups soon, according to the Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

- B. Prabhakara Sarma

SpiceJet to Fly With Araku Aroma

In a significant development, Spicejet, the third largest airline in the country by number of domestic passengers carried has come forward to serve the organic brew of Araku to its passengers.

In a win-win situation for the Tourism Department and Spicejet, AP Tourism ministry planned for promoting of Araku Coffee, a product of the Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC). Araku Coffee, the organic coffee grown in the tribal tracts of the Visakhapatnam Agency will figure from February in the list of announcements made in the SpiceJet flights bound for destinations in Andhra Pradesh. Also, the coffee will be served to the passengers aboard the flights. SpiceJet operates close to 36 flights per day to destinations such as Visakhapatnam, Rajamahendravaram, Vijayawada, and Tirupati.

According to Tourism Minister Bhuma Akhila Priya said the department came up with the novel way of promoting Araku Coffee and Araku Valley. SpiceJet air hostesses would make special announcements on the brand and its significance. They would also say a few words about the coffee plantations in Araku Valley.

Aiming to improve the footfalls at the tourist places located around Araku Valley, a scheme of scratch cards is ready to be introduced. Accordingly, scratch cards would be given to every passenger and two lucky passengers, along with their families, would get free accommodation at Araku Valley for two nights and three days. The department would pay Rs. 1.5 crore to the airliner towards promotion of Araku Coffee for three months.
In a recent letter to the Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, the Chief Minister, Nara Chandrababu Naidu sought for routing funds of Externally Aided Projects (EAP) through NABARD as grant. He also urged the FM to ensure the funding should not fall within the limits set by Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act.

The CM reminded Jaitley of the centre’s assurance on the special assistance to AP. The centre assured the special assistance through special dispensation in the funding of EAPs. Prompting the same in the letter, the CM has suggested that Rs. 16,447 crore for five years i.e. (from 2015-16 to 2019-20) should be provided from NABARD.

What if the disbursal of funds is made as grant through NABARD, instead of routing them as loans through external agencies? The Chief Minister had given an explanation for the proposal. Funds through NABARD as grant would help the State in cutting down delay in grounding and completing the projects. The letter of CM also elaborated how the State government arrived at the figures. Here is the verbatim of the letter.

Please recall the special assistance measures announced to the State of Andhra Pradesh. It was announced that the special assistance measures for Andhra Pradesh will be given by way of special dispensation in funding of Externally Aided Projects (EAP) and the Central Government will provide special assistance measure to Government of Andhra Pradesh, which would make up for the additional Central share the State might have received during 2015-16 to 2019-20, if the funding of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) would have been shared at the ratio of 90:10 between the Centre and the State. The special assistance will be provided by way of repayment of loan and interest for the Externally Aided Projects (EAPs) signed and disbursed.
The CM requested that special assistance at 90:10 ratio for Externally Aided Projects as being given to special category states may also be awarded to the state of Andhra Pradesh. This should be applied to all the ongoing projects and projects to be signed till 2019-20, he said.

In this connection I may bring to your notice that in pursuance of the above announcement, Government of A.P. have sent proposals for various projects to Department of Economic Affairs, GoI under EAP. In this connection I would like to mention that the projects under EAP will consume lot of time for grounding and completing the projects, considering elaborated procedures involved in getting clearance, and approval from the external funding agencies. The State will not be in a position to consume the entire special assistance amount within the five years period ending with 2019-20, including the ongoing projects, which were signed after 2015-16.

Therefore, it is suggested, that the special dispensation amount as arrived at para 2 above, may be provided to the Andhra Pradesh for the specified projects from the NABARD instead of loans through External Agencies (EAP). The list of projects to be considered for through NABARD is enclosed and it should be disbursed to the State as grant from GoI, so that this will not form part of State FRBM limits. This will facilitate the State government for early commencement of the projects and to avail the special assistant measures announced to our State. This will enable to put the residuary State’s finances on a firmer footing as envisaged by the parliament while passing the bifurcation Bill.

With regards,

Yours Sincerely,

(Nara Chandrababu Naidu)
AP needs more fiscal space

Yanamala to Arun Jaitley

State Finance Minister Y Ramakrishnudu appealed Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley to address the concerns and the development needs of the states in the Union Budget 2018-19, in order to strengthen the spirit of co-operative federalism. In a memorandum submitted for Pre-Budget 2018-19, Ramakrishnudu sought to impress upon the Union Finance Minister on the need to provide additional fiscal space. Here is the letter in full.

To
Shri Arun Jaitley
Hon’ble Finance Minister,
Government of India.

Memorandum given by Shri Yanamala Ramakrishnudu, Hon’ble Finance Minister, Government of Andhra Pradesh for Pre Budget 2018-19 Meeting to be held on 18.01.2018

The State Government of Andhra Pradesh earnestly appeals the Union Minister for Finance to address the concerns and the development needs of the States in the Union Budget 2018-19 in order to strengthen the spirit of co-operative Federalism. We hope that the forthcoming budget he a catalyst to the growth and keeps up the momentum that has been set in motion and help to launch the country on the path to sustained double-digit growth.

1. It is a fact that no State in our country is more dependent on the generosity of the central government for its financial health than Andhra Pradesh, as irrational reorganisation of Andhra Pradesh State by the UPA Government without concern for the economic and financial consequences has left Andhra Pradesh with a revenue deficit of Rs 16,079 crore in the first ten months of its existence.

2. Andhra Pradesh earnestly hopes that the Union Budget 2018-19 make explicit provision for financing all covenants of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014 as indicated in the package announced to the State. The following key areas for immediate financial assistance during the year 2018-19 and the coming years.

3. **Grant to bridge the Resource Gap:** The Section 46 (2) of APR Act 2014 has ordained that the "Central government shall provide appropriate grants having regard to the resources available to the successor State of AP for 2014-15."

4. Notwithstanding this provision, we received an adhoc grant of Rs 3,979.50 crore, though the Accountant-General of Andhra Pradesh certified that the revenue deficit for the period from June 02, 2014 to March 31, 2015, was Rs 16,078.76 crore.

5. Further we have requested the GoI to consider the arrears of Rs. 5,325 crore to the pensioners and employees from 2-6-2014 to 31-3-2015 due to implementation of PRC, to arrive the total Revenue Deficit.

6. Government of India indicated that entitlement of State government under Revenue Deficit grants is
Rs. 4,117.89 crore only after adjusting the expenditure on New Schemes in 2014-15FY (i.e. Rs. 13,775.76 — Rs. 11,960.87 crore). But it was agreed to release Rs. 7,500 crore as revenue deficit grant. It may be appreciated that piecemeal release of instalments in small quantities may be of no use for a new State. Therefore, we request that the remaining amount of Rs 12,099.26 crore may be released. At least the balance of the agreed amount Rs. 3,520.50 crore (7,500-3979.5) may be released in this financial year. By any reason, if it cannot be done, the same provision may be made in the 2018-19 Union Budget.

7. **Incentives for Industrial Development:** Section 94 (1) of the AP Reorganisation Act 2014 states that "the central government shall take appropriate fiscal measures, including tax incentives, to promote industrialization and economic growth". Similarly, Section 46 (3) of the Act has enjoined, "the Central Government shall, while considering the special development package for the successor State of Andhra Pradesh, provide adequate incentives, in particular for Rayalaseema and north coastal regions of the State".

8. While bridging the resource gap is critical to achieve the much-needed financial stability and help embark on development trajectory, the State would require financial and institutional assistance from the Central government to attract investments, stimulate industrial development and revitalise the economy. Gol providing 15% additional accelerated depreciation and 15% additional investment allowance.

9. Further, in order to create an ecosystem for industrial development and to translate the vision of Make in India into reality, we request you to create a level playing field for Andhra Pradesh. In this direction, Rs 1,500 crore may be provided in the Budget for Andhra Pradesh to develop industrial estates. Andhra Pradesh is making all possible efforts to be at the forefront of Make in India Mission. This would help us realise the dream of our Country becoming the manufacturing hub of the world in the very near future.

10. **Financial Assistance to Amaravati:** Section 94 (3) of the APR Act 2014 has assured that Government of India would provide "special financial support for the creation of essential facilities in the new capital of Andhra Pradesh State, including, the Raj Bhawan, High Court, Government Secretariat, Legislative Assembly, Legislative Council, and such other essential infrastructure".

11. Government of India is providing Rs. 3,500 crore for this purpose. Rs. 2,500 crore were already received. Remaining amount of Rs. 1,000 crore may be released in this financial year.

12. Amaravati, in order to become the economic growth engine, would require rail and road connectivity with all districts, especially Rayalaseema districts. In addition, the AP Reorganisation Act has assured Metro Rail projects to Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and Amaravati Cities and high-speed train connecting Visakhapatnam with Chennai. The Government of India may provide financial assistance and technical support required for commissioning these projects.

13. It is also requested that the following incentives be sanctioned for all industrial investments in the Amaravati City region: a) 100% excise duty exemption for a period of 10 years from the date of commencement of commercial production; b) 100% income tax exemption for the initial period of five years and thereafter 30% for companies and 25% for other than companies for a further period of five years from the date of commencement of commercial production; and c) Capital investment subsidy @ 15% of their investment in plant & machinery, subject to a ceiling of one crore rupees.

### Support under Special Package

14. The Central Government has announced a special assistance measure for Government of Andhra Pradesh for five years, which would make up for the additional Central share the State might have received during these years, i.e. 2015-16 to 2019-20, if the funding of CSS would have been shared at the ratio of 90:10 between the Centre and State. The special assistance will be provided by way of repayment of loan and interest for the Externally Aided Projects (EAP) signed and disbursed during 2015-16 to 2019-20 by the State.

15. Accordingly State government computed the amount that State might have received in the ratio of 90:10 under CSS and arrived at Rs. 2,951 crore in 2015-16. Government of India arrived it as Rs. 2,516 crore for 2015-16 by deducting the Central Schemes and other schemes for which sharing pattern is same for Special Status and other States. Following the same principle, the amount for the year 2016-17 has been arrived at Rs. 2,854 crore. Thus there is a growth of 13.43% over the previous year 2015-16. Assuming the same growth rate, the amount for re-
main three years would be Rs. 3,238 crore (2017-18), Rs. 3,673 crore (2018-19), and Rs. 4,166 crore (2019-20). Thus it is tentatively arrived at Rs. 16,447 crore for 5 years i.e. from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

16. Apart from this, the Special Category States are eligible for grants under CSS as well as Externally Aided Projects at 90:10 ratio. Hence it is requested that special assistance at 90:10 ratio for Externally Aided Projects as being given to special category states may also be awarded to the state of Andhra Pradesh. This should be applied to all the ongoing projects and projects to be signed till 2019-20.

17. Government of A.P. has sent proposals for various projects to Department of Economic Affairs, GoI under EAP. The projects under EAP will consume lot of time for grounding and completing the projects, considering elaborated procedures involved in getting clearance, and approval from the external funding agencies. The State will not be in a position to consume the entire special assistance amount within the five year period ending with 2019-20, including the ongoing projects, which were signed after 2015-16.

18. Therefore it is suggested, that the special dispensation amount as arrived at para 15 above, may be provided to the Andhra Pradesh for the specified projects from the NABARD instead of loans through External Agencies (EAP). The list of projects to be considered for through NABARD is enclosed and it should be disbursed to the State as grant from GoI, so that this will form part of Central FRBM limits. This will facilitate the State government for early commencement of the projects and to avail the special assistant measures announced to our State. This will enable to put the residuary state's finances on a firmer footing as targeted. Necessary provisions may be made in the Union Budget 2018-19.

19. **Polavaram Irrigation Project:** Section 90 of the AP Reorganization Act declared the Polavaram Irrigation Project to be a National Project and made it incumbent on the Union Government to complete this project. We thank the Government of India for reimbursement expenditure to a tune of Rs. 4,329.06 crore till now. The total amount received from GoI through Polavaram Project Authority as National Project is Rs. 4,329.06 crore and Rs. 3,217.63 crore are to be reimbursed by GoI as on the date.

Central Support to State's Development

20. **Impact of 14th Finance Commission:** We thank the Union Government for accepting the recommendations of 14th Finance Commission (FFC) and welcome the increased share of State governments in central taxes from 32 per cent to 42 per cent. However, in reality the net transfer from the centre to the State has not been substantial. The increased devolution of central taxes given with one hand has been taken away with the other hand in the form of diminished share of central government in centrally sponsored schemes.

**Fund flow of CAMP schemes**

21. Government of India insisting on depositing the funds relating to Centrally Aided State Plan Schemes in Bank Accounts after routing through the State Government Treasury. State government has requested to permit for depositing the same in the PD A/cs, which are being operated by State Treasury and can be operated through cheques. But some Government of India departments dealing with SSA & RMSA etc., are insisting that it is mandatory to place the funds in banks. Since Gujarat State has made it mandatory that funds shall be placed at Treasury, this may be made universal for all schemes, departments in all the schemes.

**Increasing Fiscal Space**

22. Andhra Pradesh State is facing double jeopardy from the financing perspective; the fragile financial situation is compounded by the increased need for public investment in infrastructure, public services, construction of new capital city, etc. In this context, we require a bigger borrowing space to which we are legitimately entitled. The Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) permitted an additional borrowing space of 0.5% of GSDP to States with Debt-GSDP ratio of less than or equal to 25 per cent in the preceding year and interest payments being less than or equal to 10% of the revenue receipts in the preceding year. However, this space is made available only to those states that do not have revenue deficit in the year in which borrowing limits are fixed and in the immediately preceding year.

23. In the case of Andhra Pradesh, the revenue deficit is not our making, as it was imposed upon us by virtue of the State’s reorganisation by the central government and therefore is completely external to our State’s financial management effectiveness. Therefore, we request the Union Government to make an exception and provide us with the much-needed additional fiscal space duly waiving the norms.

With Regards,
(Yanamala Ramakrishnudu)
Finance Minister
Government of Andhra Pradesh
Tawker’s Gardens,  
Royapettah, Madras,  
24-6-09.

My dear Munisubrahmanyam,
By yesterday’s mail I sent you a copy of Kanyakusulkam. Please write a review. I suppose you have a copy of my Songs of Blue Hills. If so, review that also along with my play, so that philistines may not say, “This man has written in the spoken dialect because he cannot wield the literary dialect with effect. Sour grapes!” Send on your review to me. I shall have it published.

What a disaster on the East Coast railway line! I am afraid your district suffered the most. Is it likely that the three carriages had, I mean, contained only thirty persons in all? Old Rangaiah Chetti is a good man according to his own lights, I suppose. I mention him in the Preface. His death creates a vacancy in the Board of Studies. I requested Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer not to put a crank in his place. I suggested the name of Mr. Ramanujachari. “Why not you?” asked Krishnaswami Iyer. I had no objection except on the score of frequent journeys to Madras.

Yours affectionately,

P.S.: I learn that a firm of enterprising rascals is pirating popular publications. Someone tells me that on the Curator’s list of registered books my name appeared recently. But I did not register any book.

Tawker’s Gardens,  
Pater’s Road,  
Royapettah,  
1-7-1909.

My dear Munisubrahmanyam,
I did send the book to you and along with it copies to three other friends. Two of them acknowledged the books. I think the postal people played some mischief. Please enquire. I sent you another copy today. Please write a review and send it to me.

Give your opinion frankly, otherwise the review would be one-sided and valueless. You must learn to rely on your own judgement. It does not matter if we differ. An author finds some justification, sound or unsound for whatever he writes. Unfortunately the Registration Department is under a European now. And my friends have no influence with him.

Can you come next Sunday and spend a day or two with me? I live at Tawker’s Bungalow in Royapettah. You may live with me. Will they not give you a day’s leave?

Yours affectionately,
CM Chandrababu Naidu is an active social media user. Many of you have been actively following his activities with admiration. Here are a few snapshots from his Twitter account and those on him.

Children of MPUPS Naganathanalli in Adoni Mandal, Kurnool District participating in #Janmabhoomi2018 celebrations.

I congratulate the seven companies that have started operations in Andhra Pradesh yesterday. These firms together will create 2,880 jobs in two years.

Presented awards to the winners of Amaravati marathon 2018. Congratulations to the winners as well as all participants for their hard work and dedication. #Janmabhoomi2018

Initiatives taken in the last three years for the welfare and development of SC community in Andhra Pradesh. #Janmabhoomi2018

There is no poor people which were belongs to higher cast[OC]. What about them sir? Every one is providing concessions/ offers to them only, I accepted they were poor, but at the same time the ratio of how effectively they utilizing should be monitored Thank you sir

Good Government Cheilo Cheilo AP CM Naidu ji ke saath

Thank you sir
The Government of Andhra Pradesh is working relentlessly to ensure that welfare schemes reach the beneficiaries. Technological intervention for data integration is also being done to signify a real time model of governance in the state. Now, in all the 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh, people who rely on ration card supplies to cook daily meals can access their allotted rice, sugar, daal and wheat flour with an assurance of transparency. The Aadhaar-enabled public distribution system has made the whole exercise transparent and efficient.

Anywhere ration, that is ration portability, is also being implemented from May 2015. Through this measure, beneficiaries can draw food grains from any ePos enabled FPS. About 6% of the cardholder have availed portability benefits since its inception. The savings achieved during the process in Andhra Pradesh is to the tune of Rs 246 crore from 7,595 FP shops.
With the general elections set to keep pollsters, politicians, businessmen, activists and just about everyone else on their toes in the latter half of the year, Telugu film industry too is taking a shot at the political sphere in 2018. Already, there are couple of biopics in the making on the lives of former Chief Ministers NT Rama Rao and YS Rajasekhar Reddy respectively. But beyond this, there are a bunch of other films that are aimed at educating the viewers about politics and questioning the status quo of current political system.

Among the most awaited films of the year is Nandamuri Balakrishna starrer NTR, a biopic of the legendary actor and former CM NT Rama Rao. Directed by Teja, the film is said to be ‘a tribute to the legend who lived for the people and chosen by the people’. So far, neither Balakrishna nor Teja have spoken about the content of the film, but the film is expected to highlight NTR’s rise to fame through films and how he made his foray into politics which led to dramatic results in the early 80s. The ‘Chaitanya Ratham’, a political journey undertaken by NTR, spanned for several months in 1982 and 1983, during which the actor-turned-politician covered nearly 75000 kms and addressed millions of people all over Andhra Pradesh. And buzz is that this particular segment in NTR’s life could be under the spotlight in the biopic as well. Moreover, the biopic is also a perfect platform to explain the origins of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and how it has had a huge impact on the lives of Telugu-speaking people in the past three and a half decades.

Meanwhile, Mahi V Raghav, who recently made Anando Brahma, is also said to be making a biopic on the life of former CM YS Rajasekhar Reddy. Tentatively titled as ‘Yatra’, the film is said to be focusing on the ‘Pada Yatra’ undertaken by the erstwhile Congressman that led to a drastic change in his persona in the early 2000s that finally led to his victory in the elections. Needless to say, the film is expected to be lapped by admirers of YSR, the former Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh, who passed away in a tragic accident in late 2009.

That’s not all. One of the much-awaited films this year is a political drama, Bharath Ane Nenu, starring Mahesh Babu, which is gearing up for release in summer this year. Directed by Koratala Siva, the film is set in undivided Andhra Pradesh, and it stars Mahesh Babu as the Chief Minister of the state. Buzz is that the film will showcase...
The run-up to elections has almost always been a perfect stage to make a political statement for actors and directors. Back in 2014, Balakrishna starrer *Legend* too was a political drama that pitched the actor as a leader and man of the masses. While it didn’t explicitly feel like it was part of Balakrishna’s political campaign, the parallels that the film drew between Balakrishna, the actor, and Balakrishna, the politician, are unmistakable.

how a youngster transforms the state and motivates millions of people to lead a better life. Then, there’s Vishnu Manchu starrer *Voter* which takes a look at the state and national politics from the perspective of a common man. Meanwhile, in Tamil film industry too, there’s a lot happening with Shankar and Kamal Haasan coming together for Indian 2, and Rajinikanth’s *Kaala* speaking about lives of the downtrodden, and bunch of other films addressing the socio-political issues prevailing in the state.

The run-up to elections has almost always been a perfect stage to make a political statement for actors and directors. Back in 2014, Balakrishna starrer *Legend* too was a political drama that pitched the actor as a leader and man of the masses. While it didn’t explicitly feel like it was part of Balakrishna’s political campaign, the parallels that the film drew between Balakrishna, the actor, and Balakrishna, the politician, are unmistakable.

This year, RGV too has evinced interest in making a film on the lesser known side of NTR, and already, the film has run into trouble. Amidst all this, given the themes and lives of people that these films are going to highlight, it brings us to ask another question - Can cinema be a medium for change in the society and a tool to educate the voters? After all, Telugu cinema has always tilted in favour of being entertaining and a means to escape the reality of our lives. The answer is, for the lack of a better word, tricky because its effect is more likely to play at a subconscious level.

Films that try to capture the politically-charged climate of any given state often offer us food for thought and help us gauge the pros and cons of the system itself. There’s no denying that there’s still plenty of injustice that’s meted out to the underprivileged segments of the society, and political dramas, in a subtle way, offer a glimmer of hope that there’s a leader somewhere out there who’ll address their views. So, when you see a character speaking in favour of farmers, who are struggling to clear their debts, or women, who are fighting against all odds to run their family, you do understand that the story turns into a canvas to trigger a debate within us.

Few people might see this trend of making political dramas as opportunistic, but then, such stories also need an audience which is ready to grasp the message that they try to drive home. Will the biopic of NTR imbibe a subtle political message that could have a huge impact on the minds of the viewers? It’s not that simple, given the extent to which NTR’s popularity cuts across political and social barriers. And at the same time, will the ‘padayatra’ of YSR make a difference in current scenario, nearly a decade after he passed away? It’s hard to pinpoint the effect it might have since the film tells a very humane story about how much a politician changed in the course of his journey.

Whatever might be the case, it’s not just politicians and their supporters that are taking the upcoming elections seriously. Everyone wants to be part of the debate. And films are no different.

- Hemanth Kumar C R
Amazing Andhra Pradesh

Chandavaram Buddhist Mahastupa

Only Hinayana stupa in India
Imagine a travel, ending on a thoroughfare of National Highway, moves on a narrow road by an auto-richshaw, passes through a bridlepath by a cart, later strolls on a lane and halt halfway at boulevard, before reaching the picturesque site of historical importance through trekking: is not the travel like a dream? Yes! Journey to Chandavaram Buddhist Mahastupa, situated in the vicinity of seamless avenues, lush green spreads and floating clouds, is destination by itself.

Next in importance only to Sanchi Stupa, Chandavaram Buddhist Mahastupa is situated at a tiny village, Chandavaram, on the bank of Gundlakamma River, 10 kilometres away from Donakonda railway station. The sculptural panels suggest the site as a timely representation of the early stages of Amaravati School of Art dating to the period between the 2nd century B.C and 2nd century A.D. The remains of Buddhist relics, sculptures are widespread over a hill, Singarakonda, four kilometres away from Chandavaram.

Historical Significance

Three hundred feet Chandavaram Buddhist Stupa, was constructed above the Singarakonda hill. According to the archeology department the Stupa was built in 2nd Century A.D. It is said to be one of the 84,000 stupas built throughout the country by Ashoka after Kalinga War. Another significance was that Chandavaram stupa was only one Hinayana stupa found in India. Remaining stupas were changed to Mahayana, the tradition which worships Buddha in idol.

In the year 1965 when some of the villagers were digging the mud they found out large bricks and idols. They informed the government and the State archeology department took over the responsibility in 1972. Excavations were done four times, in which hundreds of small stupas and 15 big stupas, viharas, marble carvings and some of the inscriptions were found. Dharma Chakram, Bodhi tree, throne and Purna Kumbham were also unearthed during excavations. The inscriptions were written in Prakrithi language. Indicating the Hinayana tradition, no Buddha idol was found in the excavations. Only one coin of Sathavahana king Sirisathakarni was found.

According to eminent archeologist Dr. Veluri Venkata Krishna Sastry, Chinese Travellor Huyansang also visited this Stupa in 7th Century on his way from Amaravati. Huyansang also confirmed that the Stupa in Chandavaram was built by king Ashoka. Chuliya empire, referred to by Huyansang was nothing but Chola rulers who ruled Kudapa and Kurnool in 7th Century. Based on the writing of Huyansang it was very clear that Buddha visited Andhra Pradesh. Marking Buddha’s visit, Ashoka built Stupas in Amaravathi, Vengi and Chandavaram.

Architectural Sculptural Grandeur

The ruins include a Maha Chaitya with a dome of 1.6 meters height and a drum of 60 cms wide, a three-winged vihara. The bricks used in the construction of Chandavaram Stupa, which is of 40 meters width and 30 feet height, were 18X9X5 inches. The limestone panels on the dome and drum sections of the Mahastupa throw adequate glimpses of the Buddhapada worship, Stupas, Bodhi trees. A museum present at Chandavaram also comprises significant sculptures, relics including coins, black and red ware and inscriptions in the Brahmi script. Three Viharas were found during the excavations in front of the Stupa. One Vihara contained 19 rooms and two other Viharas were completely damaged. Two Chaityas were also found in front of this Vihara. Bricks, sand and limestone were used for constructing Viharas. Broken pillars of six feet each around the Stupa were carved with sculptures. Stupa, Bodhi tree, Purna Kumbham and many Marble monuments found during excavations were kept in the museum near the place of excavations. Emphasizing cultural heritage, the Chief Minister N.Chandrababu Naidu was keen on improving the tourist infrastructure at Chandravaram and promote religious tourism by organising package tours to the stupa. State Level Buddhist Convention was held in Chandavaram and Buddhists from Tibet and Thailand attended the event. AP Government is taking more steps to make this as a biggest Heritage and historical site.

how to reach

By Road
It is located 92 KM towards west from District head quarters Ongole. Guntur – Kurnool Highway. Get down at Vellampalli and from there Chandavaram is just 2 kilometers distance.

By Train
Get down at Dhonakonda railway station. Chandavaram is 14 kilometers distance from here and auto rickshaws are frequently available.

accommodation

Ongole, being district headquarters, has good number of hotels for accommodation.
Student Is Amaravati Brand Ambassador

A girl student, Ambula Vaishnavi, who adopted two government schools and is making efforts to develop them, was appointed as Amaravati brand ambassador. A ninth standard student, Vaishnavi met the Chief Minister in his office at the Secretariat recently to explain her efforts in developing the school in her village Mudinepalli. She has spent Rs 4 lakh so far on those schools. She also donated Rs1 lakh for construction of Capital city Amaravati. Impressed with her gesture and philanthropic activity, the CM decided to appoint her as Amaravati brand ambassador.

Kakinada marine food exporter honoured

Kakinada-based marine food exporter Devi Fisheries Limited stood first in marine export value and frozen shrimp exports at the national level and bagged awards from the Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA). Managing Director of the firm Yarlagadda Surya Rao received the awards from Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu and Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parikkar, at a programme organised in Goa recently. The awards were presented to the best performing marine food exporters for the fiscal 2016-17.

TET put off again

The State government postponed the Teacher Eligibility Test dates again considering the pleas of the aspirants and the students’ organisations for time for preparation. Human Resources Development Minister Ganta Srinivas in a release said the test would be conducted between February 21 and March 3. TET had actually been scheduled from February 5 to 15. But, the aspirants across the State had sought postponement as the time for preparation was short. Acting on the requests from the D.Ed 2016-18 batch students, the B. Tech graduates who pursued Diploma in Education (D. Ed) and the Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) seeking time, the State Government postponed it. Meanwhile, arrangements for conducting the online examination for the 4,46,833 aspirants were on.

New EO for Kanaka Durga Temple

The State government posted IAS officer Dr. M Padma as Executive Officer of famed Kanaka Durga temple, located atop the Indrakeeladri hill. Padma, who has been serving as Managing Director of the A.P. Brahmmin Welfare Corporation Limited, will also hold full additional charge for the old post until further orders. After taking charge, she said implementation of e-governance in all the departments in the temple would be ensured on the lines of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD). Providing hassle-free darshan of goddess to the devotees and taking appropriate steps to perform rituals in the temple as per the Agamasstra were a few of her ‘priorities’.

U-14 team is South Zone champion

Andhra Cricket Association teenage players won the South Zone u-14 championship that concluded in Kerala recently. In the last match, Andhra beat Goa to top the table. This is third consecutive time that U-14 team topped the table, as the same feat was achieved in the earlier editions of 2015 and 2016. The performance of Andhra throughout the tournament was consistent as the same eleven players played the five matches. Captain and middle-order batsman Sk. Rasheed (369) emerged as the scorer while M. Mahendra Dev (247) and K.S.S. Jayanth (168) were the other contributors. In the bowling department, G. Sumith was the pick of the bowler with 21 wickets. Sk. Rasheed was declared Man of the Tournament by the Kerala Cricket Association. ACA announced a cash award of Rs. 2 lakhs to the team.

Tomato Pest Research By WVC

The World Vegetable Center (WVC), a Taiwan-based horticulture research forum, has come up with an eco-

Lokesh receives KIGA

Panchayat Raj & Rural Development (PR&RD) department of Andhra Pradesh won Kalam Innovation in Governance Award (KIGA) for exemplary development of rural areas and integration of technology in rural governance. PR&RD and IT Minister N. Lokesh received KIGA- 2018 during second edition of the summit and awards ceremony, held at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi recently. “This is a testimony and a token of encouragement to work harder for development of the State,” Lokesh said in a tweet after receiving the award. KIGA, which has been constituted by Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Centre, an independent think tank based in New Delhi to recognize different sectors of governance.
friendly pest management system in Madanapalle region. It embarked on the ambitious mission of putting an end to the menacing pest ‘tuta absoluta’ which is found to be affecting the large expanses of tomato farms in the region, considered the largest tomato-growing belt in India. The WVC scientists from its Hyderabad chapter have launched research into the pest, obtaining successful results in recent weeks. A Germany-based trade organisation is also involved in extending the logistics to the research. Currently, the research was grounded in four experiment farmlands in Ramasamudram, Palamaner, Nimmanapalle and Madanapalle mandals. The tomato growers in large numbers showed much interest in the experiment, expecting the laboratory success to reach their fields.

Made in AP Drone Launched

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu launched a drone jointly manufactured by the AP Innovation Society and Omnipresent Robot Tech, at the Collectors’ conference held recently. The drone was made in Visakhapatnam and it would be first deployed for capturing the progress of rural roads and used for other applications in due course. Branded as ‘Amaravati drones,’ they have an endurance of 40 minutes and can carry payloads of up to one kg, and they could be custom-made to suit the requirements of various user departments. Besides, by using the drones for training purpose, the State could generate revenue.

IIMV inks pact with IIMB

Indian Institute of Management-Visakhapatnam (IIMV) has partnered with the IIM- Bangalore by signing a MoU to promote nationwide women startup programme. IIMV’s participation is expected to facilitate the growth of women entrepreneurs by providing in-depth training to foster and augment managerial and entrepreneurial skills through mentoring, incubation and financial support. The initiative launched recently is funded by Goldman Sachs and the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. The programme aims at imparting training to over 12,000 women by offering massive open online course ‘Do Your Venture’ during January 22-March 3 and hold a boot-camp. Nearly 300 ventures will be short-listed for a boot-camp.

Vizianagaram in Limca Book of Records

Active participation of people, officials and policy makers made Vizianagaram district find a place in Limca Book of Records. District authorities achieved to construct 10,000 toilets in 100 hours in March last. The feat was entered in the latest records of Limca Book, which was released recently. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had appreciated the district administration for achieving the target in his ‘Man ki Baat’ programme on All India Radio.

SVU student in CAT-2017 toppers

An engineering graduate from SVU’s College of Engineering K. Sreekanth Naidu secured 99.76 percentile in Common Admission Test (CAT) 2017. After engineering in the discipline of Electronics and Communications, he appeared for CAT 2017. He secured 99.76 percentile and emerged one of the toppers. He received interview calls from IIM Calcutta and IIM Kozhikode.

EAMCET commences from April 22

Common entrance test for admission into engineering courses (APEAMCET) will commence on April 22. The entrance test will be held in three days and six sessions. The test for admission into medicine (Bi.P.C) will be held on April 26. JNTU-Kakinada will host the tests. Minister for Human Resources Development Ganta Srinivasa Rao recently released the schedule of the entrance tests. Beginning with the common entrance test for admission into B.Ed courses (APEDCET) on April 19, the CETs would end on May 4. The APLAWCET would be held on April 2018, followed by EAMCET (engineering and medicine), APICET (management courses) and APECET for the students who completed polytechnic and are aspiring for the engineering course. Entrance test for admission into PG courses in engineering would be held by Andhra University during the period between May 10 and May 12.
A team of students from marginalised sections, studying in the schools run by the Andhra Pradesh Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (APSWREIS) made it possible to trek Africa’s highest peak (19,341 feet) Kilimanjaro that consists of five contrasting ecosystems. A 15-member team, 10 of them were teenage girls, successfully reached the summit of the mountain and hoisted a 1350 sq ft National Flag, which set a new record.

The group took the Machame route. This trail was considered difficult, steep and challenging, particularly due to its shorter itinerary. This route, it is said, is better suited for more adventurous folks or those with some hiking experience. The route approaches Mount Kilimanjaro from the south. The Machame route, which the team had taken, traverses through high alpine desert that also presents a magnificent view of ice fields. This tough route is also known as ‘Whisky Route.’ The Machame route is about 62 kilometres to and fro.

“First time, a 15-member team has collectively climbed this mountain peak and ten of them are girls.”

The first two days are critical due to the drastic change in the elevation where they trek to Shira Camp located at an altitude of 12,500 feet from Machame Gate’s 5,400 feet,” coach and team leader Raghunand said.

According to the Secretary of APSWREIS, Col. Ramulu, the earlier record on Kilimanjaro was hoisting of 600 sq ft Indian national flag. First time, a 15-member team has collectively climbed this mountain peak and ten of them are girls, he further said.

The expedition is part of the APSWREIS ‘Mission Impossible’ programme designed to promote love of adventure and spirit of camaraderie among the students.

“With repeated success in mountain expeditions, we hope to see more students coming forward to take up the activity that will expose them to new terrains not just physically but also on the mental plane,” said Col. Ramulu.

Minister for social welfare Nakka Ananda Babu congratulated the students, teachers and the coach upon the achievement when they met him in his chambers recently.

The team included 10 girls S Sirisha, K Ramyasri, B Indirabai, Y Kavita, C Padmavathi, K Mahalakshmi, G Hemalatha, B Suneetha, K Ammulu and MC Mahalakshmi and five boys, D Lakshman, B Ramesh, V Srikanth, D Krishna Kumar and B Suresh. Sekhar Babu and Paramesh Kumar were also the coaches for the team and Neelima was the guide to the expedition. Another team of 20 students is being trained for a Mount Everest expedition in May this year.
Pic 1: CM Chandrababu Naidu participated in the Awametha Mahayagnam, being solemnised by the Akhila Bharata Gayatri Parivar, at Mangalagiri.

Pic 2: The CM launched the Amaravati chapter of Public Relations Society of India (PRSI)

Pic 3: The CM felicitated Sai Satvika from Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayam (KGBV) Atloor, Kadapa for securing third rank in International Science Olympiad.

Pic 4: A group of priests from TTD and Kanaka Durga Temple blessed the CM couple on New Year at their residence in Vijayawada

Pic 5: CM visited Tirumala temple with members of family on Makara Sankranti.
Governor ESL Narasimhan receiving a guard of honour on 69th Republic Day celebrations at Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) stadium, in Vijayawada.