

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

"Who Is the Next GD Naidu?" — State-Level Engineering College Innovation Contest

These Terms and Conditions ("Terms") govern participation in the "Who Is the Next GD Naidu?" engineering college innovation contest ("Contest"), conducted in Tamil Nadu, India. By registering, submitting an entry or participating in any stage of the Contest, every participant ("Participant"), team ("Team"), and the college or institution to which the Team belongs ("Participating Institution") agrees to be bound by these Terms in their entirety. Please read these Terms carefully before registering.

1. Definitions

- "Organisers" means the production house (Varghese Moolan Pictures and Tricolour Films) and Thanthi Media (publisher of Daily Thanthi and its allied media properties), acting jointly as Contest organisers.
- "Contest" means the "Who Is the Next GD Naidu?" innovation challenge described in these Terms.
- "Participant" means any individual student of a recognised engineering college in Tamil Nadu who registers for the Contest as part of a Team.
- "Team" means a group of up to four (4) Participants from the same Participating Institution, accompanied by one (1) Faculty Mentor.
- "Participating Institution" means any AICTE-approved or UGC-recognised engineering college, deemed university, or institute of technology located in Tamil Nadu that registers one or more Teams.
- "Entry" or "Submission" means the combination of the slide deck, prototype demonstration video, problem statement summary and bill of materials uploaded to the official Contest portal by the deadline.
- "Innovation" means any device, process, system, software, method, design or other creative output developed by a Team for the Contest.
- "Prize" means the monetary award and any non-monetary benefits awarded to winning Teams as described in Clause 10.

2. Organisers and Partners

The Contest is jointly organised by the production house behind the upcoming feature film on G.D. Naidu, in association with Thanthi Media. Thanthi Media is the official media partner, responsible for outreach, coverage and on-ground mobilisation across its twelve (12) edition locations in Tamil Nadu. The GD Naidu Charities, Coimbatore, has been informed and may be associated as a knowledge partner. Industry, academic and government partners may be added from time to time; any such additions will be published on the Contest portal.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Eligible Participants

- Each Participant must be a full-time student currently enrolled in an undergraduate or postgraduate engineering programme (B.E., B.Tech., M.E., M.Tech., or equivalent) at a Participating Institution as on the registration deadline.
- Each Participant must be at least eighteen (18) years of age at the time of registration. Participants below eighteen (18) require written consent from a parent or legal guardian on the prescribed form.
- Participants must be Indian nationals or holders of a valid student visa for studies in India.
- Participants must have in his/her possession valid and subsisting legal documents which are Government of India acceptable documents as proof of age, identity, nationality, etc., such as Aadhaar Card and Permanent Account Number ('PAN') etc. and shall furnish the same, along with any other documents for registration and/or as reasonably required by the Organizers, upon request.

3.2 Eligible Institutions

- The Participating Institution must be AICTE-approved or UGC-recognised and located in any district of Tamil Nadu.
- A Participating Institution may register a maximum of two (2) Teams.

3.3 Ineligible Participants

- Employees, directors, immediate family members or contractors of any Organiser, sponsor, jury member or partner entity are not eligible to participate as Participants.
- Participants who have previously been disqualified from any Organiser-run programme remain ineligible.
- Anyone who does not meet the eligibility criteria specified in Clause 3.1 above.

4. Team Composition and Roles

- Each Team shall consist of a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of four (4) student Participants drawn from the same Participating Institution.
- Each Team shall nominate one (1) Team Lead who will act as the single point of contact with the Organisers.
- Each Team must be supported by exactly one (1) Faculty Mentor from the same Participating Institution. The Faculty Mentor is responsible for academic guidance and integrity supervision of the Team but is not eligible for any rewards or cash Prize individually.
- Cross-institution Teams are not permitted.
- Once a Team is confirmed by the registration deadline, no addition, replacement or substitution of members is permitted save with the written approval of the Organisers in exceptional circumstances such as medical emergency.

5. Registration

- Registration is free of cost and is conducted exclusively through the official Contest portal at the URL notified by the Organisers.
- The Team Lead shall complete the online registration form, attach the student each Team Participant's identity proofs and Faculty Mentor declaration, and accept these Terms electronically.
- Registration opens on 8 June 2026 (00:01 IST) and closes on 21 June 2026 (23:59 IST). The Organisers may extend or shorten this window at their sole discretion; any change will be notified through the portal and Thanthi platforms. Any registration submitted after the registration deadline shall be rejected.
- Information furnished at registration must be true, accurate and complete. Any misrepresentation may lead to disqualification at any stage at Organizer's discretion, including after Prize distribution, in which case the Team shall return any Prize received.

6. Problem Statements and Themes

The Organisers will release the official problem statements on 11 June 2026 under five (5) thematic tracks inspired by the lifework of G.D. Naidu: (a) Indigenous Manufacturing and Frugal Engineering; (b) Agritech for Small and Marginal Farmers; (c) Water and Sanitation; (d) Affordable Mobility and Transportation; (e) Frugal Engineering for Rural India. Teams may select one (1) problem statement from these tracks or propose their own under an open category subject by submitting a request through the designated portal for the Contest. The Organizers shall communicate their approval or rejection of such request to written approval from the Contest jury chair within forty-eight (48) hours of the request submission.

7. Submission Requirements

7.1 Required materials

- A presentation deck of not more than ten (10) slides in PDF format, no larger than 25 MB.
- A prototype demonstration video of duration between two (2) and three (3) minutes, in MP4 format, no larger than 250 MB. The video must be original and produced by the Team.
- A one-page problem statement summary in PDF format.
- A bill of materials, including approximate costs of components used, in PDF or Excel format.

7.2 Submission window

- The submission portal opens on 17 June 2026 and closes at 23:59 IST on 24 June 2026. Late or partial submissions will be auto-rejected by the portal. The Organisers will not entertain submission requests received via email, courier or any other channel.

7.3 Quality, originality and language

- Each Entry must be the original work of the Team and must not infringe any third-party rights. Submissions may be in English or Tamil.

- Use of generative AI tools is permitted only as a productivity aid (for example, code linting, document drafting, image generation). The Innovation itself must be substantially conceived and built by the Team. Any wholesale, unmodified AI-generated work will be disqualified.
- Plagiarised content, fabricated data or false claims of working prototypes will lead to immediate disqualification.

8. Evaluation Process

8.1 Three-tier model

- Tier 1 — Digital Screening: A central jury panel of eight (8) to ten (10) members will evaluate all valid Entries and shortlist thirty-six (36) Teams (top three per district).
- Tier 2 — District Prelims: The shortlisted Teams will demonstrate their prototypes in person at the designated Thanthi hub city venue on 29 June 2026. A three-member local jury (one academic, one industry, one Thanthi senior representative) per hub will select two (2) Teams to advance from each district, totalling twenty-four (24) finalists.
- Tier 3 — Chennai or Coimbatore (as shall be communicated by the Organisers) Grand Finale: The 24 finalist Teams will pitch live in Chennai or Coimbatore on 1 to 3 July 2026 before a senior jury of five (5) members for final ranking.

The prize distribution ceremony is expected to be held on or around 4 July 2026 at either Chennai or Coimbatore. The final date, venue and other relevant details shall be communicated by the Organisers to the winning Team.

8.2 Evaluation criteria

Entries will be scored on the following five (5) criteria, each weighted equally unless announced otherwise: (a) Innovation and originality; (b) Technical feasibility and execution; (c) Social and economic impact; (d) Presentation and storytelling; (e) Alignment with the spirit of G.D. Naidu — indigenous, frugal, problem-solving engineering.

8.3 Jury independence and finality

- Jury members are appointed by the Organisers in their sole discretion. Jury members will declare any conflict of interest and recuse themselves from evaluating any Entry from a Participating Institution to which they have a connection.
- All decisions of the jury at every stage are final, binding and not subject to appeal, reconsideration or challenge by any Participant, Participating Institution or third party.

9. Travel, Accommodation and Logistics

- Travel of Tier 2 shortlisted Teams to the designated Thanthi hub city venue within their own district shall be self-arranged, with a flat reimbursement of up to INR 1,000 per Team payable on production of bills.
- Travel of the twenty-four (24) Tier 3 finalist Teams to Chennai or Coimbatore shall be arranged or reimbursed by the Organisers in second AC train class or non-stop economy

air-fare (whichever is lower), on the basis of bookings made through the Organisers from 27 June 2026 onward.

- Accommodation, ground transport in Chennai or Coimbatore and meals during the Grand Finale (1 to 3 July 2026) shall be arranged by the Organisers on a twin-sharing basis.
- All Participants travelling for the Grand Finale must carry valid government-issued photo identification (Aadhaar/PAN card) and college identity cards.
- No travel, accommodation or meal allowance is payable to Participants who voluntarily withdraw, fail to attend or are disqualified.

10. Prizes and Awards

10.1 Prize structure

- First Prize: Indian Rupees Five Lakh only (INR 5,00,000) — one (1) winning Team.
- Second Prize: Indian Rupees Two Lakh only (INR 2,00,000) — one (1) Team.
- Runner-Up Prizes: Indian Rupees Fifty Thousand only (INR 50,000) each — six (6) Teams.
- Total cash Prize pool: Indian Rupees Ten Lakh only (INR 10,00,000).
- Each of the twenty-four (24) Tier 3 finalist Teams will additionally receive a certificate of participation and a one-year incubation mentoring engagement with a partner institute, subject to that partner institute's own terms.

10.2 Disbursement

- Prize money shall be transferred by electronic funds transfer to the savings bank account of the Team Lead within forty-five (45) working days of the Prize ceremony, on the understanding that the Team Lead shall internally distribute the Prize among Team members in such proportion as they agree among themselves.
- Upon such transfer, the Organisers shall be deemed to have fully discharged their obligations in relation to the Prize, and the distribution of the Prize amount among the Team members shall be the sole responsibility of the Team Lead and/or the relevant Participating Institution, as applicable.
- All Prize amounts are inclusive of applicable taxes. The Organisers will deduct tax at source (TDS) under Section 194B of the Income-tax Act, 1961 or any successor provision and remit the same to the relevant authority. The Organisers will issue Form 16A or its successor certificate to each winner.
- Winners may be required to furnish PAN, address proof and bank account details to enable disbursement. Disbursement will not be made until these are received.
- Prizes are non-transferable and cannot be redeemed for any other product, service or cash equivalent except as expressly stated.

10.3 Right to withhold or revoke

The Organisers reserve the right to withhold or revoke any Prize, and to reclaim any disbursed Prize, where a breach of these Terms is discovered, including but not limited to plagiarism, misrepresentation, identity fraud or violation of intellectual property rights of any third party.

11. Intellectual Property

11.1 Ownership remains with the Team

All intellectual property rights in and to any Innovation, including patents, copyrights, designs and trade secrets, shall vest in and remain with the Team and its members, subject to any pre-existing rights of the Participating Institution under that institution's own IP policy. The Organisers do not claim, and shall not acquire, ownership of any Innovation.

11.2 Limited promotional licence to Organisers

In consideration of the opportunity to participate and the potential to win a Prize, each Team grants to the Organisers a worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive, sub-licensable, perpetual licence to use, reproduce, publish, broadcast, edit and distribute the Entry, the names, photographs and likenesses of Team members and the Faculty Mentor, in any manner as deem fit, in any medium now known or later developed, solely for the purpose of promoting the Contest, the Organisers, the GD Naidu legacy and the associated feature film. Such promotional use shall not include the commercial exploitation of the Innovation itself. Organisers will not be obligated to or be liable to promote the Entry/Submission. Further, using the Entry/Submission as part of promotion for the Film does not grant any right to the Student/Team/Participating Institution to claim any right or interest in the Film. Further, the Participant/Participating Institution/Team shall not use the name of the Film to promote their Entry/Submission without prior written consent of the Organisers.

11.3 Confidentiality of sensitive technical details

Teams that wish to keep specific technical implementation details confidential (for example, proprietary algorithms or formulations) may mark such information clearly in their Entry. The Organisers and jury will treat the marked portions as confidential and not disclose them publicly, while still using them for evaluation purposes.

11.4 Warranty of originality

Each Team warrants that its Innovation does not infringe the intellectual property or other rights of any third party and that the Team has obtained all necessary consents and licences from third parties whose work is referenced in the Entry. The Team shall indemnify the Organisers against any claim arising from a breach of this warranty.

12. Use of Name, Image and Likeness

Each Participant and Faculty Mentor consents to the recording, photography and broadcast of Contest events and to the use of their name, image, voice and likeness by the Organisers for promotional and editorial purposes connected to the Contest and the GD Naidu film, without further consent and without payment of additional consideration. Participants may withdraw such consent only by writing to the Organisers, in which case the Organisers shall make reasonable efforts to remove the Participant's image from future publications but shall not be obliged to retract content already distributed.

13. Code of Conduct

- Participants must conduct themselves with respect, integrity and professionalism throughout the Contest.
- Harassment, intimidation, discrimination, abusive language or behaviour against any other Participant, jury member, official, volunteer or member of the public will result in immediate disqualification and may be reported to law enforcement.
- Consumption of alcohol, illegal substances, smoking inside venues, gambling, or carriage of weapons of any kind is strictly prohibited at all Contest venues.
- Participants must adhere to the dress code (smart casual or business casual) at the Grand Finale and Prize ceremony.
- Cell phones must be on silent during jury sessions. Photography or video recording of jury deliberations is strictly prohibited.

14. Health, Safety and Insurance

- Participants must declare any pre-existing medical condition or accessibility need at the time of registration. The Organisers will make reasonable accommodations.
- The Organisers will arrange basic public liability insurance covering on-venue activities at the district prelims and the Chennai Grand Finale. This insurance does not extend to personal property of Participants or to travel between Participants' home cities and the venue.
- Participants are advised to carry their own personal accident and health insurance.
- Prototypes that involve hazardous materials, high-voltage electrical components, combustion, drones or any controlled substance must be declared at registration. The Organisers may require additional safety documentation or may refuse to permit on-site demonstration of any prototype that poses a safety risk.
- The Organisers shall not be responsible for any loss of or damage to a Participant's property, or for any personal injury, illness or accident suffered by a Participant in connection with the Contest.

15. Disqualification

The Organisers may, at their sole discretion and without prior notice, disqualify any Participant, Team or Participating Institution for any of the following: (a) breach of these Terms; (b) misrepresentation of identity, eligibility, academic affiliation or Innovation; (c) plagiarism, intellectual property infringement or fabrication; (d) breach of the Code of Conduct; (e) violation of any applicable law; (f) any act that, in the Organisers' reasonable judgment, brings the Contest, the Organisers or any partner into disrepute. The Organisers' decision regarding eligibility, compliance, disqualification and participation in the contest shall be final and binding and shall not be subject to any appeal.

16. Force Majeure

Neither the Organisers nor any partner shall be liable for any failure or delay in performing their obligations under these Terms where such failure or delay results from any cause beyond their reasonable control, including but not limited to acts of God, fire, flood, earthquake, pandemic,

epidemic, war, civil unrest, terrorism, government orders, strikes, lockouts, failures of public infrastructure or telecommunications. In such an event the Organisers may, at their sole discretion, postpone, reschedule, modify, suspend or cancel the Contest or any part of it.

17. Limitation of Liability

To the maximum extent permitted by applicable law, the aggregate liability of the Organisers and their officers, directors, employees and agents to any Participant, Team, Participating Institution or third party arising out of or in connection with the Contest shall not exceed the value of the Prize that the affected Team was eligible to win. In no event shall the Organisers be liable for any indirect, consequential, special, punitive or exemplary damages, loss of profits, loss of opportunity or loss of data.

18. Indemnity

Each Participant, Team and Participating Institution shall indemnify and hold harmless the Organisers and their officers, directors, employees, agents, sponsors and partners against any and all claims, damages, losses, costs and expenses (including reasonable legal fees) arising out of (a) any breach of these Terms by the Participant, Team or Participating Institution; (b) any infringement by the Innovation of a third party's rights; (c) any negligent or wrongful act or omission of the Participant, Team or Participating Institution during the Contest.

19. Data Protection and Privacy

- Personal data collected during registration and the Contest will be processed in accordance with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 and other applicable Indian laws.
- Personal data will be used to administer the Contest, communicate with Participants, disburse Prizes, comply with legal obligations and for limited promotional purposes connected to the Contest.
- Personal data will not be sold to third parties. It may be shared with partner institutes (only to the extent necessary), tax authorities and contracted service providers under appropriate confidentiality obligations.
- Participants have the right to access, correct and request deletion of their personal data by writing to the contact address in Clause 24.
- By registering for and participating in the Contest, each Participant expressly consents to the collection, use, storage and processing of their personal data by the Organisers for purposes relating to the Contest, in accordance with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 and applicable laws.

20. Confidentiality

Each party shall keep confidential all non-public information disclosed to it by another party in connection with the Contest, including jury deliberations, evaluation scores, internal scoring sheets and the confidential portions of Entries. Any non-public Film materials, information or other project-related details (if any) shared with Participants shall also be deemed Confidential

Information and Participants agree to not disclose or use except for participation in the Contest. This obligation shall survive the conclusion of the Contest for a period of three (3) years.

21. Changes to These Terms

The Organisers reserve the right to amend, update or modify these Terms including without limitation to schedule, timelines, format, stages, evaluation process or any other aspect of the contest at their sole discretion at any time and from time to time. Any material amendment will be notified through the Contest portal and Thanthi platforms. Continued participation following such notification shall constitute acceptance of the amended Terms. In the event a Participant does not accept the amendment, the Participant may withdraw from the Contest by written notice to the Organisers, in which case no Prize, reimbursement or other entitlement shall accrue.

22. Independent Contest; No Endorsement

The Contest is conducted in connection with promotional activities for an upcoming feature film inspired by G.D. Naidu. Participation in the Contest does not entitle any Participant to any role, appearance, credit or other involvement in that film or in any related production. No endorsement of any Innovation, Team or Participating Institution by the GD Naidu Charities, the cast of the film or any partner is implied unless expressly stated in writing.

23. Governing Law and Jurisdiction

These Terms shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of India. Any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of or in connection with these Terms or the Contest shall, subject to the courts at **Chennai** Kerala shall have exclusive jurisdiction.

24. Notices and Contact

All notices and communications to the Organisers shall be sent in writing by email to the official Contest email address published on the Contest portal, with a copy to the Central PMO. Notices to Participants shall be sent to the email address provided at registration. Notices shall be deemed received twenty-four (24) hours after sending if no delivery failure is recorded.

25. Severability and Entire Agreement

If any provision of these Terms is held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect. These Terms constitute the entire agreement between the parties in relation to the Contest and supersede all prior representations, understandings or agreements.

26. Acceptance

By clicking "I Accept" at the time of online registration, each Participant, on behalf of themselves and (where applicable) their Team and Participating Institution, confirms that they have read, understood and agree to be bound by these Terms. The Faculty Mentor co-signs the registration to confirm institutional awareness and supervisory undertaking.

— END OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS —