

# NEW DISTRICTS, NEW CHALLENGES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency & Accountability including Right to Information and Citizen Charter

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government's proposal [to create 13 new districts in Andhra Pradesh](#) on the lines of what has been done in Telangana may ensure good governance but it adds multiple challenges to the existing ones in the State.

As promised before the 2019 Assembly election, the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government has carved out 13 new districts, taking the total number of districts to 26. Each of the 25 Assembly constituencies will now become a district. However, the tribal communities-dominated Araku constituency, which is spread over many districts, has been split into two. Prakasam district will now be the largest in size after the reform and Visakhapatnam will be the smallest. The new districts are set to come into force from Ugadi, the Telugu new year which falls on April 2.

Also read | [With creation of 13 new districts, A.P. now has 26 districts](#)

Objections or suggestions in writing from the people of these districts have been invited within 30 days of the notification. The government's stated aim is to ensure administrative convenience and better development of all the regions.

The decision comes at a time when Andhra Pradesh is staring at stressed finances, dipping revenues and growing expenditure, largely owing to numerous welfare programmes which were promised before the election. A rough estimate indicates that half the budget goes to employees' salaries and the other half to welfare. The new districts will require additional infrastructure such as office buildings for the Collectors, Superintendents of Police, and other officials. Carving out borders, building roads and bureaucratic exercises are likely to further burden the State exchequer. Added to this, the stalemate between the government and employees over pay revision doesn't help. As the district delimitation exercise is expected to be expeditious, support from employees is crucial.

Though objections and suggestions have been invited for 30 days, there seem to be new demands and protests surfacing every other day and so, the matter is likely to stretch beyond 30 days. Some have protested over the choice of names for the proposed districts. There are demands emerging from some districts for new names. There are also complaints that the move will affect people's identity with their districts and that changes in district headquarters will affect the people. For instance, the proposal to merge agency region Rampachodavaram from East Godavari district with Araku district was resisted by many as the new district headquarters, Paderu, is about 300 km from Rampachodavaram. Some suggest that Rampachodavaram should be made the headquarters. Chintoor, another place in the same district, is over 400 km from the district headquarters Paderu. Similarly, the people of Ongole feel that the district has lost its identity as most parts of it have been merged with two other districts. There was also a demand that Hindupur be made the district headquarters for a new district.

The protests notwithstanding, the State government seems to be on a mission. It has planned nine fishing harbours and three major ports across the coastline besides 13 airports. There are already six airports in the State and two more are in the planning and development stages in Bhogapuram and Nellore. While these mega projects are at different stages of development, the State is also under pressure to repair the highways and district roads which are in bad shape.

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With massive projects waiting to be completed and with the State facing a cash crunch, how the Jagan Mohan Reddy government plans to rise up to the new challenge of creating 13 more districts and infrastructure within a short span of time is unclear.

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