

TOURISM IN ANDHRA PRADESH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANANTAPUR DISTRICT

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Introduction

Andhra Pradesh is a state in India.¹ Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) is a state government agency which promotes tourism in Andhra Pradesh, describing the state as the Koh-i-Noor of India. Andhra Pradesh has a variety of tourist attractions including beaches, hills, caves, wildlife, forests and temples.

TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Visakhapatnam City

Visakhapatnam city has many tourist attractions such as Kailashagiri park near the sea, Visakha Museum, Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, the INS Kursura (S20) Submarine museum, the Dolphins Nose, and the Lighthouse.

Tourist spots at Vijayawada include Prakasam Barrage, Kondapalli Fort, Krishna River, Bhavani Island and many more parks in the city. Rajahmundry city, located on the banks of Godavari River is one of the main attractions of the state.

Nature tourism

R.K. Beach

Beaches

Visakhapatnam has many beautiful beaches along the Bay of Bengal namely R.K. Beach, Rishikonda Beach, Lawsons Bay Beach, etc. There Are other beaches too along coastline of the state, such as Suryalanka Beach, Located 9 km from Bapatla in Gunture district..

Caves

Belum Caves

Sankaram caves

The Borra Caves in the Ananthagiri Hills of the Eastern Ghats, near Vishakapatnam at an altitude of about 800 to 1300 metres are famous for million-year-old stalactite and stalagmite formations. They were discovered by British geologist William King George in 1807. The caves got their name from a formation inside the caves that looks like the human brain, which in Telugu language is known as burra. The Belum Caves in Kurnool District have a length of 3,229 metres (10,594 ft), making them the second largest natural caves on the -Indian subcontinent. The Belum Caves derive their name from Bilum, the Sanskrit word for caves. The caves have long passages, spacious chambers, freshwater galleries, and siphons. The caves' deepest point is 120 feet (37 m) from the entrance and is known as Patalaganga.

Hills and valleys

Araku valley scenic view

Araku Valley is a hill station in Visakhapatnam district. The Anantagiri and Sunkarimetta Reserved Forest, which are part of Araku Valley, are rich in biodiversity. It has thick forests, coffee plantations, waterfalls. This scenic beauty attracts large number of tourists.

Horsley Hills is a summer hill resort in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. It is situated at an elevation of 1,265 metres and attracts lots of tourists. The site which is the departure point for the Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary at a distance of 87 km (54 mi). The Papi Hills located in Khammam district near Bhadrachalam surrounding the Godavari river is also famous.

Field and lakes

Birds gather at Kolleru Lake Coringa Wildlife

Sanctuary

Konaseema is a place in East Godavari for nature lovers, with scenic greenery of lush paddy fields and coconut groves along the banks of river Godavari and its canals.

Kolleru Lake is one of the largest freshwater lakes in India. It is located between Krishna and Godavari delta. The lake was declared as a wildlife sanctuary, and designated a wetland of international importance. The wildlife sanctuary covers an area of 308 km². During the winter season, many birds such as Siberian crane, ibis, and painted storks migrate here from Siberia and other countries to nest at the sanctuary. The sanctuary is situated about 65 km from the city of Vijayawada.

Religious and pilgrimage sites Srikalahasti Temple

Durga Temple in Vijayawada

Holy relic sites map of Andhra Pradesh

The state's many temples and shrines, mosques, and churches attract many pilgrims. Most of the temples were built during the reign of Vijayanagara Empire. A number of festivals are organized with thousands of tourists visiting them. Some famous temples are:

- Tirumala Venkateswara Temple in the town of Tirumala in Chittoor district is an important pilgrimage site for Hindus throughout India. It is one of the richest pilgrimage temple of any religious faith in the world.³ It is the abode of Lord Venkateswara.
- Mallikarjuna Swamy temple situated at Srisailam in the Nallamala Hills of Kurnool district,⁴ is the abode of lord Mallikarjuna Shiva and is one of the twelve Jyotirlinga shrines in India. Lord Rama himself installed the Sahasralinga, while the Pandavas lodged the Panchapandava lingas in the temple courtyard. The Vijayanagara Empire built a number of monuments, including the Srisailam and Lepakshi temples.
- Kanaka Durga Temple of the goddess Durga is situated on the Indrakeeladri Hill in the city of Vijayawada on the banks of Krishna River. A large number of pilgrims attend the colourful celebrations of Tepotsavam and for a holy dip in the Krishna river during the festival of Dusshera. ⁵
- Simhachalam, located on a hill 20 kilometres (12 mi) north of the Visakhapatnam city centre, is another popular pilgrimage site of national importance. Simhachalam is said to be the abode of the savior-god Narasimha.

The five ancient Hindu temples of Lord Shiva, known as Pancharama Kshetras, are located at Amararama, Draksharama, Somarama, Ksheerarama and Kumararama. Other religious places include Srikalahasti temple in Chittoor district, Raghavendra Swami Mutt in Mantralayam of Kurnool district, Lord Venkateswara temple in Dwaraka Tirumala of West Godavari District, Annavaram temple in East Godavari and Arasavalli Surya temple in Srikakulam District are also located in the state.

Islam is also popular religion, with a number of mosques built during the reigns of Muslim rulers. One of the famous is Shahi jamia masjid in Adoni of Kurnool district. There are many famous churches constructed centuries ago with historical significance. One of them is the Gunadala Church at Vijayawada.

The state has numerous Buddhist centres at Amaravati, Nagarjuna Konda, Bhattiprolu, Ghantasala, Nelakondapalli, Dhulikatta, Bavikonda, Thotlakonda, Shalihundam, Pavuralakonda, Bijjannakonda(Sankaram), Phanigiri and Kolanpaka.⁶

Anantapur District is a district in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh, India. The district headquarters is located at Anantapur city. As of 2011 Census, the district had a population of 4,083,315, of which 28.09% is urban and a literacy rate of 64.28%. It is the largest district in terms of area in Andhra Pradesh and 7th largest district in India respectively.⁷

History

Area which comes under Ananthapuram district was once a crucial part of the Vijayanagara Empire. After the fall of the Vijayanagara rulers. British India took control. Ananthapuram district created in 1882 with Sir Thomas Munro as its first Collector.

Geography

Districts of Andhra Pradesh

It is the largest district of Andhra Pradesh spanning an area of 19,130 square kilometres (7,390 sq mi), comparatively equivalent to Japan's Shikoku Island. It is bounded on the north by Kurnool District, on the east by Kadapa District, on the

southeast by Chittoor District, and on the southwest and west by Karnataka state.⁸ It is part of Rayalaseema region on the state. Its northern and central portions are a high plateau, generally undulating, with large granite rocks or low hill ranges rising occasionally above its surface. In the southern portion of the district the surface is more hilly, the plateau there rising to 2,000 ft (610 m). above the sea. Six rivers flow within the district: Penna, Chithravathi, Vedavathi, Papagni, Swarnamukhi, and Thadakaleru. The district receives an average annual rainfall of 381 millimeters.

Anantapur city is 354 km from Hyderabad, 200 km from the neighboring state capital of Bangalore. Anantapur connects Hyderabad and Bangalore through National Highway – 7. Bangalore International Airport is nearest international airport to Anantapur.

Demographics

According to the 2011 census, Anantapur district has a population of 4,083,315,¹⁷¹ roughly equal to the nation of Lebanon or the US state of Oregon. This gives it a ranking of 52nd in India (out of a total of 640) and 7th in its state. The district has a population density of 213 inhabitants per square kilometre (550/sq mi) .¹⁷¹ Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 12.16%. Anantapur has a sex ratio of 977 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 64.28%.⁹

The district had a population of 3,640,4th of which 25.26% is urban as of 2001. Anantapur district includes 866 villages. Telugu is the widely spoken language in this region and it has a literacy rate of 56.69%. Urdu, Kannada languages are the other three widely spoken languages in the district. Telugu and Urdu are the two official languages of the district. Moreover, Anantapur is one of the 13 districts in Andhra Pradesh where Urdu is the second official language. Main religious groups are Hindus 3,225,156, Muslims 389,201 (10.7%), Christians 20,770.

In 2007-2008 the International Institute for Population Sciences interviewed 1009 households in 37 villages across the district. They found that 94.1% had access to electricity, 99.5% had drinking water, 35.6% toilet facilities, and 61.3% lived in a pucca (permanent) home. 31.4% of girls wed before the legal age of 18 and 88.2% of interviewees carried a BPL card.¹⁰

Economy

Anantapur has a major potential for development of industry due to its strategic location between Bangalore - Chennai and Bangalore -Hyderabad routes and availability of vast tracts of land. In 2006 the Indian government named Anantapur one of the country's 250 most backward districts (out of a total of 640). It is one of the thirteen districts in Andhra Pradesh currently receiving funds from the Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme (BRGF).¹¹

Minerals Anantapur is a major producer of Dolomite and Iron Ore minerals.

Power plants Solar thermal power plant of 50 MW was commissioned at this village under Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission which was named as Megha Solar Plant. It is one of the 7 solar thermal plants in the country.¹²

Silk sarees

Dharmavaram region in Anantapur is world famous for the handmade pure silk sarees. Its a major hub for Silk trade with end to end silk related industries situated in the region supporting a major portion of population. Tadipatri region in Anantapur is an industrialized down famous for Granite and Cement production. Ultra Tech Cements a unit of Industrial major Larsen & Toubro has a major Cement production unit near the town.

Agriculture

The economy is principally agrarian with a developing industrial sector. Anantapur receives very less rainfall due to its location in the rain shadow area of Indian Peninsula. Prominent crops include groundnut, sunflower, rice, cotton, maize, chillies, sesame,' and sugarcane. Silk trade, limestone quarrying, iron and diamond mining. Anantapur town

Is known as Groundnut City in reference to the neighboring Bangalore being called as Garden City.¹³

Religious tourism

Puttaparthi region in Anantapur is home to the Ashram of Sathya Sai Baba, one of the most popular spiritual gurus of India. Puttaparthi has developed into a major tourist destination due to vast infrastructure created by the Ashram.¹⁴

Administrative divisions

Revenue divisions map of Anantapur district Anantapur district mandals outline map

The District has 5 Revenue Divisions viz., Anantapur, Dharmavaram, Kadiri, Kalyandurg and Penukonda divisions. Kadiri and Kalyandurg divisions are formed in 2013.¹⁵ These revenue divisions are further divided into 63 mandals.¹⁶

The mandals of the district are listed in the following table:

	Anantapur division	Dharmavaram division	Penukonda division	Kadiri division	Kalyanadurg division
1	Atmakur	Bthalapalli	Agali	Kadiri	Kalyanadurga
2	Anantapur	Beluguppa	Amadaguru		
3	Dharmavaram	Bommanahal	Amarapuram		
4	Garladinne	Brahmasamudram	Bukkarayasa mudram		
5	Gooty	Bukkapatnam	Chilamathur		
6	Guntakal	Chenne Kothapalle	Gandlapenta		
7	Kudair	D.Hirehal	Gorantla		
8	Narpala	Gummagatta	Gudibanda		
9	Pamidi	Kambadur	Hindupur		
10	Peddapappur	Kanaganapalle	Lepakshi		
11	Peddavadug-ur	Mudigubba			
	Kanekal				

12	Putlur	Kothacheruvu	Nallacheruvu
13	Raptadu	Kundurpi	Nallamada
14	Singanamala	Madakasira	Nambulapula kunta

Education

Anantapur is an important education center with many prominent educational, schools, colleges and universities situated in the district. Anantapur city has become a major hub with many education institutions situated in its vicinity. Some of the famous institutions in Anantapur include

- Sri Krishnadevaraya University
- JNTU Ananthapur
- Sri Sathya Sai University
- Government Medical College
- Srinivasa Ramanujan Institute of Technology

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