

Andhra CM backs multilingual learning, warns against politics

PTI, AMARAVATI: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday emphasised that language is not for hating and called for avoiding "unnecessary politics" over languages.

Describing Hindi as the 'national language', the Chief Minister said learning it would enable fluent communication in Delhi. "I am telling this very clearly to you, language is not for hating. Here (in Andhra Pradesh) the mother tongue is Telugu. Hindi is the national language and the international language is English," Naidu told the Assembly.

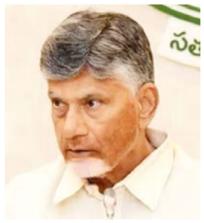
"That's why you should all remember to, refrain from engaging in unnecessary politics. Today, let's all think, language is useful for communication, hence, it is good to learn as many languages as possible," he said.

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— Chandrababu Naidu, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister

Addressing the Assembly, the CM advocated learning many languages to enhance livelihood opportunities, while maintaining a connection to one's mother tongue.

The CM's remarks on languages come amid the ongoing controversy between Tamil Nadu and the BJP-led Central Government over



allegations of Hindi language imposition. Further, the TDP supremo claimed that only those people who study in their mother tongue are excelling across the world and a misconception is prevalent that only the English language can guarantee knowledge.

"Language is only for communication. Knowledge will not come with language. Only people who study in their mother tongue are excelling across the world. It is easy to learn (through the mother tongue)," said Naidu.

As many people are going to other countries such as Japan and Germany, he said if those languages could also be learnt here, then it will be very easy when people visit those overseas destinations. Later, in an official press release, Naidu defended the three-language formula, stating that language is a tool for communication but not a barrier.

He underscored that people who studied in their mother tongues have succeeded globally and learning multiple languages will open up job opportunities in international markets.

19 Naxalites surrender before security forces in Chhattisgarh

PTI, BIJAPUR: At least 19 Naxalites, nine of them carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 28 lakh, surrendered before security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Monday, a senior police official said.

The cadres, including a couple, turned themselves in before senior officials of the police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), citing disappointment with "hollow" and "inhuman" Maoist ideology, exploitation of innocent tribals by senior cadres and differences brewing within the outlawed outfit, Bijapur Senior Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav said.

He said that they were also impressed with the increasing influence of the security forces, with the setting up of camps and the 'Niya Nellanar' (your good village) scheme, under which the authorities have been making efforts to provide basic amenities and carrying out development works in interior areas.

Yadav said all the surrendered Naxalites were active in different capacities in the Andhra Odisha Border (AOB) division and Pamed area committee of Maoists.

SC seeks Centre's reply on PIL challenging CAG appointment process

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre's reply on a PIL for declaring as unconstitutional, the process of appointment of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India "solely by the executive and the Prime Minister" and said we should trust our institutions.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh issued the notice on a PIL filed by NGO Centre for Public Interest Litigation and tagged it with a pending case on the issue.

The bench said Article 148 of the Constitution provides for the appointment of CAG aside from the safeguards from any influence.

"Ultimately, we have to trust our institutions. Article



148 also provides protection, similar to one which is provided to the judges of the Supreme Court," the bench said.

Advocate Prashant Bhusan, appearing for the NGO, said the question was over the independence of the institution and claimed audits by the CAG of BJP-ruled states such as Maharashtra were being stalled.

For a long time the appointment of the CAG was largely independent but recently the independence

of the constitutional body, which audits the schemes of the Centre, states and the PSUs was being stalled, he added.

Bhusan said in 2023, only 18 CAG audit reports were tabled in Parliament as opposed to 40 previously. "Now, the CAG are not being allowed to audit the schemes in the states especially which are ruled by the ruling party in the Centre. For Maharashtra, the audit teams were ready but then an order came that audit should be done after the elections," he said.

Justice Surya Kant, however, asked if the Constitution had provided an unbridled power of appointment, should the court intervene and "to what extent"?

EC to introduce new option in its software to find 'ghost voters'

PTI, KOLKATA: Amid the Trinamool Congress highlighting the issue of 'fake voters', the Election Commission has decided to introduce a new option in its software for the detection of 'ghost voters', an official said. The new option would help the Electoral Registration

Officers (EROs) find out if there are multiple names on a particular EPIC number, the official said.

"The chief electoral officers in all states have been informed about this decision," he said. On Monday, a letter was sent to the chief electoral officers of

the states informing them about a new module for correcting 'duplicate EPIC numbers', the official said.

Acting CEO of West Bengal, Dibendu Das on Monday held a virtual meeting with senior officials in the districts and briefed them about the decision, he said.

Horror videos of dogs with dead newborns go viral in MP

PTI, BHOPAL: Two videos in the last five days showing stray dogs with the bodies of newborn babies and their menacing presence in and around hospitals has become a topic of

intense debate in Madhya Pradesh, with officials and NGOs emphasising the need for a sustained campaign to control the canine population.

Some even blamed it on

the success of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which they claimed had reduced availability of food in the open for strays.

The state, with a population of 7.26 crore as per the

2011 Census or at least nine crore now, may be home to 47.36 lakh canines, which makes it a man to dog ratio of 19:1, a government veterinarian official told PTI on Monday.

voice of business

Net direct tax kitty rises 13% to Rs 21.26 lakh crore till Mar 16

PTI, NEW DELHI: Net direct tax collection grew 13.13% to over Rs 21.26 lakh crore so far this fiscal aided by higher advance tax mop up, government data showed on Monday.

During the year, the government collected Rs 10.44 lakh crore from four instalments of advance tax as against Rs 9.11 lakh crore in the previous fiscal, registering a growth of 14.62%.

The last instalment of the advance tax payment was due on March 15, 2025, for the current financial year.

Advance tax collection under the corporate tax category rose by 12.54% to Rs 7.57 lakh crore while non-corporates witnessed a

Advance tax collection under the corporate tax category rose by 12.54% to Rs 7.57 lakh crore while non-corporates witnessed a growth rate of 20.47% to Rs 2.87 lakh crore during the financial year. An individual whose estimated tax liability is likely to be over Rs 10,000 (after considering tax deducted and collected at source - TDS and TCS) is required to pay advance tax that year, as per Section 208 of the Income-Tax Act. This includes salaried taxpayers.

growth rate of 20.47% to Rs 2.87 lakh crore during the financial year.

An individual whose estimated tax liability is likely to be over Rs 10,000 (after considering tax deducted and collected at source - TDS and TCS) is required to pay advance tax that year, as per Section 208 of the Income-Tax Act. This includes

salaried taxpayers. Advance tax is to be paid before the end of the financial year on the income that one would have earned that year.

Advance tax is paid in four instalments - June 15, September 15, December 15, and March 15 of the financial year.

As per the data released by the Central Board of

Direct Taxes (CBDT), mop up from net non-corporate taxes, which include mainly personal income tax, grew 17% year-on-year to about Rs 11.01 lakh crore.

However, net corporate tax collection rose in single digits at 7% to Rs 9.69 lakh crore between April 1, 2024, and March 16, 2025.

Net collections from securities transaction tax (STT) surged nearly 56% to Rs 53,095 crore so far this fiscal. Refunds worth more than Rs 4.60 lakh crore were issued during the period as against Rs 3.47 lakh crore in the year-ago period.

Gross direct tax mop up till March 16 grew 16.15% to more than Rs 25.86 lakh

crore.

In the revised estimates (RE) for the current fiscal, the government has pegged income tax collections at Rs 12.57 lakh crore, up from the budget estimate of Rs 11.87 lakh crore.

The collection from STT is pegged at Rs 55,000 crore in this fiscal in RE, higher than the budget estimate (BE) of Rs 37,000 crore.

The corporate tax collection target was revised lower at Rs 9.80 lakh crore, down from the budget target of Rs 10.20 lakh crore.

In total, the RE pegs direct tax collections at Rs 22.37 lakh crore, higher from Rs 22.07 lakh crore in BE.

Feb exports dip to \$36.91 b, trade deficit narrows

PTI, NEW DELHI: India's exports declined for the fourth month in a row in February to \$36.91 billion due to volatility in petroleum prices and global uncertainties.

The country's exports stood at \$41.41 billion in the same month a year ago.

However, trade deficit in February narrowed to \$14.05 billion as the country's imports reduced to \$50.96 billion in February, according to commerce ministry data.

Cumulatively, during the April-February period this fiscal year, merchandise and services exports rose 6.24% to \$750.53 billion as against \$706.43 billion in the year-ago period.

India's merchandise

businessday



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) at the opening bell, in the Financial District of New York City

Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors to hike vehicle prices from April

NEW DELHI: Maruti Suzuki India and Tata Motors on Monday announced plans to increase vehicle prices from April, the second time in this year, in order to partially offset the impact of rising input costs. Maruti Suzuki said it plans to hike prices of its entire model range by up to 4% from next month. Tata Motors said it will increase the price of its commercial vehicle range by up to 2% from next month. In light of rising input costs and operational expenses, the company has planned to increase the prices of its cars from April, Maruti Suzuki India said in a regulatory filing. The price increase is expected to be up to 4% and will vary depending on the model, it added. While the company continuously strives to optimise costs and minimise the impact on its customers, some portion of the increased cost may need to be passed on to the market, the country's largest carmaker stated. Maruti Suzuki currently sells various models ranging from the entry-level Alto K-10 to multiple-purpose vehicle Invicto in the domestic market, with price ranging from Rs 4.23 lakh and Rs 29.22 lakh respectively (ex-showroom Delhi). In January this year, the company announced to hike prices by up to Rs 32,500 across various models from February 1. Maruti Suzuki India shares ended 0.24% up at Rs 11,536.10 apiece on BSE. A Honda Cars India spokesperson said that the automaker is also looking to increase vehicle prices from next month. Tata Motors said it will increase prices of its commercial vehicle range by up to 2% from April in order to partially offset the impact of rising input costs.

China boosts consumer spending as US tariffs hit exports

AP, BEIJING: Chinese government officials on Monday outlined steps they are taking to try to boost domestic demand by getting consumers to spend more as a tariff war launched by US President Donald Trump threatens to curb the country's exports.

The central bank will study creating new tools to increase low-cost funding for important consumption areas, said Che Shiyi from the People's Bank of China, the central bank.

On the spending side, the government has already provided a first tranche of 81 billion yuan (\$11.2 bil-

lion) to local governments in January for a rebate program to boost auto and appliance sales, announced Li Chunlin, the vice chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission.

The officials spoke at a news conference one day after the government, together with the ruling Communist Party, released a multi-faceted plan to try to boost consumer spending. The moves seemed designed to demonstrate that the government is committed to reviving a sluggish economy.

"While there are few

new details on how the government will increase spending, the details of the plan show a greater determination to tackle China's consumption problem this year," Lynn Song, the chief Greater China economist at ING bank, wrote in a report on the plan.

New government data released Monday showed signs of improvement in the first two months of the year, though housing market weakness remained a drag on growth.

Retail sales were up 4% in January and February compared to last year, more than forecast. Industrial

WINDS OF PROGRESS



A worker welds parts at a wind power manufacturing factory in Qingzhou, in China's eastern Shandong province

RBI permits settlement of trade transactions with Maldives in local currencies

PTI, MUMBAI: Reserve Bank on Monday said India's bilateral trade transactions with Maldives may also be settled in INR and/or MVR in addition to the ACU mechanism.

Asian Clearing Union (ACU) is a payment arrangement whereby the participants settle payments for intra-regional transactions among the participating central banks on a net multilateral basis.

The participants include central banks and the monetary authorities of Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, My-

anmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between RBI and Maldives Monetary Authority in November 2024 for establishing a framework to promote the use of local currencies -- Indian Rupee (INR) and Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR) for bilateral transactions.

"In the wake of signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)...it has been decided that India's bilateral trade transactions with Maldives may also be settled in INR and/or

Wholesale price inflation inches up to 2.38% in February

PTI, NEW DELHI: Wholesale price inflation marginally rose to 2.38% in February due to expensive manufactured food items like vegetables oil and beverages, government data released on Monday showed.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation was 2.31% in January. It was 0.2% in February 2024.

The marginal increase in WPI was witnessed after three consecutive months of decline. The month-over-month change in WPI for the month of February stood at 0.06% as com-

pared to January.

Positive rate of inflation in February, 2025 is primarily due to the increase in prices of manufacture of food products, food articles, other manufacturing, non-food articles and manufacture of textiles, etc, according to the statement issued by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

As per the data, inflation in manufactured food products rose to 11.06%, vegetable oil rose by 33.59%, while beverages increased marginally to 1.66% during the month.

Overall, the manufac-

tured products index increased by 0.42% in February.

However, prices of vegetables cooled with potato prices dropping to 27.54% from 74.28% during the month. Besides, prices of milk moderated at 1.58% from 5.40% in the previous month.

Fruits and onion prices were still ruling high with 20% and 48.05% inflation respectively.

The fuel and power category witnessed a deflation of 0.71% in February, against a deflation of 2.78% in the previous month.

Retail inflation data released on Wednesday showed that Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation eased to a 7-month low of 3.61% in February on easing prices of food items.

According to ICRA Senior Economist Rahul Agrawal, the downward pressure on the headline print on account of the dip in food inflation was offset by the narrowing deflation in the fuel and power segment, and an uptick in the core (non-food manufacturing) WPI inflation to a 24-month high of 1.3%.

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