

VD Satheesan sworn in as Kerala CM as UDF returns to power after a decade

NEW GOVT. Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar administered the oath of office to Satheesan and 20 Cabinet members

V Sajeev Kumar Kochi

Drawing cheers from thousands of Congress workers and in the presence of a galaxy of national leaders, VD Satheesan was sworn in as the 13th Chief Minister of Kerala on Monday after the Congress-led UDF returned to power in the State after a decade.



TAKING CHARGE. Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar with Chief Minister VD Satheesan at the swearing-in ceremony of the UDF cabinet in Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar administered the oath of office to Satheesan at a grand ceremony held at the Central Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram. A 20-member Cabinet was also sworn in alongside the Chief Minister.

Satheesan, who took oath in the name of God, will handle Finance, Ports and Law portfolios. Having served as Leader of the Opposition for the past five years, he is widely credited with revitalising the Congress grassroots network...

strength for the Congress, with senior leaders, including AICD president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh...

SHOW OF POWER The swearing-in ceremony turned into a major show near...

formation available on the PRD site of Kerala government, Ramesh Chennithala will handle Home and Vigilance, Sunny Joseph Revenue, Muralidharan Health and Devaswam, AP Anil Kumar Power Ministry, PC Vishwanath Tourism and Culture, M Liju Excise and Cooperation, and T Siddique Forests.

Among the two women ministers, Bindu Krishna has been assigned Women and Child Development, while KA Thulasi will handle SC/ST Welfare. Roji M John has been assigned Higher Education Minister and OJ Janesh takes charge of Youth Welfare.

N Shamsuddeen and VE Abdul Gaffoor. Among those present at the ceremony were former Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, CPM State Secretary MV Govindan, former Speaker AN Shamscher, CPI State Secretary Binoy Viswam and BJP State president Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

GABINET MEETING In its first Cabinet meeting after assuming office on Monday, the Satheesan-led government announced a series of welfare measures, including free travel for women in KSRTC buses from June 15 and a ₹3,000 hike in the monthly honorarium of ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers.

It was also decided to put out a white paper on the financial condition of the State. Speaking to reporters after the first Cabinet meeting, the Chief Minister also announced the formation of a separate department for elderly care, modelled on international best practices...

VP Nandakumar, Chairman, FICCI, Kerala State Council, pointed out that the State is currently navigating significant challenges, and various bold decisions have to be taken. Reforms agenda in the case of doing business has to continue, he said. He also called for quicker approval of business ventures, faster reforms in land and plantation laws, stronger support for MSMEs, and continued encouragement for the start-up ecosystem through investor-friendly policies.

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Kerala Inc urges new govt to expedite reforms

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Trade and industry was assured cooperation to the new State government in all its efforts for the comprehensive economic development of the State.

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Commerce and Industry, suggested the new government should prioritise sectors where Kerala could emerge as a national and global leader by strengthening infrastructure, branding, skill development and policy support in key sectors such as fisheries, electronics, healthcare and other high-potential industries.

Referring to the growing number of NRIs returning to Kerala, she said their international exposure and expertise should be effectively utilised to build world-class systems and contribute to the State's short-term development. Raj Kumar Gupta, President, Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry, said Kerala needs innovative thinking, bold decisions. He expressed hope that the new administration would create a positive environment for businesses to invest, expand operations and generate employment opportunities.

Experts call for faster response to CBRN threats

Our Bureau New Delhi

With chemical, biological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons' covert use in battlesfields with traces of such weapons recovered in frontline areas of Ukraine in February 2025, experts have sought a government-industry collaboration for a quick and comprehensive tech-driven response.

This is to address such suspected potent threats that have grown beyond tradi-

tional applications to include industrial accidents, asymmetric warfare and terrorism, they said.

Speaking at a seminar organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHD-CPI), Lt Gen K. Suresh, Director General, Soldier Support Systems (SSS), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), without getting into details, said, "During operation Sindoor, there is a concern about an attack near a nuclear storage site near Kirana Hills, which could have escalated beyond control. Sci-

entists and departments worked overnight to assess the possible repercussions and likely responses from the other side."

In that context, the Director General referred to the Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear disasters and discussed the scientific studies on environmental resilience. In his speech covering different global threats, he also stated that India is actively monitoring dual-use technologies to remain vigilant on regulatory frameworks.

"Through the SCOMET (special chemicals, organisms, materials, equipment and technologies) framework, DRDO has been entrusted with the responsibility of determining whether specific equipment or processes fall under these controlled categories. We have observed that such requests are increasing significantly in both frequency and volume," he observed.

GLOBAL THREATS Hinting at the international crisis arising from the continued blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, she said there are many ways to destabilise an opponent. "In today's situation, we cannot separate military power from other soft powers or financial or economic powers... The whole dynamics of the world is extremely unpredictable at this point of time," Singh said.

Addressing the gathering, Roli Singh, Chairperson, National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention, stated that CBRN threats were no longer theoretical concerns but have emerged as critical and evolving challenges for modern economies like India.

Andhra Pradesh will play strategic role in global nuclear economy: Nara Lokesh

Our Bureau Hyderabad

Andhra Pradesh is positioning itself as a trusted long-term partner in the quest for global nuclear energy as rising AI-driven electricity demand and industrial decarbonisation are reshaping global energy strategies, according to Nara Lokesh, Minister for Education, IT & Electronics.

Speaking at the US Executive Nuclear Mission to India summit jointly organised by the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) and the US-India Nuclear Partnership Forum (USINPF) in New Delhi on Monday, Lokesh said Andhra Pradesh was being significant opportunities across nuclear manufacturing, engineering ecosystems, industrial supply chains, advanced energy infrastructure and next-generation clean technology partnerships.

"Global energy systems are entering a structural transition driven by AI compute growth, industrial electrification, energy security concerns and decarbonisation commitments. Andhra Pradesh intends to play a meaningful role in that transition," Lokesh said. Advanced nuclear technologies such as small modular reactors (SMRs) and next-generation reactor systems were opening up opportunities far beyond electricity generation,

particularly in precision manufacturing, modular engineering, distributed supply chains and industrial-scale deployment ecosystems, he added.

ENGINEERING TALENT India's engineering talent, manufacturing competitiveness and industrial scale, combined with Andhra Pradesh's ports, logistics capabilities, industrial corridors and execution capabilities will create a compelling proposition for global partnerships.

"Andhra Pradesh is approaching nuclear energy not merely as a power source opportunity, but as a long-term industrial ecosystem opportunity," Lokesh said.

Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh

MULTIPLE FRONTS The State government is simultaneously building industrial corridors, electronics manufacturing clusters, renewable energy infrastructure and large-scale digital infrastructure ecosystems, the Minister said adding Visakhapatnam was being positioned as a major AI and data centre hub, with nearly 6 GW of data centre capacity expected to come up soon.

Andhra Pradesh's Integrated Clean Energy Policy targets nearly ₹10 lakh crore in investments across renewable, storage, green hydrogen, transmission infrastructure, utilities, manufacturing ecosystems and grid modernisation, according to a release.

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Bondada Engg bags ₹469 crore orders from Adani Group

G Naga Srihar Hyderabad

Bondada Engineering has received multiple orders from the Adani Group aggregating to ₹469 crore for the execution of the balance of system (BOS) package for a 250 MW solar project at Khavda, Kutch.

The orders from Adani Green Energy and Adani Green Sls involve the supply of goods and on-site services for the BOS package. The project is scheduled to be executed within eight months from the receipt of the order. With this latest order win, Hyderabad-based Bondada Engineering's cumulative project capacity with Adani Group has reached about 1 GW, further strengthening its position in the rapidly expanding RE infrastructure sector, a release said.

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