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**Maha shocker: Uddhav group leader shot dead on Facebook live** **page 7**

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**Vijayan slams 'Union over States' mentality** **page 8**

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**Violence mars Pakistan elections, 10 cops killed in terror attack** **page 9**



## AI city, Internet for all in TS proposed

**Govt to implement digital literacy programme, says Governor**

STATE BUREAU  
 HYDERABAD

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, addressing the State Legislative Assembly and Council at the joint Budget session that began here on Thursday, said the Telangana government would soon introduce Internet as a basic right. The focus would not just be to create digital infrastructure but also to make it accessible and affordable to all sections of society.

The government would implement a thorough, digital literacy programme to ensure that every household, regardless of its economic status or location, would be able to benefit from the rapid digital adoption of opportunities that are arising, she said, also stating that it would position Hyderabad and Telangana as the Artificial Intelligence (AI) capital of the country by inviting top global and national technology companies to set up AI



Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan addressing the joint Budget session of the Houses on Thursday.

centres here. "We will set up a dedicated AI City in 50-100 acres," she said.

Earlier, the Governor said as promised during the elections, the government was committed to realising the six guarantees. Pointing out that two guarantees were already being implemented, she said over 15 crore trips

were already utilised by women through the free TSRTC bus transportation services under the Maha Lakshmi Scheme. The government would implement two more guarantees very soon under the scheme, which would be LPG cylinders to eligible families for Rs 500. (SEE PAGE 2)

**Session till Tuesday**

The Budget session will be conducted till Tuesday and the Budget will be presented on Saturday. (REPORT PAGE 5)

## Congress to present vote-on-account Budget

**Pegged at Rs 3 lakh cr; full Budget in July-Aug**

PS DILEEP  
 Hyderabad

With a marginal hike of four to five per cent over last year's Rs 2.9 lakh-crore Budget, the State government is likely to present a vote-on-account Budget for 2024-25 in the Telangana State Legislative Assembly on Saturday. The Budget is pegged at Rs 3 lakh crore.

Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka will present the debut State Budget of the Congress government with a full Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal likely to be presented later this year in July-August.

Under Article 116 of the Constitution, a vote-on-account is presented to meet essential government expenditure for a limited period until the Budget is approved. It is generally presented by a government in an election year to cover short-term expenditure requirements before the new fiscal begins. Recently, the newly elected Rajasthan government also opted for a vote-on-account Budget.

Sources said though it is an elected government with

**WHAT'S VOTE-ON-ACCOUNT BUDGET**

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- It is generally presented by a government in an election year to cover short-term expenditure requirements before the new fiscal begins.
- Recently, newly elected Rajasthan gov't also opted for vote-on-account Budget.

**CONGRESS GOVT'S DEBUT BUDGET IN TELANGANA**

- Marginal hike of 4-5% over last year's Rs 2.9 lakh-cr Budget.
- Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka to present debut State Budget of Cong government.
- Govt chose to introduce vote-on-account Budget citing lack of clarity on Central grants in the absence of a comprehensive union Budget, State's mounting debts.
- Bhatti expected to hint at allocations for Six Guarantees.

Initial estimation pegged at over **Rs 45,000 crore**

a full majority, the Revanth Reddy government chose to introduce a vote-on-account Budget. The reasons being cited are the lack of clarity on Central grants for Telangana in the absence of a comprehensive Union Budget and the State's mounting debts. "Due to increased debt burden, the

CM and Deputy CM are of the view that Telangana should secure maximum share in Central grants and Centrally Sponsored Schemes. As there is no clarity about TS' share in the Union Budget, the officials have been asked to prepare a vote-on-account Budget," sources said. (SEE PAGE 2)

**Nirmala hits out at UPA**

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**Rift in US, Israel relations widens**

WORLD | PAGE 09



**"Kohli's absence blow for India"**

SPORT | PAGE 10



**CHICKEN RATES IN HYDERABAD**

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Farm .....                | Rs. 117 |
| Retail live .....         | Rs. 139 |
| With skin .....           | Rs. 202 |
| Skinless .....            | Rs. 229 |
| Egg Rates (12 eggs) ..... | Rs. 72  |

## No mention of pressing issues in Guv's speech: BRS

STATE BUREAU  
 Hyderabad

Pressing issues of the State did not find a mention in the Governor's address marking the commencement of the Budget session, BRS leader and former Minister T Harish Rao said on Thursday.

Reacting to the Governor's speech, Harish Rao said her address to the Budget session was usually looked upon as a vision document indicating priorities for the financial year. However, this time, it appeared to be dull and drab.

People looking for a commitment from the government on the implementation of the promises given were left disappointed. People in the twilight of their lives were also disappointed

**“ There was no mention of the promises made to the unemployed youth in the State. There was no mention of the bonus of Rs 500/quintal to paddy growers either**

— T HARISH RAO, BRS leader

as no reaffirmation was sounded in the Governor's address on the pension hike. No mention was made about the promises given to the unemployed youths in the State. There was no mention of the bonus of Rs 500 per quintal to paddy growers either.

The State government completed 60 days in power, just 40 days short of the deadline set for the implementation of its guaran-

tees. Power cuts were becoming common and farmers were paying the price, Harish Rao said, pointing out that the government did not make a mention of the development of villages.

Harish Rao also demanded a white paper on the investment offers worth Rs 40,000 crore to the State received from different companies during the recent World Economic Forum summit at Davos.

**RBI keeps interest rate unchanged**

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday decided to keep the policy rate unchanged for the sixth time in a row given global uncertainty and the need to bring down retail inflation to 4 per cent.

Following the RBI's decision to maintain the status quo, banks and financial institutions will largely keep lending rates stable. The RBI had last raised the repo rate in February 2023 to 6.5 per cent after six consecutive rate hikes aggregating to 250 basis points since May 2022. Announcing the decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said it has decided to keep the policy repo rate unchanged based on an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation. (PTI)

As per the common admission norm, 85 per cent of the seats in higher educational institutions in the State have been reserved for Osmania University area (Telangana) locals and the remaining, i.e., 15 per cent, is open for all. This means, students from TS and AP can compete for a seat in the 15% quota. (SEE PAGE 2) (RELATED REPORTS PAGE 8)

## Seats in professional courses only for locals from 2025

YUVRAJ AKULA  
 Hyderabad

The clock is ticking for the students of Andhra Pradesh, who have a final opportunity to secure admissions in professional courses in Telangana for this academic year 2024-25.

Post June 2, 2024, the students will not have access to seats in professional courses in Hyderabad, as the common admissions between the two Telugu-speaking States cease to be operational and entire seats in professional courses are expected to be filled with Telangana locals. This will formally mark the end of the 10-year common admissions era between two the States.

For this academic year, however, the State government will continue common admissions for both TS and AP students, as laid down in the Andhra Pradesh Reor-

**Schedules**

**EAPCET 2024**

- Date of notification: **Feb 21**
- Commencement of online applications: **Feb 26**
- Last date for submitting applications: **April 6**
- Entrance tests: **May 9-12**

**PGECET 2024**

- Date of notification: **March 12**
- Online applications from: **March 16**
- Last date for registration: **May 10**
- Examination dates: **June 6-9**

ganisation Act 2014 for only this year. The government took this decision since notifications, including the Telangana State Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Common Entrance

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 11:00am-7:30pm

**PARK HYATT**  
 Banjara Hills, Hyderabad