CARPE DIEM IAS

ANDHRA PRADESH CURRENT AFFAIRS

Monthly Compendium — September 2026

Target Examinations:

APPSC Group-I | APPSC Group-II | APPSC Group-III | APPSC FSO

Compiled Topics: 41 High-Yield Current Affairs

Categories: Governance · Economy · Infrastructure · Agriculture · Environment · Health · Culture & Tourism

Format: Current Affairs + Detailed Static Integration + Paper Mapping

— A Comprehensive Revision Resource by Carpe Diem IAS —

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01 SSAAT Wins Prestigious SKOCH Gold Award for Social Audit Excellence

PAPER III — Polity, Constitution, Governance, Law & Ethics

WHY IN NEWS

The Society for Social Audit Accountability and Transparency of Andhra Pradesh (SSAAT), functioning under the Department of Rural Development, has been recognized as the first State Social Audit Organisation in India to receive the SKOCH Gold Award. This accolade highlights the state's progressive approach to embedding transparency, accountability, and direct public participation in the implementation of government welfare and rural development schemes.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Award Details:** The award was received by AP Social Audit Director G. Srikanth at the 109th SKOCH Summit held at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi.
- **Core Recognition:** SSAAT was honored for its citizen-centric approach, specifically for strengthening transparency and accountability in the execution of rural development and welfare programmes.
- **Innovative Initiatives:**
  - Active involvement of citizens in field-level audits.
  - Mandatory presentation of audit findings before Gram Sabhas and during public hearings.
  - Livestreaming of public proceedings to ensure real-time transparency.
  - Digitization of social audit reports to guarantee wider and easier public access.
- **Administrative Backing:** The revitalization of the state's social audit mechanism has been driven under the guidance of the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, K. Pawan Kalyan.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Governance and Accountability:** Serves as a contemporary case study for effective social audit mechanisms, demonstrating how grassroots democracy and technology can curb corruption in schemes like MGNREGA.
- **Institutional Framework:** Highlights the critical role of dedicated statutory bodies in institutionalizing public participation and transparent governance.

02 Operation Trishul: Multi-Departmental Initiative in NTR District

PAPER III — Polity, Constitution, Governance, Law & Ethics

WHY IN NEWS

Launched by the NTR District Collector in Vijayawada, this initiative aims to create a safer urban environment by tackling three critical social and civic issues: drug abuse, crimes against women, and road accidents, through coordinated inter-departmental action.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Core Objectives:** Eradicate drug usage, prevent crimes against women, and reduce road accidents across the district.
- **Convergent Governance:** The operation mandates coordinated efforts across multiple departments, including the Police, Medical and Health, and Women Development and Child Welfare departments, moving beyond siloed policing.
- **Statistical Progress:** The NTR Police Commissionerate reported a significant 81.4% decrease in NDPS (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) cases and a 14.8% drop in crimes against women, reflecting the impact of recent targeted interventions.
- **Administrative Backing:** The initiative was launched following direct directives from the Chief Minister to ensure a unified administrative response to these civic challenges.

03 Swayam AP Initiative and 8th Collectors Conference

PAPER III — Polity, Constitution, Governance, Law & Ethics

WHY IN NEWS

The state government intensified its focus on women's empowerment and administrative efficiency through targeted schemes and high-level bureaucratic reviews.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Swayam AP:** Announced a major push to empower 5 lakh women entrepreneurs across all districts through targeted financial and skill-development support.
- **8th Collectors Conference:** Chaired by the Chief Minister in Amaravati, focusing on accelerating e-governance, improving digital service delivery at the grassroots level, and reviewing district-level administrative performance.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Women Empowerment:** Aligns with national objectives of promoting female entrepreneurship and financial inclusion as primary drivers of rural and semi-urban economic growth.
- **E-Governance:** Reinforces the importance of digital public infrastructure in bridging the gap between policy formulation and last-mile service delivery, ensuring transparency and speed.

04 Expansion of Fire and Disaster Management Infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh

PAPER III — Polity, Constitution, Governance, Law & Ethics

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh government has announced a comprehensive plan to establish a dedicated fire station in every Assembly constituency. This initiative aims to enhance emergency response capabilities, minimize disaster-related risks, and ensure rapid intervention across both urban and rural areas of the state.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Universal Coverage:** A new fire station will be set up in each of the state's Assembly constituencies to reduce emergency response times to 10–15 minutes.
- **Funding and Procurement:** The state has received ₹210 crore in financial support from the Centre for this initiative, out of which ₹110 crore has already been utilized for procuring advanced fire equipment and vehicles.
- **Addanki Fire Station Model:** A new fire station building in Addanki (Prakasam district) was constructed at a cost of ₹2.25 crore, utilizing funds allocated under the 15th Finance Commission. A new fire tender vehicle was also procured for ₹75 lakh.
- **Operational Impact:** The Addanki station serves six mandals (Addanki, Korisapadu, J. Panguluru, Ballikurva, Santhanuthalapadu, and Mundlamuru). It successfully handled 47 incidents in 2025-26 (saving ₹1.70 crore in property and rescuing six lives) and 94 incidents in 2026-27 (saving ₹2.05 crore and rescuing two lives).
- **Associated Infrastructure:** A 33/11 kV semi-indoor electrical substation was also inaugurated in Addanki at a cost of ₹7.72 crore to resolve persistent low-voltage issues in the region.

05 Rural Power Infrastructure Augmentation and Sector Reforms

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh government is undertaking a massive ₹10,000 crore initiative to upgrade rural power supply infrastructure, coupled with a strong focus on renewable energy adoption and power sector employee welfare.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Rural Infrastructure Upgrade:** Power distribution networks in villages are being significantly augmented under the central Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS).
- **Renewable Energy Push:** Rooftop solar panels are being installed for nearly six lakh SC and ST families under the PM Surya Ghar scheme, promoting decentralized green energy.
- **Recruitment and Employment:**
  - 389 compassionate appointments have been made across AP-Genco, AP-Transco, and DISCOMs since June 2024, with additional vacancies being processed.

- Examinations for 629 Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) posts have been successfully conducted, with results and transparent verification processes underway.

- **Employee Welfare:** Three installments of Dearness Allowance (DA) have been disbursed to power sector employees to ensure financial stability.
- **Capacity Building:** A dedicated, modern training centre has been established in Visakhapatnam at a cost of ₹30 crore to upskill personnel with the latest technological tools.

06 Andhra Pradesh Housing for All Programme and Infrastructure Targets

PAPER III — Polity, Constitution, Governance, Law & Ethics

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh government has launched a comprehensive push to implement the 'Housing for All' programme on a saturation basis, aiming to provide a safe and permanent house to every eligible family in the state by 2029. This initiative involves close coordination with central ministries and the restructuring of land and data management for transparent beneficiary selection.

KEY HOUSING TARGETS

- **Short-Term Goal:** Complete 5.52 lakh houses by March 2027.
- **Phased Execution:** 2.05 lakh houses to be completed by December 2026, followed by 2.74 lakh houses by March 2027.
- **Urban Focus:** A specific target of constructing 1.5 lakh houses in urban areas.
- **Future Pipeline:** Secure sanctions for 75,000 new houses by December 2027 and add another 1.5 lakh houses to the pipeline through coordination with the Union Ministries of Rural Development and Housing and Urban Affairs.

CURRENT PROGRESS AND SCHEMES

- **Central Schemes (PMAY-G, PMAY-U, PM Janman):** 18.72 lakh houses sanctioned, with 13.20 lakh already completed.
- **State Agencies:** The Andhra Pradesh Housing Corporation has completed 11.31 lakh out of 16.11 lakh sanctioned houses, while AP TIDCO has completed 1.88 lakh out of 2.61 lakh sanctioned houses.

07 Revision of Additional Pension Rates for Senior Citizens in Andhra Pradesh

PAPER III — Polity, Constitution, Governance, Law & Ethics

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh government has enhanced the additional pension quantum for senior citizens to provide better financial security and strengthen social welfare support for the elderly population.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Revised Rates:** The additional pension has been increased to 10% of the basic pension for those aged 70 years (previously 7%) and 15% for those aged 75 years (previously 12%).
- **Unchanged Higher Age Brackets:** The additional quantum remains unchanged for older age groups: 20% for 80 years, 25% for 85 years, 30% for 90 years, 35% for 95 years, and 50% for 100 years.
- **Implementation Timeline:** The revised rates are effective from December 2026 and will be payable from January 1, 2027.
- **Administrative Action:** The revision was formalized through GO Ms No. 126, issued by the Finance Principal Secretary.

SECTION II — ECONOMY, INFRASTRUCTURE & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

08 Andhra Pradesh $2.40-Trillion Economy Vision and Cluster Strategy

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

Andhra Pradesh has outlined an ambitious roadmap to scale its economy from $200 billion to $2.40 trillion by 2047. This vision, articulated by IT & HRD Minister Nara Lokesh, relies on a targeted, cluster-based development strategy to drive investment, innovation, and job creation across diverse sectors.

KEY EXAM FACTS

- **Core Strategy:** Development of 23 sector-specific clusters spanning traditional manufacturing (cement, automotive), material sciences, rare earth minerals, AI, data centres, pharma, and biomedical sectors.
- **Quantum Technology Hub:** A dedicated quantum ecosystem is being developed in Amaravati, covering cryogenics, material sciences, and practical quantum applications.
- **Tech Investments:** Major investments from global tech giants like Google in the data centre sector, acting as a catalyst for further industry inflows.
- **Agricultural R&D:** Proposal to establish an Indian School of Agriculture, modelled on the Indian School of Business (ISB) in Hyderabad, to build a robust ecosystem for agricultural research and development.
- **Governance Framework:** Adoption of the 'P4' model (Public, Private, and People Partnership) to ensure inclusive growth, focusing on grassroots entrepreneurship and uplifting marginalized communities.

09 State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) Approvals and Industrial Push

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh government held its 21st State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) meeting, chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, to approve new industrial proposals and set strategic directives for accelerating economic growth, advanced manufacturing, and green energy transitions in the state.

KEY INVESTMENT APPROVALS

- **Recent Clearances:** 28 industrial proposals approved with a total investment of ₹22,178 crore, creating potential employment for 19,739 youths.
- **Targeted Sectors:** Energy, IT and communications, food processing, manufacturing, and tourism.
- **Cumulative Progress:** The SIPB has approved 387 projects to date, representing a potential investment of ₹14.05 lakh crore and generating employment opportunities for 10.79 lakh people.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIVES AND FUTURE FOCUS

- **Advanced Manufacturing & Tech:** Push to establish AP as a hub for semiconductors, chip manufacturing, robotics, quantum technology, and high-performance computing, moving beyond basic electronics assembly to a complete research, design, and manufacturing ecosystem.
- **Emerging Clusters:** Development of specialized cluster industries around drone and space cities, integrated with allied industries.
- **Resource & Energy Security:** Focus on developing the state as a hub for rare earth minerals and aggressively expanding solar and wind power generation.
- **Green Energy Targets:** Investments secured for 113.75 GW out of the state's targeted 160 GW capacity in green energy.
- **Logistics & Ports:** Directive to build a comprehensive port infrastructure ecosystem along the coastline, integrating ports, shipbuilding, logistics, and industries to boost export competitiveness.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND EXPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Strict Timelines:** A mandatory six-month timeline has been set for all SIPB-cleared projects to commence construction work.
- **Export Rankings:** Tirupati district (supported by Sri City) secured the 10th position nationally in district-wise exports, while East Godavari ranked 12th.
- **Sustainable Tourism:** Directive to achieve a net-zero goal at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) through the adoption of electric buses and charging infrastructure (511 charging station permissions already granted statewide).

10 Surge in GST and Commercial Tax Collections

WHY IN NEWS

Andhra Pradesh registered remarkable growth in tax revenues for September 2026, reflecting improved economic activity, formalization, and effective tax administration across the state.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **GST Growth:** Recorded a 14.10 percent Year-on-Year growth in net Goods and Services Tax collections, reaching ₹3,182.87 crore, outperforming the national average growth rate of 8 percent.
- **Half-Year Performance:** Total commercial tax revenue surged by 18 percent in the first half of the fiscal year, reaching ₹30,435.98 crore.
- **Investment Grounding:** The state enforced a strict deadline for the physical grounding of all pre-approved investment projects and State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) MoUs to ensure capital inflows translate into actual employment.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Economic Planning:** Highlights the success of targeted industrial policies and "ease of doing business" initiatives in boosting state revenues and formalizing the economy.
- **Fiscal Federalism:** Demonstrates how improved state-level tax compliance and economic growth contribute to stronger fiscal health and greater autonomy in state-level welfare spending.

11 Andhra Pradesh Aims to Double Cargo Handling Capacity of 'Other Than Major Ports'

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh government is actively developing four greenfield seaports to double the cargo handling capacity of its 'Other Than Major Ports' (OTMP) to 200 Million Tons Per Annum (MTPA), with the strategic goal of establishing the state as the primary maritime gateway for India's east coast.

KEY FACTS

- **Current Capacity & Ranking:** Existing OTMPs in Andhra Pradesh handle 100 MTPA (equivalent to the state's only major port in Visakhapatnam). AP holds a 16% share of India's total OTMP cargo, placing it in the second position nationally, behind Gujarat.
- **Four Greenfield Seaports:** The new ports under construction are located at Ramayapatnam (Prakasam district), Mulapeta (Srikakulam), Machilipatnam, and Kakinada.
- **Operational Timeline:** The government aims to make all four OTMPs fully operational by the end of 2027.
- **Development Models:** Ramayapatnam, Mulapeta, and Machilipatnam are being developed as 'State ports'. The Kakinada gateway port is a multi-cargo facility being built within the Kakinada Special

Economic Zone by the Aurobindo Group under the PPP (Public-Private Partnership) mode.

- **Project Status:** Ramayapatnam and Kakinada are in advanced stages, with the Andhra Pradesh Maritime Board recently issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to finalize the Ramayapatnam port operator. The Machilipatnam port is being constructed by Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited (MEIL).
- **Strategic Hinterland Connectivity:** The infrastructure push includes robust rail and road connectivity to serve industries in neighboring and landlocked states, including Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, and Maharashtra.
- **Market Objective:** This expansion is designed to meet the high demand for container cargo handling and bridge the significant demand-supply mismatch currently existing between Haldia (West Bengal) and the Visakhapatnam/Chennai ports.

12 BPCL Ramayapatnam Refinery and Petrochemical Project

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh government is actively pushing for the expedited commencement of a mega greenfield refinery-cum-petrochemical project by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) near Ramayapatnam Port. The project aims to boost the state's industrial capacity, enhance downstream value addition, and align with India's growing demand for advanced petrochemical feedstocks.

KEY EXAM FACTS

- **Location:** Between Prakasam and Nellore districts, near the proposed Ramayapatnam Port, Andhra Pradesh.
- **Project Cost & Capacity:** Estimated investment of ₹1.45 lakh crore with a refining capacity of 9 million tonnes per annum (MTPA).
- **Output Profile:**
  - Euro-6 standard fuels (Motor Spirit, High-Speed Diesel, Aviation Turbine Fuel): ~5.4 MTPA.
  - Petrochemical products: ~3.2 MTPA, including high-value polymers like HDPE, LDPE, LLDPE, Polypropylene, and PVC.
- **Implementation Timeline:** Final environmental clearance is expected by late September 2026, followed by the finalization of investment costs based on the study report by Engineers India Limited (EIL). Land acquisition (6,000 acres total) is in advanced stages.
- **Downstream Integration:** A joint initiative between BPCL and the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) to develop a 1,500-acre downstream petrochemical park adjacent to the refinery.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Economic Infrastructure & Value Addition:** The project represents a strategic shift in refinery design, moving beyond mere fuel production to focus on chemical feedstocks (like ethylene and propylene).

This aligns with the national goal of increasing India's petrochemical intensity index from the current 5% to 15-20% over the next decade.

- **Environmental Standards:** The explicit commitment to producing Euro-6 standard fuels highlights the integration of stringent emission norms into new industrial infrastructure, supporting national air quality and climate goals.
- **Regional Development:** The establishment of a downstream petrochemical park will catalyze ancillary manufacturing, attract private investment, and generate significant employment in the coastal Andhra region, serving as a model for port-led industrialization.

13 Krishna River Water Metro Project: Vijayawada to Amaravati

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

To alleviate road congestion and promote sustainable urban mobility in the rapidly urbanizing capital region, the Andhra Pradesh government has proposed a Krishna River Water Metro connecting Vijayawada and Amaravati. Modeled on the successful Kochi Water Metro, the project seeks clearance from the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).

KEY EXAM FACTS

- **Proposed Route:** A 30 km waterway distance connecting Vijayawada to Amaravati, falling under the purview of National Waterway-4 (NW-4).
- **Implementing Agencies:** Proposed by the A.P. Inland Waterways Authority (APIWA) under the Water Metro Policy of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, with preliminary studies to be conducted by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).
- **Phased Execution:**
  - Phase 1 (Vijayawada to Rayapudi): Requires no major dredging, as confirmed by a 2021 feasibility study and recent trial runs.
  - Phase 2 (Rayapudi to Amaravati): Will require dredging and the development of a dedicated navigation channel.
- **Current Inland Waterway Status in AP:** Three National Waterways (NW-4, NW-79, and NW-104) pass through the state, with the Krishna and Godavari rivers currently supporting around 250 operational inland vessels for cargo, ferries, and tourism.

STRATEGIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE

- **Sustainable Urban Mobility:** The adoption of electric or hybrid vessels will significantly reduce vehicular traffic, fuel consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions, directly advancing India’s Net-Zero commitments.
- **Regional Development:** Serves as a dual-purpose infrastructure project, easing commuter demand while simultaneously boosting tourism in the capital region.

14 India's First 3D-Printed Rural Housing Pilot

PAPER V — Science and Technology

WHY IN NEWS

The central and state governments approved India's first-ever pilot project for 3D Concrete-Printed (3DCP) rural housing in Burripalem village, Guntur district, aiming to revolutionize affordable housing delivery.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Technological Innovation:** Utilizes advanced automated layer-by-layer construction technology to build homes rapidly.
- **Core Objectives:** Designed to be cost-effective and disaster-resistant while significantly reducing traditional construction time and material wastage.
- **Implementation:** Scheduled for launch in early October, serving as a scalable model for future rural housing projects.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Urban and Rural Development:** Serves as a contemporary example of leveraging cutting-edge technology to solve chronic housing deficits and improve living standards in rural areas.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Aligns with national goals for sustainable construction, reducing the carbon footprint of the building sector through minimized material waste and energy efficiency.

15 YouthPOWER Rankings and Andhra Pradesh State Handbook of Youth Opportunity

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

The Future of India Foundation released the "Andhra Pradesh State Handbook of Youth Opportunity" at GITAM Deemed to be University, evaluating all 26 districts to assess youth development, skilling, and employment readiness across the state.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Top Performer:** Visakhapatnam secured the highest YouthPOWER score of 55, driven by a robust formal employment sector and superior educational outcomes.
- **Assessment Parameters:** Districts were evaluated on participation, opportunity, work, education, and readiness/skilling, utilizing nearly 180 indicators drawn from 27 government databases.
- **State-Level Challenges:** Youth unemployment stands at 16.2%, with 28.4% of youth classified as NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training). Female labor force participation remains critically low at 29.7%.

- **State-Level Gains:** The state has recorded improvements in child and adult nutrition, a steady structural shift of young workers from agriculture to services, trade, hospitality, and construction, and rapid expansion of digital connectivity and banking access for young women.
- **Visakhapatnam's Distinct Edge:** The district features 60% regular salaried jobs (compared to the state median of 21%) and a higher value added per worker (₹1.79 lakh vs. ₹1.42 lakh). Educational metrics are notably stronger, with only 15% of young women (aged 15-21) not in education or employment.

16 PanIIT Summit 2026 and DeepTech Roadmap

PAPER V — Science and Technology

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh Government finalized preparations to host the PanIIT Summit 2026 in Vijayawada, aiming to outline the state's DeepTech Roadmap and align with the broader "Swarna Andhra @ 2047" development vision.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Thematic Focus:** The summit centers on five core areas: energy and fuel optimization, quantum computing, semiconductors, artificial intelligence in governance, and building a robust startup ecosystem.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Designed to position the state as a premier hub for technological innovation and attract high-value investments in emerging, future-ready sectors.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Science and Technology:** Highlights the state's proactive approach to building a domestic DeepTech ecosystem, which is crucial for national self-reliance in critical technologies like semiconductors and quantum computing.
- **Governance and Administration:** Demonstrates the integration of AI in governance to improve public service delivery, transparency, and administrative efficiency.

SECTION III — AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH

17 Chittoor to Receive ₹1,529.69 Crore Under Rayalaseema Horticulture Development Plan

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

Chittoor district is set to receive a significant allocation of ₹1,529.69 crore under the Rayalaseema Integrated Horticulture Development Plan. The initiative aims to transform the Rayalaseema, Prakasam,

and Markapuram regions into a Global Horticulture Hub by creating a complete value chain from production to marketing and exports, thereby ensuring better incomes for farmers.

KEY FACTS

- **Official Launch:** The programme will be formally launched on October 2 at Madanapalle by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- **Implementation Strategy:** The plan will be executed over three years across 20 clusters covering 27 mandals in Chittoor district. The first phase (2026-27) will cover five clusters in seven mandals, scaling up in subsequent years.
- **Major Fund Allocations:**
  - ₹620.40 crore for micro-irrigation to improve water use efficiency.
  - ₹383.74 crore for promoting demand-driven crops such as exotic fruits, vegetables, flowers, and oil palm.
  - ₹162.80 crore for productivity enhancement through the rejuvenation of old orchards, pruning, mulching, and integrated pest and nutrient management.
  - ₹84.96 crore for post-harvest management, including cold storages, ripening chambers, reefer transport, and processing units.
  - ₹77.11 crore for market infrastructure such as collection centres, warehouses, and pack-houses.
- **Institutional and Capacity Support:** Additional funds are earmarked to strengthen the agricultural ecosystem, including ₹23 crore for FPOs and agri-startups, ₹21 crore for quality planting material and nurseries, ₹17.21 crore for farm mechanisation, and ₹17.40 crore for training and capacity building.

18 Rayalaseema Horticulture Expansion and Irrigation Development

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

Strategic push to transform the drought-prone Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh into a major commercial horticulture hub by 2030, shifting the regional focus from water scarcity to high-value agricultural production and agro-processing.

KEY TARGETS FOR 2030

- **Cultivation Area:** Expansion from 8.4 lakh hectares to 14.41 lakh hectares.
- **Total Production:** Increase in horticultural output to 435 lakh tonnes.

MAJOR IRRIGATION & INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

- **Veligonda Project:** Highlighted for improving the availability of Krishna river water to the Badvel area in Kadapa district.
- **Annamayya Project:** Surveys are currently underway for rebuilding the project and implementing structural measures to prevent future flood damage.
- **Supply Chain:** Emphasis on strengthening transport, railway connectivity, and digital marketing systems to facilitate the rapid movement of farm produce.

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS & VALUE ADDITION

- **Water-Efficient Farming:** Expansion of commercial crops like banana, papaya, and pomegranate utilizing drip irrigation to maximize yield with limited water.
- **Regional Specialties:** Targeting enhanced global market and export opportunities for Madanapalle tomato, tamarind, banana, and sweet orange.
- **Price Stabilization:** Establishing robust processing, storage, and marketing infrastructure to protect farmers from price crashes during peak harvest seasons and to generate local employment.

INVESTMENTS & KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- **Financial Outlay:** The expansion proposals envisage central assistance of ₹40,352 crore alongside private-sector investments of ₹59,000 crore.
- **Horticulture Hub:** A major horticulture hub is being established in Madanapalle, with inauguration and foundation-laying ceremonies scheduled for October 2.

19 Rayalaseema Horticulture Challenges and the ₹1-Lakh-Crore Hub Project

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

Farmers in the Rayalaseema region frequently face distress sales during bumper harvests due to a severe lack of cold storage, weak market linkages, and middlemen exploitation. To address these structural bottlenecks and prevent post-harvest losses, a massive integrated horticulture hub is being proposed to transform the region's agricultural economy.

KEY AGRICULTURAL CHALLENGES

- **Water Management:** Agriculture remains largely rain-fed with patchy micro-irrigation coverage. Delayed release of Handri-Neeva project water causes delayed sowing, leading to bunched harvests and market gluts.
- **Marketing Flaws:** Weak Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), absence of pre-arranged buyers, and middlemen dictating prices through crate advances leave farmers vulnerable to price crashes.
- **Logistics and Perishability:** A critical lack of cold storage units and pack houses. With tomatoes having a 2-day shelf life and mangoes a 10-day window, transport delays or full market yards force farmers to dump produce on roads.

THE ₹1-LAKH-CRORE RAYALASEEMA INTEGRATED HORTICULTURE HUB

- **Location:** Foundation stone to be laid at Madanapalle in Chittoor district.
- **Funding Structure:** Envisages ₹40,000 crore from the Centre and ₹60,000 crore in private-sector investment.
- **Scope:** Development of infrastructure across 201 clusters in 10 districts.
- **Core Infrastructure:** Each cluster will be equipped with collection centres, grading facilities, cold storage, and direct market linkages to allow farmers to store produce and sell based on demand rather

than distress.

ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES AND POLICY DEMANDS

- **Indian School of Agriculture:** Being established at Ramireddypalli by Reliance to provide farmers with AI-based technological tools and real-time market alerts.
- **Institutional Demand:** Stakeholders are demanding the creation of a separate Central Mango Board, modelled on the existing Tobacco Board, to specifically support and regulate mango growers.
- **Value Addition:** Strong push for establishing pulp units, pack houses for export, and direct linkages to food processing industries to ensure price stability and generate local employment.

20 Enhancement of Totapuri Mango Value Chain in Tirupati

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

To address the persistent decline in Totapuri mango prices and strengthen the agricultural value chain, the Andhra Pradesh State Horticulture Department has launched a phased project for the rejuvenation and scientific management of Totapuri orchards in the Tirupati district, guided by recommendations from a central expert committee.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Collaborative Framework:** The project is led by ICAR-Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (ICAR-CISH), Lucknow, in collaboration with ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), Bengaluru, and Dr. YSR Horticultural University, Andhra Pradesh.
- **Core Intervention:** Implementation of phased top-working (grafting superior varieties onto existing rootstocks) of orchards, alongside training and demonstrations on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for farmers in Chinnagottigallu mandal.
- **MIDH Support:** Interventions under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) include orchard rejuvenation, construction of pack houses, distribution of fruit covers, and subsidies for post-harvest management infrastructure.
- **Financial Relief:** A price deficit support of ₹4 per kg has been announced for eligible Totapuri mango farmers to mitigate the impact of recent market crashes.
- **Strategic Guidance:** Experts emphasized the need for byproduct processing, value addition, market diversification, and the adoption of scientific grafting methods to tap into newer, more profitable domestic and export markets.

21 Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi (HNSS) Project and Water Security in Kuppam

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu marked the arrival of Krishna river waters into the tail-end, drought-prone areas of the Kuppam constituency via the Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi (HNSS) project, addressing chronic water scarcity and laying the groundwork for long-term irrigation security.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Project Reach:** The HNSS network successfully channels water from the foothills of Srisailam to the southern tip of the state.
- **Tangible Impact:** The project has filled 133 minor irrigation tanks across the constituency. The release of 2.4 TMC (Thousand Million Cubic feet) of water last year recharged local aquifers, raising groundwater tables by nearly 3 meters and reviving dried-up borewells.
- **New Infrastructure:** The foundation stone was laid for the Beeraganipalle reservoir, with additional reservoirs planned for Yamiganipalle and the Madanapalle region.
- **Future Vision:** A comprehensive plan was unveiled to interlink over 550 minor irrigation tanks across the constituency using a combination of lift irrigation systems, underground pipeline networks, and gravity canals.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Water Resource Management:** Demonstrates the effectiveness of inter-basin water transfer and the interlinking of micro-irrigation tanks in mitigating drought in rain-shadow and semi-arid regions.
- **Groundwater Recharge:** Highlights the direct correlation between surface water availability in minor tanks and aquifer revival, which is a critical strategy for sustainable agriculture and drinking water security.
- **Rural Resilience:** Ensures stable agrarian livelihoods and drinking water access, reducing distress migration and insulating vulnerable communities from the impacts of climate variability.

22 NIO-Goa Identifies 14 Breach-Prone Stretches Along Godavari River

PAPER V — Science and Technology

WHY IN NEWS

Experts from the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO-Goa) have identified 14 breach-prone locations along the Gouthami and Vasista branches of the Godavari river in the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district of Andhra Pradesh, prompting administrative action to strengthen embankments and assess flood risks.

KEY FACTS

- **Geographical Significance:** The Godavari river, originating in Maharashtra, confluences into the Bay of Bengal in the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema and West Godavari districts, experiencing at least two floods annually.

- **Administrative Action:** The District Collector directed officials to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) and a socio-economic study to assess the impact of potential embankment breaches on local villages, crops, and assets, alongside recording water pressure at the vulnerable sites.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** NIO-Goa experts recommended the riprap method (placing stones along the embankment) for strengthening. The use of geo-textile is also being examined in select locations to minimize reinforcement costs.
- **Agricultural Impact Study:** Officials were directed to study the impact of silting at the confluence points of the Konavaram drain and Rameswaram drain, which are currently submerging nearly 15,000 acres of agricultural fields in the district.

23 Environmental Concerns: Untreated Effluents at RK Beach, Visakhapatnam

PAPER V — Science and Technology

WHY IN NEWS

Recent heavy rainfall, exacerbated by low-pressure systems over the Bay of Bengal, has triggered widespread urban runoff in Visakhapatnam. This has caused untreated sewage and urban drainage to overflow from open storm-water drains and spill directly onto the iconic Ramakrishna (RK) Beach and into the Bay of Bengal, raising serious environmental and public health alarms.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- **Inadequate Drainage Infrastructure:** Heavy downpours overwhelm the city's low-capacity underground drainage channels and open storm-water drains, leading to system breaches.
- **Marine and Coastal Pollution:** The discharge of discoloured wastewater and accumulated litter directly into the sea compromises the ecological health of the littoral zone and threatens marine biodiversity.
- **Public Health and Tourism Impact:** The contamination of a premier tourist destination poses direct health risks to citizens and visitors, while degrading the city's aesthetic and economic value.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE AND EXECUTION GAPS

- **Planned Interventions:** Civic authorities have previously outlined plans to plug major open drains and divert wastewater to Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) through upgraded Underground Drainage (UGD) networks.
- **Field-Level Deficits:** Despite these plans, persistent gaps in field-level execution and maintenance continue to allow untreated municipal waste to reach the coastline, highlighting a disconnect between policy formulation and ground-level implementation.

24 Combating Vector and Food-Borne Diseases in Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

The State Department of Health, Medical and Family Welfare has launched intensified surveillance and preventive measures to contain a sharp rise in vector-borne and water or food-borne diseases, particularly focusing on vulnerable and tribal districts across the state.

KEY STATISTICS AND AFFECTED REGIONS

- **Malaria:** 7,895 cases reported (a 27.9% increase from the previous year), primarily concentrated in Alluri Sitarama Raju, Polavaram, and Vizianagaram districts.
- **Dengue:** 1,475 cases reported (a 4.6% increase).
- **Scrub Typhus:** 941 cases recorded, with notable increases in Alluri Sitarama Raju and Parvathipuram Manyam districts.
- **Food-Borne Illnesses:** A sharp spike observed in Srikakulam district, where cases surged from 34 last year to 408 this year.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- **Targeted Interventions:** Implementation of intensified indoor residual spraying, distribution of mosquito nets, and aggressive removal of mosquito breeding sites, with a special focus on malaria-prone tribal areas.
- **Weekly 'Dry Day':** A mandated weekly drive every Friday to eliminate stagnant water and breeding sites, leveraging a community-driven approach involving ASHA workers, health staff, local government personnel, and residents.
- **Vector Control:** Active identification and targeted treatment of waterlogged areas to curb dengue transmission in urban and semi-urban pockets.

25 Establishment of Genome Analysis Centre and Expansion of Cancer Care Infrastructure

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh government is advancing its healthcare infrastructure by inaugurating a pilot genome sequencing facility in Guntur and announcing a large-scale Genome Analysis Centre at the proposed Quantum Valley in Amaravati. This initiative aims to democratize access to advanced genetic testing, personalized medicine, and comprehensive cancer care across the state.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GENOME INITIATIVE

- **Amaravati Quantum Valley Centre:** A future large-scale facility dedicated to identifying the genetic causes of rare diseases, supporting advanced medical research, and analyzing genetic data related to cancer.

- **Guntur Pilot Facility:** A genome sequencing centre established at the NATCO cancer centre within the Government General Hospital, Guntur.
- **Free Advanced Testing:** Provides free genetic and biomarker tests for breast and lung cancer patients, offering services that typically cost up to ₹25,000 in private laboratories.
- **Personalized Medicine:** Enables the identification of genetic alterations in cancer cells, allowing doctors to tailor treatment methods and medicines to individual patients, while also aiding in the early detection of hereditary disease risks within families.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EARLY DETECTION DRIVE

- **Mass Screening:** The government is conducting free screening for oral, breast, and cervical cancers.
- **Progress Metrics:** Out of a targeted population of 4.27 crore people, approximately 2.65 crore have been screened, leading to the identification of nearly 7,500 new cancer cases.

INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION FOR CANCER CARE

- **Phase 1 Completion:** Four comprehensive cancer centres established in Guntur, Visakhapatnam, Kurnool, and Kadapa at a cost of ₹311 crore. These are equipped with advanced technologies, including linear accelerators, brachytherapy, and CT simulators.
- **Phase 2 Rollout:** New cancer centres are currently under development in Kakinada and Anantapur.
- **Future Expansion:** Plans are in place to upgrade an additional 11 teaching hospitals into dedicated cancer care centres.

26 Patient Safety and Student Mental Health Initiatives

PAPER V — Science and Technology

WHY IN NEWS

The state government launched targeted interventions to improve healthcare quality and address the growing mental health crisis among students in educational institutions.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Healthcare Metrics:** Andhra Pradesh secured the highest national score of 86 in patient safety protocols and medical service infrastructure.
- **Mental Health Directive:** Following academic stress incidents at Andhra Medical College, Visakhapatnam, a mission-mode directive was issued to establish dedicated counseling infrastructure and psychological support systems across all major educational institutions.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Public Health:** Highlights the necessary shift towards preventive healthcare and the recognition of mental health as a critical component of overall well-being, especially among youth.
- **Social Development:** Demonstrates proactive governance in addressing non-communicable challenges like academic stress, ensuring a supportive environment for human capital development.

27 Sanjeevani Programme and Tribal Welfare Initiatives

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WHY IN NEWS

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu launched the Sanjeevani Programme from Ganneli in the Araku Valley, Alluri Sitarama Raju district, with the overarching objective of achieving the complete elimination of multidimensional tribal poverty through targeted health and infrastructure interventions.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Healthcare Reach:** Deployment of a specialized emergency network comprising 150 vehicles and 104 ambulances, equipped to conduct 42 unique diagnostic tests on-site in remote, hilly terrains.
- **Budget Allocation:** A dedicated sum of ₹250 crore has been earmarked for the Tribal Health Infrastructure Mission.
- **Connectivity Project:** Concurrent launch of the Adivathalli Bata project, aimed at constructing 900 kilometers of remote roads to improve accessibility.
- **Drone Logistics:** Integration of automated drone delivery payloads within the Sanjeevani framework to transport critical blood samples and emergency medicines between inaccessible tribal hamlets and district hospitals.

28 Leopard Sighting at Alipiri-Tirumala Footpath and HANUMAN Team Deployment

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WHY IN NEWS

A leopard was spotted near the 2,800th step on the Alipiri–Tirumala footpath, prompting immediate administrative action and the deployment of specialized wildlife response teams to ensure both public safety and the animal's safe return to its natural habitat.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Incident Location:** The sighting occurred on the heavily frequented Alipiri–Tirumala footpath, a major pilgrimage route in the Seshachalam Hills region.
- **Administrative Response:** Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan directed the Forest Department to maintain strict, round-the-clock vigilance in the affected area.
- **Specialized Response Unit:** A 20-member HANUMAN (Healing And Nurturing Units for Monitoring, Aid & Nursing of Wildlife) team, comprising forest officials, veterinarians, and doctors, was deployed to monitor the situation and safely guide the leopard back into the forest.
- **Public Safety Advisory:** Pilgrims have been strictly advised to remain on designated pathways, follow official instructions, avoid approaching or chasing the animal, and immediately report any sightings to Forest Department or Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) personnel.

29 Rescue of Indian Gaur in Papikonda National Park

PAPER V — Science and Technology

WHY IN NEWS

Forest officials successfully rescued a female Indian Gaur trapped in a poacher's wire snare within the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of Papikonda National Park in Andhra Pradesh, highlighting ongoing anti-poaching operations and wildlife rehabilitation efforts in the region.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Species Profile:** The rescued animal is a 750-kg female Indian Gaur (Bos gaurus). The Papikonda Hill Range in the Godavari Valley was historically known as 'Bison Hills' due to its thriving Gaur population.
- **Location:** The incident occurred in the Indukuru reserve forest (Rampachodavaram Forest Division) in Polavaram district, which falls under the protected area network of Papikonda National Park.
- **Rehabilitation:** Following initial first aid by forest officials and veterinarians, the Gaur was shifted to the Animal Rescue Centre (ARC) in Visakhapatnam for advanced veterinary care and rehabilitation.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Protected Area Mapping:** Papikonda National Park is located in the Godavari Valley of Andhra Pradesh. It is a critical habitat for diverse flora and fauna, and its surrounding Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ) require strict monitoring against anthropogenic threats like snaring, poaching, and habitat fragmentation.
- **Species Conservation:** The Indian Gaur (Indian Bison) is the largest extant bovine. It is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Incidents of snaring highlight the persistent threat of illegal poaching and the need for intensified patrolling in buffer and eco-sensitive zones.
- **Wildlife Healthcare Infrastructure:** The utilization of the specialized Animal Rescue Centre (ARC) in Visakhapatnam underscores the importance of dedicated veterinary infrastructure for the successful treatment, rehabilitation, and eventual release of injured mega-fauna back into their natural habitats.

SECTION IV — SOCIETY, EDUCATION & WELFARE

30 Ongole Utsavam & Indigenous Cattle Conservation

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WHY IN NEWS

The notes are based on the 'Ongole Utsavam', an event organized to mark the 150th anniversary of Ongole Municipality in Andhra Pradesh. The primary focus of the event was the conservation of indigenous livestock and the celebration of local governance milestones.

KEY EXAM FACTS

- **Ongole Cattle Breed:** A world-renowned indigenous breed native to the Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh. They are highly valued for their strength, vitality, and adaptability.
- **Conservation Concern:** There is an urgent need to conserve this indigenous breed domestically, as foreign countries are actively acquiring these native cattle to develop new, resilient cross-breeds.
- **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):** Referenced during the event. This flagship scheme was launched under former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee with the objective of providing all-weather road connectivity to unconnected rural habitations.
- **Notable Civic Initiative:** As part of the 150th-anniversary celebrations, 150 medical camps were organized in a single day, showcasing a model for rapid public health outreach.
- **Key Personalities:** M. Venkaiah Naidu (Former Vice-President of India, Chief Guest) and Kambhampati Haribabu (Current Governor of Odisha, attending in his official capacity as a native of Ongole).

31 Palle Panduga 3.0 and Rural Infrastructure Push in Andhra Pradesh

PAPER IV — Economy and Development of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh government is launching the third edition of its flagship rural development initiative, Palle Panduga 3.0, aimed at transforming rural infrastructure, enhancing connectivity, and boosting wage employment in the state's drought-prone regions.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF PHASE 3.0

- **Rural Connectivity:** Laying of 8,571 km of rural roads, including crucial gravel roads connecting directly to farms.
- **Financial Outlay:** An allocation of ₹5,838 crore for road works, strengthening drainage systems, and constructing village administrative infrastructure such as Panchayat office buildings.
- **Scheme Convergence:** Integration with the Jal Jeevan Mission to provide household drinking water connections, alongside the utilization of Panchayat-level grants to complete pending local works.

ASSOCIATED EMPLOYMENT AND ASSET CREATION SCHEME

- **VB-G RAM G:** Launch of works worth ₹12,000 crore under the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin).
- **Objective:** To expand the reach of rural employment guarantee programs, ensure direct benefit transfers to workers, and create durable, long-term rural assets.

TRACK RECORD OF PREVIOUS PHASES

- **Phase 1:** Completed projects worth ₹2,525 crore, including 4,000 km of cement concrete (CC) roads, 22,500 livestock shelters (mini Gokulam), 15,000 water storage units, and one lakh farm pits.

- **Phase 2:** Executed 53,382 decentralized works worth ₹6,787 crore across 13,326 Panchayats.

SECTION V — CULTURE, TOURISM & HERITAGE

32 Nava Nandi Book and A.P. Tourism Award

PAPER II — History, Culture and Geography of India and Andhra Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

The book Nava Nandi, authored by M. Lahari, won the Andhra Pradesh State Annual Tourism Award for Excellence 2025-26 in the Best Excellence in Writing/Publication category. The recognition highlights the rich cultural, historical, and architectural heritage of the Nandyal region, promoting it as a key destination for cultural tourism.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AWARD AND PUBLICATION

- **Award Presentation:** The award was received by M.V. Shivkumar Reddy (INTACH Nandyal district convenor) from Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh during the World Tourism Day celebrations in Rajamahendravam.
- **Publication Timeline:** The book was compiled over two years and published in December 2025.
- **Core Subject:** The book documents the prominence of Nandyal town and the Nava Nandis (Nine Nandi temples) that surround it, which are uniquely influenced by the Navagrahas (nine celestial bodies).

CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- **Etymology:** The name Nandyal is derived from Nandi (bull) and Alayam (temple). It is recognized as the only location globally that houses this specific cluster of nine Nandi temples.
- **Engineering Marvel:** A major focus of the publication is the centuries-old Mahanandi temple tank, detailing the ancient engineering brilliance that allows it to maintain a constant, crystal-clear water level year-round.
- **Regional Narrative Shift:** The work actively aims to reshape the external perception of Rayalaseema, moving away from stereotypes of regional animosity to highlight its identity as a historic center of devotion, meditation, and architectural heritage.

INSTITUTIONAL AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

- The documentation was supported by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), local historians, and temple authorities, underscoring the importance of community-driven heritage preservation in boosting regional tourism.

33 Godavari Declaration and Tourism Promotion for Pushkarams-2027

WHY IN NEWS

Ahead of the upcoming Godavari Pushkarams in 2027, the Andhra Pradesh government unveiled the 'Godavari Declaration' (titled "The Godavari Calls") to strategically boost regional tourism, upgrade infrastructure, and leverage technology to enhance visitor experiences.

KEY INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Pushkarams Preparations:** Development of a tent city and the Havelock bridge to accommodate and manage the massive influx of pilgrims and tourists.
- **Industry Status:** The tourism sector in the state has recently been granted industry status, facilitating easier access to institutional finance and incentives.
- **Capital Inflow:** The sector has attracted ₹20,000 crore in total investments, with ₹6,000 crore specifically directed toward the construction of 16 major hotels over the past two years. An additional 45 hotels are currently under construction across Amaravati, Tirupati, Kakinada, and Visakhapatnam.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN TOURISM

- **AI Documentation:** 130 tourist destinations, including heritage temples, have been digitally documented using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and made available online.
- **Language Accessibility:** AI is being deployed for real-time translation of local languages to improve accessibility for domestic and international tourists.
- **Balanced Approach:** Authorities emphasized that while technology enhances reach and convenience, it must not compromise the authenticity and cultural integrity of the destinations.

NICHE TOURISM AND STATE ASSETS

- **Unique Selling Propositions (USPs):** The state leverages its 1053-kilometer coastline, rich tribal diversity, Araku coffee, and 21 Geographical Indication (GI) tagged crafts, arts, and food items.
- **Astro and Eco-Tourism:** Maredumilli, with its deep forest cover and minimal light pollution, is being developed as a premier destination for Milky Way sighting, alongside its existing ecological and archaeological appeal.
- **Adventure Tourism:** Planned bike expeditions on scenic routes, including Rajamahendravaram-Maredumilli, Visakhapatnam-Araku, and Tirupati-Gandikota, to attract younger demographics and adventure seekers.

34 Development of Chandavaram Buddhist Stupa as an International Tourist Destination

WHY IN NEWS

The ancient Chandavaram Buddhist Stupa in Prakasam district, Andhra Pradesh, is slated for comprehensive restoration and development into an international tourist destination. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) is currently being prepared to outline the master plan for its conservation and infrastructural upgrade.

KEY HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FACTS

- **Location:** Situated on Singarakonda Hill near the Gundlakamma River in Chandavaram village, Donakonda mandal.
- **Significance:** It is the largest of the 150 Buddhist stupas discovered in Andhra Pradesh, featuring an ancient double-terraced structure.
- **Historical Timeline:** The region flourished as a major Buddhist center between the 2nd century BCE and the 2nd century CE.
- **Ancient Trade Route:** The site holds strategic historical importance as it was located along the ancient route connecting Kashi and Kanchipuram.

DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM INITIATIVES

- **Buddhist Circuit Integration:** The stupa will be formally integrated into the proposed Buddhist Circuit, linking Amaravati with other prominent Buddhist heritage sites across the state.
- **Spiritual Tourism Circuit:** Plans are underway to connect the stupa with the Tripuranthakeswara Swamy and Bala Tripura Sundari Devi temple complex at Tripurantakam, and the Lakshmi Chennakesava Swamy Temple at Markapuram.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** A new road connecting the stupa from Tripurantakam on National Highway 544D (Anantapur-Guntur) is being laid, alongside basic site infrastructure development funded by the district administration.
- **Documentation:** A comprehensive book is being published to document the historical and cultural legacy of the site for future research and preservation.

35 18th Vysakhi Nrityotsav and Classical Dance Heritage

WHY IN NEWS

Visakhapatnam hosted the 18th edition of the Vysakhi Nrityotsav, a prominent all-dance festival, at the Kalabharathi Auditorium, celebrating India's diverse classical and folk dance traditions under the direction of founder B.R. Vikram Kumar.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND AWARDEES

- **Vysakhi Bharata Nritya Bhushan Award:** Conferred upon Darshana Jhaveri, a Padma Shri awardee and renowned exponent of Manipuri dance.
- **Guru Saroja Vaidyanathan Excellence Award:** Awarded to Vasundhara Doraswamy for her significant contributions to Bharatanatyam.
- **Yuva Puraskar Awards:** Presented to emerging artists, including Afsaan Gujaravat, who showcased Rajasthani folk dance.

CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

- **Classical Forms:** The festival featured prominent troupes performing Manipuri, Kathak (led by Hari Reddy), and Bharatanatyam.
- **Folk and Rare Traditions:** An animal-mask dance by an Odisha troupe led by Dhanu Bisai was showcased, highlighting a seldom-staged regional folk art form.
- **Kuchipudi Debut:** Shloka Pakala performed her Rangapravesham (traditional debut) in Kuchipudi, accompanied by nattuvangam (rhythmic cymbal playing and vocalization) by her guru K.V. Lakshmi of the Nataraj Music and Dance Academy.

36 National IETE Lifetime Achievement Award: Prof. G.S.N. Raju

PAPER V — Science and Technology

WHY IN NEWS

Prof. G.S.N. Raju, a distinguished academician and former Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University, was conferred the National IETE Lifetime Achievement Award in Kolkata for his exceptional contributions to teaching, education, and research in electronics and telecommunication engineering.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Awarding Body:** Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers (IETE), a premier professional society in India dedicated to the advancement of science and technology.
- **Recipient Profile:** Prof. G.S.N. Raju is the current CEO of Srinivasa Institute of Engineering and Technology and former Chancellor of Centurion University of Technology and Management, Andhra Pradesh. He has guided over 60 researchers and authored more than 530 research papers in national and international journals.
- **Award Significance:** He is the 24th recipient of this prestigious award, which has been conferred annually since 2011.
- **Presentation:** The award was presented by Shashi Shekhar Vempati, former CEO of Prasar Bharati and former chairman of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

37 164th Birth Anniversary of Mahakavi Gurajada Venkata Apparao

WHY IN NEWS

The 164th birth anniversary of the renowned Telugu poet, playwright, and social reformer Mahakavi Gurajada Venkata Apparao was observed with cultural performances and official tributes across Andhra Pradesh, reaffirming the enduring relevance of his progressive literature in modern society.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Seminal Literary Work:** Best known for his groundbreaking play Kanyasulkam, which boldly exposed the social evils, superstitions, economic disparities, and gender inequalities prevalent during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- **Core Philosophy:** Popularized the profound humanistic message, "A nation is not the soil; it is its people" (Desamante matti kadhoi, desamante manushuloi), emphasizing civic responsibility and humanism over mere territorial nationalism.
- **Educational Integration:** Strong recommendations were made to include Gurajada's writings in NCERT and CBSE school curricula to instill patriotism, social awareness, and progressive values in the younger generation.
- **Statewide Observance:** Tributes were paid by district administrators and cultural leaders in Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, and Paderu (Alluri Sitharama Raju district), highlighting his widespread and lasting cultural impact.

38 Gurajada Jayanti Declared as State Festival

WHY IN NEWS

The state government officially designated Gurajada Jayanti, the birth anniversary of the legendary social reformer, writer, and poet Gurajada Apparao, as a State Festival, celebrated with official ceremonies on September 19.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Cultural Recognition:** Formalizes the state's commitment to honoring Gurajada Apparao's monumental contributions to Telugu literature, social reform, and the promotion of progressive, humanistic values.
- **Official Observance:** Ensures annual, state-sponsored ceremonies to keep his literary and philosophical legacy alive for future generations.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Culture and Heritage:** Reinforces the importance of preserving and promoting the legacies of historical reformers who challenged social inequalities and championed progressive ideals, serving as a continuous source of inspiration for civic consciousness.

39 Discovery of 14th-Century Vijayanagara Inscription at Penukonda

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WHY IN NEWS

A significant 14th-century stone inscription was discovered at the Sri Naga Lingeshwara Swamy Temple atop Penukonda hill in the Sri Sathya Sai district, shedding light on the early administrative history of the Vijayanagara Empire.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Historical Timeline:** The epigraph dates back to 1363 CE, during the early reign of Emperor Bukka Raya I.
- **Linguistic Features:** Written in a hybrid ancient Kannada-Telugu script, reflecting the cultural synthesis of the Deccan region during that era.
- **Administrative Insight:** Records the consecration of a Shiva Linga by Anantharasu Chikka Odeyar, the Prime Minister of the empire, highlighting the region's historical status as the empire's second capital.
- **Associated Heritage:** The text mentions a sacred pond locally known as Nagula Bavi (Well of Serpents). This is corroborated by the physical discovery of an intricate sculpture depicting eight Naga Kanyas worshipping Lord Shiva within the temple premises.
- **Regional Significance:** Penukonda historically served as the second capital of the Vijayanagara Empire, making this a crucial archaeological find for understanding the region's medieval political and religious landscape.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- **Medieval History:** Provides primary epigraphical evidence of the administrative hierarchy and royal patronage for religious institutions during the early Vijayanagara period.
- **Art and Heritage:** Underscores the importance of preserving lesser-known archaeological sites and the role of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in reconstructing regional cultural history.

40 Epigraphical Discoveries at Kondaveedu Fort

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WHY IN NEWS

The recent unearthing of a medieval inscription at the Kondaveedu Fort in Palnadu district, Andhra Pradesh, adds to previous archaeological findings in the region. These discoveries provide crucial primary evidence regarding the socio-religious history, land grant systems, and royal patronage during the reign of the Reddy dynasty and earlier medieval rulers.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS (RECENT 14TH/15TH CENTURY DISCOVERY)

- **Location:** Found on the right-side doorway pillar of a ruined Siva temple atop Rudrapada Sikharam (also locally known as Adam Shafi Bodu hillock) within the fort complex.

- **Content of the Inscription:** Records a charitable grant of four putlu (a traditional land measurement unit) of wetland, with specified boundaries, to teachers and gurus associated with Tapanacharyulu for their permanent enjoyment.
- **Decipherment:** The text was analyzed and deciphered by K. Muniratnam Reddy, Director of Epigraphy at the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- **Historical Corroboration:** The find aligns with the Kondaveeti Kaifiyat (local historical chronicle), which documents extensive land and temple donations made by the prominent Reddy ruler Pedakomati Vema Reddy.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS (PREVIOUS 13TH CENTURY DISCOVERIES)

- **Location:** Unearthed during the renovation and clearing of the Yogi Vemana hall (a 125x25 foot pillared structure) within the fort.
- **Content:** Written in old Telugu script, these inscriptions record the construction of civic and religious infrastructure, including a marriage hall (Kalyana Mandapam) built by the Malla Yadava Chola king, and another built for the Visweswara temple by a patron named Galala Pathana.

41 Valmiki Caves Documentation and Preservation

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WHY IN NEWS

In late September, tribal cultural welfare boards and independent researchers initiated comprehensive documentation efforts focused on the cultural preservation of the Valmiki Caves.

GEOLOGICAL AND PALAEOCLIMATIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Valmiki Caves in Andhra Pradesh have drawn significant attention for their 1.6-billion-year-old rock formations, unique limestone structures, pristine underground water bodies, and their critical role in providing evidence of past climatic changes in the Indian subcontinent.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Location and Geography:** Situated near Boyavandlapalle (Peapully mandal), approximately 25 km from Dhone and 75 km from Kurnool. They are located near Gooty Fort and the Gooty–Mantralayam Road, surrounded by the Erramala hills. They are considered among the oldest exposed geological formations in Rayalaseema and the deepest cave systems in South India.
- **Geological Profile:** Formed within ancient dolomite and limestone rocks. The rocks contain fossilized evidence of ancient blue-green algae, offering vital clues about early environmental conditions.
- **Major Cave Formations (Speleothems):** Mineral-rich water has created structures over millennia, including stalactites (growing downward), stalagmites (growing upward), flowstones, calcite pillars, curtains, and honeycomb structures. Some formations produce resonant, tabla-like sounds when tapped, though they are highly fragile.

- **Palaeoclimatic Importance:** Oxygen-isotope ratios preserved in stalagmites help reconstruct past rainfall and climatic conditions. Studies indicate a shift to stronger monsoons and increased rainfall after the end of the last Ice Age (around 11,700 years ago), contrasting sharply with the region's current water stress.
- **Underground Water Bodies:** The caves house clear subterranean water sources locally known as Edu Bavulu or Gundalu. Fluctuations in their water levels during varying rainfall patterns assist in studying regional climate and groundwater history.
- **Cultural Significance:** Local tradition associates the caves with Sage Valmiki, believed to have composed the Ramayana here. Natural rock formations resembling a Nandi and Shiva Lingam are actively worshipped, with special prayers conducted during Maha Shivaratri.
- **Exploration History:** First documented in depth through surveys led by H.D. Gebauer in the 1980s, with wider attention brought by German explorers in 1993. Over 300 steps have since been constructed to improve access, though the terrain remains steep and rugged.



— End of Compendium —

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