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Cash-strapped KRMB, GRMB may find it hard to pay salaries **page 5**

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Hasina's Awami League inches closer to victory **page 9**

Budget to focus on Six Guarantees

Preparations in full swing to present full-fledged Budget

PS DILEEP
HYDERABAD

With shifting priorities, the latest Budget of Telangana for 2024-25 is likely to focus on the Congress government's Six Guarantees and other new development projects. While preparations are in full swing to present a full-fledged Budget in the Assembly next month, officials have not ruled out the possibility of a Vote-on-Account Budget if the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections is announced.

For the current financial year of 2023-24, the previous BRS government presented a massive Rs 2.9 lakh crore Budget last February. Sources in the Finance Department informed that while proposals were being collected from all the departments concerned, the State Budget for 2024-25 was likely to surpass the previous fiscal's outlay.

The Finance Department has commenced the process of Budget preparation for the fiscal year 2024-25. Proposals have been invited from all departments, asking the heads of departments (HoDs) concerned to sub-

ON AGENDA

Officials have not ruled out possibility of Vote-on-Account Budget if schedule for LS polls is announced

- Sources say proposals are being collected from all departments concerned
- State Budget for 2024-25 likely to surpass previous fiscal's outlay
- Finance Dept invites proposals from all departments, asking HoDs concerned to submit them online by Jan 11
- Asserts necessity of submitting accurate and fact-based proposals for any new scheme
- Instructions issued to focus on increasing revenue and preventing leakages

For FY 2023-24, previous BRS govt presented ₹2.9 lakh crore Budget



mit them online by January 11 to facilitate smooth coordination and incorporation of changes, as per the priorities of the new government.

The HoDs were also instructed to provide cadre-wise posts and details of existing employees in the prescribed format. In addition, they were asked to furnish details pertaining to new employees expected to join this year and also the revised estimates for the current financial year, as part of the Budget exercise. The

government has clarified that there would be no increase in the Budget amount in the revised estimates.

Strict instructions were issued to focus on increasing revenue and preventing leakages. Specific targets would be set, detailing the amount incurred under operating expenditure and scheme expenditure for the upcoming financial year. Proposals should align with the changing priorities of the State government. The Finance Department as-

serted the necessity of submitting accurate and fact-based proposals for any new schemes, including proposed launch dates and estimated outlay. Public works departments were instructed to submit scheme-wise payments and details online, ensuring accuracy and compliance with actual requirements.

Regarding schemes, the Finance Department suggested for submission of year-wise expenditure, the number of beneficiaries, and relevant data, since the formation of Telangana State. Utilisation of the Central government-sponsored schemes was encouraged, and proposals should consider their linkage with State schemes, including department-wise grants, for optimum usage of funds. The Finance Department also sought details of all loans obtained by government departments, corporations, and special-purpose vehicles. All the departments were instructed to submit details of all bank accounts and assets. They were warned that non-compliance with transparency standards would be taken seriously.

School bags to get lighter from next academic year

Thickness of paper in textbooks to be reduced

YUVRAJ AKULA
Hyderabad

Going to school will be less burdensome for students as their bags will get lighter by at least 25 per cent from the next academic year. In response to increasing concerns over the strain that growing children endure on their shoulders with heavy school bags, the School Education Department is bringing down the thickness of paper in textbooks to lighten the load.

From 90 Grams per Square Metre (GSM), the paper thickness of the textbooks will be reduced to 70 GSM — resulting in the lightening of the school bags between 25 per cent and 30 per cent, depending on the class. Preliminary estimates suggested that the Class X textbooks, which now weigh around 4.5 kg, will come down by one kg once the paper thickness is reduced.

Apart from alleviating the burden on children, the department will save big on paper purchases as the raw paper procurement will come down from the present 11,000 tonnes to 8,000 tonnes. This will aid the department in saving Rs 30 to Rs 40 crore on the raw paper procurement. During the academic year 2023-24, Rs 150 crore was spent in



Present load norms

PRIMARY SCHOOL	UPPER PRIMARY, SECONDARY SCHOOLS
Classes I-II Under 1.5 kg	Classes VI-VII Under 4 kg
Class III-V 2-3 kg	Classes VIII-IX Under 4.50 kg
	Class X Under 5 kg

providing free textbooks to students of the government and local body schools.

Around 2 crore textbooks will be provided to 24.66 lakh students of the government and local body schools under the free component in the next academic year. An official said that the proposal, which awaits the

State government approval, apart from cutting down school bag load and cost, is also an environment-friendly move. The move aligns with the contemporary debate on reducing the undue impact on the environment, by reducing the usage of tonnes of raw paper material.

C-130J's night landing

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Kim's sister mocks S Korea

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Rohit back in T20 squad

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Skinless	Rs. 152
Egg Rates (12 eggs)	Rs. 73

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'BRS will not repeat mistakes'

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Sunday opined that the result of the recent Assembly elections would have been different if some sitting MLAs were not repeated in some constituencies. He declared that the party would not commit the same mistake in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, hinting at a change of candidates in the polls, if necessary.

He also felt that another factor for the BRS defeat was that people who did not receive the benefits of the 'Bandhu' schemes had voted against the party. "Even though all the beneficiaries of the Dalit Bandhu scheme in Nizam Sagar mandal received the full benefit, people from other communities who did not receive similar benefits, voted against us," he said. Participating in the Lok

“Result of Assembly polls would have been different if some sitting MLAs were not repeated”
— KT RAMA RAO, BRS working president

Sabha election preparatory meeting on Zaheerabad constituency held at Telangana Bhavan here, Rama Rao expressed confidence that the BRS would emerge victorious in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Zaheerabad constituency. He stated that there would be a three-way contest in the Parliamentary elections in Telangana and that the conditions were 'favourable' for the BRS to win a large number of seats. (SEE PAGE 2)

PG medical admissions in online mode

NEW DELHI

Counselling for postgraduate medical admissions will be done only in online mode now and colleges will have to declare the fee for each course beforehand, the National Medical Commission said underlining that no college will admit candidates on their own. Medical education regulator NMC recently notified the "Post-Graduate Medical Education Regulations, 2023" according to which all rounds of counselling for all PG seats will be held in online mode by State or Central counselling authorities.

There shall be common counselling for admission to PG courses in medicine for all medical institutions in India solely based on the merit list of respective exams, the new regulations states. (SEE PAGE 2)

Mumbai's new link



ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY: The country's longest sea bridge, Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, known as Atal Setu, spanning 22 km will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 12. — Photo: ANI

Woman kills husband who underwent sex change

STATE BUREAU
Siddipet

A woman, whose husband underwent sex change surgery, allegedly hired killers to eliminate him in Siddipet district. The woman, along with two contract killers, were arrested after they allegedly smothered her husband to death.

According to the police, the woman, Daripally Vedha, offered a Rs 18 lakh *supari* to get her husband, Daripally Venkatesh, killed, after he underwent the surgery and became 'Roja'.

According to the police, the woman offered Rs 18 lakh *supari* to contract killers to eliminate him

The hired killers are said to have smothered Roja to death on December 11 after having a liquor party with the latter. According to the Siddipet One-Town Police, the accused, Daripally Vedha married Venkatesh, both residents of Siddipet town, in 2014. The couple had an eight-year-old

daughter. However, their life changed when Venkatesh underwent the surgery and changed his name to Roja, after which he began roaming the roads in Siddipet town seeking alms.

Lost job
While Vedha was working as a private school teacher, Roja used to go to the school and pick up arguments with her. Vedha reportedly lost her job after Roja created issues at the school, police said, adding that Roja was also forcing Vedha to send their daughter with her to seek alms. (SEE PAGE 2)

Modi posts: Maldives suspends 3 Ministers

NEW DELHI

The Maldivian government on Sunday reportedly suspended three deputy Ministers for social media posts critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the Indian High Commission in Male raised the issue with the Foreign Ministry even as the island nation's key opposition leaders slammed the ruling establishment over the row.

The three deputy Ministers criticised Modi for his post on 'X' following his visit to Lakshadweep, inferring that it was an attempt to project the union Territory as an alternative tourist destination to the Maldives. A number of media outlets,

quoting officials, reported that deputy Ministers in the Youth Ministry, Malsha Shareef, Mariyam Shiuna and Abdulla Mahzood Majid, have been suspended over their posts. The row erupted on a day President Dr Mohamed Muizzu embarked on a week-long visit to China.

The disparaging remarks by the Ministers have drawn flak in India, with many celebrities urging people on X to explore domestic tourist destinations instead of going to the Maldives. There were also posts on social media claiming that some Indians are cancelling their scheduled trip to the Maldives. (RELATED REPORTS PAGE 7)

Former Governor calls on KCR

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

Former Telangana Governor ESL Narasimhan and his wife Vimala Narasimhan called on BRS chief K Chandrashekhara Rao at the latter's residence in Nandina-gar here on Sunday.

The couple, who inquired about Chandrashekhara Rao's health, wished him a speedy recovery. Narasimhan and Vimala received a warm welcome from former Minister and BRS working president KT Rama Rao and other party senior leaders upon their arrival at the Nandina-gar residence. Former Ministers Vemula



Former Telangana Governor ESL Narasimhan and his wife Vimala Narasimhan with BRS chief K Chandrashekhara Rao.

Prashanth Reddy, V Srinivas Goud and Koppula Eshwar, and MPs BB Patil and J Santosh Kumar were also present. Later, they met Rao, his wife Shobha and other family members. (SEE PAGE 2)