

Society and Economy of Karnataka in News



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CONTENTS



Agriculture

Decentralisation

Economy

Education

Environment

Health

Gender

Governance

Social Issues

Urban Affairs

AGRICULTURE

Amidst gloomy scenario, agricultural sector gets slew of innovative schemes

Budget announces scheme titled 'Karnataka Raitha Samruddhi Yojane' to promote integrated and sustainable farming to boost farmers' income

B.S. Satish Kumar BENGALURU

midst the gloomy scenario of agriculture sector reporting a negative growth of 1.8% due to severe drought, the State Budget for 2024-25 has announced a slew of innovative schemes for agricultural development, including a scheme titled Karnataka Raitha Samruddhi Vojane for promoting integrated and sustainable farming for boosting farm incomes

The proposed scheme, which is in tune with the present day requirement of making farming a sustainable activity through integration of allied sectors, seeks to create awareness among farmers about ways of increasing their incomes by taking up a com-



To promote sustainable agriculture in drought-affected and rainfed areas and for soil and water conservation, the Budget announced that 5,000 waterbodies will be created over five years. FILE PHOTO

bination of activities related to agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, and dairy farming.

and dairy farming.

The scheme involves technical counselling by experts on various aspects, including information on soil testing and soil characteristics, selection of crops based on soil characteris-

tics and market demands, new farm practices and technologies, storage and value addition besides creating market linkages.

The Budget also seeks to create the Agriculture Development Authority under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister to facilitate effective implementation of policies related to agriculture and allied activities, besides ensuring proper co-ordination among these departments.

departments.
In a bid to tackle serious drought situation in the State, the Budget has not only continued Krishi Bhagya scheme, but also an-

Panel to be constituted

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

An expert committee will be constituted to examine the feasibility of starting an agriculture university in V.C. Farm of Mandya district in Karnataka, according to the Budget.

According to sources, the government was earlier keen to announce the setting up of a new University of Agricultural Sciences in Mandya, but has now decided to move cautiously following opposition from prominent academicians and experts. *The Hindu* had reported the government's move to set up a University of Agricultural Sciences in Mandya.

nounced measures to build further on the scheme. To promote sustainable agriculture in drought-affected and rainfed areas and for soil and water conservation, the Budget announced that 5,000 waterbodies will be created over five years. According to sources, the waterbodies will be bigger than the Krishi Hondas (agricultural ponds) and aim at providing protective irrigation to crops during summer.

The highlight of the Budget is that it focused on food processing to increase farmers' incomes and announced setting up a separate Food Processing Directorate under Agriculture Department.

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, Feb. 17, 2024

Floriculture market in Bengaluru

The Budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah noted that floriculture is practiced on 40,000 hectares of land across Karnataka. Hence, to promote the sales and exports of these floricultural crops, a well-equipped commercial floriculture market of international standards will be set up in the capital city of Bengaluru, under Public-Private Partnership.

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024



Source: The Times of India, p.4, Feb. 17, 2024

Focus on consolidation of farm schemes, use of tech

Agriculture

Stress on millet consumption, securing stable income for farmers

The Namma Millet programme with said arman Millet programme are siddarmaniah hasearmarked agriculture sector the Karnatak Raitha Samruddh Yojane by consolidating various schemes to guide farmers on securing a stable income, selecting crops based on the soil characteristics and market linkages to and creating market linkages to be turn prices for their produce. Focus on private partnerships another highlight of the budget. The Agriculture Development Authority will be set up to facilitate effective implementation of policies related to agricultural produce.

activities, apart from continuing Krishi Bhagya Yojane. The Namma Millet programme will make millets available at af-fordable prices. As many as 5,000 water bodies will be created in the drought-affected areas of the state in the next five years.



district, Ittangihal in Vijayapura district and Pujenahalli village in Bengaluru Rural district. Most of these projects will be de-veloped under the private-public partnership model.

Horticulture & sericulture

Horticulture & sericulture
The budget details setting up isian
malls in select districts to provide
farmers with horticulture-related guidance, along with a wellequipped floriculture market of
international standards in Bengalaru. Research and plant protection
activities will be prioritised to prevent diseases in arecanut crops.

Spice park in C'magaluru A spice park will be established in Chikkamagaluru district and a college of horticulture sciences at Alamel in Vijayapura district.

The allocation of funds provides for the development of occoon markets in Ramanagara and Shidalphatta in Chikkaballapur district at a cost of Rs 150 crore in the first phase and Rs 250 crore in the second phase, apart from a subsidy for aw silk reclers and an incentive of Rs 30 per kg for bivoltine silk cocoons.

Manpower shortage

"Fund allocation for the agriculture sector is not sufficient. The lack of workers will pose a big. behalings to the government in implementing the schemes. It is an ambitious Budget and its plan can be implemented only through private partnership and financial assistance from the Centre," according to farmer leader Prof C Narasimhappa.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.7, Feb, 17, 2024



Budget keeps hopes of farmers alive

The influence of the agriculture sector is quite vital. The economy of the state still depends on farm sector for its growth and development, though sector contributes a meagre 13% to GSDP.

to GSDP.
Rural Karnataka is facing an exodus of workforce from agriculture to non-agriculture activities. An alarming fact is that about 3.44 lakh cultivato

Among the five guarantees provided last year, the largest beneficiaries are the farmers and the persons from rural Karnataka with direct transfer of hentist tuned to Rs 50,000 to 55,000 per household. The farmers had placed genuine demands before the government, like purchasing centres for MSP operations, an increase in FRP by Rs 150, revisiting the Agricultural Credit Policy, regularisation of Bagar Hukum cultivators and a pension scheme for farmers above 60 years of age. Many of these are

not difficult to implement and will have only negligible impact on the finances, and hence, could have been fuffilled.

Another lurking issue is the reduction in area and low-value addition in food grains. The share of food grains has been consistently replaced with non-food grain crops and reached less than 24%; the food grain economy needs attention and that should happen through MSP procurement, value addition, inputs, and marketing infrastructure support. The chief minister has

declared new schemes with need-ed input, technology, market and

ed input, technology, market and institutional support. Picking up the growth of the agriculture sector is essential to keep the pace of overall growth. The CM has emphasized integrated agriculture. Many schemes are going to be revitalised with a new scheme called 'Karnataka Raitha Samrudhi Yojana'. The soil testing and soil information based on the soil health card will be given to the farmer. To encourage millets, a new programme called 'Namma

tech firms and retail chains. To enhance soil and water conservation, 5,000 water bodies are proposed in the next five years. Along with these programmes, e-SAP software to advise on pests, diseases, and nutrient management; export promotion; an Agri Accelerator Platform is proposed for the promotion of agricultural and horticultural produce and training to farmer-produce organizations (FPO) has been proposed.

and allied sectors is up from Rs 8,538,1 crore to Rs 9,942.4 crore and that would come to Rs 11,478 per operational holding. In this, the subsidy to the sector alone accounts for Rs 4,596.7 crore. There cannot be two views that this budget is presented in difficult times. It is the skill of the Finance Department and the CM, who successfully presented in difficult times are reflected in last year's deficit but not to the extent that many economists perceived.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.6, Feb, 17, 2024

Raitha Yojane brings hope in times of distress



WITH the demand for scientific prices for farm produce getting louder and greater, to making the agriculture sector lucrative with an integrated system, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced a novel Karnataka Raitha Samruddhi Yojane, bringing new hope for farmers who have been battered by consecutive drought and floods.

Claiming that the government's top priority is to make agriculture sustainable and lucrative, CM Siddaramaiah

allocated Rs 6,688 cr -- 2 per cent of the total budget - for agriculture and horticulture. He announced that integrated agriculture would be encouraged from the current financial year, with guidance and support to the farming community. Comprehensive agriculture is inclusive of agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture and dairy farming; it also involves selection of crops based on soil characteristics and market demands, other than raising awareness about new agricultural practices and technologies, and market linkages.

Though the budget is silent



on loan waiver, Siddaramaiah announced the creation of an Agriculture Development Authority to facilitate effective implementation of policies.

The CM announced a Food Processing Directorate to avoid wastage of agricultural produce and bunch all food processing schemes under the directorate. Food parks are to be set up near airports under the Public-Private Partnership, at Sogane in Shivamogga, Ittangihala in Vijayapura district and Pujenahalli in Bengaluru Rural district.

He announced the reintroduction of Krishi Bhagya Yojane which had become extremely popular during the earlier Congress tenure, and allocated grants of Rs 200 crore. Community seed banks are planned to protect local seeds that are on the verge of extinction, and millets will be promoted in a big way.

Source: The New Indian Express, p.5, Feb, 17, 2024

State to get its first sea ambulance

MANGALURU, DHNS: A long-pending demand of fishermen was realised with the chief minister announcing on procuring the state's first sea ambulance at a cost of Rs7 crore in the budget on Friday.

Presently, the emergency evacuation of fishermen during accidents along the coast are done by Indian Coast Guard (ICG). Former-ICAR Emeritus Scientist (Economics) Ramachandra Bhatta, welcoming the CM's promise on introducing sea ambulance, said the cyclones and disasters along the coast had increased in recent times.

The government has proposed to invest Rs 3,000 crore in the coming years for all-round development of fisheries sector.

The CM proposed setting up a fisheries research centre at Manki or Kasarkod in Honnavar taluk, a well-equipped fishing harbour at Murudeshwar in Bhatkal taluk, aqua parks and a modern fish market in Bhadravathi. This apart, the budget proposed opening a new inland fisheries skill development centre at Almatti in Vijayapura district.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.4, Feb, 17, 2024

ಪ್ರಜಾಷ್ಟ್ರವಾಣಿ

ದುಬಾರಿಯಾದ 'ರಾಜಕೀಯ' ● ದುಂದು ವೆಚ್ಚಕ್ಕೆ ಇಲ್ಲ ಕಡಿವಾಣ ● ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆ ಕೊರತೆ

ಬರೀ ಹ

• ಸಚ್ಚಿದಾನಂದ ಕುರಗುಂದ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು: 'ಖಾಸಗಿ ಡೇರಿಯವರು ಪ್ರತಿ ಲೀಟರ್ಗೆ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ₹40 ನೀಡಿದರೆ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳು ₹30 ನೀಡಲು ಪರದಾಡುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಇದೇ ಸ್ಥಿತಿ ಮುಂದುವರಿದರೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳಿಂದಲೇ ರೈತರು ವಿಮುಖ-ರಾಗಬಹುದು. ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರದಲ್ಲೇ ಪ್ರತಿ ದಿನ ಪೂರೈಕೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದ 1.5 ಲಕ್ಷ ಲೀಟರ್ ಹಾಲು ಈಗ 1 ಲಕ್ಷ ಲೀಟರ್ಗೆ ತಲುಪಿದೆ. ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯೂ 11 ಸಾವಿರದಿಂದ ಈಗ 9.5 ಸಾವಿರಕ್ಕೆ ಇಳಿಕೆಯಾಗಿದೆ'

'ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ದುಡಿಮೆಗೆ ತಕ್ಕಂತೆ ಪ್ರತಿಫಲ ಸಿಗುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆ ಹೈನುಗಾರಿಕೆಗೂ ಕುತ್ತು ತರುವ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನ ಗಳು ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿವೆ'. ಇದು ದೊಡ್ಡ-ಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರದ ರೈತ ಮುಖಂಡ ಆರ್. ಸತೀಶ್ ಅವರ ನೋವಿನ ನುಡಿಗಳಿವು.

ಸರಾಸರಿ ₹40ರಿಂದ ₹50 ವೆಚ್ಚವಾಗು-ತ್ತದೆ. ಕೊಬ್ಬಿನ ಅಂಶ (ಎಸ್ಎನ್ಎಫ್) 8.5 ಇದ್ದರೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಉತ್ತಮ ದರ ನೀಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಖಾಸಗಿ ಡೇರಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ದರ ನಿಗದಿಗೆ ಇರುವ ಮಾನದಂಡಗಳು ಕಡಿಮೆ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿಯೇ ರೈತರು ಖಾಸಗಿ ಯವರತ್ತ ಒಲವು ತೋರುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ' ಎಂದು ಸತೀಶ್ ವಿವರಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ಒ೪ನೋಟ

ಹಾಲಿಗೆ ವೈಜ್ಞಾನಿಕ ದರ ನಿಗದಿ-ಪಡಿಸುವಂತೆ ರೈತರ ಬೇಡಿಕೆಯಿದೆ. ತಮಿಳುನಾಡಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಲು ಶೇಖರಣೆ ದರವನ್ನು ₹35ರಿಂದ ₹38ಕ್ಕೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಕೇರಳದಲ್ಲಿ 8.5 ಎಸ್ಎನ್ಎಫ್ಗೆ ₹43.98 ದರ ನಿಗದಿ ಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರಿಗೆ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳು ಪ್ರತಿ ಲೀಟರ್ಗೆ ಸರಾಸರಿ ₹ 25ರಿಂದ ₹ 32 ಮಾತ್ರ ನೀಡುತ್ತಿವೆ.

ಬಮುಲ್ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಎಸ್ಎನ್ಎಫ್ ಇದ್ದರೆ ₹32.15 ನೀಡಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ ಹಾಲು 'ಪ್ರತಿ ಲೀಟರ್ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದನೆಗೆ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲೂ ಕಳೆದ ಅಕ್ಟೊಬರ್ 11ರಿಂದ ಪ್ರತಿ ಲೀಟರ್ಗೆ ₹ 2 ಕಡಿಮೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. 8.5 ಎಸ್ಎನ್ಎಫ್ ಇದ್ದರೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ₹31.10 ದೊರೆಯುತ್ತದೆ. ಮಂಡ್ಯ, ತುಮಕೂರು ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಯೂನಿಯನ್ಗಳು ₹32 ನೀಡುತ್ತಿವೆ.

ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳು ಕಡಿಮೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವುದರಿಂದ

ಉತ್ತಾದನೆ ಉತ್ತಾದನೆ ನಂತರ ಪ್ರತಿ ದಿನ ಒಂದು ಪ್ರತಿ ಹಸುವಿಗೆ ಮಾರಾಟ ವೆಚ್ಚ _{ಲೀಟರ್ಗೇ8}

ಕೆಜೆಗೆ ₹1150 ದರ) ಕೆ.ಜೆ. ಮೇವು

කಜೆ0ಟ್0ಗೆ ಮಾರಾಟದ ₹2.5

ಮಾನವ ಸಂಪನ್ಮೂಲ ಸೇರಿ ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆ ಉತ್ಪಾದನಾ ವೆಚ್ಚ ಲೀಟರ್ಗೆ ₹40000₹50

ರೈತರ ಹಿತಾಸಕ್ತಿ ಕಾಪಾಡಲು ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಸದಾ ಬದ್ಧವಾಗಿದೆ. ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ನೀಡುತ್ತಿರುವ ದರ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಇದೆ ಎಂದು ಭಾವಿಸಿಕೊಂಡರೂ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಡೇರಿಗಳ ಕಡೆ ಹೈನುಗಾರರು ವಾಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಗಡಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಬೇರೆ ರಾಜ್ಯಗಳ ಹಾಲು ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾದರೂ ಅದು ತಾತ್ಕಾಲಿಕವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಬಹುತೇಕ ಸಂದರ್ಭಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳಿಗೆ ಬೇಡಿಕೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಎಂ.ಕೆ. ಜಗದೀಶ್, ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕ, ಕೆಎ0ಎಫ್

ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ದರ ನೀಡುವ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಡೇರಿಗಳ ಪ್ರಾಬಲ್ಯ ದಿನೇ ದಿನೇ ಹೆಚ್ಚುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಪ್ರಮುಖವಾಗಿ ಚಾ ಮ ರಾಜನಗರ, ಕೋಲಾರ. ತುಮಕೂರು. ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಲು ಶೇಖರಣೆ ನಕಾರಾತ್ಮಕ ಬೆಳವಣಿಗೆ

ಕೊಪ್ಪಳ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕಿನ ಕೋಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿನ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಹಕಾರ ಸಂಘದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಲು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಪ್ರಜಾವಾಣಿ ಚಿತ್ರ: ಭರತ್ ಕಂದಕೂರು

ಲೀಟರ್ಗೆ ಬೇಡಿಕೆ ಇದ್ದರೂ, ಬಮುಲ್ 35 ಲಕ್ಷ ಲೀಟರ್ ಹಾಲು ಮಾತ್ರ ಆಡಳಿತ ನಡೆಸಿದರೂ ಪೋತಾಹ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲೇ ಪ್ರತಿ ದಿನ 45 ಲಕ್ಷ ಲಕ್ಷ ಲೀಟರ್ ವಹಿವಾಟು ನಡೆಸುತ್ತಿವೆ. ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಪಕ್ಷ ಪೂರೈಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ಖಾಸಗಿ ಡೇರಿಗಳು 10 ಧನ ಮತ್ತು ಕ್ಷೀರಭಾಗ್ಯ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ

ಒಂದಿಲ್ಲೊಂದು ಯೋಜನೆಗಳ ಮೂಲಕ ಕೆಎಂಎಪ್ಗೆ ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ನೆರವು ನೀಡಿವೆ. ಇಡೀ ದೇಶದಲ್ಲೇ ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ನೆರವನ್ನು ಯಾವ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರ್ಕಾರಗಳು ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳಿಗೆ ನೀಡುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ.

6ನೇ ಪುಟ ನೋಡಿ

Continued...



24,125 agree

15,551

26.60 🛭 ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸದಸ್ಪರ

81.33 og of other new ಪ್ರತಿ ನಿತ್ಯ ಸರಾಸರಿ ಶೀಖರಣಿ

94.18 eg ő. z. ರದ ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ಹಾಲು ಶೇಖರಣೆ (2022 ಜೂನ್ 29ರಂದು) ₹27 AGEN 150_{4,620} ත්රධ්ති සමවා භායත් අව

351 og elestranen

6 ಕೋಟಗೂ ಅಧಿಕ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರು

ಯಾದಗಿರಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರಿ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಗೆ ಕಳುಹಿಸಲು ಪ್ಯಾಕೆಟ್ನಲ್ಲಿ ಸಿದವಾಗುತ್ತಿರುವ ನಂದಿನಿ ಹಾಲು ಚಿತ್ರ: ತಾಜುದ್ದೀನ್ ಆಜಾದ

ಒಂದನೇ ಪುಟದಿಂದ.

ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆಯಾಗಿ ಕೆಎಂಎಪ್ಗೆ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ₹1000 ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆಯಾಗಿ ಕೊಂಎಫ್ಗಗೆ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ₹1000 ಕೋಟಗೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಮೊತ್ತವನ್ನು ಸರ್ಕಾರವೇ ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದೆ. 2021-220€ ₹1250 ಕೋಟ, 2022-230€ ₹1200 ಕೋಟ ಮೊತ್ತವನ್ನು ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಜತೆಗೆ ಸಿನಿಮಾ ನಟಲಾದ ಡಾ.ರಾಜಕುಮಾರ್, ಉಸೇಂದ್ರ. ಪ್ರಾನಿಕರ್ ಅವರು ಉಚಿತವಾಗಿ ಕಿಂಎಫ್ ಬ್ರಾಂಡ್ ರಾಯಭಾರಿಯಾಗಿ ಹಾಲಿನ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳ ಪ್ರಚಾರ ಮಾಡಿ, ಮಾರಾಜಕ್ಕೆ ನೆರವು ನೀಡಿದ್ದರು. ಇಷ್ಟೇ ನೆರವು ಸಂಗೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು, ಇಷ್ಟೇ ನೆರವು ಸಂಗೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು, ಇಷ್ಟೇ ನಿರೇಷ್ಟರು ಸಂಗೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು, ಇಷ್ಟೇ ನಿರೇಷ್ಟರು ಸಂಗೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು, ನಿರೇಷ್ಟರು, ಸಂಗೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು, ಸಂಗೆಯುತಿದ್ದರು, ಸಂಗೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು, ಸಂಗೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ ದೊರೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಖರೀದಿ ದರವನ್ನು ಹಾಲಿಗೆ ಯಾವ ಕಾರಣಕ್ಕೆ ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ನೀಡಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಹೈನುಗಾರರಿಗೆ ಯಕ್ಷಪ್ರಶೈಯಾಗಿಯೇ

ಕೆಎಂಎಪ್. ಈಗ ಹಾಲು ಉತಾದನೆಯಲಿ ದೇಶದಲ್ಲೇ ಎರಡನೇ ಸ್ಥಾನದಲ್ಲಿದೆ. ಅಂತಕರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲೂ ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಭಾವು ಮೂಡಿಸಿದೆ. ಅಮೂಲ್ ನಂತರ ಎರಡನೇ ಅತಿ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಸಹಕಾರ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್. ಅಮುಲ್ ಪ್ರತಿ ದಿನ ಅಂದಾಜು 1.8 ಕೋಟ ಲೀಟರ್ ಹಾಲು ಸಂಗಹಿಸುತ್ತಿದರೆ, ಕೆಎಂಎಪ್ ಸುಮಾರು 81 ಲಕ್ಷ ಲೀಟರ್ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ನ 'ನಂದಿನಿ' ಸುಮಾರು 21 ಸಾವಿರ ಕೋಟ ಮೌಲ್ಯ ಹೊಂದಿರುವ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಿತ ಬ್ರ್ಯಾಂಡ್. 'ನಂದಿನಿ'ಯನ್ನು ಕನ್ನಡಿಗರು ಕೇವಲ ್ರವಿಷ್ಯಾತ ಒಕ್ಕೆ ಅನ್ನ ಗುಂಡು ಯಾವು ಕ್ರಾಪ್ತಣಗಳ ಕಾವಲ ಒಂದು ಉತ್ಪನ್ನವಾಗಿ ಕಂಡಿಲ್ಲ ಅನ್ನದಾತರು ತಮ್ಮ ಬದುಕಿನ ಮತ್ತು ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಆರ್ಥೀಕತೆಯ ಭಾಗವಾಗಿ ಭಾವನಾತ್ಮಕ ಸಂಬು ಹೊಂದಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಇತ್ತೀಚಿನ ವರ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ರಾಜಕಾರಣಿಗಳ ಸ್ವಹಿತಾಸಕ್ತಿಯೇ ವಿಜ್ಞಂಭಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ

ಸಂಘದಿಂದ ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ವರೆಗಿನ 'ಸೋರಿಕೆ' ಅವ್ಯಾಹತ ವಾಗಿ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿದೆ. 'ರೈತರೇ 'ಯಜಮಾನ'ರಾಗ ಬೇಕಾಗಿದ್ದ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಆಡಳಿತ ಮಂಡಳಿಯೆಂದ ನೈಜ ಹೈನುಗಾರರನ್ನು ದೂರವೇ ಉಳಿಸುವ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ಹೃನುಗಾರರನ್ನು ದೂರವೇ ಉಳಿಗುವ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಸಿ ರಾಜಕಾರಣಿಗಳು ಕೊಎಎಫ್ ಅನ್ನು ತಮ್ಮ ಕಿಪಿಮುಷ್ಟಿಯಲ್ಲಿರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳ ಅವಳಿಕ ಮಂಡಳಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೈನುಗಾರಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತೀಡಗಿದ ನೈಪಿ ರೈತರ ಬದಲು ರಿಯಲ್ ಎಸ್ಟೆಡ್ ಕುಳಗಳು. ರೌಪಿಕೀಟರ್ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯವರೂ ಅಯ್ಯೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಮಂದು ವೆಚ್ಚ ಭ್ರಷ್ಟಾಚಾರ. ಅನಗತ್ಯ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ ನೇಮಾಣತಿ, ಸ್ಥಜನಪಥ್ರಪಾತ, ಚಾತಿ ಸಂಕೋಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಂಡಿತ್ ಮತ್ತು ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳು ನರಳಿ ಹಲಗಿತೆ ಎನ್ನುವ ಆರೋಪನಮ್ಮ ಹೆಸರು ಬಹಿಕರರ್ ಮಾಡಬಾರರು ಎನ್ನುವ ಕರ್ರಕ್ಷಿನ ಮೇಲೆ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಮಾಜಿ ನಿವೀತಕರೊಬ್ಬರು ಈ ಅಪಾದನೆ ಮಾಡಿದರು. ಕೊಂಡಿತ್ತ್ ಮತ್ತು ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳ ಚುನಾವಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರಾಗಿ ಅಯ್ಯೆಯಾಗುವವರಿಗೆ ಸ್ಥಾನವನಾನ ದೊರೆಯುವ ಏತೆಗೆ ಹಿರಾರುವವರಿಗೆ ಸ್ಥಾನವನಾನ ದೊರೆಯುವ ಏತೆಗೆ ಹಿರಾರುವವರಿಗೆ ಸ್ಥಾನವನಾನ ದೊರೆಯುವ ಏತೆಗೆ ಹಿರಾರುವ ಏತೆಗೆ, ಹಲವು ರೀತಿಯ

ಸಾನಮಾನ ದೊರೆಯುವ ಜತೆಗೆ, ಹಲವು ರೀತಿಯ ಸ್ಥಾನವಾಣ ದೊರೆಯುವ ಜತೆಗೆ, ಹಲವು ರೀತಿಯ ಭನ್ನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸೌಲ್ಯರ್ಭನ್ನು ಕಲ್ಲಿಸಲಾಧಿವೆ, ವಿದೇಶ ಪ್ರವಾಸವೂ ಇವುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಖ್ಯ. ಒಂದು ಅವಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕನಿತ್ತ ಒಂದುಬಾಲ ವಿದೇಶಿ ಪ್ರವಾಸಕ್ಕೆ ಗೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದೆ, ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಬ್ಬರಿಗೆ 7 4 ಅಕ್ಷದಿಂದ १ 5 ಅಕ್ಷವನೆಗೆ ವಶ್ಯ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ, ಪ್ರವಾಸಕ್ಕೆ ತೆರಳುವ ತಂಡದ ಜತೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರಗಳನ್ನು ಸಹ ನಿರ್ಯೋಜಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ತಾರಾ ಹೋಟರೆಗಳಲ್ಲೇ ಇವರ ವಾಸ್ತವ್ಯ ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಒತ್ತೂಟಗಳೇ ಈ ವಿದೇಶ ಪ್ರವಾಸಗಳನ್ನು ಹಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ತಾರ್ವಿಸಲಿಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಕರ್ಣಕ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಆಯೋಜಿಸುವುದು ಹೆಚ್ಚು, ನ್ಯೂಜಿಲೆಂಡ್ ಮತ್ತು ಆಸ್ಟ್ರೇಲಿಯಾಗೆ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಪ್ರವಾಸ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ, ಕೆಲವು ಬಾರಿ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕಾಕ್ ನಂತಹ 'ಆಕರ್ಷಕ ತಾಣ'ಗಳು ಸಹ ಪ್ರವಾಸದ ಪಟ್ಟಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸೇರ್ಪಡೆಯಾದ ಉದಾಹರಣೆಗಳಿವೆ. ಕೋಲಾಲ್-ಬ್ಲ್ಫ್ನ್ನ್ನ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಂಘಗಳ ಕೋಚಿಮುಲ್) ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷ ನಂಜೇಗೌಡ ಕೋಲಾರ-ಚಿಕಬಳಾ.ಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಂದ ಎಂಘಾನ್ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ (ಕೋಚಿಮುಲ್) ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷ ನಂಜೇಗೌಡ ಹಾಗೂ ಹಲವು ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು ಮತ್ತು ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಯುರೋಪ್ ಪ್ರವಾಸ್ ಕೈಗೊಂಡಿದು ಚರ್ಚೆಗೆ ಗ್ರಾಸವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಭತ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಸಹ ಮನಬಂದಂತೆ ಪಡೆಯಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ ಎನ್ನುವ ದೂರುಗಳು





ಕ್ಷೀರಭಾಗ್ಯದಲ್ಲೂ ಅಕ್ರಮ

ಆಕ್ರಮಗಳು ನಡೆದ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ವರದಿಯಾಗಿವೆ. ಶಾಲೆಗಳ ಮುಖ್ಯಸ್ಥರು, ಬಿಂಒಗಳು ಗಮನಹರಿಸದ ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಹಾಲಿನ ಪುಡಿಯನ್ನು ಖಾಸಗಿ ದಿನಸಿ ಅಂಗಡಿಗಳಿಗೆ, ಬೇಕರಿಗಳಿಗೆ, ಐಸ್ ಕ್ರೀಂ ಮತ್ತು ಚಾಕೊಲೇಟ್ ತಯಾರಿಸಲು ಅರ್ಧ ಬೆಲೆಗೆ ಪೂರೈಸುವ ಮಾಫಿಯಾ ತಲೆ

ಹಾಲಿನ ಪುಡಿಯ ತೂಕದಲ್ಲೇ ವೃತ್ಯಾಸ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಶಾಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಗುಣಮಟ್ಟದ ಹಾಲು ನೀಡದೆ ನೀರು ಮಿಶ್ರಣ ಮಾಡಿ ಪೂರೈಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ನಡೆದಿವೆ. ಹಾಲಿನ ಪುಡಿಯ ಪ್ಯಾಕಿಂಗ್ ಅನ್ನು

ಖಾಸಗಿಯವರಿಗೆ ವಹಿಸಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ಹೆಚ್ಚುತ್ತಿವೆ ಎಂದು ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಕಲಬುರಗಿ, ಧಾರವಾಡ, ವಿಜಯಪುರ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ಉತ್ತರ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಜಿಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಲಿನ ಪುಡಿಯ ಅಕ್ರಮ ವ್ಯವಹಾರ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ನಡೆದಿರುವುದನ್ನು ಪೊಲೀಸರು ಪತ್ತೆ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದರು. ಆದರೂ, ಹಾಲಿನ ಪುಡಿಯನ್ನು ಸಮರ್ಪಕವಾಗಿ ಪ್ಯಾಕ್ ಮಾಡುವ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆ

ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳಿಗೆ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರಾಗಿ ಆಯ್ಕೆಯಾಗಲು ನಡೆಯುವ ಚುನಾವಣೆಯ ವೆಚ್ಚವೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಅಧಿಕಾರ ಹಿಡಿಯುವ 'ದಾಹ'ದಿಂದ ಚುನಾವಣೆಗೆ ₹25 ಲಕ್ಷದಿಂದ ₹75 ಲಕ್ಷದವರೆಗೆ ಖರ್ಚು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ತೀವ್ರ ಪೈಪೋಟಿ ಇರುವ ಸ್ಥಳಗಳಲ್ಲಿ १1 ಕೋಟಗೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಖರ್ಚು ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಹಕಾರ ಸಂಘಗಳ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರಿಗೆ ಅಮಿಷವೊಡ್ಡಿ ಮತ ಪಡೆಯುವ ವೃವಸ್ಥೆಯಿಂದ ಮೂಲ ಆಶಯಕ್ಕೆ ಧಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದಿದೆ. ಇನ್ನು ಕೆಎಎಫ್ ಆಡಳಿತ ಮಂಡಳಿ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರಾಗಲು ಬಯಸುವವರು ₹50 ಲಕ್ಷದಿಂದ ₹ 1 ಕೋಚಗೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಖರ್ಚು ಮಾಡುವ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿ ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಯಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂದು ಹೆಸರು ಬಹಿರಂಗಪಡಿಸಲು ಬಯಸದ ಕೆಎಂಎಪ್

ಹಿರ್ದೇಶಕರೊಬ್ಬರು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ.

'ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ ಚುನಾವಣೆಗಳು ವ್ಯಾಪಾರದಂತೆ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಚುನಾವಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿನ ಖರ್ಚು ಸರಿದೂಗಿಸಲು ನೇಮಕಾತಿ, ವರ್ಗಾವಣೆ, ಬಡ್ತಿ ಮತ್ತು ಇತರ ಮೂಲಗಳಿಂದ 'ಬಂಡವಾಳ' ವಾಪಸ್ ಪಡ ವಾಮಮಾರ್ಗಗಳನ್ನು ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಕಣಿಮಿಣಿಕೆ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಹಕಾರ

ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಕಣಿಮೀಣಿಕೆ ತಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಹಕಾರ ಸಂಭಾದ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕರ ಮನೆ ಮೇಲೆ ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಲೋಕಾಯುಕ್ತ ದಾಳೆ ನಡೆದಿತ್ತು, ಗ್ರಾಭೀಣ ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲೂ ಇಂತಹ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿ, ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಯಾದರೆ ರೈತರ ಬದುಕು ಹಸನಾಗಲು ಹೇಗೆ ಸಾಧ್ವ ಎಂದು ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರೊಬ್ಬರು ಪ್ರಶ್ನಿಸಿದರು. ಇನ್ನು ಸಚಿವ ಸ್ಥಾನ ಸಗದ ಬಿಕ್ಕೆ ಇದಿ ನೋಗಿಸುವ ಶಾಸಕರನ್ನು ಸಂತೃಷ್ಟಿಸರ್ಜಿಸಲು ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರನ್ನಾಗಿ ನೇಮಿಸಿ ಪ್ರಕರ್ವಸ್ಥನಿಕ ಕಲ್ಪಿಸುವುದು ಕಾಲುದರಲ್ಲೂ ನಡೆದು ಬಂದಿದೆ. ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿ ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮನ್ನು ಅವರ ಆಸ್ಪಪಲಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಗುರುತಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿರುವ ಮಾಜಿ ಶಾಸಕ ಮಿಜಾನಾಯ್ ಅವರು ಈಗ ಅವರ ಆಸ್ತ್ರವಲಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಗುರುತಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿರುವ ಮಾಜಿ ಶಾಸಕ ಭೀಮನಾಯ್ಕ್ ಅವರು ಈಗ ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. 2023ರ ವಿಧಾನಸಭೆ ಚುನಾವಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಇವರು ಪರಾಭವಗೊಂಡಿದ್ದರು.

ಶಾಸಕ ಎಚ್.ಡಿ. ರೇವಣ್ಣ ಅವರು ಸುಮಾರು 30 ತಾರ್ಕ ವರ್ಣವಿ ಅದ್ಯುತ್ತ ತಮ್ಮ ಸಮಯ 30 ವರ್ಷ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ ಮತ್ತು ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ನಲ್ಲಿ ಆಡಕಿತ ನಡೆಸಿ ಹಿಡಿತ ಸಾಧಿಸಿದ್ದರು. ಸುಮಾರು ಹತ್ತು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಕಾಲ ಇವರೇ ಕೊಂತಿಸ್ಥಳ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರಾಗಿದ್ದರು. 2019ರಲ್ಲಿ ಜನತಾ ಪರಿವಾರದ ಪ್ರಾಬಲ್ನ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಿಸುವಲ್ಲಿ ಯಶಸ್ವಿಯಾದ ಬಿಜೆಪಿಯು, ಅರಭಾವಿ ತಾಸಕ ಬಾಲಚಂದ್ರ ಜಾರಕಿಹೊಳಿ ಅವರನ್ನು ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರನ್ನಾಗಿ

ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರಿ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಂಪಗಳ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ (ಬೆಮುಲ್) ಮೇಲೆಯೂ ಶಾಸಕ ಸಂಭರ್ಗ ಜಮರೈತದ (ಜಮರ) ಹಿರಿತ ಸಾಧಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಸಹಜವಾಗಿಯೇ ಅವರು ಸೂಚಿಸಿದ ಅಥವಾ ಬೆಂಬಲಿಸಿದ ವೃಕ್ತಿಯೇ ಈ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ ಚುಕ್ಕಾಣಿ ಹಿಡಿಯುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಶಾಸಕ ಬಾಲಚಂದ್ರ ಅವರು ಸಕ್ರಿಯ ರಾಜಕಾರಣಕ್ಕೆ

ಬಂದ ಮೇಲೆ ಕ್ಷೀರೋದ್ಯಮದಲ್ಲಿ 'ಪ್ರಭಾವಿ'ಯಾದರು. 20 ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಬೆಮುಲ್ ಮೇಲೆ ತಮ್ಮದೇ ಪ್ರಭಾವ



ಮೈಸೂರು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಸಿದ್ದಲಿಂಗಪುರದಲ್ಲಿ ರೈತರು ಹಾಲು ಮಾರಲು ಸರದಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಿಂತಿರುವ ದೃಶ್ಯ ಚಿತ: ಅನೂಪ್ ರಾಘ.ಟಿ.

'ನಷ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳು'

್ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿನ ಚಹುತೇಕ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳು ನಷ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿವೆ. ಬಹುಎಲ್ ಈಗ ಸುಮಾರು ₹ 50 ಕೋಟ ನಷ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿದೆ. ಈ ಮೊದಲು ₹ 70 ಕೋಟ ನಷ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿತ್ತು. ರೈತರಿಗೆ ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಹಾಲಿನ ದರದಲ್ಲಿ ₹ 2ರಷ್ಟು ಕಡಿಮೆ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ನಷ್ಟದ ಪ್ರಮಾಣ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾಗಿದೆ" ಎಂದು ಬಹುೂಲ್ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕ

2ರಷ್ಟು ಕಡಿಮ ಮಾಂದ್ಯಲಂಬ ಇಣ್ಣದ ಪ್ರ ವರಸಿಂಹಮೂರ್ಕಿ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. 'ಹಾಲಿಗೆ ವೈಜ್ಞಾನಿಕ ದರ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಬೇರು. ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಪ್ರತಿ ಲೀಟರ್ ಹಾಲಿಗೆ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ₹40 ನೀಡಬೇರು. ಆಗ ಮಾತ್ರ ಹೈನೋದ್ಯಮಕ್ಕೆ ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹ ದೊರೆಯುತ್ತದೆ. ಬೇರೆ ರಾಜ್ಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರಿಗೆ ಸಕಂ ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಗ್ರಾಹಕರಿಗೆ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ₹50 ದರ ನಿಗದಿ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ ಒಕ್ಕುಟಗಳು ಉಳಿಯುತ್ತವೆ. ಒಕ್ಕುಟಗಳೇ ದರ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸುವ ನಿರ್ಧಾರವನ್ನು ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕು. ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣಗಳಿಂದ ಮುಕ್ತವಾಗಬೇಕು' ಎಂದು

ಪ್ರತಿಪಾದಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. "ಒಂದು ಲೀಟರ್ ಹಾಲಿನ ಪುಡಿ ತಯಾರಿಸಲು ಪ್ರತಿ ಕೆ.ಪಿಗೆ ₹360 ವೆಚ್ಚನಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಸರ್ಕಾರವು ₹285 ಕೈ ಖರೀದಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದ, ಕೆ.ಜಿಗೆ ₹75 ನಷ್ಟವಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ತಿಂಗಳಿಗೆ ₹2.5 ಕೋಟಯಪ್ಪು ನಷ್ಟವಾಗು. ತ್ತಿದೆ. ಗ್ರಾಹಕರಿಗೆ ಕಡಿಮೆ ದರಕ್ಕೆ ಹಾಲು ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡುವುದರಿಂದ ₹7 ಕೋಟಿ ನಷ್ಟವಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದ ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆ ಬಮುಲ್ಗೆಗೆ ತಿಂಗಳಿಗೆ ₹9.5 ಕೋಟಗೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ನಷ್ಟವಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಎಂದು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. "ಮುಂಡ್ನ ಬೆಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಂಘಗಳ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ(ಮಸ್ ಮಲ್) ₹ 24 ಕೋಟಿ ನಷ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿದೆ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ, ಹಾಲು ಖರೀದಿ ದರವನ್ನು ಲೀಟರ್ಗೆಗೆ ₹1.50 ಇಳಿಕೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ" ಎಂದು ಸತ್ತವಾಲಕ್ಕೆ ಬರ್ಸೆ ಕಿ. ಪ್ರಕಾರಣೆಗಳು ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕ್ಕೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ" ಎಂದು

ನ್ಯಾಬರಲ್ಲಿ, ಹರಗಾಗ, ಹಲಲ ಖರೀದ ಬರುತ್ತು ರೇಖರ್ಗೆ 13.50 ಕಳ ಮೂರವಾಗು ಎರಡು ಮನೆಯಲ್ ಆದ್ದರೆ ಬಿ.ಟೋರೇಗೌಡ ವಿವರಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. 'ಮಹಾರಾಷ್ಟ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರತಿ ರೀಟರ್ ಹಾರೆಗೆ 15 ಕೆಂಟಿನೆ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ, ಹೀಗಾಗಿ ಅಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಲು ಮಾರಾಟವಾಗದೇ ಅದನ್ನು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಗಡಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸರುರಾದು ಆಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ನಮ್ಮ ಹಾಲು ಅವರಿಗಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ದರ ಇರುವ ಕಾರಣ ಜನ ಅಲ್ಲಿಯ ಹಾಲನ್ನೇ ಖರೀದಿಸುವುದು ಹೆಚ್ಚು, ಇದರೊಂದಿಗೆ ಬಜೆಂಟರಿಗೆ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾರ್ಜಿನ್ ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಹಾಗಾಗಿ, ಅವರು ನಂದಿನಿ ಹಾಲು ಮಾರಾಟಕ್ಕೆ ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಹಿಂದಡಿ "ಇಟ್ಟದ್ದಾರೆ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳು ಹಾನಿಯಲ್ಲಿವೆ" ಎಂದು ಬೆಮುಲ್ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕ ಶ್ರೀನಿವಾಸ್ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ಬೀರಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅವರ ಬೆಂಬಲದಿಂದಾಗಿಯೇ ವಿವೇಕರಾವ್ ಪಾಟೀಲ ಅವರು ಸತತ ಎರಡನೇ ಅವದಿಗೂ ಅದ್ದಕರಾಗಿ ಮುಂದುವರಿದಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಇವರಿಬ್ಬರೇ ನಿರ್ಣಾಯಕರು ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾರೆ ರೈತರು.

ಆಂಧ್ರಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿನ ತಮಿಳುನಾಡು, ಮಹಾಮಂಡಳಿಗಳು ಆರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಉತ್ತಮ ಸ್ಥಿತಿಯಲ್ಲಿದ್ದರೂ ರಾಜಕೀಯ ಹಸ್ತಕ್ಷೇಪ ಮತ್ತು ಆದಕ್ಷತೆಯಿಂದ ಕಾಲಕ್ರಮೇಣ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಡೇರಿಗಳ ಜತೆ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧೆ ನೀಡಲು ವಿಫಲವಾಗಿವೆ. ಇಂತಹ ಆತಂಕ ಜತಿ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧೀ ನೀಡಲು ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಸಲಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಎಲಹ ಆತಿರಿತ ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಗೂ ಎದುರಾಗುವ ಸ್ಥಿತಿ ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣವಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣ ಸ್ವಾಯತ್ತ ಸಂಸ್ಕೆಯಾಗಬೇಕಾಗಿದ್ದ ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣಕ್ಕೆ ದೂಡಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಮೇಲೆ ಪ್ರಶ್ನು ಸಂಗೋಪನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸಹಕಾರ ಇಲಾಖೆಗಳು ಸವಾರಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿವೆ.

ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಮತ್ತು ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆದಿರುವ ನೇಮಕಾತಿಗಳು ಸಹ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕವಾಗಿ ನಡೆದಿಲ್ಲ ಎನ್ನುವ ಆರೋಪಗಳು ಪ್ರಬಲವಾಗಿ ಕೇಳುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಗಳು ಲಾಭದ ಹಳಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಇಲ್ಲದಿದ್ದರೂ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿಗಳ ನೇಮಕಕ್ಕೆ ಆದ್ಯತೆ ಸಿದ್ದರು ಸಿದ್ದರು ಸಿದ್ದರು ನಿರ್ದರ್ಭವರ್ ನಿರ್ದರ್ಭವರ್ ನಿರ್ದರ್ಭವರ್ ನಿರ್ದರ್ಭವರ್ ನಿರ್ದರ್ಭವರ್ ನಿರ್ದರ್ಭವರ್ ನಿರ್ದರ್ಭವರ್ ನಿರ್ದರ್ಭವರ್ ನಿರ್ದರ್ಭವರಿಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ಹಣದ ಥೈಲಿ ನೀಡಿದವರಿಗೆ ಮಣಿ ಹಾಕುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ನಡೆದುಕೊಂಡು ಬಂದಿದೆ.

_ ನೇಮಕದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ವೈಜ್ಞಾನಿಕ ಸಮೀಕ್ಷೆ ನಡೆಯದಿದ್ದರೂ ಪ್ರತಿ ಐದು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಅವಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ 200ರಿಂದ 500ರಷ್ಟು ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿಯನ್ನು ನೇಮಕ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಕೆಲವು ಸಲ ಮೂಲ ವೇತನ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆಯೂ 'ಕಾಂಚಾಣ' ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಉದಾಹರಣೆಗೆ ಮೂಲ ವೇತನ ₹30 ಸಾವಿರ ಇದ್ದರೆ ₹30 ಲಕ್ಷ

'ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಹಿತಾಸಕ್ತಿ ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಲಿ'

ಗ್ರಾಹಕರು, ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ವಿಶ್ವಾಸ ಗಳಿಸುವ ಜತೆಗೆ ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಹಿತಾಸಕ್ತಿ ಕಾಪಾಡುವುದು ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಬೇಕು. ಆದರೆ, ಲೂಟಿ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಸಕಾಲಕ್ಕೆ ಮಂಡಳಿಯ ಸಭೆಗಳು ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ ಮುಖ್ಯವರ್ಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಅದು, ಅಹಾ ನೀಮುತ್ತದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಹಾರ್ಥ ಮುಂದಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಚ್ಚಿಸಿದ್ದೆ, ಅದರೆ, ಈಗ ತಾನು ಅಧಿಕಾರದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದಾಗೆ ಎಂಟು ಖಾಸಗಿ ತತು ಅಹಾರ ಕಾರ್ಖಾನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಮುಚ್ಚಿಸಿದ್ದೆ, ಅದರೆ, ಈಗ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿ ಬದಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಹಾಸನ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ ಅತಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ದರವನ್ನು ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದನೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಳವಾಗಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಅನಿವಾರ್ಯ ಕಾರಣಕ್ಕೆ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಹಾಲಿನ ದರದಲ್ಲಿ 1 ಇಳಿಕೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ ಎಬ್.ಸಿ.ಎ. ರೇವಣ್ಣ ಹಾಸಕ, ತಾನನ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷ

'ಕಾಂಚಾಣ'ವನ್ನು ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ ಎನ್ನುವ ಆಸಾಗನೆಯಿದೆ. ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ನಲ್ಲಿ ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಆಪಾದನೆಯದೆ. ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ಸ್ ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ 487 ಮಂದಿಯ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲಾಯಿತು. ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮಯ್ಯ ಅವರು ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಯಾಗಿ ಅಧಿಕಾರ ವಹಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಒಂದು ವಾರ ಮೊದಲು ತರಾತುರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಆದೇಶ ನೀಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟದಲ್ಲೂ ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ 46 ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿಯನ್ನು ನೇಮಕ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಕೋಚಿಮುಲ್ನಲ್ಲಿ 75 ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ಭರ್ತಿಗೆ ನಡೆದ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ವಿಚಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಕ್ರಮ

ನಡೆದಿರುವ ಆರೋಪ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿತ್ತು ಕೋಲಾರ-ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಸಹಕಾರ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಕ್ಕೆ (ಕೋಚಿಮುಲ್) ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ನಡೆದ 75 ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ನೇಮಕಾತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಕ್ರಮ ನಡೆದಿರುವುದನ್ನು ಹುದ್ರೆಗಳ ನೇಮಕಾತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಕ್ರಮ ನಡೆದಿರುವುದನ್ನು ಮಾರಿ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕಾಲಯದ (ಐ.ವಿ.) ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳೇ ಪತ್ತೆ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದರು. 'ನೇಮಕಾತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂದರ್ಶನದ ಅಂತರ್ಗಳನ್ನು ತಿದ್ದಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಪ್ರತಿ ಹುದ್ದೆಯನ್ನು է 20 ಲಕ್ಷದಿಂದ է 30 ಲಕ್ಷಕ್ಕೆ ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಕೋಚಿಮುಲ್ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು ಹಾಗೂ ಸಕ್ತಿಪ್ಪುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ, ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಕೋಚಿಮುಲ್ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು ಹಾಗೂ ಜಕ್ಕಿಪ್ಪುತ್ತಿದ್ದು ಪರ್ವಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಧಿಸಿ ಎಂಬುದಾಗಿ ಜಾರಿ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕಾಲಯವು ತಿಲಿಸಿತ್ತು. ಕೋಚಿಮುಲ್ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷದಾಗಿರುವ ಮಾಲೂರು ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದ ಕಾಂಗ್ರೆಸ್ ಶಾಸಕ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರವಾಗಿರುವ ಮಾಲೂರು ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದ ನಿರ್ದಾಹಕರ್ ಕೆ.ವೈ.ನಂಜೇಗೌಡ ಅವರ ನಿವಾಸ ಮತ್ತು ಅವರಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ 14 ಕಡೆ ಇ.ಡಿ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ದಾಳಿ

ಅತ್ಯಂತ ಪ್ರಾಮುಖ್ಯತೆ ಹೊಂದಿರುವ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರ ಹುದ್ದೆಯು ಚರ್ಚೆಗೆ ಗ್ರಾಸವಾಗಿದೆ. ಐಎಎಸ್ ಅದಿಕಾರಿಗಳಿಗಿಂತ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕವಾಗಿ ಪರಿಣತಿ ಹೊಂದಿರುವ ತರುಕಾರಗಳಗಳಿತ ತಾರತ್ರಕವಾಗ ಪರಣತ ಹೂರದರುವ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಹಿರಿಯರನ್ನೇ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರನ್ನಾಗಿ ನೇಮಿಸಬೇಕು ಎನ್ನುವ ವಾದಕ್ಕೆ ಬೆಲೆ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿಲ್ಲ. ಇಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ತಮ 'ಅಚುಮೆಚಿನ' ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳನೇ ನೇಮಿಸುವ ಸಂಪದಾಯ ದಶಕಗಳಿಂದ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಾ ಬಂದಿದೆ. ಸಹಕಾರ ಇಲಾಖೆಯ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ಸಿರ್ದೆಶಕರನ್ನಾಗಿ ನೇಮಿಸಲೇಬಾರದು ಎನ್ನುವ ಪ್ರಬಲ ವಾದವೂ ಇದೆ. ಸಹಕಾರ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಿಂದ ಈ ಹಿಂದೆ ವ್ಯವಸಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರಾಗಿ ನಿಯೋಜನೆಗೊಂಡ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲೇ ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಅತಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಸಂಕಷ್ಟಗಳನ್ನು ಅನುಭವಿಸಿದ ಉದಾಹರಣೆಗಳಿವೆ. ಹಾಲು ಮತ್ತು ತುಪ್ಪದ ಕೊರತೆಯ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ಸಹ ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಯಾಗಿದ್ದವು. ತಪ್ಪದ ಹಾರತಿಯ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ಸಹ ಸೃಷ್ಟಯಾಗುವುದೆ, 75 ರಕ್ಷ ಲೀಟರ್ ಹಾಲ ಉತ್ಪಾದನೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲೂ ಸಮರ್ಪಕವಾಗಿ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರಿಗೆ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಅಗಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಸಹಕಾರ ಇರಾವೆಯ ಎಂ.ಡಿ. ಇದ್ದಾಗಲೇ ಖಾಸಗ ಸಹಭಾಗಿತ್ವದಲ್ಲಿ (ಪಿ.ಪಿ.) ಹಲವು ಪ್ರಾಪಿಕ್ಕೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಬಾಲನೆ ನೀಡಿ ಬಲಿಷ್ಠ ವೃಕ್ತಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಧಾರೆ ಎರೆದುಕೊಡಲಾಯಿತು ಎನ್ನುವ ಆರೋಪ ಸಂವರ್ಣಕರ್ತಿಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ ಚಟ್ಟು 19 ಲಕ್ಷ ಲೀಟರ್ ಹಾಲನ್ನು ಪುಡಿಯಾಗಿ ಪರಿವರ್ತಿಸುವ ಘಟಕಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಿದೆ. ವೃದ್ಧಯಾಗ ಪರಿಚಾಸವ ಭಾರ್ವಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪನ್ನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಪರಿಚರ್ತಿಸುವ ಸಂಸ್ಕರಣಾ ಘಟಕವನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಆದರೂ, ಬೆಂಗಕೂರು ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ ವತಿಯೆಂದ ಕನಕಪುರದಲ್ಲಿ 6 ಲಕ್ಷ ಲೀಟರ್ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯದ ಹಾಲಿನ ಪುಡಿ ತಯಾರಿಸುವ ಘಟಕ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸುವ ಯೋಜನೆ ಜಾರಿಯಲ್ಲಿದೆ. ಇದೇ ರೀತಿ ಚನ್ನರಾಯಪಟ್ಟಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಘಟಕವಿದ್ದರೂ ಹಾಸನದಲ್ಲಿ ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಘಟಕ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಕೆಎಂಎಫ್ನ ಚಲ್ಲಘಟ್ಟ ಜಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ಥಾನಸಂಗದ. ತುಂಬಹನ ಪಲ್ಪಕ್ಕ ಬಾಗುವಲ್ಲ ಬೆಣ್ಣೆಯನ್ನು 'ಡಿಪ್ಟೀಟ್' ಮಾಡುವ ಯೋಜನೆಗೆ ಚಾಲನೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಬೆಣ್ಣೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿಯಾಗಿ ಉಳಿಯವುದೇ ಇಲ್ಲ. ಹೀಗಿದ್ದರೂ, ಈ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಅಗತ್ತತೆ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಪ್ರತ್ಯೆಗಳು ಮಾಡಿವೆ. ಕೊಂಎಫ್ ಘಟಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲೇ ಪಶು ಅಹಾರ ತಯಾಲಿಸುವ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯ ಘಟಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲೇ ಪಶು ಅಹಾರ ತಯಾಲಿಸುವ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯ ಸಾವರ್ಣ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಸಹಭಾಗಿಕ್ಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆ.ಆರ್. ಪೇಟೆ ಮತ್ತು ಅರಕಲಗೂಡಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊಸದಾಗಿ ಪಶು ಆಹಾರ ತಯಾರಿಕ ಘಟಕವನ್ನು ಸಹ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಗುಜರಾತ್ ನ ಅಮೂಲ್, ತೆಲಂಗಾಣದ ಹೆರಿಟೇಜ್

ಗುಜರಾತ್ ನ ಅಮೂಲ್, ತೆಲಂಗಾಣದ ಹೆರುಟೀಬ್ ಮತ್ತು ದೊಡ್ಡ ಪಮಿಳುನಾಡಿನ ಆರೋಕ್ಕ ಹಾಲು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದಲ್ಲಿ 'ನಂದಿನಿ' ಈ ತ್ವರ್ತಜ ನಿನಮಿಯಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಪ್ರತಿ ನಿಷ್ಕ 2 ಲಕ್ಷ ಲೀಟರ್ಗಿಕು ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಹಾಲು ಪೂರೈಕೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಅತಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಬೇಡಿಕೆ ಇರುವ ಸ್ಥರ್ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ದೊರೆಯುವ ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ಹೆರುಟೀಬ್, ಅರೋಕ್ಕ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಮುಂತಾದ ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ಹೆರುಟೀಬ್, ಅರೋಕ್ಕ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಮುಂತಾದ ಅನೆಗಾಗಿ ಡೇರಿಗಳು ಬಳಸಿಕೊಂಡು, ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಯನ್ನು ಆಕ್ರಮಿಸುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಈ ಬೇಡಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಸಾಮಗಟ್ಟಿ ನಂದಿನಿಯ ಪಾರುಪತ್ರ ಉಳಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುನ ಸಾಮಗಟ್ಟಿ ನಂದಿನಿಯ ಪಾರುಪತ್ರ ಉಳಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುನ ಸಾಮಗಟ್ಟ ನಂದಿನಿಯ ಪಾರುಪತ್ರ ಉಳಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಾಗಿದೆ.

> ದಿ.ಎಂ. ಕುರ್ಕೆ ಪ್ರಶಾಂತ್, ಪಂತೋಷ ಚಿನಗುದ್ದಿ, ಅಮ್ಮ ತ ಕಿರಣ ಮೋಹನ್ ಸಿ. ಕುಮಾರ

Source: Prajavani, p.01-06, Feb.18, 2024

The possibility of the control of th

Though a traditional crop in Karnataka, several myths abound millets — they are not tasty, they're costly, and hard to digest — hindering its adoption by the multitude. Yet, ever since the UN tagged 2023 as the International Year of Millets', there has been a renewed interest in the ancient

grain. TOI catches up with a few who have incorporated millets in their daily diet, and some experts who say its adoption is picking up pace

veni.N@timesgroup.com

ood aggregator Swiggy saw an exceptional growth of 124% in orders for millet-based dishes in 2023, the 'International Year of Millets'. It was also the year when the G20 summit hosted in New Delhi grabbed the world's attention for gastronomic reasons too — chefs in the city literally competed with each other rustling up millet-based idlis, rotis and thalis, softas and risotto, and even desser.

Millets or 'shri anna' have been around for long — way before social media made a 'superfood' trend out of them. Their advantages are plenty: they're a powerhouse of protein, fibre and minerals, they require less water and pesticides to grow, and most importantly, they can be cooked in the most innovative ways. But despite the global push, their adoption has been shockingly slow in India, which tops in millet production globally Unless you're a health nut, or suffer from a disease that requires you to cut down on your gluten consumption, it's unlikely that millets have made their way into your urban diet.

Until the Green Revolution, millets formed 40% of India's overall grain output and were a major part of the diet. The agrir evolution, rather unintentionally, almost obliterated millet production, besides changing food choices of



MAKING THE HARD SWITCH

MAKING THE HARD SWITCH
It has been more than two years since
Geetha Luthiya, a homemaker in the
city has shifted entirely to a millet based
diet. After being diagnosed with Sick
Euthyroid Syndrome (a condition where
bubbles of fluid form in the breast),
Geetha was put on a ketogenic diet for
two months—surviving only on raw or
boiled vegetables — when
she was introduced to
millets. "When I found
out I could eat chapati,
idlis and other dishes
again, but made out of
millets, I immediately
switched to it,"she says.
The change was not easy
though. "Istarted with millet amball (a type of fermented porridge made using ragi). I continued with
it for nearly three months
to build some confidence
about the new diet." he says.
Geetha depends on online recipes
only after that," she says.

only after that," she says.
Geetha depends on online resources
for new recipes. Now she makes chapati,
idli and dosa using millets. "I use all
kinds of millets. When millets become
the key grain of your meals, it's impor-

you should never mix different varieties of millets; before cooking a meal, you must soak the millet overnight." Geetha keeps alternating millets to make her meals tasty: "If I cook 'little millet for lunch today, it will be footail millet tomorow." I'm now pessenching. millet tomorrow. I'm now researching on how to make snacks like *chakli* and *kodubale* using millets," she says. Geetha says it's just a myth that the

kodubale using millets." she says.
Geetha says it's just a myth that the
prep-time for millets is longer. "Be it millets or wheat or rice, there
isn't much difference
in the time it takes to
cook the basic fare."
says Geetha. "We
are so accustomed to
rice and wheat that
none of us really want to
give millets a try despite
their widely-known
health benefits. When
lets to my family and
friends, they said a
big 'no,'' rues Geetha.
Hariram, a techie who
hass successfully incorporated a fullfledged millet meal once a day into his
family's diet, says that all it takes is a
change in mindset. "I happened to taste
a millet dish during one of my jogs on
GKVK campus. I loved it, and since I
was aware of the health benefits of millets, I took some expert help to add it to

BACK ON THE MENU

Chef Vijaya Baskaran, general secretravel of the transition of the transition without much frown."

BACK ON THE MENU

Chef Vijaya Baskaran, general secretravel of Indian Federation of Culinary
Associations, says he has been curating millet recipes for several hotels and restravel of the transition of the transition of our diet since ancient times, but they took a backseat after the Green Revolution. I hink the International Year of Millets will be remembered as the turning point in the story of millets. Their acceptance has drastically increased since 2023. The says.

Talking about why people find full-fiedged adoption difficult. Vijaya says there are a lot of myths surrounding millets: they're tasteless and bland, they're difficult to cook, among others.

"People are switching to millets slowly but surely. We're noticing the shift as people are now more willing to try millet-based dishes at hotels and restaurants," he says. The challenge, he says, is little to no knowledge about millets and how to cook them the right way causing people to avoid even trying out new recipes at home. "Now there are plenty of value-added millet products available in the market for people to try the grains without going through the whole process of making something from scratch," he says.

Another city-based consulting chef says that over the years, the acceptance of millets has drastically gone up. "The past few years, I have incorporated a vast variety of willet dishes in menus everywhere from top hotels to local restaurants in the city To truly see a change in the market, we'll have to give it some time to let people get accustomed to it. The demand, in fact, has increased over the years, the says.

AMILLET ECOSYSTEM

The Carrier of the contract of the contract of Gandine trainsition and the care and Gandine Krishi

A MILLET ECOSYSTEM

A MILLET ECOSYSTEM
The 'LRigu' millet cafe at Gandhi Krishi Vigyana Kendra (GKVK) campus caters to a range of people—students and faculty, morning walkers, joggers, legal and medical professionals, and athletes frequent the cafe that opened in November last year. 'It's only been a few months now, but we get a large number of visitors. And to my knowledge, we are the only ones to have set up a millets cafe on government property.' says Srinivas G V, director of Beam Foods, a millet based kitchen that runs the cafe.

Ashwathy Das, key resource person with Beam Foods, says the primary goal of 'LRigu' is to introduce millets to the public and undoing the myth that millets are tasteless. 'LRigu' sells millets based breakfast items like bist bele bhath,

sweet and kara pongal, puliyogare, ke-sari bhath, millet protein dosa, millet puri, millet puff chaat, millet crunchies chaat, banana smoothie, millet coffee smoothie, millet choco malt, and millet sprouted malt

PACKAGING IS KY
Attractive packaging plays a major role
in promoting millets, just like any other
product. "Earlier, millet packets available in the market used to look very plain
and simple. But nowadays, the packets
are colourful and creative...t catches
people's eye," says chef Vijaya Baskaran.

THE KARNATAKA STORY

THE KARNATAKA STORY
KARNATAKA SI sib third largest producer of millets in India. Ragi and jowar,
cultivated extensively in the state,
inspire two signature eats of Karnataka cuisine—the 'ragi mudde' and
'jolad roti'. Nucchu, a form of upma
made from jowar, is quite popular in
north Karnataka. Dr Deepak Ganga,

a gastroenterology consultant at Kauvery Hospital, says there are very few families in Karnataka who follow a traditional diet, and such families still consume ragi as primary grain. "After the Green Revolution, a fast moving and busy lifestyle has stopped people from consuming traditional grains of the state ...unless one becomes super health conscious. However, we haven't lost the hold on production and consumption of our traditional millets."

MILLETS ON MIDDAY MEAL?

MILETS ON MIDDAY MEAL?
At the International Millets Trade Fair held in Bengaluru in January, chief minister Siddaramaiah announced that the gott will introduce millets at staterun food subsidization programme Indira Canteens, and for midday meals at schools so that "children can be healthy and strong". Since taste is oftentimes acquired, introducing children to millets at a young age could make it easier for them to make it a part of their daily diet.

FARM TO KITCHEN: KNOW YOUR MILLETS

• Millets are gluten-free, highly nutritious and rich in dietary fibre, making them easy for the body to absorb

SOAK BEFORE USE

They have a high content of protein, essential fatty acids, dietary fibre, B-vitamins and minerals, such as calcium, rion, zinc, potassium and magnesium

TOP PRODUCER

India is the largest producer of mil-lets accounting for about 41% of the world production in 2020 and 83% of Asia's millet cropping area. India produces around 12 million MT (metric tonnes) of millets annually, according to ministry of agricul-ture and farmers welfare data. In India, millets have been an integral part of tribal food in the states of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Inarkhand, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Uttarakhand T TYPES OF MILLETS

MAJOR: The major millets include sorghum (jowar) and pearl millet (bajra)

mandua), foxtail millet (kangni/Italian millet), little millet (kutki), kodo millet, barn yard millet (sawan/jhangora), proso millet (cheena/com-mon millet), and brown top millet (korale)

SOAK BEFORE US
There's a reason why millets need to be soaked before use. "Soaking (overnight) is the primary
and major pre-dressing
activity one should do
before cooking millets.
Unsoaked millets can
release phytic acid while
cooking, and it would hinder
absorption of other nutrients. Consuming anything in excess is unhealthy,"
says Dr Decpak Ganga, gastroenterology
and interventional endoscopy consultant at Kauvery Hospital, Marathaballi,
"Difficulty in digestion and issues with
constigation are the major myths
surrounding millets. In fact, millets
averaged and the content of the content have a good amount of fiber content which will help in easy bowel movement," he adds

A HEALTHY PORTION

A HEALTHY PORTION

CIMCRAtional institute of Nutrition says the quantity of millet should be around 33% of the total cereal consumption during the day. For example, a person with a sedentary list of the protion of millets of cereals, including nutri-cereals (millets), daily. So, the protion of millets would be about 1/2rd or 33% (99-100) of millets per millets and of the recommended quantity.

day) of the recommended quantity

NORmillet (ragl/
foxtall millet, mil

MOST SEARCHED

Swiggy reports 124% growth in orders for millet-based dishes on 'Guiltfree' and a 38% increase in search queries for the same in 2023

Source: The Times of India, p.2, Feb. 19, 2024

DISGRUNTLED LOT Ryots Launch Protests, Say Budget Has Nothing For Them | Nearly ₹1

Farmers' anger leaves Cong, BJP in muddle over election strategy

BV.Shivashankar@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: With farmers in Karnataka and in several north Indian states on the war path, both Congress and BJP are at a loss at devising an effective strategy for the Lok Sabha elections.

Hours after chief minister Siddaramaiah presented his budget, farmer organisations in Karnataka kicked off an agitation claiming the budget had little for them and "nothing" to alleviate their distress from drought.

Members of Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha (KPRS) and Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) held protests in all 236 drought-hit

EYE ON LS POLLS

taluks on Friday even as Siddaramaiah was reading out his budget proposals. Some farmers later gheraoed agriculture minister N Chaluvarayaswamy in Bengaluru.

"Both the Karnataka and central govts are behaving as if there is no drought in the state," said GC Bayya Reddy, KPRS president. "While the state budget has not even mentioned drought, the Union government has been indifferent to our distress and has not granted drought relief from NDRF (National

TAKING EFFORTS TO REDUCE GRAFT: CM

Bengaluru: Chief minis-ter Siddaramaiah said his govt was taking efforts to reduce, if not eradicate, corruption and that his govt has revised some estimates for projects being executed by contractors. "Who said there is no corruption? We are making efforts to see that corruption is reduced," he said. He also criticised the Centre for failing to release funds to Karnataka, especially for drought relief. "Farmers are angry with BJP. We presented two memoranda to Union ministers in the past five months, but we have not got even a rupee till now. Who do we turn to?" he asked.



NEED RELIEF: A group of farmers met chief minister Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru on Sunday and urged him to announce a loan waiver scheme

Disaster Response Fund)." HR Basavarajappa, KRRS president, said farmer or-

president, said farmer organisations had requested Siddaramaiah to waive crop loans, but there was no mention of it in his budget.

Reddy said all farmers organisations will meet this week and plan agitations in all villages. "This is the right time to put pressure on both parties. They should roll out relief measures before asking for votes from farmers," said Reddy.

NDRF norms prescribe input subsidy (compensation for crop loss) at Rs 8,500 per hectare in rainfed areas and Rs 17,000 per hectare if the land is irrigated. But drought-affected farmers are seeking Rs 25,000 per hectare.

While the BJP-led central govt has not released funds despite several requests from the state govt — a central inter-ministerial team had also assessed the situation last year — the Congress-led state govt has granted compensation of Rs 2,000 to some 32 lakh distressed farmers.

Both Congress and BJP are trying to turn the scenario

into an election issue by blaming each other. Congress has already launched a campaign highlighting the "injustice meted out by the Centre to Karnataka" which will be their main election theme.

"It is the Centre's duty to grant relief from NDRR" said Chaluvarayaswamy. "We will do our best to help our farmers. I will request the CM to release the second instalment of relief, but we appeal to farmers to punish BJP."

On the other hand, BJP functionaries said they will reach out to farmers with the message that the Congress govt has not granted drought relief because it has mishandled the state's finances and emptied the exchequer.

"While govts in all drought-hit states have granted drought relief without depending on the Centre, the Karnataka government has failed to do so," said BY Vijayendra, BJP state president.

Vijayendra, who was in Delhi to attend BJP's national executive meeting, apprised central functionaries of the political scenario in Karnataka. He said central BJP functionaries will begin visiting Karnataka soon. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to visit Bengaluru this week and make a significant announcement.

Source: The Times of India, p.4, Feb. 19, 2024

Farmers reject govt offer, to go ahead with Delhi march

AJITH ATHRADY NEW DELHI, DHNS

The protesting farmers on Monday rejected the Union government's proposal to buy pulses, maize, and cotton at minimum support prices (MSP) and announced they would go head with their planned 'Delhi Chalo' march on February 21.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) dismissed the offer and insisted on bringing in a law to give guaranteed MSP.

"After discussion with both forums, it has been decided that there is nothing in the government's proposal...This is not in favour of farmers. We reject it," farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal told the media.

The central point of contention remains the demand for MSP on all 23 crops, as emphasised by the farmers. The proposed government plan included the purchase of pulses, maize and cotton crops at MSP for five years after entering into an agreement with farmers.

SKM, which led the 2020-21 stir, dismissed the offer, saying it sought to "divert and dilute" the farmers' demand for MSP. The SKM insisted on nothing less than the 'C-2 plus 50%' formula for MSP, as recom-



Farmer leaders Sarwan Singh Pandher and Jagjit Singh Dallewal address reporters in Patiala, Punjab, on Monday, PTI



mended in the Swaminathan Commission report.

Union Minister for Agriculture Arjun Munda, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Raiheld the fourth round of talks with farmer leaders. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann was also present during the talks.

A proposal was discussed in which the government agencies like NCCF (National Cooperative Consumers Federation) and NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India) will get into a contract and buy produce pulses -- arhar, tur, masoor and urad, and maize from the farmers on MSP.

"Similarly, we proposed that the Cotton Corporation of India will enter into a five-year agreement with farmers to buy cotton crops at MSP. We believe that cotton should be revived in Punjab," Goyal said. The meeting started on Sunday night and was held for more than five hours.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.1, Feb, 20, 2024

ಕೊಬ್ಬರಿಗೆ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿಲ್ಲ ಕೇಂದ್ರದ ಬೆಂಬಲ!

ನಾಲ್ಕೇ ಬೆಳೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ। ಇದು ರೈತರ ಒಗ್ಗಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ತೊಡಕು

ಶತಿದರ್ ಎಸ್.ದೋಣಿಹಕು ತುಮಕೂರು

shashidara.ds@timesgroup.com ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಕೊಬ್ಬರಿ ಬೆಳೆಗಾರರ ಬಹು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಬೇಡಿಕೆಯಾದ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಬ್ಬರಿ ಖರೀದಿಸುವ ವಿಚಾರ ದಲ್ಲಿ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಸಂಸದರು ಚಕಾರ ಎತ್ತದಿರು ವುದಕೆ ರೈತರು ಬೇಸರ ಹೊರಹಾಕಿದಾರೆ.

ಚಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಖರೀದಿಸುವ ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾಪ ಮುಂದಿಟ್ಟಿರುವ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಸರಕಾರ, ಕಾರ್ಪೋರೇಷನ್ ಆಫ್ ಇಂಡಿಯಾ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಕೃಷಿ ಆರ್ಥಿಕತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ವಹಿಸುವ ಕೊಬ್ಬರಿಯನ್ನು ನಿರ್ಲಕಿಸಿದೆ. ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಘೋಷಣೆ ವಿಷಯ ದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಸರಕಾರ ಕೆಲವೇ ನಿರ್ಲಕ್ಷಕ್ಕೊಳಗಾಗಿವೆ. ಬೆಳೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪರಿಗಣಸುವ ಮೂಲಕ, **ರಾಜ್ಯದ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಅಸ** ರೈತರ ಒಗ್ಗಟ್ಟನ್ನು ಮುರಿ ಯುತ್ತಿದೆ ಆನ್ವೆದಾತರ ವಲಯದ ಆತಂಕವಾಗಿದೆ. ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ 12 ಬೇಡಿಕೆಗಳ ಈಡೇರಿಕೆಗೆ ಆಗ್ರಹಿಸಿ ಹೊಸದಿಲ್ಲಿ ಗಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರತಿಭಟನೆ ನಡೆಸಯುತ್ತಿದೆ. ರೈತರ ಮನವೊಲಿಕೆ ಕಾರ್ರವೂ ಸಾಗಿದೆ.

ಗೋಯಲ್, ಪಿಯೂಪ್ ''ತೊಗರಿ, ಉದ್ದು ಜೋಳ ಹಾಗೂ ಹತ್ತಿಯನ್ನು 5 ವರ್ಷ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಖರೀದಿಸಲು ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ (ಎನ್ಸ್ ಸಿಎಫ್), ಭಾರತೀಯ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಕೃಷಿ ಸಹಕಾರಿ ತೊಗರಿ, ಉದ್ಪು ಮೆಕ್ಕೆ ಜೋಳ ಹಾಗೂ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ (ನಾಫೆಡ್) ಹತ್ತಿಯನ್ನು 5 ವರ್ಷ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಬೆಂಬಲ ರೈತರೊಂದಿಗೆ ಒಪ್ಪಂದ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಿದೆ. ಹತಿ ಬೆಳೆ ಖರೀದಿ ಮಾಡಲು ಕಾಟನ್

ರಾಜ್ಯದ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಅನ್ಯಾಯ

(ಸಿಸಿಐ)

ಬೆಳೆಗಳು

ರಾಜ್ಯ ಉಂಡೆ ಕೊಬ್ಬರಿಗೆ ಹೆಸರುವಾಸಿ. ನೀಡುವಂತೆ ಕಲತರು ನಾಡು ತುಮಕೂರು ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ರಾಜ್ಯಾದ್ಯಂತ ತೆಂಗು ಬೆಳೆಗಾರರು ಹಲವು ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಮನವಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಪ್ರಮುಖವಾಗಿ ತುಮಕೂರು. ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗ, ಹಾಸನ, ಚಾಮರಾಜನಗರ,

ಕೇಂದ್ರದಿಂದ



ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಕನ್ನಡ, ರಾಮನಗರ, ಚಿಕಮಗಳೂರು, ಮೆಸೂರು ಸೇರಿ 9 ಜಿಲೆಗಳಲಿ 2022-23ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನಲಿ ಹೆಕ್ಕೇರ್ 6,45.664 28,71,017 ಮೆಟ್ರಿಕ್ ಟನ್ ತೆಂಗು ಬೆಳೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಹೀಗೆ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಕೃಷಿ ಆರ್ಥಿಕತೆಯ ಆಧಾರ ತೆಂಗಾಗಿದೆ. ಇದನ್ನು ಕೇಂದ್ರ 'ಬೆಂಬಲ' ಪಟ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ಹೊರಗಿಟ್ಟು ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾವನೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಿರುವುದನ್ನು ರೆತರು ಖಂಡಿಸಿದಾರೆ.

ಎಂಎಸ್ಪಿಯಿಂದ ಕೊಬರಿ ಹೊರಗಿಟ್ಟಿರುವುದು ಖಂಡನೀಯ. ನಾಲ್ಕು ಬೆಳೆ ಹೊರಸುಪಡಿಸಿ ಉಳಿದ ಬೆಳೆಗಳನು ನಿರ್ಲಕ್ಷಿಸಿ ರುವುದು ರೈತರ ಒಗ್ಗಟ್ಟನ್ನು ಮುರಿಯುವುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಕೊಬ್ಬರಿಗೆ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ನೀಡಲೇ ಬೇಕು. -ಎಂ.ನಾಗೇಶ್ ರೈತ ಬಿಳಿಗೆರೆ ಪಾಳ್ಯ, ತಿಪಟೂರು

ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಸೇರಿ 156 ಬೆಳೆಗೆ ಎಂಎಸ್ಪಿ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು: ಭತ್ತ, ತೊಗರಿ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ 24 ಬೆಳೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಅದೇ ರೀತಿ ಈರುಳಿ . ಟೊಮೆಟೊ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ರೆತರು ಬೆಳೆಯುವ 156 ಬೆಳೆಗಳಿಗೂ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿ ಖಾತ್ರಿ ಕಾನೂನು ಜಾರಿಗೆ ತರಬೇಕು ಎಂದು ಸಂಯುಕ್ತ ಕಿಸಾನ್ ಮೋರ್ಚಾ (ರಾಜಕೀಯೇತರ) ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಭಾರತ ರಾಜ್ಯಗಳ ಸಂಚಾಲಕರಾದ ಕುರುಬೂರು ಒತ್ತಾಯಿಸಿದರು

ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ ರಾಗಿ, ಭತ್ತ, ಜೋಳ, ಹೆಸರುಕಾಳು, ಶೇಂಗಾ, ಶೊಗರಿ, ಹತ್ತಿ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ 24 ಬೆಳೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಕನಿಷ್ಣ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ನಿಗದಿ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ರೈತರು ಬೆಳೆಯುವ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಬೆಳೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಉತ್ಪಾದನಾ ವೆಚ್ಚ ಏರಿಕೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಬೆಲೆಯಿಲ್ಲದೆ ತೀವ್ರ ನಷ್ಟ ಅನುಭವಿಸುವಂತಾಗಿದೆ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ, ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಸರಕಾರ ರೈತರು ಬೆಳೆಯುವ ಭತ್ತ, ಬೇಳೆಯಂತಹ ಧಾನ್ಯಗಳ ಜತೆಗೆ ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ, ಟೊಮೇಟೊದಂತಹ 156 ಬೆಳೆಗಳಿಗೂ ಉತ್ಪಾದನಾ ವೆಚ್ಚಕ್ಕೆ ಅನುಗುಣವಾಗಿ ವೈಜ್ಞಾನಿಕ ರೀತಿ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿ, ಖಾತ್ರಿ ಕಾನೂನು ಜಾರಿಗೆ ತರಬೇಕು," ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು.

Source: Vijayakarnataka, p.12, Feb.20, 2024

NEW SPROUTS

Mustard adds spice to K'taka rice bowl in rabi season

VITTAL SHASTRI KALABURAGI, DHNS

ustard, grown mainly in north and eastern India, has ▲ entered Karnataka in a big way with paddy farmers in the Tungabhadra command area cultivating it as the second crop (rabi crop). According to agriculture department data, the edible oil crop is now grown on around 7,000 hectares in Koppal district and has penetrated Raichur and Ballari districts as well.

Farmers opted for this crop as they did not get water from the reservoir to grow a second paddy crop following monsoon failure last year.

While paddy coverage is around 49,000 hectares in Koppal district, it is grown only on 7,000 hectares in the rabi season with borewell water. Tungabhadra reservoir has a command area of 9.26 lakh acres.

Farmers get two to three quintals of mustard per acre and the prevailing rate is around Rs 8,000 a quintal. The average expenditure is Rs 3,000 an acre for seeds and pesticides. Profits from mustard are expected to be slightly higher than paddy, which is Rs 15,000-Rs 20,000 an acre.

"We experimented with mustard four years ago when officials did not release water during the rabi season." said Karatagi Ramanna, who has



Mustard crop grown in Karatagi hobli of Koppal district.

cultivated the crop on seven acres instead of paddy this year. "We are expecting Rs 60,000-Rs 70,000 if the yield is good," he said.

He expects this revenue to help him meet the expenditure on cultivating the next paddy crop (khariff).

Koppal Agriculture Department joint director Rudreshappa said mustard is a 60-70 day duration crop. He said mustard is easy to sow as farmers just sprinkle the seeds on the residue moisture in their land.

"We had conducted a demonstration with a variety of mustard from Rajasthan a few years ago. Farmers grow dhaincha, pille pesaru and sunhemp during distress to increase land fertility and to use it as cattle fodder. Now, more farmers are opting for mustard to earn profits," said Gangavati Krishi Vigyan Kendra head and senior scientist Raghavendra Yaligar, who is also the director of Rapeseed and Mustard Research.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.1, Feb, 21, 2024

Intense heat, low soil moisture spell doom for Bagalkot's grape growers

A few farmers trying in vain to save crops with tanker water

JAMKHANDI (BAGALKOT DISTRICT), DHNS

The commercial crops of the taluk - grapes and pomegranate - are wilting due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures and humidity and low and depleting soil moisture. A few farmers are trying in vain to save crops with tanker water.

"Two acres of grape crop has wilted due to lack of moisture. Two borewells in the farm have dried up. I had spent Rs 8 lakh three years back for the crop. All my efforts to save the crop have gone to waste. Crops in the neighbouring farms too

have wilted. The story of many farmers in the district is no different," Anand Desai, a farmer from Savalagi, poured out his woes to *DH*.

"The farmers of Gote, Gadyal, Kajibilagi, Kannolli, Tungal-Konnur, Hulyal and surrounding villages in the taluk have lost their crops and mounting debts meant they are in a kneedeep crisis. The authorities used to release water into the canal every year. But this time, with monsoon playing truant, water didn't flow in the canal and the water table in the region has gone down further," Satish Ainapur, an aggrieved farmer. said.



A vineyard at Savalagi in Jamkhandi taluk of Bagalkot district has dried up completely due to sweltering heat and lack of soil moisture.

"The prices of grapes and raisins have decreased sharply in the last two years. However, the rates of fertiliser and pesticides have doubled. Because of this, the growers are struggling to maintain the vineyards," Ajit Nyamagouda, a grape grower, lamented

Kashinath Byadagi, a grape grower, said the state gov-

ernment should rescue horticulture farmers with a new scheme.

"The farmers would suffer losses for four to five years if the commercial crops like grapes, lemon and pomegranate wilt. The government should bail the farmers out with adequate compensation," he demanded.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3A, Feb, 22, 2024

Decentralisation

Govt. proposes to increase BBMP revenue, decongest traffic

The Budget makes a mention of the much-talked-about tunnel road. To check the feasibility, a small tunnel will be built this year at Hebbal junction. The revenue target set for this fiscal is ₹4,790 crore. Last year, the collection was ₹3,155 crore

Shreyas H.S. BENGALURU

he 2024-25 Budget presented on Friday has proposed to substantially step up the revenue of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), besides focusing on decongesting Bengaluru's traffic through the implementation of big-ticket projects. The State government has allocated ₹3,000 crore in the outlay for special infrastructure projects in Bengaluru.

The BBMP has successively failed to tap into the city's fullest revenue potential, which the government has proposed to fix. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah stated that in the next fiscal (2024-25), tax collection is expected to reach ₹6,000 crore.

The Budget said this fiscal, the civic body has collected ₹4,300 crore, which is ₹1,000 crore more than the previous financial year's collection.

The revenue target set for this fiscal is ₹4,790 crore. Last year, the BBMP's collection stood at ₹3,155 crore. The budget



The Budget has proposed to mobilise additional non-tax revenue of ₹2,000 crore through a revised advertisement policy and premium floor area ratio policy. FILE PHOTO

has also proposed to mobilise additional non-tax revenue of ₹2,000 crore through a revised advertisement policy and premium floor area ratio (FAR)

Decongesting traffic

The other focus area is traffic management. The budget has proposed the much-talked-about tunnel road. Mr. Siddaramaiah "The State government has decided to resolve traffic congestion in the city by constructing underground tunnels." To check the feasibility, a small tunnel will be constructed this year at Hebbal junction, where there is high traffic congestion. However, there is no mention in the budget about the total distance of the tunnel.

The budget has also proposed the commencement of work on the 73 km Bengaluru Business Corridor

(BBC), which was earlier known as Peripheral Ring Road (PRR). The cost of the project is estimated at ₹27,000 crore and will be implemented under the Public Private Partnership model. A request for proposal has already been invited for the project, and land has already been acquired.

It is also proposed to build an additional 100 km all-weather road by utilising space available within the canal buffer zone. Under this scheme, a 100 km road is being developed,

The Chief Minister said about ₹1,700 crore has been allocated for the white-topping of several roads in the Central Business District (CBD). The State government will release about ₹900 crore for this, and the BBMP should fund the rest.

Under Sugama Sanchara - Brand Bengaluru, the BBMP is in consultation with an expert committee and based on the committee's report, measures will be taken to ease traffic congestion in the city, he said.

Solar parks

Among the other projects listed was a 250-meterhigh sky deck for which internationally renowned architects have been invited to prepare a novel design. But there is no allocation made for the project.

On the other hand, captive solar parks will be established in various institutions under the Urban Development Department, such as BBMP, BMRCL, BWSSB and BDA.

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

BBMP gets Rs 3,000 cr, but focus is on mobilising funds

NAVEEN MENEZES BENGALURU, DHNS

he BBMP's over dependence on the government for fund-ing seems to have taken a hit as Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has kicked the ball back on the civic

resources.
Siddaramaiah said the BBMP is taking many initiatives to consolidate tax and non-tax resources.
Wear headed towards record tax collections of Rs 4,300 crore during 2023-24. This is Rs,1000 crore more than the previous year," he said. "Our taxcollection is expected to reach Rs,6,000 crore in the year 2024-25 which will be achieved by preventing leakages in the tax collection is yestern."

floor area ratio (FAIN) possible Bengaluru.
"Starting this year, additional non-tax resources of Rs 2,000 crore will be mobilized by implementing these two policies," Siddaranaiah said.

Rs 3,000 crore Rs 1,435 crore structure Rs 400 crore RS 35 Crore Bengaluru Smart City

junction, construction of all-weath- er road by utilizing space availa-

ble within the canal buffer zone, a 250-meter skydeck and 75-kmlong peripheral ring road (PRR). Officials said the allocation of Rs 3,000 crore – which is as same as the BBMP received last year – will be used both for clearing the old bills of projects approved by the government as well as new works. The Bengaluru Solid Waser Man The Bengaluru Solid Waser Man of BBMP, had sought Rs 600 crore in the state budget but the new-ly-formed entity has not received

special grants.
Siddaramaiah proposed endto-end waste management from
households to the waste processing
centres. "The BBMP is procuring
50 to 100 acres of lands at four places
for processing of waste and creation of scientific landfill. This will
solve the problem of landfills in the
tily for the next 30 years, "he said.
No funds were however earmarked
for this project which is eco-sensitive and runs against multiple court
and tribunal orders.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.4, Feb, 17, 2024

BBMP elections, implementation of BMLTA missed

CIVIC

HE Karnataka Budget 2024-25, tabled in the state legislature, offers a glimpse into how the Karnataka government thinks about Bengaluru, the biggest economic engine. The

about Bengaluru, the biggest economic engine. The BBMP budget, which will come soon, will offer more insights into what's in store for our city, but the state budget does set the direction.

The Shakti scheme has infused new energy into BMTC and, even more importantly, the priority the organisation gets from the state government in terms of fund allocation. With 42 lakh daily commuters, BMTC is the lifeline of our city and deserves all the financial support from the state government. 2,154 new buses is the kind of news bus advocates have been waiting to hear for decades.

2023 has been a landmark year for Bengaluru in terms of fighting traffic congestion. With the Shakti and Purple line extension to Metro, daily commuters on public transport increased by nearly 30% – 2024 looks promising as the yellow line

as the yellow line becomes operational and new buses join the fleet. The government should have taken bold steps to further strengthen public transport, instead of also trying to build a tunnel which is likely to take a long time with limited impact. Though mobility science and experience from other cities established that "move people, not ve-hicles" must be the guiding principle of any city, our policymakers continue to spend precious public mon-ey on archaic ideas. The fact that no new flyovers have been proposed is a positive sign, while the sheer amount of money poured into white topping makes little sense when so many outer areas have no roads to begin with.

Lack of coordinated plan-

Lack of coordinated planning and execution across transport agencies is a well-known problem in Bengaluru, and yet, the BMLTA makes no mention while some expert organisations are seen as giving us solutions. BMLTA is critical for

Brand Bengaluru and I urge the government to establish BMLTA without further delay.

The record tax collection in Bengaluru is a positive sign of improved local governance. BBMP must be commended for addressing the complex issues of tax collection to a great extent. Both state and union governments benefit enormously from all the taxes paid by citizens of Bengaluru, but the BBMP is often found without money to run the city and looks for grants from the state. The only long-term solution for this is the State Finance Commission. As Karnataka raised the issues of devolution formula, rightly so, from the Centre to state, it must also look at state finances and how they are devolved to cities and panchavats.

Karnataka has been a role model for decentralisation, but we haven't moved in that direction in the recent decades. Developing other cities finds

other cities finds prominent mention in the budget, which is welcome, but unrealistic without devolving funds and functionaries to district and city level. Building infrastructure is important, but equally important is the politi-



CIVIC ACTIVIST

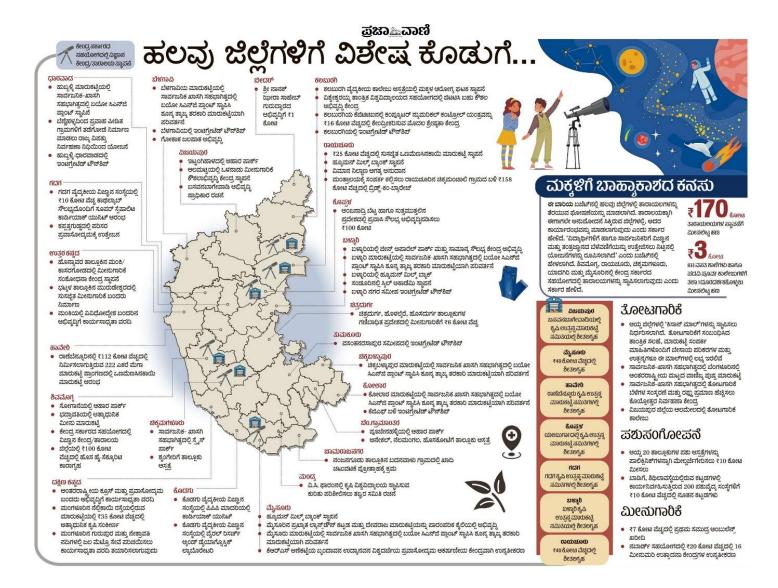
cal and economic empowerment of districts and cities.

A positive development in terms of governance is the formation of a Climate Change Management division in the BBMP with a broader jurisdiction. As Bengaluru becomes India's third city to adopt a Climate Action Plan, the governance structures to deliver on that action plan become critical. Public participation, a forgotten subject, finds mention in this context. Without public participation at the grassroots, our city cannot fight the many challenges in preserving the character of our city represented by our lakes, parks and green cover.

Though it finds zero men-

Though it finds zero mention in the budget, I certainly hope the government will hold elections to the BBMP at the earliest, without which there is no public scrutiny or accountability. We need our corporators and mayor (2.5-year tenure) to take office as soon as possible

Source: The New Indian Express, p.2, Feb, 17, 2024



Source: Prajavani, p.09, Feb.17, 2024

27 revenue officers face probe for being 'lenient'

Action for going 'soft' on top property tax defaulters

BENGALURU, DHNS

Por the first time, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is going after revenue officers who allegedly went soft on top property tax defaulters in their respective zones.

Launching a Departmental Enquiry (DE) against 27 revenue officers, the civic body has issued notices to them, asking to explain why action should not be taken against them.

The notice from the BB-MP's administrative division has warned Revenue Officers (ROs) and Assistant Revenue Officers (AROs) of penalties if they fail to respond within 15 days.

days.

The action follows after the BBMP top brass found that the errant officials had failed to act on instructions from the head office to inspect buildings

to review the Self-Assessment Scheme (SAS), prepare a spreadsheet of action taken, and recover dues from the top 50 defaulters.

The BBMP has also devised a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for sealing and seizing both commercial and non-commercial properties, with sub-divisional offices tasked with assembling teams to enforce the orders.

Rattled by the action, the revenue officers, through the Bruhat Bengaluru Officers and Employees Union, have urged the BBMP chief commissioner to drop the action against them, especially since they are overburdened with additional responsibilities

responsibilities.
"In 2022-23, the BBMP collected property tax of Rs 3,339 crore. So far, the collection has crossed Rs 3,598 crore, which is an increase of Rs 258 crore. All this is being done in addition to their routine work such as khata-related services, and election work, among others. Additional responsibilities are adding to the burden of revenue officers, who have experienced stress and harassment," the association said, urging the BBMP to dropall the charges.

HC stays BBMP tax notices to pvt firm

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka High Court has issued an interim stay order on multiple demand notices issued by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) against Gopalan Enterprises.

Justice S Sunil Dutt Yadav noted that the BBMP chief commissioner mustacknowledge that the requirement for a 50% payment does not arise until an order is passed under Section 144(15)(e) of the BBMP Act.

Gopalan Enterprises contested demand notices dated October 31, 2023, which requested payment of Rs 19.69 crore in differential property tax along with penalties and interest from 2008-09 to 2022-23.

A second notice was issued on January 22, 2024, and demanded Rs 29.54 crore for the same period, and a third

The association also threatened to hold an indefinite protest if the



notice followed on February 15, 2024, serving as a reminder for the payment of the differential property tax. The petitioner argued

The petitioner argued that the joint commissioner had previously assessed the property tax and set the rate through an order dated March 20, 2015. The petitioner contended that there were no grounds provided for the reassessment of the property tax fixed on March 20, 2015, which, according to the petitioner, is time-barred as reassessment cannot occur more than five years after

filing tax returns.

Moreover, it was asserted that the principles of natural justice were not followed, and as per Section 144(15)(c) of the BBMP Act, a minimum period of 30 days should have been granted by the BBMP. In granting the interim or-

In granting the interim order, the court noted that the insistence on a 50 per cent deposit, as per the standard operating procedure (SOP), is observed in numerous cases

"The court has observed in this matter as well as in other matters that prima facie, in light of Section 144 (15)(e), 50 per cent has to be deposited at the stage of appeal and such insistence, even at the stage of considering the reply before order under Section 144 (15)(e), does not arise. Such action has to be taken note of appropriately," Justice Yaday said.

"harassment" continues.

Senior BBMP officers said the revenue officers have only

been asked to do their basic work, which is to collect property tax.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.2, Feb, 20, 2024

MARCH EXERCISE

Budget: B'luru civic body to focus on digitising records

NAVEEN MENEZES BENGALURU, DHNS

The BBMP, which is all set to present its annual budget by the first week of March, is likely to focus on digitising all 20 lakh property records and replace the manual khata with e-certificates in the next financial year. Some inputs it received under the 'Brand Bengaluru' programme, such as increasing green cover, promotion of rainwater harvesting etc., will also be included in the budget, officials said.

This is the fourth budget to be presented by senior IAS officers in the absence of an elected council, whose term expired in September 2020.

Engineers of different departments have been asked to suggest an action plan after consulting local legislators, it's learnt. "We had received close to 70,000 inputs under Brand Bengaluru. We will include them in the budget to the extent possible. The broader contours of the report will be submitted to the committee led by former chief secretary BS Patil," BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath said.

Roads, skydecks

New roads in the buffer zones of canals and skydecks to promote tourism are likely to get budgetary grants as the state government did not earmark funds for these projects in the past budget. The civic body may earmark $Rs\,400\,crore\,for\,white-topping\,of\,roads\\ as\,committed\,in\,the\,recently\,approved\\ Rs\,1,200-crore\,action\,plan.$

A major highlight of the budget is likely to be the reforms being taken up by the BBMP's revenue department ever since Munish Moudgil, a 1998-batch IAS officer, took charge as the special commissioner of the section.

Targeting property collection of over Rs 6,000 crore, digitising property records, building an internal tech team, upgrading Sahaaya application etc., are some initiatives in the works.

The BBMP also hopes to increase revenue by Rs 2,000 crore once the state government approves new advertisement and premium floor area ratio (FAR) policies.

Srikanth Narasimhan, founder of Bengaluru Navanirmana Party (BNP), said the way in which the BBMP is drafting the annual budget was wrong.

"Bengaluru has a road network of 14,000 km. Is it possible for an MLA to decide where the funds should be allocated? The government should instead make efforts to hold BBMP elections so that the councillors, ward committee as well as area sabha members can together contribute to the BBMP budget," he said.

"Municipal administration is all about citizens deciding where the funds should be budgeted. The solution lies in holding council elections," he added

Source: Deccan Herald, p.1, Feb, 20, 2024

Having panchayats as self-governing institutions

hree decades have passed since the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments Acts came into effect, which envisaged that local bodies in India would function as institutions of local self government. As a follow up, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was constituted in 2004 to strengthen rural local governments.

When it comes to analysing the status of devolution, it is evident that some States have forged ahead while many lag behind. The commitment of State governments towards decentralisation has been vital in making panchayati raj institutions an effective local governance mechanism at the grass-roots level

governance mechanism at the grass-roots level. The constitutional amendment has set forth specific details on fiscal devolution which includes the generation of own revenues. Emanating from the Central Act, various States Panchayati Raj Acts have made provisions for taxation and collection. Based on the provisions of these Acts, panchayats have made efforts to generate their own resources to the maximum extent. Participatory planning and budgeting were the end result of such interventions by the Ministry.

Ministry.

That "Panchayats earn only 1% of the revenue through taxes", with the rest being raised as grants from the State and Centre was highlighted in a 'Datapoint' (Opinion page, *The Hindu*, February 5, 2024). It specifically points out that 80% of the revenue is from the Centre and 15 % from the States. This is an eye-opener for the proponents of decentralisation as the net result is that the revenue raised by panchayats is meagre even after 30 years of devolution initiatives.

Avenues for own source of revenue

The report of the expert committee constituted by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on own source of revenue (OSR) of rural local bodies elaborates on the details of State Acts that have incorporated tax and non-tax revenue that can be collected and utilised by panchayats. Property tax, cess on land revenue, surcharge on additional stamp duty, tolls, tax on profession, advertisement, user charges for water and sanitation and lighting are



P.P. Balan is Senior Consultant, Ministry of Panchayati Raj

There is a need

and the public on the

significance and

the need for

be able to

panchayats to

survive on their

to educate

elected representatives the major OSRs where panchayats can earn maximum income. Panchayats are expected to establish a conducive environment for taxation by implementing appropriate financial regulations. This includes making decisions regarding the tax and non-tax bases, determining their rates, establishing provisions for periodic revisions, defining exemption areas, and enacting effective tax management and enforcement laws for collection

The huge potential for non-tax revenue includes fees, rent, and income from investment sales and hires charges and receipts. There are also innovative projects that can generate OSR. This covers income from rural business hubs, innovative commercial ventures, renewable energy projects, carbon credits. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds and donations.

The role of gram sabhas

Gram sabhas have a significant role in fostering self-sufficiency and sustainable development at the grass-roots level by leveraging local resources for revenue generation. They can be engaged in planning, decision-making, and implementation of revenue-generating initiatives that range from agriculture and tourism to small-scale industries. They have the authority to impose taxes, fees, and levies, directing the funds towards local development projects, public services, and social welfare programmes. Through transparent financial management and inclusive participation, gram sabhas ensure accountability and foster community trust, ultimately empowering villages to become economically independent and resilient. Thus, gram sabhas need to promote entrepreneurship, and foster partnerships with external stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of revenue generation efforts.

In several States, gram panchayats lack the authority to collect taxes, while in numerous others, intermediate and district panchayats are not delegated the responsibility of tax collection. When gram panchayats collect 89% of own taxes, the intermediate panchayats collect 7% and the

district panchayats a nominal amount of 5%. There is a need to demarcate OSR for the entire three-tier panchayats to ensure equitable sharing. There are several factors behind the general

There are several factors behind the general aversion towards generating own income. With the increase in the allocation of Central Finance Commission (CFC) grants, panchayats are evincing less interest in the collection of OSR. The allocation for rural local bodies from the 10th and 1th CFC was ₹4,380 crore and ₹8,000 crore, respectively. But in the 14th and 15th CFCs there was a huge increase by way of allocating ₹2,00,202 and ₹2,80,733 crore, respectively. The tax collected in 2018-19 was ₹3,12,075 lakh which diminished in 2021-2022 to ₹2,71,386 lakh. The non-tax collected for the same period was ₹2,33,863 lakh and ₹2,09,864 lakh. At one time, panchayats were in competition to raise OSR for their commitment to fulfil basic needs. This has now given place to dependency on grants allocated through central and State finance commissions. Some States have the policy of incentivisation by providing matching grants but which were sparingly implemented. Panchayats also have no need of penalising defaulters as they believe that OSR has not been regarded as an income that is linked with panchayat finance.

Overcoming the dependency syndrome

Despite every enabling factor to raise revenue, panchayats confront several impediments in resource mobilisation: the 'freebie culture' rampant in society is the cause for the antipathy in paying taxes. Elected representatives feel that imposing taxes would alter their popularity adversely. Here, the answer is clear. There is a need to educate elected representatives and the public on the significance of raising revenue to develop panchayats as self-governing institutions. Ultimately, the dependency syndrome for grants has to be minimised and in due course, panchayats will be able to survive on their own resources. Panchayats can only achieve such a state of affairs when there are dedicated efforts in all tiers of governance, which includes even the State and central level.

Source: The Hindu, p. 10, Feb. 21, 2024

BBMP TAXES: NOD FOR BILL TO REDUCE FINES

Govt says Act amended as some provisions hindered levying and collection of property tax

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THE Legislative Assembly on Tuesday passed the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Amendment Bill that reduces fines for non-payment of property and other taxes from 200 to 100%.

The House also passed the Karnataka Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Bill 2024 to provide Floor Area Ratio up to 0.4 times of the land dimension.

Both Bills were passed amid protests by BJP MLAs, who criticised the state government



for not holding a discussion on them.

The government stated that it considered necessary to amend the BBMP Act as some of its provisions hindered levying and collection of property tax, advertisement fee, and recovery of tax and fee arrears.

The Karnataka Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Bill allows levying of premium charges for grant of premium Floor Area Ratio. This means premium Floor Area Ratio can be purchased by builders and developers at a cost of 40% of the guidance value.

The premium charges collected for grant of premium Floor Area Ratio should be deposited under a separate account of the planning authority or the urban local body and the same should be utilised only for land acquisition and public infrastructure. The money should not be used for repair, maintenance or other

miscellaneous work.

Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar said this will help generate more revenue which can be used for Bengaluru's development. Former CM Basavaraj Bommai objected to the amendment and said increasing Floor Area Ratio means more congestion. When there is more pressure on roads, increasing the Floor Area Ratio will add more chaos. This is a money-making Bill. he alleged.

Shivakumar, however, said there is a provision to increase it by 50%. But it has been restricted to 40%.

Source: The New Indian Express, p.4, Feb, 21, 2024

Premium FAR, BBMP property tax bills passed amid ruckus

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Amid an uproar by BJP and JD(S) members, who were demanding suspension of a Ramanagara district police sub-inspector over lawyer protests, the govt pushed through two significant revenue-generating bills in the assembly. Both focus primarily on development in Bengaluru.

The assembly approved a premium floor area ratio (FAR) across the state, allowing homeowners, builders, and developers to acquire additional FAR at a cost equal to 40% of the guidance value.

However, this additional FAR is limited to 0.6 times the permissible FAR statewide. In Bengaluru, the restriction has been limited to 0.4 times permissible FAR.

Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai of BJP criticised the bill, labelling it a "moneyminting" scheme spearheaded by Bengaluru development minister DK Shivakumar. Bommai raised concerns about the potential for chaotic and unplanned urban growth, emphasising the need for adequate infrastructure development alongside such initiatives.

But Shivakumar defended the bill, citing provisions in the 1961 Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act that allowed for allocation of up to 50% of guidance value. He said the govt's decision



MONEYSPINNER? DK
Shivakumar
said the BBMP
Amendment
bill will cut
penalties on
property tax
evasion by
half and will
save
Bengalureans
Rs 2,700 crore

to cap it at 40% shows responsible financial management while directing the extra revenue to city development and infrastructure enhancements

The amendment further dictates that collections through premium FAR must be allocated exclusively for land acquisition and public infrastructure development within the jurisdiction of the respective planning authority or urban local body, with no exemptions granted under section 4 of the KTPP Act.

Shivakumar also introduced—and successfully passed—the BBMP Amendment Bill, which aims to reduce penalty on unpaid property taxes from 200% to 100% of taxes evaded. This penalty applies when the property tax exceeds the remitted amount by more than 5%.

Shivakumar said penalty has been halved, saving Bengalureans Rs 2,700 crore. BBMP will be able to mop up Rs 1,000 crore in penalties. He said the amendment will benefit 13-15 lakh people in Bengaluru including 5.5 lakh taxpayers, 5-7 lakh people outside the property tax bracket and 3 lakh partial property taxpayers.

The bill proposes a special rebate for poorer segments. Govt residential buildings and those in slums are exempt from property tax penalties, as are buildings up to 1,000sq ft which are for own use.

Under the amendment, penalties on residential and mixed-use properties will have to pay penalties only for a maximum period of five years irrespective of the default duration. Interest has been waived for dues beyond five years.

"This is a taxpayer-friendly amendment. We have introduced this bill to help common people though it is a financial burden on the govt," said Shivakumar.

Source: The Times of India, p.4, Feb, 21, 2024

Bengaluru property tax to be based on guidance value

Starting April 1, many properties likely to see tax rise

BENGALURU, DHNS

uidance value will now form the basis for calculating property tax in Bengaluru. The present system of assessment, which classifies properties under different zones (A-E), will be scrapped.

As per the draft notification issued by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) on Tuesday, property tax will be calculated by clubbing two components — the guidance value of the property and the built-up area.

Starting April 1, several immovable properties in Bengaluru will likely see a dramatic jump in annual tax though the increase will be capped at 20% from what owners paid the previous year. The owners will have to pay the difference in the subsequent years until the gap is bridged.

Properties, including flats,

Bill to prevent illegal layouts

To curb illegal registration of properties in urban areas, the Assembly on Wednesday passed a Bill which will do away with the system of 'paper or handwritten khata'. The Bill aims to simplify registration without the physical presence of both parties at sub-registrar offices.

Details on Page 6

have been further classified into tenanted, self-occupied and fully vacant.

Each category has been assigned a different percentage of guidance value. For example, 0.1% of the guidance value is the base rate for a self-occupied property while it will be 0.5% for non-residential buildings.

Owners who put up telecommunication towers, hoardings or electronic devices on their buildings or lands will have to shed Rs 20,000 per year in addition to their property tax.

▶ Property tax, Page 7

Continued..

Bengaluru property tax to be based on guidance value

Property tax, from Page 1

The cost of the built-up area for a residential building has been fixed at Rs 1,500 per square feet with a 3% annual depreciation.

Houses built for the poor by the government and those declared as slums will have an annual composite property tax of Rs 300.

The civic body will not reduce the existing property tax if the new system results in a lower payable property tax.

The notification also empowers the BBMP to increase the tax by 5% on April 1 every year, starting in 2025. As and when there is a revision of the guidance value, it will also apply to property tax.

The BBMP appears to have dropped a bombshell as it published the notification without holding public consultation or training its staff. What's more, it has given the public only 15 days to raise objections as against the standard 30 days.

A senior BBMP official said the notification would come into effect only in the next financial year and there was enough time to train both the staff and create awareness.

"Our purpose is not to collect more taxes but to bring in a simpler and more rational tax

How will it work?

A 2,600 sq ft house constructed on a 1,200 sq ft plot in BTM Layout in 2007 will pay a property tax of Rs 15,462 at a guidance value of Rs 7,874 per square foot. While this will be a 49% increase over last year's property tax, the owner will pay only 20% more.

Similarly, a resident owning a 1,650 sq ft flat in Kodichikkanahalli will pay Rs 6,600 as against Rs 5,600.

system," Munish Moudgil, the BBMP's Special Commissioner for Revenue, told *DH*.

"It's also the Union government's policy that unless the property tax is linked to the guidance value, the BBMP won't get funds under the 15th Finance Commission."

Moudgil said municipal corporations across Karnataka had been charging property tax based on guidance value since 2003.

He insisted that property tax assessment based on zonal classification was "irrational" because houses in the same neighbourhood were classified under different zones.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.1&7, Feb, 22, 2024

ECONOMY

Ahead of LS polls, a welfare-centric State Budget with no new taxes

Nagesh Prabhu

BENGALURU

Projecting the "Karnataka Model" of development as an example, by focusing on the five guarantees that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah promised would ensure positive changes in the lives of crores of people - mainly women and marginalised sections - the State Budget for 2024-25 sought to demonstrate that welfare has the pride of place in the Congress government.

Revenue deficit

Ahead of the Lok Sabha 2024 elections, Mr. Siddaramaiah has not levied any new taxes. The Budget pegged borrowings at ₹1,05,246 crore, which is 28% of the Budget size of ₹3,71,383 crore in

Revenue deficit is expected to touch ₹27,354 crore. Mr. Siddaramaiah, who holds the Finance

Budget at a glance



Gleeful: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah surrounded by legislators after he presented the Budget on Friday.

portfolio, presented his 15th Budget in the Legislative Assembly on Friday which not only provided financial support for five guarantees, aimed

achieving equitable distribution of wealth in society, but also added more schemes for the welfare of women self-help groups (SHGs), gig workers, and anganwadi workers.

Act, 2022

Revenue

₹27,354 cr.

deficit

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 13

RELATED REPORTS ON

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Targeting Centre

In a over a three-hour-long speech replete with criticism of the Centre, Mr. Siddaramaiah defended the five guarantees and hit out at the Central government's "anti-people" policies for the last one decade, which, he said, had led to widening inequality, concentration of wealth in few hands, and "crony capitalism".

The State government had undertaken the work left undone by the Centre which had abdicated its responsibility, he charged.

The Chief Minister's tirade against the Centre left the BJP and the Janata Dal (S) fuming, and both staged a walkout from the House terming the Budget as "empty".

Continued...

Spending on guarantees

Mr. Siddaramaiah, stating that the guarantee schemes were not an "election gimmick", hit out at the Opposition for their criticism, saying that they rest on the soaring aspirations of the people. The Budget proposed to spend ₹52,000 crore on five guarantees - Shakti, Gruha Jyothi, Gruha Lakshmi, Yuva Nidhi, and Anna Bhagya.

The Chief Minister justified the government's "welfare approach" by citing principles advocated by B.R. Ambedkar and Basaveshwara. Apparently referring to "Modi guarantees", he found an irony in the same people who criticised guarantees as "Bitti Bhagyas" had now "stolen" them and were trying to implement them as their own. For the first time, the Preamble of the Constitution was used as the front cover page of the Budget book.

Guarantees ensured an average income of ₹50,000 to ₹55,000 to each family every year, which would reduce inequality and bring prosperity and dignity to lives of vulnerable people, said the Chief Minister.

The Budget displayed an 18% increase in GST and 12% growth in State-own taxes, which were largely owing to positive effects of guarantees by increasing the disposable income in the hands of the people. Continuing his criticism of the Centre, Mr. Siddaramaiah took a dig at the Narendra Modi-led government for "unscientific" implementation of GST that caused loss of ₹59,294 crore to the State during 2017-2024.

He criticised the Centre for meeting out injustice to the State in the devolution of taxes, cesses, and surcharges (₹45,322 crore during 2017-24) and non-release of drought relief.

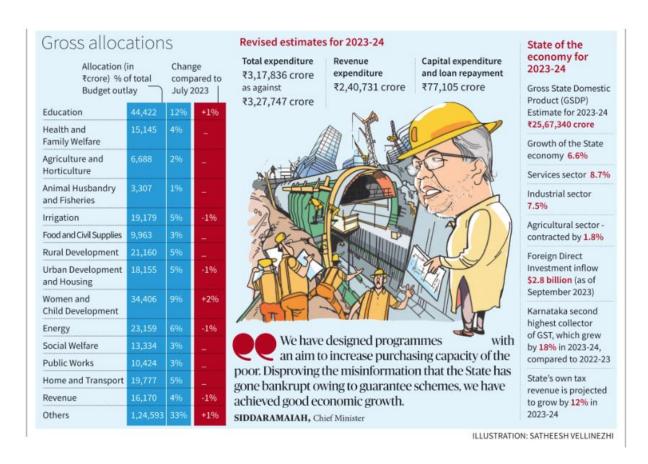
For Bengaluru, some of the infrastructure initiatives in the Budget were the repositioning of the peripheral ring road as Bengaluru Business Corridor to decongest traffic to be developed at a cost of ₹27,000 crore on PPP model, a 250-metrehigh Skydeck in the city, and permitting shops and establishments to remain open till 1 a.m. in Bengaluru and 10 other city corporations to boost trade and commerce.

The Budget proposed to bring out eight new policies and they are: Skill Policy, Gram Panchayat-SHG Convergence Policy, Green Hydrogen Policy, Industrial Policy, Textile Policy, Global Capability Centres Policy, AVGC-XR Policy, and Tourism Policy.

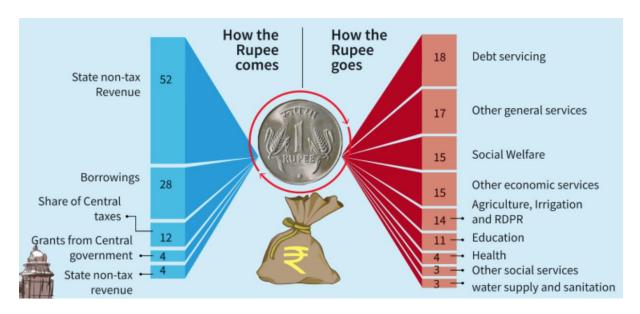
Of the total expenditure, the revenue expenditure was estimated at ₹2,90,531 crore and capital expenditure estimated at ₹55,877 crore. The fiscal deficit was estimated at ₹82,981 crore, which was 2.95% of GSDP and the total outstanding liabilities of the State was estimated to reach ₹6,65,095 crore in 2024-25, which is 23.68% of GSDP. The estimated receipts, including loans, was estimated at ₹3,68,674 crore, in 2024-25.

The Chief Minister said: "Though I have presented a revenue deficit Budget, I have increased the allocation for welfare programmes ... I am confident of achieving a revenue surplus after two years."

Source: The Hindu, p. 1&13, Feb. 17, 2024



Source: The Hindu, p. 8, Feb. 17, 2024



Source: The Hindu, p. 9, Feb. 17, 2024

Social welfare gets ₹4Kcr boost

G Subhash Chandra @ Chitradurga

Demonstrating his commitment for
the uplift of SCs, STs, OBCs and
minorities, CM Siddaramaiah
announced an allocation of
₹39,121 crore for this sector -- a
significant increase of ₹4,827 crore
over the previous allocation of
₹34,294 crore. It includes
₹27,674 crore for a Scheduled
Castes sub-plan and ₹11,448 crore
for a Scheduled Tribes sub-plan.

₹2,710 cr for construction of residential schools, hostels of SCs, STs, backward classes and minority welfare

departments

29 new residential school complexes will be started at a cost of ₹638 crore, residential schools by KREIS in 20 hoblis, 18 new hostels

EDUCATION SECTOR A PRIORITY

31 new postmatric hostels to boost higher education among SC/STs

Food allowance increased by \$100 per month for students in hostels and residential schools run by social welfare, tribal welfare, backward classes and minority

welfare department

All schools which have Classes 1 to 5 will get Class 6 from the next academic year; Schools having Class 7 will get Class 8

Strength of schools will increase from 25 to 40 students 14 hostels each for boys and girls, with a strength of 100 students, to be set up in 7 districts

Stinend of

₹15,000 for 200 engineering graduates enrolled in 6-12 month vocational training courses such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in IISc, IITs, NITs

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Training to be imparted to 5,000 budding photographers in drone-based photography and videography

Monthly stipend of Rs 25,000 for 100 research students pursuing post-doctoral fellowship programme and not receiving any fellowship

Two initiatives for comprehensive development of 23 nomadic, seminomadic communities like Koraga, Jenu Kuruba, Yarava, Kadu Kuruba, Soliga, Gonda, Siddhi, Aldalikudi, Kudiya, Hasalaru, Gowdalu, Bettakuruba, Harinishiki, Iruliga, Rajagonda, Harinishikari and others



RENAMING OF ASHRAM SCHOOLS

Vacant posts in tribal welfare dept to be filled

Ashram Schools run by the department to be renamed Maharshi Valmiki Adivasi Budakattu Residential Schools

₹1,750 CRORE FOR CORPORATIONS

Funds to set up study chair in memory of Padmashri Dr Siddalingaiah at Bengaluru University

Programmes at a cost of ₹1,750 crore will be formulated through various corporations under social welfare and tribal welfare dept

RARE DISEASES TREATMENT CORPUS



₹35 crore corpus fund to be created to provide financial assistance to SC/ST patients suffering from rare medical diseases

Destitute shelter with capacity of 500 inmates will come up in East Bengaluru at a cost of ₹10 crore

Source: The New Indian Express p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

Budget Outlay At ₹3.7 Lakh Cr; Govt To Reduce Duty On Beer, Premium Brands Of IML

TAX COLLECTION UP, BUT STATE ON LOAN CRUTCH

hief minister Siddaramaiah appears increasingly dependent on loans to finance welfare schemes, including his party's five guarantees and development projects, a shift in strategy that reflects a recognition of limited opportunities to expand tax revenue in the 2024-25 fiscal.

Siddaramaiah, who presented a Rs 3.7 lakh crore budget, intends to borrow over Rs 1 lakh crore, a notable increase from the Rs 85,818 crore he had pencilled in for loans in the previous 2023-24 fiscal.

Consequently, total liability of the govt will rise to Rs 6.6 lakh crore, with the burden of servicing debt touching a staggering Rs 86,068 crore, including interest payments of approximately Rs 40,000 crore. It is a marked increase from interest payments of Rs 34,027 crore projected for 2023-24.

However, the decision to borrow more comes amid a forecast of robust growth. Gross state domestic product (GSDP) is projected to reach Rs 28.6 lakh crore, up from Rs 25.7 lakh crore previously. In any case, the state is not pushing the limit on borrowings.



SOARING HIGHER: The Rs 1 lakh crore the state intends to borrow is a notable increase over the Rs 85,818 crore earmarked for loans last year

Fiscal Responsibility and **Budget Management rules** state the govt's total liability should not exceed 25% of GSDP. Presently, the liability stands at Rs 5.7 lakh crore and the govt can borrow up to Rs 1,40,000 crore to remain within the prescribed limit. However, caution seems the better part of recklessness and Siddara maiah has opted to stay well below this threshold.

We have maintained fis-

cal prudence. The borrowing is justified as funds will be allocated for welfare and development in a balanced manner," said Basavaraj Rayareddi, economic advisor to the chief minister.

While tax revenue has been robust, collections haven't matched expectations. Except for commercial tax. targets for all other departments have largely stayed unchanged. The target for com-



mercial taxes has been revised upward from Rs 1 lakh crore to Rs 1.1 lakh crore.

The state's own tax revenue is projected at Rs 1.9 lakh crore, compared to Rs 1.7 lakh crore estimated for the 2023-24 crease in tax revenue, govt departments have struggled to meet ambitious targets, prompting Siddaramaiah to set comparatively modest goals for 2024-25.

However, experts have criticised Siddaramaiah's approach, suggesting he should have prioritised increasing non-tax revenue instead. Non-tax revenue is estimated to reach Rs 13,499 crore, up from Rs 12,000 crore in the previous budget.

"It is disappointing that the govt has not placed more emphasis on bolstering nontax revenue. By tapping into this readily available source, the chief minister could have reduced the state's debt bur-den," said BV Madhusudan Rao, senior research adviser, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies. "There is concern that majority of borrowing is from open market loans, while capital expenditure, especially on development, has seen minimal increase."

Opposition leader R Ashoka slammed the proposal, saying: "The annual interest burden on the state shot up from Rs 8,500 crore to Rs 16,208 crore leaving a debt burden of Rs 44,000 on every citizen.'

Source: The Times of India, p.4, Feb. 17, 2024

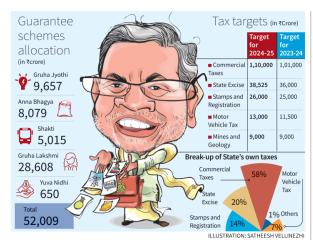
Revenue deficit unlikely to come down at least till 2026-2027

The deficit that was 0.49 % of the GSDP in 2023-24 will increase to 0.97 % in 2024-2025; govt. to dip into SCSP/TSP funds meant for SC, ST welfare

Sharath S. Srivatsa BENGALURU

he revenue deficit in the Budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday, which is due to the implementation of the five guarantee schemes of the Congress, is unlikely to come down at least till 2026-2027.

The revenue deficit has increased from ₹ 12,523 crore in 2023-2024 (when the government estimated to spend ₹ 36,000 crore on guarantees) to ₹ 27,254 crore in 2024-2025 with the government allocating ₹ 52,000 crore. This is likely to up further. The revenue deficit that was 0.49 % of the GSDP in 2023-24 will increase to 0.97 % in 2024-2025. In 2022-2023, the State had a revenue surplus budget due to the ₹20,000 crore released by the Centre as GST compensation. "We do not expect the revenue deficit to come down at least till 2026-2027. Barring Gruha Jyothi, which is expected to increase by about 8 % to 10 %, the cost incurred on other guarantees of Gruha Lakshmi, Anna Bhagya and Shakti, is expected to remain stable. On the other hand, we expect resource mobilisation to increase by 10 % to 12 % annually. This would would annually. This would mean, the revenue deficit will remain for at least next two financial years," a Re-



venue Department official

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah also acknowledged that the government will dip into the SCSP/TSP funds meant for Scheduled Tribes welfare to fund the guarantee schemes like last year, since they also benefit from guarantees, and that it would be proportionate to the population.

With State government raising the issue of "injustice" in tax devolution from the Centre and pressure of implementing the guarantees within the available resources, the government has increased the borrowing to ₹ 1.05

lakh crore in 2024-2025, up from ₹ 85,818 crore in 2023-2024, taking the total outstanding liabilities of the State to ₹ 6.65 lakh crore. The fiscal deficit is pegged at ₹ 82,981 crore or 2.95 % of the GSDP in 2024-2025 compared to ₹ 66,646 crore or 2.60 % of the GSDP in 2023-2024.

The net result has been that the capital expenditure outlay at ₹ 52,902 crore has seen a marginal increase by 3 % while the Budget outlay has increased by 13 %. A senior government official acknowledged that the capital expenditure was under stress as the general services, including debt services.

ing and salaries/ pensions account for 35 % or about ₹ 1.59 lakh crore of the total Budget outlay of 3.71 lakh crore. Besides the guarantees, the State government is also under pressure to implement the 7th Pay Commission recommenda tion to its employees that is estimated to cost between ₹ 15,000 crore and ₹ 20,000 crore. "The allocation in general services has been increased partly due to the expected wage revi-sion this year," another of-ficial said. Incidentally, the committee expenditure on salaries, pensions, interest payment and administra tion expenditure account to ₹95,000 crore.

Excise duty slabs on IML and beer to be rationalised

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

In a bid to bring liquor prices on a par with the neighbouring States, Karnataka will rationalise excise duty slabs, which is likely to bring down the prices of premium liquor while increasing lower end liquor marginally during the next financial year.

May miss target

Without announcing any increase in excise duty, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday announced that the excise duty slabs on IML and beer will be rationalised and make Karnataka competitive with neighbouring States.

Incidentally, the Excise Department had been given a target of ₹36,000 crore owing to reduced demand, and the department is likely to miss its target. The government revised the excise duty rate for beer last month as the State reported a higher beer sales.

Finance Department sources said that the rationalisation of slabs had been a demand from the industry for sometime as certain slabs or rate had become redundant, making the liquor prices uncompetitive. "Because of the higher

"Because of the higher price, Karnataka is losing business in the high end liquor sales," a senior Finance Department official explained, adding that the distilleries had also complained of increasing cost of production but lower returns.

He said, "While premium liquor contribute about 2% to 3% of the total excise revenue in Karnataka, it contributes about 52% of the total excise revenue in Telangana. The prices of beer will also be looked into."

More revenue

The official said that the reduction in excise duty is expected to mop up more revenue.

On the expected time frame for rationalisation, the official said it is likely to be implemented during the next excise year, which starts from June.

Source: The Hindu, p. 9, Feb. 17, 2024

State set to miss revenue target this year by ₹10,000 cr.

Sharth S. Srivatsa BENGALURU

Amidst a tightrope walk for the government that is implementing guarantee schemes, Karnataka is set to miss its revenue target this year by about ₹ 10,000 crore for a range of reasons, including drought and GST issues, though overall State's own tax revenue is estimated to grow by 12 %.

Speaking on other reasons for not meeting the target, a government official said that the State had set an ambitious target for 2023-24, anticipating higher growth that did not happen.



Drought has played a major role in reduction of GST collection.

Higher targets

Despite not being able to reach revenue targets for 2023-24, the State government has set much higher revenue targets for all State's taxes in 2024-25. While target for Commercial Taxes has risen by 11.5%, target for Excise has risen by 7%, Stamps and Registration by 4% and Motor Vehicle Tax by 13%. However, the official said, We have set realistic tar-

gets for 2024-25 year."

Barring motor vehicle tax, the State seems to have slipped in commercial tax that had a target of ₹ 98,650 crore, excise duty target of ₹ 36,000 crore, stamps and registration target of ₹ 25,000 crore.

The State has lost out about ₹ 2,000 crore in GST, including about ₹ 1,200 crore towards compensation and ₹ 800 crore towards IGST settlement. "The Centre has adjusted about ₹ 2,000 crore to earlier higher payment made to the State and we will have this reduced in the total GST given to the State," a government official said Another official

said GST collection had also come down due to reduced government spending on public works which attracts 18% GST. "This has, however, picked up now." he added.

attracts 18% GST. "Tins has, however, picked up now," he added.
While drought has played a major role in reduction of GST collection, the price stabilisation in steel and petroleum products had also reduced GST collection.

"The government forecast the collection based on 14% growth in this sector, which did not happen. Prices that were rising stabilised this year." Overall, the growth rate of resources was expected to be about 18 % while actual growth rate was about 14 %, the official explained.

Eventually, the total GST collection could be around ₹95,000 crore and the stamps and registration department could fall short of the target by about ₹ 5,000 crore and excise duty could come down by over ₹ 1,000 crore by the end of this financial year.

nancial year.

Meanwhile, though the government has claimed to have put ₹ 4,000 to ₹ 5,000 a month in poor families contributing to revival of economy, government sources said that though it contributed to GST collection, but it has not been much.

Source: The Hindu, p. 9, Feb. 17, 2024

'Except for revenue surplus, K'taka fulfils all key fin metrics'

BENGALURU, DHNS: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah argued Friday that Karnataka was in "sound" financial health and fulfilled all metrics, except one, outlined in the Karnataka Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2002.

Addressing a press conference after presenting the state budget for 2024-25, he said Karnataka's revenue deficit was 0.97% of the GSDP and its fiscal deficit 2.95%, against the upper limits of 1% and 3%, respectively, outlined in the act. The state will borrow Rs 1,05,246 crore in FY 2024-25, or 23.68% of the budget size, which is also well within the limit specified in the law, he stated.

"The only thing we haven't achieved is revenue surplus, but that will stabilise next year," he said. For comparison, the government of India's revenue deficit is 2% and its fiscal deficitis 5.8%, he added.

Karnataka's budget size for FY 2024-25 is Rs 3,71,383 lakh crore, as against the Rs 3,27,747-crore budget presented in July 2023, he said.

The CM passionately defended the Congress government's five guarantees, which would cost Rs 52,009 crore in FY 2024-25, and said they hadn't bankrupted Karnataka. He promised to release the necessary funds for the flagship schemes if there was any shortfall.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.8, Feb, 17, 2024

K'taka GSDP growth may slow to 6.6% in FY24: Economic Survey

State fiscal deficit to narrow to 2.6% on jump in revenues

> GYANENDRA KESHRI NEW DELHI, DHNS

arnataka's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is estimated to grow at 6.6% in the financial year ending March 31, lower than the projected national economic growth of 7.3%, as severe drought conditions have badly hit the agriculture sector, as per the state economic survey report released on Friday.

The rate of GSDP growth in Karnataka in the current financial year is projected to be sharply lower than the previous year and will be the slowest in three years. GSDP expanded by 7.9% in 2022-23 and 11% in 2021-22.

At constant prices, GSDP is estimated to increase to Rs 14.23 lakh crore in 2023-24 from Rs 13.35 lakh crore in 2022-23. At current prices, GSDP is projected to increase to Rs 25.01 lakh crore from Rs 22.70 lakh crore, registering a growth of 10.2%.

Agriculture sector will be the biggest drag on the state's economy this year. Farm sector is expected to contract by 1.8% in the current financial year after posting a growth of 2.8% and 5.7% in the previous two years, respectively. Fisheries sector is projected to contract by 4.6%.

The contraction in agriculture and fisheries sector will be "due to severe drought conditions and inadequate rainfall in the state, which has affected an area of 48 lakh hectares," noted the report.

Services sector, which is the biggest component of the state's economy, is projected to grow at 8.7% in 2023-24, slower than the 9.9% and 10% expansion registered in the previous two years, respectively, while IT related services is projected to expand 12.6%, sharply higher than 9.2% growth registered in the previous year.

The report noted that the industry sector is showing 'gradual recovery from Covid distress'. Construction with 8.2% growth rate and manufacturing with 7.4% growth rate will be the key drivers of industrial growth during the year.

Services sector accounts for 67% of the state's economy, followed by industries at 20% and agriculture at 13%.

Fiscal deficit, or the gap between the state's revenue and expenditure, is projected to narrow to 2.6% of GSDP in 2023-24 helped by robust increase in tax and non-tax revenue. In 2022-23, the state's fiscal deficit stood at 3.26%, as per Karnataka Economic Survey 2022-23 report.

"Improving efficiency in public expenditure, maintaining fiscal discipline and rationalisation of schemes and subsidies are the ways to improve revenue resources crucial for financial progress of the state," the annual report noted.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.8, Feb, 17, 2024

Drought slows GSDP growth to 6.6%

TEAM TOI

arnataka's gross state domestic product (GSDP) is estimated to grow by 6.6% (Rs 88,177 crore) in constant prices to Rs 14.2 lakh crore for 2023-24 from Rs 13.3 lakh crore in 2022-23, the Economic Survey released Friday states.

The projected 6.6% growth comes despite acute drought in the state. Chief minister Siddaramaiah said: "This impressive growth trajectory solidifies Karnataka's position as a key player in India's economic growth narrative."

The estimated GSDP growth is 1.5 percentage points lower than the 8.1% growth in 2022-23. However, it needs to be seen through the prism of drought, which came on the heels of the pandemic induced GSDP slowdown in 2020-21.



That year, the state recorded negative growth of '2.3%. In 2021-22, GSDP grew from that low base number due to the Covid-19 negative growth. It

then rationalised in 2022-23.

Sector-wise analysis shows the service sector grew at 8.7% and industry at 7.5%. The agriculture sector showed a negative growth of 1.8% due to drought.

In percentage terms, growth rates across sectors dipped from last year. This dip stems from the low base during the pandemic and rationalisation in subsequent years. It also reflects the drought's impact this year. At current prices, GSDP's advanced estimates in nominal terms stand at Rs 25 lakh crore, up from Rs 22.6 lakh crore in 2022-23.

Total receipts increased to Rs 2.7 lakh crore in 2023-24 from Rs 3.2 lakh crore as per the 2022-23 revised estimate (RE). "Revenue receipts rose to Rs 2,12,359 crore from Rs 2,38,409.8 crore (2022-23 RE).

Expected capital receipts

hit Rs 86,068 crore, up from Rs 67,180 crore. Non-tax revenue estimate increased to Rs 12,500 crore from Rs 10,940 crore and fiscal and revenue deficits are pegged at 2.6% and 0.49%.

PCI & \$1 Trillion Target

At Rs 3.3 lakh, Karnataka's per-capita income is 79% higher than India's Rs 1.8 lakh figure for 2023-24. This places the state third nationally behind only Delhi and Telangana.

"Per-capita income grew from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 3.3 lakh, an increase of 9.3% at current prices," the survey said. "At constant prices, it expanded from Rs 1.7 lakh to Rs 1.8 lakh, a 5.8% growth rate."

The survey sets a vision of reaching \$1 trillion GSDP by implementing strategies in the sustainable development goals 2030, and \$1 trillion vision documents.

Source: The Times of India, p.4, Feb. 17, 2024

Earn to run, CM sets Rs 13K crore target for transport dept

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah in his budget proposed to develop automated test centres at 32 places under the PPP model to facilitate fitness testing of all transport vehicles seeking renewal of Fitness Certificate (FC). Besides, automated driving test tracks are being planned at a cost of Rs 36 crore.

Stating that the transport department has collected Rs 9,333 crore in taxes on vehicles till January in the current fiscal, the CM added that a target of Rs 13,000 crore has been set for the coming financial year. The growth of revenue collection in the transport department is at 19%, compared to previous years', the CM added. Since the digitisation of doc-

Since the digitisation of documents on a pilot basis is being done at Bengaluru Central, Belagavi, Mangaluru and Bhalki, a scheme will soon be launched to digitise all vehicle documents.

Separately, the CM mentioned that his gover n ment has spent Rs 3,000 crore towards the Shaktischeme, which saw 155 crore women passenger trips since its launch.



GOVT EXTENDS HSRP NUMBER PLATE DEADLINE TO MAY END

BENGALURU: The state government extended the deadline to affix high-security number plates (HSRP) for vehicles from February 17 to May 31. Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy had earlier stated that only 18 lakh vehicles registered before April 2019 have affixed HSRP number plates and they will extend the deadline by three months. The transport department on Friday issued an order extending the deadline.

Source: The New Indian Express, p.4, Feb, 17, 2024

₹26k-cr target for Stamps & Regn dept

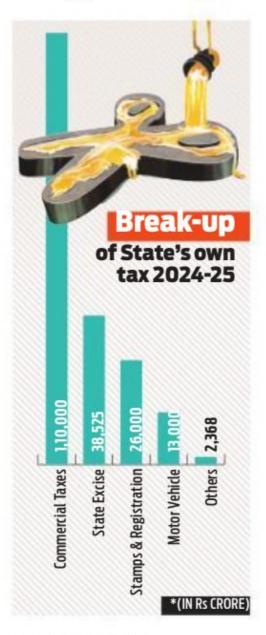
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Bengaluru

THE state budget fixed revenue collection target for the Stamps and Registration Department at Rs 26,000 for 2024-25 crore as against Rs 19,000 crore for 2023-24. Noting that the guidance value for immovable property was revised by the government in 2023-24, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah stated on Friday that in the current financial year, Rs 15,692 crore revenue has been collected till January, registering a growth of 10 per cent.

Sources said Rs 26,000 crore target can be achieved in 2024-25, as the guidance value of properties has been increased by 15 percent and also with the increase in the non-registrable duties, which are other than registration of documents like rental agreements, employees' contracts, affidavits, loan agreements, etc.

Mobilising Rs 26,000 crore can be achieved by way of Rs 19,000-20,000 crore collection through the registrable duty and the remaining Rs 5,000-6,000 crore by way of non-registrable duty. The guidance value has to be increased every year, but it had not been done since 2019. In 2023-24, it was increased by 15 per cent,



the sources said.

However, it is difficult to collect Rs 5,000-6,000 crore from the marginal increase in non-registrable documents, they added.

Source: The New Indian Express, p.4, Feb, 17, 2024

CM PROPOSES INDUSTRIAL NODE NEAR DHARWAD

COMMERCE

ENS @ Bengaluru

IN what appears to be big a boost to North Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has proposed an industrial node near Dharwad, which is expected to resolve the unemployment problem in the region.

In his budget speech, the Chief Minister said the industrial node will be established in 6,000 acres of land near Dharwad under Bengaluru-Mumbai economic corridor programme, in collaboration with the Central government. "This will resolve the unemployment problem of North Karnataka region and encourage economic development," he added.

Besides, he has also proposed that a new Textile Policy 2024-29 will be formulated for the development of textile and weaving sector. Through this, a capital investment of Rs 10,000 crore is expected, along with

NORTHWARD TRAJECTORY

Knowledge, Health
Care, Innovation and
Research (KHIR) city
to be established in
2,000 acres near
Bengaluru to attract
an investment of
₹40,000 cr and
provide employment
to 80,000 people

A scientific drone-based survey to assess the current state of mining and control illegal mining, which will boost revenue collection

New sugar factory will be established on the premises of Mandya sugar factory

New textile parks will be constructed in Kittur Karnataka, Kalyana Karnataka (Raichur) and Mysuru regions under publicprivate-

partnership. It is

expected to create

10,000 jobs in the

coming years

Mini-textile parks in 25 districts

A common facility centre and Jeans apparel park in Ballari

mmon re and pparel Ballari

> the state and central governments. The Park is expected to generate direct employment for one lakh people and indirect employment for two lakh people. A grant of Rs 50 crore has been earmarked for supplemental infrastructure for the project.

generation of two lakh jobs. The policy will also promote greater investment and employment opportunities.

He also proposed a Mega Textile Park in 1,000 acres land in Kalaburagi district under PPP model in collaboration between

Source: The New Indian Express, p.6, Feb, 17, 2024

Industrial policy this yr; jobs, infra expansion on agenda

New textile parks in Kittur & Kalyana K'taka, Mysuru region

> R KRISHNAKUMAR BENGALURU, DHNS

Riding on investment of Rs 88,150 crore attracted over the current fiscal, the state government is lining up initiatives to build on the numbers, including the new industrial policy that will be formulated during the current year.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah noted that the investment in 2023-24 was predominantly generated in sectors related to production of Lithium-Ion Batteries for electric vehicles, Electronic System Design and Manufacturing, automobiles, data centres etc. Presenting the 2024-25 state budget, the chief minister said a Global Investors Meet would be organised in February 2025, to attract greater foreign investment.

The government has proposed infrastructure expansion, with industrial estates in various districts set to be upgraded through the Karnataka State Small Industries Development Corporation. The move, implemented in collaboration with the Central government, comes at an estimated cost of Rs 39 crore.



New textile parks will be established in Kittur Karnataka, Kalyana Karnataka (Raichur) and Mysuru regions under a public-private partnership model. These parks are expected to create about 10,000 jobs.

Through a new textile policy (2024-29) for the development of textile and weaving sectors, the government is eyeing a capital investment of Rs 10,000 crore and the creation of two lakh jobs.

A Rs 50-crore grant will be provided for the supplemental infrastructure at the 1,000-acre textile park coming up in Kalaburagi district, in collaboration with the central government.

Checks on illegal mining: The statewide drone-based survey to assess the state of mining and control

illegal mining of minor minerals, including building stone, is expected to boost revenue collection and bring in greater accountability.

Khadi-related activities will be promoted in Badanavalu in Nanjangud taluk, a village in Mysuru Mahatma Gandhi visited.

The government will provide assistance to small and medium industries to issue IPO in the stock exchange. Financial assistance of up to 50% of the cost will be provided, subject to a maximum of Rs 25 lakh.

The proposed jeans apparel park in Ballari will formalise the presently unorganised jeans manufacturing units and help upgrade the industry to international standards.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.7, Feb, 17, 2024

Siddu vows to double power production in seven years

Electricity

Subsidies take away major share of Rs 23k or allocation to energy sector

BENGALURU, DHNS

fter Karnataka witnessed power crisis owing to poorrains last year, the government has decided to increase the power production capacity of the state.

In the state budget presented on Friday, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah vowed to increase the state's installed capacity from 32,000 Megawatts to 60,000 Megawatts in the next seven years.

"We will make an even greater investment in the energy sector to take Karnataka to the number one position in the country once again in energy production," Siddaramaiah said.

Though the sector has been given an allocation of Rs 23,159 crore, nearly 6% of the budget outlay, Gruha Jyothi, the free electricity scheme for houses, and the subsidy schemes have taken the lion's share of the allocations.

Planning to tap into the numerous advantages of Green Hydrogen technology, the department is planning to set up a 300 kW self-sustained Green hydrogen plant, at a cost of Rs 10 crore, from the funds allotted by the Ministry of Newand Renewable Energy (MNRE). The state will also get a dedicated new Green Hydrogen Policy.

To address the problems caused by prolonged power outages during the maintenance of transmission lines, the KPTCL will purchase mobile or vehicle-mounted 66 kV and 110 kV sub-stations. The budget also focused on increasing the use of renewable energy in the agricultural sec-



tor and announced plans to install 40,000 off-grid solar pump sets under the PM-KUSUM Component-B scheme under MNRE. That apart, under phase two of the agricultural pump set feeder solarisation scheme, the government now plans to implement 1,192 MW of solar projects to power up 4.30 lakh irrigation pump sets.

That apart, the department will also collaborate with various other departments to promote solar energy and bring down power bills. For instance, a new scheme will be introduced under the PPP model for establishing solar parks in backwaters and land owned by the Water Resources Department on the lines of Pavagada Solar Parks.

The Urban Development Department also plans to establish solar parks in the BWSSB, BDA, and the BBMP offices and the Rural Development Department is planning to install solar streetlights in 50 Gram Panchayats at an estimated cost of Rs 25 crore under the Hombelaku programme.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.6, Feb, 17, 2024

Eco corridors to lift investor confidence

TEAM TOI

o revitalise the economy and reinforce investor confidence, the State Budget outlined plans for three new infrastructure corridors and initiatives to stimulate commercial and economic growth.

The corridors include routes connecting key hubs such as Mangaluru and Bidar with Bengaluru. Chief minister Siddaramaiah emphasised the significance of these corridors and anticipated accelerated access to ports, reduced freight transport times, and heightened economic development in these regions.

The introduction of the Bengaluru business corridor aims to alleviate traffic congestion while fostering large-scale economic initiatives in the state capital.

The budget pledges to establish a 6,000-acre industrial node in Dharwad under the Bengaluru-Mumbai economic corridor, aiming to tackle unemployment and spur economic growth in North Karnataka. The emphasis on increasing industrial activities along the Chennai-Mumbai corridor underscores the state's proactive approach to leveraging its strategic position for economic gains. The govt's ambitious

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QUICKER: The corridors will help reduce freight transport times

plans extend beyond infrastructure and policies. They will cover development of knowledge, healthcare, innovation, and research cities, as well as science and sports cities in Bengaluru.

It also plans significant investments in the textile sector through implementation of a new textile policy and the establishment of textile parks across the state to foster employment opportunities and drive economic prosperity.

The budget highlights a range of policies to stimulate economic growth, including a new industrial policy and global capability centres (GCC) policy. These seek to maintain Karnataka's industrial leadership status and attract higher investments across major sectors, especially the GCC sector.

Source: The Times of India, p.4, Feb. 17, 2024

K'taka govt to launch new GCC policy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The Karnataka govt has announced a slew of measures to elevate its position as the tech capital. The govt is announcing a new GCC (Global Capability Centres) Policy this year, a first-ofits-kind initiative to catalyse more Fortune 500 companies to set up their tech centres in the state. Bengaluru is home to over 400 GCCs out of the 1,600 GCCs operating in India. The Nasscom Strategic Review said the Indian GCC sector added 2.8 lakh employees with an installed talent base of 1.6 million people in the 2022-23 financial year.

Karnataka has also outlined Rs 150 crore investment to grow the AVGC-XR (animation, visual effects, gaming, and comic (AVGC) sector Karnataka is setting up a centre of excellence (COE) in fintech, space tech and automotive tech at an outlay of ₹10cr in collaboration with entrepreneurs and educational institutions

including launching a policy for 2024-2029 period, with the aim of generating 30,000 jobs in the sector. It's also setting up the Institute of Advanced Genome Editing and Gene Therapy to accelerate research in genomics. This institute aims to become a hub for cutting-edge research in healthcare, agriculture, and other areas of life sciences.

To promote agri-startups in the state, five acres of land will be provided to C-Camp Agri innovation park in Bengaluru. Karnataka Innovation of Technology Solutions (KITS) in collaboration with KEONICS will estab-

lish skilling & innovation centres in emerging technologies across Kalaburagi, Shivamogga, Hubballi, and Tumakuru, with a Rs12 crore outlay. A stipend of Rs 15,000 will be provided to 200 engineering graduates enrolled in 6-12 months training courses related to AI and ML in IISc, IITs or NITs.

To encourage women entrepreneurs, 50,000 women SHG-owned micro-enterprises will be developed over two years. District Level Incubation Centres (DLICs) will be established in a phased manner in all 31 districts in collaboration with IIM Bangalore.

They will serve as hubs for empowering women-led enterprises. In the first phase, incubation centres will be set up in 10 districts. The Karnataka govt has attracted Rs 88,150 crore investments in 2023-24 predominantly in the production of lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles, electronic system design and manufacturing(ESDM), automobile and data centres. A new Knowledge, Health Care, Innovation and Research City (KHIR) will be set up across 2000 acres near Bengaluru. The new KHIR City will attract an investment of Rs 40,000 crore and employ about 80,000 people. The govt will assist small and medium industries to go public by providing financial assistance up to 50% of the cost subject to a maximum of Rs 25 lakh.

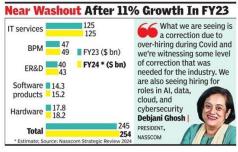
Source: The Times of India, p.21, Feb. 17, 2024

IT exports expected to grow 3.3% in FY24

Shilpa.Phadnis @timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: The 2023-24 financial year will be a near washout for Indian IT services in terms of growth and hiring. Nasscom's latest estimates for the year suggest that India's IT exports will grow at 3.3% in constant currency to \$199 billion in the 2023-24 financial year, less than a third of the 11.4% it registered in the year before, and one of the lowest in the industry's history. Overall, including the domestic business, India's tech sector is estimated to grow by 3.8% to reach \$254 billion, adding an incremental revenue of \$9 billion.

On the sunny side, GCCs did well, hiring far more than IT services for the first time ever. The industry saw a net addition of 60,000 people in the current fiscal year taking the total tally to 5.4 million. Nasscom did not break this up, but given that the big IT services companies are seeing a decline in headcount, much of the net addition



would be on account of GCCs. In 2022-23, GCCs had added 2.8 lakh employees, taking its talent base to over 1.6 million.

"What we are seeing is a correction due to over-hiring during Covid and we're witnessing some level of correction that was needed for the industry. We are also seeing hiring for roles in AI, data, cloud, and cybersecurity," Nasscom president Debjani Ghosh said on Friday at a virtual media conference to talk about the findings of its Stra-

tegic Review 2024.

Even during FY2021, which was marred by pandemic-related sharp declines in growth, the Indian tech sector added 1.3 lakh employees. In the following fiscal, it hired 4.5 lakh freshers, the highest addition in a single year.

dition in a single year.

Nasscom said 53 new
GCCs were added in 2023. Recently, UK-based financial
services major Lloyds Banking Group opened a new technology centre in Hyderabad.
It plans to grow its talent base

to 600 technologists by this year-end. Last year, Austra-lia's largest bank the National Australia Bank (NAB) set up the NAB Innovation Centre India with nearly 1,000 employees. Asked if GCCs have captured India's tech narrative, Ghosh said it's a model of coexistence because there is enough differentiation in the work that GCCs are doing, and the work tech services companies are doing. "Of course, there's some level of overlap that's bound to happen. The decline in the rowth rate in services is not due to GCCs, but what I talked about, which is at the client end, there was uncertainty and decision-making took longer. What we are seeing today is a differentiated model where coexistence is becoming the norm," she said.

Ramkumar Ramamoorthy, partner at Catalines, a teed growth advisory firm, said, "The data from Nasscom is a thumping validation of GCCs materially outpacing third-party IT services players in net

headcount addition this past year. Even if discretionary spending were to bounce back, I would not be surprised if this trend continues for some time as GCCs have become the powerhouse for digital transformation and innovation, leveraging disruptive technologies such as cloud, analytics, and AI, IoT, cybersecurity and mixed reality."

Nasscom said there is a ninefold increase in genAI related activities in the 2023 calendar year compared to the previous year, and 650,000 employees being trained on gen AI skills in 2023-2024. About 90% of the top 25 providers have made large-scale genAI skilling commitments and there's a 15% growth in AI/ML job postings in the last 12 months.

The Nasscom CEO Survey showed that the hiring outlook will improve in FY2025, with an increase in fresher and lateral hiring. Hitech, BFSI, and technology, media & telecom, that underperformed in 2023 are expected to improve in 2024.

Source: The Times of India, p.21, Feb. 17, 2024

Three new schemes to boost start-up ecosystem announced

Karnataka recently emerged as one of the best-performing States in the start-up ranking by the Department for Promotion Industry and Internal Trade. However, there was a considerable drop in funding in 2023

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

hief Minister Siddaramaiah, in his Budget for 2024-25, announced three new programmes aimed to boost the start-up ecosystem in the State.

The new programmes include the Rajiv Gandhi Entrepreneurship Programme – an funding early-stage gramme to promote innovative endeavours and start-ups by students and entrepreneurs, a new initiative to support earlystage women entrepreneurs with a sector-wise and targeted approach, and a programme to promote agri-start-ups in the State.

Under the agri-start-up programme, five acres of land will be provided to C-CAMP Agri Innovation Park.

Centre of excellence

The government has also proposed to set aside ₹10 crore to



Under the agri-start-up programme, five acres of land will be provided to C-CAMP Agri Innovation Park.

establish a centre of excellence in fintech, space tech and automotive tech over five years in collaboration with entrepreneurs and educational institutions.

Karnataka emerged as one of the bestperforming States in the startup ranking by the Department for Promotion Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). However, the State, which is home to 18,000 start-ups, saw a considerable drop in start-up funding in 2023, mostly owing to the macro-economic trends.

The Minister also nounced plans to introduce a new GCC (Global Capacity Centres) policy in the current year to attract higher investments in major sectors. Bengaluru currently has more than

400 GCCs. The other announcements included the establishment of skilling and innovation centres in Kalaburagi. Shivamogga, Hubbali, and Tumakuru, and an institute of advanced genome editing and gene therapy.

Job generation

The State is also planning to launch an AVGC-XR Policy 3.0 for the period 2024-29 with the aim of generating 30,000 jobs in the animation, visual effects, gaming and comics sec-

An investment of ₹150 crore is planned towards this.

The Budget had a slew of announcements with the aim of promoting scientific temper among citizens.

This included plans for a science city in Bengaluru in association with the Central government at a cost of ₹233 crore and a month-long Karnataka Science and Technology Festival.

Source: The Hindu, p. 5, Feb. 17, 2024

'Balanced Budget with a focus on creating growth, employment'

The State Budget presented on Friday was "a well thought about, balanced and a developmental Budget" and Chief Minister Sid-daramaiah focused on a wide spectrum of core areas such as agriculture, energy, women empowerment, education, skill de-velopment, healthcare, Bengaluru development and beyond Bengaluru, reacted trade body representatives in Karnataka. The trade body FKCCI

called it a balanced Budget focused on the growth, re-vival, and development of

Beyond Bengaluru.
The establishment of a mega textile park in Kala-burgi and the construction of new textile parks in Kit-tur-Karnataka, Kalyana-Karnataka and Mysore region would boost invest-ment inflow to the state and create employment, it said. "The proposed integrated township in MysuThe CM restricted the revenue deficit and fiscal deficit within the limits mandatory under the Karnataka Fiscal Responsibility Act 2022

ru, Mangaluru, Hubbali, Dharwad, Belagavi, Kalaburagi, Tumakuru, Kolar and Ballari also would spur economic growth in tier 2 and tier 3 cities in the State," said Ramesh Chandra Lahoti, President, FKCCI. The thrust given to the agricultural sector, particularly the allocation of ₹10 crore for the digitisation of APMCs, would smoothen the operation of the traders community and farmers

"Establishment of cold storage in APMCs, esta-blishment of dry chilli market, establishment of bio-CNG plant and establish-ment of EV charging centres and petrol bunks will add value to APMC in-frastructure," Lahoti added. Kassia welcomed the proposals of the upgradation of industrial estates with Central government support and also subsidisa-tion of IPO expenses of small and medium industries.
The Chief Minister also

mentioned the participa-tion of government departments and public sector undertakings in TReDS portal which would make the functioning of MSMEs easier by getting the payment on time from them.

Said C.A. Shashidhara Shetty, president, Kassia. However, he added, "There are several other interesting proposals, but the Budget allocation for capital outlay is very minimal, which may not be sufficient to execute the pro-

posals in our opinion." The Chief Minister res tricted the revenue deficit and fiscal deficit within the limits mandatory under the Karnataka Fiscal Res ponsibility Act 2022, he

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

'Pragati Path' to develop road network

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Focussing on rural road development, the State Budget has proposed to roll out 'Pragati Path' scheme with external assistance. Under this, the proposal is to develop a road network of 9,450 km with 50 km each in 189 rural Assembly constituencies at a cost of ₹5,200 crore.

Under the Kalyana Path scheme, the Budget has proposed to develop 1,150 km of roads on the lines of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in 38 rural Assembly constituencies of Kalyana Karnataka. The roads will be developed at a cost of ₹1,000 crore.

E-office in GP

Announcing that an asset monetisation policy will be formulated to augment the revenue of gram panchayats, the Budget has proposed to implement eoffice in all gram panchayats.

"Transfers of Panchayat Development Officers, Gram Panchayat Secretaries and Accounts Assistants will be done through counselling. All services provided through Seva Sindhu portal will be started through Bapuji Seva Centre from this year," the Budget stated.

With a focus on healthcare in rural areas, the Budget has proposed to start palliative care centres in 100 select gram panchayats from this year.

It has proposed to initiate Savitribai Phule Women Empowerment Programme in 100 gram panchayats of the State to provide vocational skill training to women.

Cold press oil units will be established in all gram panchayats through the self-help groups with financial assistance of ₹1 lakh each.

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, Feb. 17, 2024

Cess on e-transactions to protect gig workers

TEAM TOI

he state govt has proposed a cess on online transactions of technology platforms, to create a corpus for providing livelihood security to platform-based gig workers.

Announcing that the Platform-Based Gig Workers Fund and Welfare Fee Bill will be introduced to provide livelihood security to platform-based gig workers, chief minister Siddaramaiah said, "Through this, cess will be levied on eligible online transactions and the money collected will be utilized for the welfare of gig workers."

Labour minister Santosh Lad told TOI: "We've already held preliminary rounds of meetings with 14 stakeholders in the e-commerce business and aggregators such as Amazon, Uber, Ola and others. They've positively responded to the suggestion of collecting cess. In the coming days, rules will be framed on cess collection. Whether cess should be collected on the value of goods order or per transaction will be deliberated. The money collected from cess will be exclusively used for the welfare of gig workers. The



HUGE WORKFORCE: It is estimated that there are 3 lakh gig workers in the state, 75% of them based in Bengaluru

state govt has already announced insurance cover for gig workers in the state; with the availability of more funds, it will help to take other welfare measures. We have to care for gig workers who are exposed to various health hazards as they spend the whole day in traffic, delivering products. To protect their interest, the state govt has proposed the new bill."

It is estimated there are about 3 lakh gig workers in the state, 75% of them based in Bengaluru.

The labour department has already introduced an insurance scheme for gig workers, utilizing funds provided by the state govt. So far, the department has received 3,000 applications for insurance schemes worth Rs 4 lakh.

1% fire cess

To increase efficiency of the fire and emergency services, the state govt has proposed levying 1% fire cess on property tax of newly constructed multi-storey buildings.

In another proposal, the govt said cess will be collected on the registration of commercial transport vehicles, to provide security and welfare programmes for workers of transport vehicles, through the Karnataka State Unorganised Workers Social Security Board.

Source: The Times of India, p.2, Feb. 17, 2024

1% fire cess for multi-storeyed buildings

The State government is to implement a 1% fire cess on the property tax for recently constructed multistoried buildings. "To increase efficiency in Fire and Emergency Department, 1% fire cess will be levied on property tax of newly constructed multi-storeyed buildings according to the Karnataka Fire Force Act, 1964," Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said in his speech.

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

State looks to monetise assets to up its resources

N B HOMBAL BENGALURU, DHNS

urdened by five guarantee schemes, the government that is in search of newer sources of mobilisation proposed on Friday a series of asset monetisation plans in various departments, including Infrastructure, Housing, Karnataka Slum Clearance Board and Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) in the state.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that an Expert Committee will be set up to analyse the potential for asset monetisation in the state. "The Committee will also provide a roadmap for its implementation in a phased, transparent and timely manner. This will aid in further mobilisation of non-tax revenues," he added.

Besides this, the Karnataka

Housing Board will set up the Karnataka Affordable Housing Fund (KAHF) by mobilising resources through asset monetisation, housing cess and various statutory fees. The Karnataka Slum Development Board will also explore possibilities of monetising its assets.

The RDPR department will develop an asset monetisation policy to augment the revenue of every gram panchayat in the state. The CM underlined that the existing public-private partnership policy-2018 will be reviewed to facilitate greater private investments.

A separate cell would be established in the CM's office to monitor the progress of ongoing infrastructure projects and resolve inter-departmental and financial issues.

Waterways policy

The state will also develop Karna-

taka Inland Waterways and Water Transport Development Policy to attract greater private investments. The state is looking to generate investments worth Rs 20,000 crore in the coming years by improving the coastal region's Port, Railways and Air connectivity.

The CM said the feasibility report will be prepared on introducing water metro services in the Gurupur and Nethravathi rivers in the South Canara district.

Economic corridors

The PWD plans to develop two economic corridors. One is between Mangaluru port and Bengaluru for speedy.

"The second corridor will be developed between Bidar and Bengaluru to accelerate the economic development of the Kalyana Karnataka region," the CM announced.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.6, Feb, 17, 2024

Budget that goes 'Beyond Bengaluru' towards balanced growth



A sthe curtains rose on the 15th State Budget presentation by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, it became evident that this fiscal blueprintis not just a document of financial allocations but a roadmap mancial anocations but a roadina, or catalysing growth, particularly beyond the confines of Bengaluru. One of the most promising ispects of this budget is its unwaaspects of this budget is its unwa-vering commitment to extending industrial growth and develop-ment beyond Bengaluru. The establishment of industrial nodes near Dharwad under the Bengalu-ru-Mumbai Economic Corridor

Program is a visionary step that promises to generate employment opportunities in North Karnataka, bringing prosperity to regions that have long awated their turn on the development front.

The allocation for me textile park in Kalaburgi and the construction of new textile parks in Kitur-Karnataka, and Mysore Region are proton in moves that will not only attract investment but a also create much-needed employment awenues. Furthermore, the proposed development of ince-

grated townships in various cities across Karnataka underscores the government's commitment to nurturing a conducive environment for holistic growth.

In the agricultural sector, the emphasis on modernisation through the digitisation of APMC, establishment of collisorage facilities, and initiatives like the establishment of the stablishment of the conductive of the cond

Development plans for major tourism destinations coupled with initiatives to revise the tourism politic tourism politic to the coupling of the coupling of the coupling Karnanaka's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty to tecenging Karnanaka's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty attractiourists and timestors allike. Efforts to ease the traffic situation Bengaluru through infrastructure development projects like the Bengaluru Business Corridor and Metro connectivity expansionare laudable. Similarly, the government's focus on simplifying procedures for obtaining clearances and promoting Ease of Doing

Business reflects a forward-thinking approach to fostering a conducive business environment.

While the budget allocations fall bort of the Karnataka Electric Regulatory Commission's recommendations, there is a commitment to facilitating free domestic supply underscores the government's intent to prioritise the welfare of citizens.

intentro prioritise the citizens.

Looking ahead, initiatives such as the proposed Global Investment Meet and Skill Connect Summit hold the promise of attracting foreign investment and creating a

skilled workforce, essential ingredients for sustained economic growth. In a significant move towards enhancing rural livelihoods, the state plans to establish 50 women-run cafes under the banner of Cafe Sanjevini. These cafes will cater to the demand for healthy, hygienic, and affordable cooked food, as well as traditional local cuisine. Moreover, the establishment of 2,500 Coffee Kioske sexclusively managed by SHG women common commit opportunities but also empower women to manage their family's financial well-being.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.5, Feb, 17, 2024



A radical approach to revenue deficit

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah states that a revenue surplus is meaningless if the State cannot aid the poor and the needy in times of distress

If the Congress needed to demonstrate that the guarantees it offered in the elections last year were a part of its longer-term strategy for Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's Budget does so quite unequivocally. Instead of just trying to squeeze out funds for the guarantees promised at that time, he has added fresh welfare measures, including 430 free medical laboratories to be set up in Bengaluru. And the Budget reflects a financial thinking that would, if it works, make the guarantee-led model financially sustainable.

The radical part of this strategy lies in its approach to the revenue deficit. Conventional wisdom has it that the government should strive for a surplus on the revenue account that would help finance capital expenditure. The Budget

help finance capital expenditure. The Budget breaks out of this thinking with the Chief breaks out of this thinking with the Chief Minister stating that a revenue surplus is meaningless if the State cannot aid the poor and the needy in times of distress. He has gone on to concretise this approach with a budgeted revenue deficit of ₹27,354 crore, nearly 1% of Karnataka's GSDP. At the same time, he has made it clear that this is not a sign of fiscal profligacy. He has kept the fiscal deficit at 2.95% of GSDP, which is below the level mandated by the Karnataka Fiscal

Instead of just trying to squeeze out funds for the guarantees promised, CM has added fresh welfare measures including 430 free medical labs

the Karnataka Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2022. A strategy that allows the revenue deficit to increase while keeping the overall fiscal deficit in control puts pressure on capital expenditure. The Chief Minister hopes to asse this pressure. to ease this pressure by mobilising

free medical labs
to ease this pressure by mobilising private capital through a variety of measures. The Budget makes all the usual noises about foreign investment, including a Global Investors Meet, but what is worth watching are the innovative steps it takes on mobilising domestic capital. The move to help small and medium industries launch IPOs is a particularly interesting one. While the success of a company like Infosys in Karnataka's growth story is well recognised, the various steps it took in the early stages of its existence are often forgotten. It was at one time little more than a small company that used an IPO to raise capital. This is a model that is not open to many current small and medium industries due to the very high cost of an IPO. The budget provides a path for the State government to help by offering financial assistance to small and medium companies of assistance to small and medium companies of up to 50% of the costs of an IPO. With a ceiling

assistance to small and medium companies or up to 50% of the costs of an IPO. With a ceiling of 25 lakh it may not seem like a major initiative, but if even a couple of these companies follow the paths laid out by those who rose from similar beginnings to become corporate giants, the impact on Karnataka's economy would be very significant.

The budget also suggests a fresh look at the idea of public-private partnerships. The Karnataka State Warehousing Corporation has been facing a severe financial crisis. The budget proposes using the unutilised storage facilities to develop cold storages through the PPP route. Making this and other initiatives effective would call for a fresh look at the entire PPP strategy of the state government, something that the budget promises to do. The overall strategy of enabling private sector investment while concentrating the State's resources on the poor and needy is one that provides opportunities even as it has its ride. Mean etwas these decreage effects. one that provides opportunities even as it has its risks. More than three decades after risks. More than three decades after liberalisation, the private sector should be in a position to take care of itself with just a little help from State governments. The risks lie in the fact that the private sector has multiple locations across the world that it can invest in. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has bet that Karnataka has no reason to fear that competition. The coming year will provide the first indications of whether he is right.

Source: The Hindu, p. 9, Feb. 17, 2024

Nifty budget manager has eye on growth, political gains

ANALYSIS

arnataka's budget this year is under strong fi-nancial stress, and managing the books must have been a challenging exercise for the finance department and veteran budget manager Shri Siddaramaiah. He has long experience in presenting and defending 14 State budgets. Devolution from the Fi-

nance Commission is one of the main issues. The State the main issues. The State economy is poised to grow at a nominal rate of 10.2% (6.6% in real terms) in 2024-25. The reduction in share of devolution, from 4.713% from the 14th Finance Com-mission (FC) to 3.64% from the 15th FC nosed a new mission (FC) to 3.64% from the 15th FC, posed a new challenge to the State to meet its revenue require-ment and match its expendi-ture ends. The devolution to Karnataka, which wit-nessed significant growth from Rs 14,809 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 25 895

15 to Rs 35,895 crore in 2018-19, has remained around Rs 32,155 core in the last five financial

The change in The change in methodology for horizontal allocation of the pool of all taxes; adoption of GST with limited tax autonomy and fiscal expects. and fiscal space to States: depriving States of their le gitimate share of revenue from cess and duties, were partially respon-sible for reduction in share, result ing in an estimat-ed loss of Rs 1.87 ed loss of Rs 1.87 lakh crore in the process. Similarly, grant-in-aid to the State has been hovering around Rs 16,583 crore

since 2016-17, and is expected to be lower in 2024-25 at Rs 15,299 crore. Therefore, management of the fiscal house was truly a challenge.

In this background, the

budget created some interesting expectations amid opposition to the five guaropposition to the five guar-antees provided by the gov-ernment. It was managed prudently in the last budget. Along with the five guaran-tee schemes, works worth Rs 21,168 crore and Rs 2,230 crore were approved for in-clusive and accelerated

development.

In the growth decomposition of the state economy, the services sector registered a growth of 8.7 per cent. However, the industrial sector grow at a lightly. cent. However, the industry al sector grew at a slightly lower rate of 7.5 per cent, but performance of the ag-riculture sector registered a decline to 1.8 per cent due to bad weather. Even with this, the FDI recorded an impres-sive addition of \$2.8 billion sive addition of \$2.8 billion. This year, the State tax revenue has shown a substan-tial gain and reached Rs 1,89,893 crore, that is 17.58 per cent higher than the re-vised estimate.

The most important as-

pect of this budget was fo-cus on revenue, with total revenue receipts pegged at Rs 2,63,177 crore, which is over 16 per cent higher than the revised estimate of 2023-24. Of the total revenue, Central government grants are expected to be Rs 15,299 crore. This indicates an in-telligent manoeuvring in crore. This indicates an in-telligent manoeuvring in maintaining revenue and fiscal deficits within the FRBM limit. Since he did not increase taxes, the rev-enue account deficit stands at Rs 27,353 crore on higher provision for salaries and provision for salaries and pensions, to the tune of Rs pensions, to the tune of Rs 80,434 crore and Rs 32,355 crore, due for the Seventh Pay Commission. A quick analysis of emerg-ing deficits is more due to

shortage of revenue sources and difficulties in garnering revenue in the face of Cenrevenue in the face of Central grants. Even under this stressful revenue situation, the finance minister has managed to keep fiscal deficit well within the FRBM re-

quirement of below 3% of the GSDP. Given the GSDP. Given the slender spaces under the stress of revenue gener-ation and promis-es to keep the budget is cau-tiously managed without any sig-vificant too unin without any sig-nificant step-up in taxes, and putting the people of Kar-nataka in econom-ic difficulty.

The revenue deficit is about Rs 27,354 crore, and is higher than the revised estimate of last year. Fiscal deficit is pegged at Rs 82,981 crore, which is 2.95 per cent of the GSDP. The CM stated that liabilities at the end of 2024-25 would be to the tune of Rs 6,65,095



An overall analysis of presentation of this budget presentation of this budget involved major challenges. This budget shows that 52 per cent of the total revenue comes from its own tax ef-forts but also shows 28 per cent borrowings to manage the books. The share of Central taxes and grants are estimated at about 16 per cent of the revenue. This can be called a growth-inducing budget with \$2.8 billion Foreign Direct Investment flowing in, and good encouragement to industries and services. It has a strong well-fare angle with allocations to minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Chief Minister looks forward to a prosperous Karnataka, and with a smart move for the forth-coming election, has providtral taxes and grants are esti

smart move for the forth-coming election, has provid-ed support to farmers, wom-en, youth and marginalized sections. This will be seen as growth orientation with inherent political gains.



RS Deshpande

Visiting Professor at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru



Khalil Shaha Researcher, Institute for Social and Economic Change Email: khalil@isec.ac.in

Source: The New Indian Express, p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

Budget preserves guarantees

▼arnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has a reputation as a prudent finance minister of the state, but the constraints he is facing now are evident in the budget proposals for 2024-25 presented by him in the Assembly on Friday. Though, as the Chief Minister himself says, the state is in good financial health, he has estimated a revenue deficit of Rs 27,354 crore for the coming fiscal as against Rs 13,951 crore last year. In contrast, his predecessor Basavaraj Bommai had presented a Rs 400-crore revenue surplus in his interim budget in February 2023. What's weighing down Siddaramaiah, who incidentally presented the state's first revenue-surplus budget many years ago, are the five guarantees or electoral promises implemented by his government, which are estimated to consume Rs 52,000 crore. This has left very little room for manoeuvring. However, Siddaramaiah has managed to keep the fiscal deficit at 2.95% of the GSDP, and thus within the 3% cap prescribed by the Karnataka Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2002. While the Chief Minister has promised that the state will once again have a revenue surplus in the next two years, a concrete action plan or indication of a pathway for achieving the

same is missing, save for a proposal to increase excise revenue to Rs 38,000 crore, as against the present collection of about Rs 28,000 crore, by rationalising duty slabs. Instead, the government should have thought of new revenue streams, such as boosting income from tourism.

The Chief Minister has apportioned blame for the state's distress to the Centre, accusing it of denying Karnataka its rightful share of tax

CM has proved critics wrong, but should be mindful of expanding revenue deficit

revenue. The state had, he noted, lost Rs 59,274 crore due to "unscientific" implementation of GST and another Rs 62,000 crore due to lower devolution of tax revenues to the state. The Centre has also failed to release special grants of Rs 11,596 crore recommended by the Finance Commission. Despite this, Siddaramaiah said, he had set aside Rs 1,20,373 crore for welfare projects. Another worrying factor is the 1.8% negative growth of the agriculture sector due to drought, while the service sector, which is the biggest contributor to the state exchequer, grew by 8.7% and the industrial sector by 7.5%. The budget could have incorporated some proposals to step up manufacturing to shift surplus labour in the agriculture sector while the latter revives.

Some of the highlights include consolidation of various farmer schemes, setting up of 'Kisan Mall', providing record crop loans to farmers, Rs 850 crore for school infrastructure, and the eternal promise of developing Bengaluru into a world-class city. While the budget may not have proposed anything extraordinary, Siddaramaiah has managed to keep the five guarantees going, proving wrong critics who had predicted that the government would not be able to sustain these schemes for long.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.10, Feb, 17, 2024

Siddaramaiah defends hefty borrowing, welfare spending

Important To Invest In Poverty Alleviation, Devpt, Says CM

TEAM TO

Bengaluru: Chief minister Siddaramaiah defended his govt's fiscal decisions following the presentation of his 15th budget on Friday, justifying the borrowing of Rs 1 lakh crore and expenditures of Rs 1.3 lakh crore on welfare programmes as essential for development. He hinted that the increase in expenditure was due to the minimal share allocated to the state by the Union govt.

Addressing the post budget press conference, Siddaramaiah responded to criticism regarding the Congress govt's reliance on borrowing to fulfil its electoral promises, by emphasising the importance of investing in poverty alleviation, as part of the development agenda.



Acknowledging that his administration has surpassed the Rs 1 lakh crore borrowing threshold, Siddaramaiah compared his borrowing levels to those of his predecessor, Basavaraj Bommai, asserting that the increase was necessary for the state's development. Despite the increase in borrowing, Siddaramaiah assured that Karnataka's debt remained within the limits prescribed by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2002, standing at 23.7% of the gross state domestic product (GSDP). The chief minister hinted that the escalation in borrowing was due to financial constraints imposed on Karnataka due to inadequate funds from the GST share from the central govt, and reduced devolution of funds, despite the 15th Finance Commission's recommendations in this regard.

Highlighting disparities in distribution of funds, Siddaramaiah pointed out that Karnataka received only 33% of its budget from the central govt, while states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar got 51% and 73%, respectively. He quantity of the state of the s



PLANNING FINANCES: Chief minister Siddaramaiah presents his 15th State Budget at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Friday

86% polling for council byelection

The byelection to the legislative council from Bengaluru Teachers' constituency on Friday witnessed 86% turnout. Of the total 19,142 votes, 16,544 teachers exercised their franchise.

The results will be announced Tuesday.

The byelection saw a direct fight between Congress' Puttanna and BJP-JD(S) alliance candidate AP Ranganath. Puttanna, who was elected on a BJP ticket, had resigned to unsuccessfully contest the assembly elections held in 2023 on a Congress ticket. He had lost to BJP's S Suresh Kumar from Rajajinagar.

The bypoll is a litmus test for the BJP-JD(S) alliance that was recently forged keeping the Lok Sabha elections in mind. A victory will give both the parties, whose morale was down after their defeat in the 2023 assembly elections, a much-needed boost to face the Lok Sabha polls. TNN

estioned the fairness of this distribution. Responding to allegations from the opposition, that the budget favoured minority communities, Siddaramaiah dismissed the claims, stating allocation for minority groups, including Muslims, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists, amounted to approximately Rs 3,000 crore, which accounted to less than 1% of the total budget. He accused the BJP of politicising the issue without substantiated evidence.

Opposition walks out as CM attacks Centre

In his budget speech at the assembly, Siddaramaiah continued his critique of the central govt's alleged reduction in central devolution and taxes. This led to a walkout by BJP-JD(S) MLAs in protest.

Highlighting the economic injustice to the state in his 136-page speech for over three hours, Siddaramaiah asserted that Karnataka had

suffered a significant financial setback, amounting to Rs 59,274 crore over the last seven years, attributing it to what he termed, "unscientific implementation of GST by the Centre"

Additionally, he claimed the state incurred a loss of approximately Rs 62,098 crore due to changes in allocation formula by the 15th Finance Commission.

Siddaramaiah accused the Union govt of withholding cess and surcharges, resulting in an additional loss of Rs 45,322 crore over the same period.

The CM alleged that despite collecting Rs 11,34,301 crore in cess and surcharges since 2017-18, the Centre failed to allocate any portion to the states.

In a pointed allegation, Siddaramaiah asserted that the Centre disregarded the 15th Finance Commission's recommendation to provide Rs 5,495 crore as special grants to Karnataka, along with an additional Rs 6,000 crore earmarked for the development of Bengaluru.

Moreover, he criticised the Centre for its failure to release Rs 5,300 crore, as announced in the 2023-24 budget, for implementation of the Upper Bhadra project. Siddaramaiah highlighted the discrepancy between promises made by the previous BJP govt, which claimed the project would be declared a national one, and its current status. The opposition, led by BJP members, denounced Siddaramaiah's accusations, alleging he was misleading the public to conceal his failures. Refuting Siddaramaiah's claims regarding the 15th Finance Commission's recommendations, opposition leader R Ashoka contended that the state had received more funds under the Modi govt, compared to the UPA regime.

The dissent culminated in a walkout by opposition MLAs after five minutes of protest. They raised slogans outside the assembly hall against the budget, saying that it shows the state's coffers are empty. They also sang a song in chorus, and chanted, "Enilla, enilla, Siddaramaiahana budgetinalli enilla." (There is nothing in Siddaramaiah's budget).

CM laid foundation for destructive times: HDK

Former CM HD Kumaraswamy, who accompanied the BJP legislators, said, "Siddaramaiah has laid the foundation for 'vinashakaala' (destructive time) of Karnataka through this budget. He has vented his anger against the seven crore people of the state." Ashoka said Karnataka will become "bankrupt like Pakistan" with this budget. Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai said Siddaramaiah has presented a political budget laced with a bundle of lies to cover up his failures. "Siddaramaiah's budget is filled with falsehoods, despair and dismal promises, said deputy opposition leader Aravind Bellad.

Source: The Times of India, p.7, Feb. 17, 2024

Aligning the budget with Congress' LS polls strategy



NE look at the cover page of Siddaramaiah's budget copy gives a clear impression that it was meant to be a political statement as much as a financial plan for the com-

litical statement as much as a financial plan for the coming fiscal.

With the image of the Preamble of the Indian Constitution and stripes of yellow and red — the colours of the Karnataka flag — stretching below it on the cover page, the budget appeared to be ripe with political symbolism.

Social welfare schemes continued to be the focal ymbolism. Social welfare schemes continued to be the focal point of Siddaramaiah's budget. There was also a push for infrastructure development, which had taken a backseat in the first year of his second tenure as Chief Minister. Despite the five guarantee schemes taking a lion's share of Rs 52,000 crore, limiting his manoeurability, the CM appeared to have tried his best to strike a fine balance between social services and development although it meant an social services and develop ment, although it meant an increase in borrowings. The total budget outlay was Rs

total budget outlay was Rs 3.71 lakh crore.

The budget gave the impression that it was not just an exercise to present the financial statement and the roadmap for the next year with the CM trying to set the tone for the Congress' Lok Sabha elections campaign.

Although the state government is justified in demanding Karnataka's share of taxes and the Central grants, the budget speech, at times.

the budget speech, at times, sounded more stinging than an election campaign address.
"Our UPA government

"Our UPA government during its tenure at Centre had taken up people-centric schemes and legislation to provide food security, health-care, education, employment, and housing to bring justice to the poor. However, the anti-people decisions of the (BJP-ruled) Central government for the last 10 years have led to alarming developments such as widening inequality, the concentrainequality, the concentra-tion of wealth in fewer hands, and crony capital-ism," the CM stated in his ism," the CM stated in his budget speech. He accused the Centre of abdicating its responsibility, and went on to say that guarantee schemes were the result of feedback obtained during the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Taking such an aggressive and confrontational stance in the state budget is a rarity in Karnataka. Siddaramaiah's political diatribe in the Judget against the Union

and state and a state of the budget against the Union Government appeared to be in tune with his party's efforts to set a narrative against the Union Government and the BJP. Even in the post-budget press conference, the CM and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar were at their combative best when they launched a tirade against the Centre. Since the Lok Sabha polls will be mostly centred around Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his gov-

Narendra Modi and his gov-ernment's performance, Congress leaders in the state have been trying to drive home the point that the Centre is biased against Karna-taka in devolution of taxes. They took the fight to the na-tional capital and are using every available platform, in-cluding the state budget, to amplify their argument. However, the BJP has countered the government's claims stating that the state got more grants under the NDA government in the last 10 years compared to that of the UPA rule from 2004 to

the UPA rule from 2004 to 2014.

In the run-up to the assembly polls last year, the Congress effectively built a narrative around a "40% commission" charge against the then BJP government in the state and persuaded the voters with five guarantee schemes. This time around, it seems to be working hard to set a narrative against the Centre, even as it builds on the gains made by implementing the guarantee schemes.

Though he presented a

menting the guarantee schemes.

Though he presented a revenue deficit budget, Siddaramaiah increased the budgetary allocation for welfare programmes to Rs 1,20,373 crore. Even during his first tenure as the CM, from 2013-18, Siddaramaiah had implemented several welfare programmes. This time, the emphasis on welfare programmes gels well with the party's election strategy. strategy.



Apartfrom trying to brand the Centre as being unfair to Karnataka and emphasising its welfare programmes that put money directly in the hands of beneficiaries, many infrastructure projects in Bengaluru too seem to be aligned with the Congress's political strategy to end BJP's dominance in the IT City.

Deputy Chief Minister Shivakumar is also the Ben-galuru Development Minister and has managed to get a good number of infrastrucgood number of infrastruc-ture works included in the budget. His leadership will be put to test in the city where BJP currently holds three of the four Lok Sabha seats (Bengaluru Rural is held by Congress MP DK Suresh).

By the time work on any of the infrastructure projects announced in the budget can start, the Lok Sabha elections would have been announced. In any

been announced. In any case, immediately after the

case, immediately after the ongoing budget session of the state legislature ends on Friday, focus will completely shift to the Lok Sabha polls. Notwithstanding the political developments, the government should ensure that infrastructure works do not remain only on paper. Ambitious projects like tumel roads in Bengaluru need to be taken forward without compromising on safety ascompromising on safety aspects and addressing the concerns expressed by ex-perts over its feasibility.

Source: The New Indian Express, p. 4, Feb. 18, 2024

States and tax shares: The fight for fiscal space

As southern states demand higher shares in the devolution of taxes, what can work in Karnataka's favour?

M GOVINDA RAO

he relationship between the Union and southern states in general, and Karnataka in particular, has come under considerable strain in recent days. At the heart of the tension is the substantial erosion in the share of the state in the devolution of Union taxes from 4.713% under the 14th Finance Commission to 3.647% under the 15th. Accusations have been flying thick and fast. The state government has accused the Union government of denying it the amount of money that it would have accrued, had the 14th Commission's formula been

The Union government stated that even the Raghuram Rajan Committee for evolving a composite development index of states had recommended a share of 3.713% in the allocation of development assistance similar to the 15th Finance Commission. Rajan's committee was appointed in 2013 and the 14th Finance Commission was submitted after that. Nevertheless, the charges and counter-charges have reached a feverish pitch, with a Member of Parliament going to the extent of suggesting secession.

It is curious that while the report of the 15th Finance Commission was submitted in October 2020 for the period covering 2021-22 to 2025-26, and was implemented from 2021-22, the discussion on the reduction



Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM D K Shivakumar and other Karnataka Congress leaders during a protest against the Centre in New Delhi last week. PTI

in the tax share has raised its head only now, after three years following the presentation of the 15th Finance Commission in the Parliament.

The reasons for this are (i) BJP, which was ruling until the elections, did not want to raise the issue with the Union government and the Congress came to power after the elections, (ii) the implementation of five election guarantees by the ruling party creates substantial fiscal pressure on the state government as it costs almost Rs 50,000 crore and (iii) the 16th Finance Commission has just been appointed, so the state has to gear up to highlight the "injustice" caused to it by the 15th Commission and the Union government, and argue for larger transfers in its recommendation.

The fact of the matter is that the

state got a 1.066% lesser share of tax devolution under the 15th Finance Commission as compared to the 14th. In fact, under the 14th Commission, the state received the highest share as compared to the 12th (4.459), 13th (4.328), and 15th (3.647).

The major reason for the state receiving a lower share under the 15th Commission is that the distance from the highest per capita income state was much lower than that under the 14th Finance Commission.

The 14th Finance Commission took the average per capita income for three years 2010-13, but Karnataka's per capita income was Rs 76,781, when the highest (Haryana's) was Rs. 1,16,179. Karnataka's rank was 13 among 28 states.

► Tax devolution, Page 4

Continued...

States and tax shares: The fight for fiscal space

Tax devolution, Page 1

Besides, with 7.56% weightage assigned to the forest cover, the state's share increased appreciably from the previous Commissions. In contrast, during the three years 2016-19 which the 15th Finance Commission took, Karnataka's rank in per capita income was fifth, and if the two small states of Goa and Sikkim are excluded, the comparable per capita income in Karnataka (Rs 2,04,419) was behind only Haryana (Rs 2,25,547) and Kerala (Rs 2,05,114).

Even when the Commission gave 10% weightage to the forsest cover and 12.5% weightage to fertility improvement, the share of the state reduced by 1.066%. There is a lot of discussion that while the residents of the state pay much more in taxes than they get in return, making a political appeal is not rooted either in federal prin-

ciples nor in the intent of the Constitutional provision for appointing the Finance Commission by the president every five years (or earlier if required under Article 280).

The rationale for tax devolution, according to federal principles, is to offset the vertical fiscal imbalance between the revenue powers and expenditure responsibilities of the Union and state governments and to enable every state to provide comparable levels of public services mandated in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution at comparable revenue effort.

revenue effort.

If it is merely returning the tax collections to the state based on the origin, you do not require an expert body like the Finance Commission to apply a uniform approach in its assessment and be impartial between the Union and states.

This is a classic case of 'competitive federalism', where

both the Union and the states vertically and individual states horizontally compete with one another to claim larger fiscal space. The Finance Commission has the difficult task of facilitating the negotiation and bargaining to resolve the best possible compromise.

In this situation, every state will put forward its arguments to claim a larger share of the tax devolution in the memorandum submitted to the Finance Commission. Naturally, every state will build up a case to convince the Commission of the alleged injustices meted out to it in the past and how these should be corrected in its report for the ensuing five years. Therefore, it is not surprising that the southern states have raised a banner of complaints on the alleged unfair treatment meted out to them. Each state will attempt to convince the 16th Finance Commission in their

memorandums that it should consider those factors that are favourable to it.

Karnataka's case

As far as Karnataka is concerned, the growth of per capita income has been impressive, and that can be a cause for concern. The Finance Commission uses data on comparable per capita income especially estimated for this purpose by the National Statistical Organisation. As mentioned earlier, the per capita income of Karnataka has been rising much faster than that of the state with the highest per capita income. Karnataka's rank has improved from 13th to fifth in six years. Out of these five, since Goa and Sikkim are not reference states, Karnataka's position in the last Commission was evaluated as third. It will not be surprising if we find that Karnataka's per capita income has now exceeded even

that of Haryana, in which case, there will be further erosion in the shares.

Tobe fair, the distance from the highest per capita income is taken in the formula to represent revenue disability. As export incomes in the Gross State Domestic Product do notyield taxes, the state should make a plea that the per capia income variable used in the formula should exclude income from exports. Karnataka has the largest export income from services and its exclusion from per capita income could work out favourably and this is conceptually a correct argument.

ment. Similarly, when there is so much talk about achieving sustainable development goals and countering carbon emissions, the state could ask for greater weightage to be given to the forest cover in the formula. There are three arguments for the inclusion of this

factor in tax devolution.

First, areas covered by forests do not generate income or tax revenue as there is a ban on the felling of trees. Besides this revenue disability, there is a cost disability of providing public services to the sparse population residing in the fringes of forests and there are also additional costs of maintaining the forest cover. Finally, forest cover is a global public good that deserves to be rewarded.

In addition, the state should also ask for additional grants for the provision of infrastructure and services in millennium cities like Bengaluru, which is a magnet of economic activity.

(The author is a councillor at Takshashila Institution. His past positions include Member, 14th Finance Commission and Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi. The views are personal).

Source: Deccan Herald, p.1&4, Feb, 18, 2024

K'aka fares well on Jan Dhan Yojana, says study

PURAN CHOUDHARY @Bengaluru

A team comprising four professors from Bangalore University (BU) conducted an extensive review over the past six months on the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yoiana in Karnataka, Rajasthan, and West Bengal and found Karnataka fairs comparatively well on the usage of government services and digital literacy. The report emphasised the need for appropriate technological or regulatory interventions.

Speaking to TNIE, Prof SR Keshav of the varsity said that the review was done between marginalised communities such as ST, SC, OBC, women, disabled, and the third gender. In each of the states, three districts that have the maximum presence of underprivileged communities were selected. In Karnataka, Kolar, Ballari, and Dakshina Kannada were identified to check if the intended financial inclusion has happened.

"We have submitted the re-

port to the Indian Council of Social Science Research (IC-SSR) and found that Karnataka fairs better on the Jan Dhan implementation than the other two states. Relatively, the state also performed better on average daily wages earned by labourers – about Rs 350-400.

compared to Rajasthan which we found to be Rs 250-300," he said.

The extensive report also talks about the need for suitable policy changes regarding inaccessibility to other bank-

ing services such as insurance or overdraft facilities, despite these communities opening bank accounts.

Prof Keshav also highlighted that the government should spearhead the promotion of financial literacy, as many still struggle in rural areas.

"Just as UPI transactions are announced on stalls and shops same intervention can be adopted in banks and ATMs when an amount is withdrawn to curb malpractices," he said, adding that many accuse the banking cor-

KEY POINTS

According to the review, approximately 52 crore Jan Dhan account holders have benefited from the scheme, with around 98% of the population accessing banking facilities. The report also highlights government initiatives and subsidies directly reaching account holders through DBT, enabling financial inclusion.

respondents of fraud.

Revealing some details of the survey He said that almost 99% of the population has a Jan Dhan account. The third gender and tribals who live in hamlets were some of the categories that did not have the accounts, he said.

Recalling a case study, Prof Keshav added that a family in Rajasthan did not have an account and could be counted as "the poorest of the poor" who had seven daughters and the father was unemployed. "But this is only 1% of the population," he asserted. The elderly population has greatly benefited as they received their subsidies and pensions directly to their accounts. One-third of the population has the perception that was below poverty levels have come out of poverty (not disclosing exact numbers as the report is still under review.)

However, the trend noticed is that the marginalised section is making deposits. They use the account for Direct Bank Transfers and withdrawals as they don't have income to deposit.

"We also identified the demerits of RuPay cards. Some elders complained that they are not able to use those cards and are being accessed by their children," Prof Keshav explained.



Just as UPI transactions are announced on stalls and shops, same intervention can be adopted in banks and ATMs when an amount is withdrawn to curb malpractices

- Prof SR Keshav, BU

Source: The New Indian Express, p. 7, Feb. 18, 2024

Implementation of 7th pay scale for govt. staff will lead to severe financial stress on State: MTFP

'Switching back to Old Pension Scheme will be fiscally disastrous for State's finances'

Nagesh Prabhu BENGALURU

he implementation of the 7th Pay Commission for State government employees can lead to steep increase in committed expenditure over the next several years and would pose a severe challenge in maintaining fiscal deficit targets of the State in coming years, said Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) for 2024-2028.

Depending on the fitment factor, the additional financial implication of implementing 7th pay scale would range between ₹15,000 crore and ₹20,000 crore for the first year of implementation.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in his Budget (2024-25) said that the 7th Pay Commission is formed for revision of pay-scale of government employees and after receiving a report from the commission, it would be examined and suitable action taken.

The State government has been spending ₹1,59,526 crore for committed expenditure such as salaries, pensions, interest payments, and administrative expenses. Committed expenditure constituted 61% of the revenue receipts of ₹2,63,178 crore.

According to MTFP, ₹80,434 crore is needed for salaries, ₹32,355 crore for Non-scheme-based committed expenditure

	2022-23	2023-24 RE*	2024-25 BE*
Salaries	50,061	65,003	80,434
Pensions	24,020	25,116	32,355
Interest payments	29,629	31,598	40,263
Admin expenses	6,413	6,335	6,474
Total	1,10,123	1,28,052	1,59,526
Revenue receipts	2,29,080	2,26,780	2,63,178
Share	48%	56%	61%

*RE- Revised estimate *BE- Budget estimate

Capital expenditure

Capital expellulture				
Year	Budget size	Capital Expenditure	Share	
2024-25	3,71,383	55,877	15.0%	
2023-24 July	3,27,747	54,374	16.5%	
2023-24 Feb.	3,09,182	61,234	19.8%	
2022-23	2,65,720	46,955	17.6%	
2021-22	2,46,207	44,237	17.9%	
2020-21	2,37,893	46,512	19.5%	

*Numbers are in crores

Scheme-based committed expenditure

	2022-23	2023-24 RE	2024-25 BE
Subsidy and financial assistance	34,749	27,732	25,904
Guarantee schemes	_	33,468	52,009
Social security pension	9543	10,822	10,230
Grant-in aid	3,226	2,550	2,367
Devolution to local bodies	23,336	21,191	20,447
Total	70,854	95,764	1,10,957
Revenue receipts	2,29,080	2,26,780	2,63,178
Share	31%	42%	42%

pensions, ₹40,263 crore for interest payments, and ₹6,474 crore for administrative expenses for the year 2024-25. It cautioned the government that committed expenditure was witnessing steeper yearon-year increase that directly influenced overall fiscal health of the government. The MTFP also said that switching back to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) would be fiscally disastrous for the State finances in the long term and would lead to cutting back on welfare and development

expenditure.

Most of the States, including Karnataka, have switched to New Pension Scheme (NPS). A recent report by the Reserve Bank of India on this matter has warned against switching back to OPS and the cumulative fiscal burden on OPS could be as high as 4.5 times that of NPS, MTFP said. Mr. Siddaramaiah had promised government employees on bringing back OPS.

Health of Escoms

The MTFP said the finan-

cial health of Karnataka's Electricity Supply Companies (Escoms) and Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd. (KPCL) raised significant concerns about the State's fiscal stability.

As of December 2023, loan guarantee issued by the State government for Escoms and KPCL has reached ₹36,657 crore.

Escoms are burdened by substantially outstanding power purchase dues, loans, and accumulated losses exceeding ₹65,282 crore. KPCL faced challenges with outstanding loans surpassing ₹31,145 crore

"These precarious financial positions pose substantial risks, as potential defaults on guaranteed loans could trigger significant liabilities," MTFP said.

It said that the government should take steps to improve revenue collection to reduce revenue deficit and create more space for welfare programmes.

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 18, 2024

Share of capital expenditure shrinks, but guarantees not only reason behind it

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj

BENGALURU

The share of capital expenditure to the total outlay of the Budget Chief Minister Siddaramaiah presented on Friday has come down to 15% from 16.5% in the Budget he presented in July 2023. Before that, in the Budget presented by Basavaraj Bommai in February 2023, just before the Assembly polls, the share of capital expenditure to the total outlay was 19.8%, the highest in a decade. This was a Budget prior to the introduction of the guarantee schemes.

But, contrary to popular perception, it is not the guarantee schemes alone, but salaries, pensions, and interest payment on loans that have ballooned significantly reducing funds for capital expenditure.

The share of schemebased committed expenditure, which are linked to specific schemes or programmes, which saw a big jump from 31% in 2022-23 to 42% in 2023-24, when guarantee schemes were introduced, has remained a constant at 42% in 2024-25 as well. But the share of non-scheme-based committed expenditure, which is essentially salaries, pensions, loan repayments, and other administrative expenses, has risen from 56% in 2023-24 to 61% in 2024-25.

However, considering

the absolute numbers, the Medium Term Fiscal Plan 2024-28 states: "The government's commitment to boost economic growth by investing in infrastructure development has been reflected in the constant raise in capital expenditure of the State." But it lists "focus towards increasing the capital expenditure" as one of the strategic priorities of the government in 2024-25.

Capital expenditure has increased in terms of absolute numbers compared to July 2023 Budget, where it was pegged at ₹54,374 crore. It is now estimated to be ₹55,877 crore. But this is a drop in terms of the share of capital expenditure of the total outlay. Even in terms of absolute numbers, it is a drop from Budget estimates of February 2023, in which it was pegged at ₹61,234 crore.

Though the share of capital expenditure of the total Budget outlay - 15% for 2024-25 - is lower when compared to the last few Budgets, data shows that Mr. Siddaramaiah himself presented Budgets in 2014-15 and 2015-16 where the share of capital expenditure was lower than 15%.

While the total outlay of the Karnataka Budget rose by 205% from 2013-14 to 2024-25, capital expenditure also increased by 204% in the same period, when absolutely numbers are taken into account.

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 18, 2024

Tourist numbers rise, but problems persist

Some reasons for the surge in tourists to Karnataka last year are revenge tourism, a trend that emerged after COVID-19, and the enterprising nature of the private sector, but while numbers continue to grow, the challenges surrounding the sector, namely marketing and infrastructure, remain

he year 2023 was a good one for tou-rism in Karnataka. The State had 28.45 crore visitors, which is 10 crore more than the previous year (18 crore). While the numbers continue to grow, the challenges surrounding the tourism sector, namely marketing and infrastructure, remain

frastructure, remain.
The reason for the surge
in tourists is still said to be
revenge tourism, a trend
that emerged after CO-VID-19. Ram Prasath Mano-har, Director, Tourism De-partment, told The Hindu
that along with revenge
tourism, the promotions of
the department and the introduction of Shakti troduction of Shakti scheme, where women

can travel for free in State-run buses, contributed partly to the surge. Other stakeholders attri-bute it to the enterprising nature of the private sector in the last year to lure tou-rists via deals and other off-ers.

Sanjar Imam, president, Sanjar imam, president, Karnataka Tourism Forum, pointed out how there could have been more tou-rists in the State if there more infrastructure

Need for more hotels

"A lot of people could not travel during the peak sea-sons as most hotels were running at capacity. It is a shame if people wanting to shame if people wanting to come to Karnataka cannot come because of this. The government should play its



A crowd on Tannirbayi beach in Mangaluru, In 2023, Karnataka had

by encouraging private sector," he said.
K. Syama Raju, president, Karnataka Tourism Society, also agreed that tier-2 destinations need more hotels. "While there are lots of hotels in places

like Mysuru and Hassan, we need good hotels in places like Hampi, Halebi-du, and Vijayapura. The government has given in-dustry status to classified hotels, but even normal hotels should get it and we

are requesting for it," he said. He also said that if the government provides land, then private parties will de-velop hotels in under the model.

model. The capacity problem The capacity problem also extends to transport options, Mr. Imam said. "With government buses not being able to ferry all the tourists, even here they should encourage private players by giving them good-term loans," he said. He added that these pro-blems should be imme-diately addressed, other-wise the State will lose its

wise the State will lose its edge in tourism.
"If these problems are not solved and we do not capitalise on the surge we have seen this year, then the numbers will slide next year. Once they (tourists) year. Once they (tourists) pick up another destina-

tion, we will end up los-ing," Mr. Imam said.
Out of the 28.45 core visitors in 2023, only a little over 4 lakh were foreign tourists. Although this is an improvement from the 1.28 lakh foreign tourists. 30 lakh foreign tourists in 2022, stakeholders con-stantly say that there is

scope for improvement. "We need more tourists from other countries as well as other States. We need more attractions for need more attractions for this. For instance, there was not much to see in Bengaluru and now the Nandi ropeway is coming up which will boost tou-rism. In Friday's State Bud-get, some more ropeways, a lot of spiritual tourism, watersports and adventure tourism development were announced and most imannounced and most importantly, permission was

given for continuing com-mercial operations till 1 a.m. in Bengaluru, which might end up increasing the number of outside visi-tors," Mr. Raju said. "We also need good highway facilities. Wash-rooms and other basic

rooms and other basic amenities on State high-ways are also essential to attract more tourists," he

Referring to the Union Budget speech which men-tioned marketing Indian tourist destinations on a tioned marketing Indian tourist destinations on a global level, Mr. Imam said, "States should also take a leaf out of it and do their bit and market destinations on a large scale. In Karnataka, marketing happens in spurts (when compared to other states) whereas a sustained campaign. reas a sustained campaign

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, Feb. 18, 2024

Lower-priced IML brands may cost more, premium ones less

K'taka govt to rationalise liquor tax slabs to make them competitive with other states

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

THE state government may lower the Additional Excise Duty (AED) on premium brands and reportedly increase the tax marginally on lower excise slabs (2 to 5) of alcohol to gain parity with other southern states where prices of liquor in the lower segment are much higher than in Karnataka.

CM Siddaramaiah, in his budget speech on Friday, said that "in order to rationalise tax slabs and make them competitive with neighbouring states, the tax slabs for IML and beer will be revised.

In July last, he announced a 20% hike in AED on all 18 slabs of IML and a 10% hike in beer prices in his budget. The government increased beer prices by another 10% on Feb 1.

Alcohol in Karnataka is priced and taxed according to its slab. There are 18 slabs, with the cheapest alcohol falling in the first and the most expensive IML in the 18th.

The steep hike in AED on IML and beer has led to a corresponding increase in the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) in the state. Top brands of IML are priced much higher in Karnataka than other states because of various reasons, including high taxes. The cost of a premium brand of Scotch whisky is around Rs 7,000 in Karnataka, whereas it is much lower -- from

Rs 2,300 in Gurugram to Rs 4,000 in Mumbai, Rs 4,500 in Hyderabad, Rs 4,700 in Chennai and Rs 3,000 in Goa.

"Premium IML brands in

Karnataka are so expensive that people buy them from neighbouring states. The diversion of trade has negatively impacted the alcohol industry. It is high time that measures are put in place to revise the prices though it would be a tall order to match with other states," sources said. Meanwhile, it is reliably learnt that the government may "marginally" increase the AED on the lower three slabs -- two to six -- of IML to not only gain par-

ity with other southern states, but

also to level out losses due to the 'proposed' reduction of AED in some premium segments. However, tax on the first slab may remain unchanged. A pint (180 ml) of IML in the first (lowest) slab costs around Rs 63.14 in Karnataka, whereas it is priced between Rs 110 and Rs 120 in neighbouring states. Of the 18 slabs, the second one alone contributes over 55% to the excise revenue.

According to excise statistics, 88% of IML sales come from the first five slabs. The rest from sixth to 18th slabs. "Any further increase on AED in the lower segments will have to be done keeping in mind the consumers. It will have to be a fine balancing act," the sources said.

The excise duty on the second slab, which was Rs 245 per bulk litre (BL), was revised to Rs 294 per BL in the CM's July budget. The CM has also raised the revenue collection target for the Excise Department for the 2024-25 fiscal at Rs 38,525 crore from Rs 36,000 crore in the previous fiscal against which, the department has so far raised Rs 34,000 crore.

Source: The New Indian Express, p. 5, Feb. 18, 2024

Karnataka has most EV charging stations in India, says report

In terms of the number of EVs, Uttar Pradesh is top with 7.45 lakh, followed by Maharashtra (4.15 lakh) and Karnataka (3.31 lakh)

Darshan Devaiah B.P. BENGALURU

arnataka tops the country in terms of public electric vehicle charging stations with 5,059, according to statistics from the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under the Union Ministry of Power.

Bengaluru Urban district has the most public charging stations with 4,281, which constitutes 85% of the charging infrastructure in the State.

In 2017, Karnataka became the pioneer in India by introducing the first electric vehicle (EV) policy. At present, it leads in the number of public charging stations, with Maharashtra (3,079), Delhi (1,886), Kerala (958), Tamil Nadu (643), Uttar Pradesh (583), and Rajasthan (500) following suit.

Meanwhile, in terms of the number of EVs, Uttar Pradesh is top with 7.45 lakh, followed by Maharashtra (4.15 lakh), and Karnataka (3.31 lakh).

According to Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom), the designated agency for establishing EV charging stations in Bengaluru, there has been a notable increase in the adoption of EVs.

An official from Bescom



Electric cars being charged at Bescom solar power integrated charging facility at K.R. Circle in Bengaluru. K. MURALI KUMAR

Break-up of EV charging stations

Karnataka	5,059
Maharashtra	3,079
Delhi	1,886
Kerala	958
Tamil Nadu	643
Uttar Pradesh	583
Rajasthan	500

Source: Bureau of Energy Efficiency

said that they have installed charging stations through various funding sources, including the Union government's Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme, Bescom's own capital expenditure, funds from the State Transport Department's green cess, and through a public-private partnership model.

The State government, last year, in a bid to create a robust electric vehicle ecosystem in Karnataka, unveiled a revised draft EV policy (2023-28), which aims to attract ₹50,000 crore in investment while creating job opportunities for one lakh people.

In Karnataka, the registered number of EVs has increased from 9,703 in 2020 to 33,306 in 2021, 95,892 in 2022, and 1.52 lakh in 2023.

Source: The Hindu, p. 5, Feb. 19, 2024

Karnataka looks to PPP to drive development

Sandeep.Moudgal @timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Chief minister Siddaramaiah's budget on Friday suggested tax revenue has reached saturation levels and the govt has very little leeway to increase duty on excise, stamps and registration, motor vehicle or commercial taxes to augment its revenue.

To circumvent this, Siddaramaiah has proposed more public-private partnerships (PPP) and asset monetisation to fund development work, a move that is likely to become a norm rather than an exception.

With the state looking to mop up every rupee possible, Siddaramaiah even decided to "rationalise" additional excise duty (AED) on premium brands of liquor and beer to increase sales and prevent people hopping across borders to neighbouring states to buy their tipple. The govt also marginally increased duty on lower-end IMFL brands to "offset any losses" in revenue collection.

Senior officials say the state expects tax revenue to grow by 12-14%, "the maximum possible". "Even then, we will fall short of covering the state's expenses which will only increase with inflation and population requirements," said a finance department official.



ON PAPER: Workers carry copies of the budget at Vidhana Soudha

The only possible "untapped" tax revenue proposal is to hike mining royalties and sales tax on petrol and diesel — which the govt insists is "lower" in Karnataka than in neighbouring states. But with elections around the corner, increasing sales tax on petrol and diesel is a no-go area at least until the end of Lok Sabha polls.

With nearly Rs 1.3 lakh crore of the total Rs 3.7 lakh crore budget outlay being spent on welfare schemes, the govt faces a serious dearth of funds for capital expenditure.

Basavaraj Rayareddi, Siddaramaiah's economic adviser, admitted that the govt has "no option" but to explore other avenues to drive development. "With committed expenses of Rs 54,000 crore on guarantees and another Rs 34,000 crore on salaries and pension of 7.1 lakh govt em-

ployees, newer avenues have to be explored," he said.

As a result, the government is now banking heavily on bringing private entities into govt projects under the PPP model and asset monetisation. LK Atheeq, additional chief secretary (finance), said the underlying principle of the budget is to focus on implementing the five guarantees, while also looking beyond it for long-term development by creating job opportunities.

"Resources required would be generated through enhancement of revenue growth, increase in non-tax revenue and harnessing private investment in infrastructure through the PPP model," Atheeq said. He said the govt must "carefully examine" asset monetisation opportunities.

During his budget speech, Siddaramaiah mentioned PPP under 11 separate schemes and used the words asset monetisation thrice. He also said: "An expert committee will be set up to analyse potential asset monetisation. The committee will also provide a roadmap for its implementation in a transparent and timely manner. This will help further mobilise nontax revenues."

Atheeq said: "If this works, we will look to turn revenue surplus in a couple of years."

Source: The Times of India, p.4, Feb. 19, 2024

State is not bankrupt and Budget size has increased despite guarantees: CM

The Hindu Bureau

BELAGAVI

Launching a counter-attack on political opponents who have alleged that the State has become bankrupt owing to the guarantee schemes, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said the State has not gone bankrupt and on the contrary, the Budget size has increased significantly.

Speaking after launching several projects and laying foundation stone for drinking water works in Haveri on Sunday, he said: "In my recent Budget, I announced ₹52,000 crore for the five guarantee schemes. We realised that the Budget size has increased from ₹46,000 crore. It is for everyone to see that despite the successful implementation of the guarantee schemes,

the State is not bankrupt. First the Opposition claimed that the guarantees would never be implemented. Then they started spreading lies that the State would go bankrupt if the promises were fulfilled. If the size of the Budget increases over last year's Budget, how can you say the State has gone bankrupt? I think the Opposition is misguided," he

"Nearly five crore of the total seven crore people of the State are benefiting from the guarantee schemes. Our aim is to see that the poor join the middle class using the benefits of various government schemes," he said.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated the Ashakirana project of the Health Department where the poor get free consultancy and diagnosis.

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 19, 2024

Thermal stations brace to produce more power as output dips in hydel units

State's electricity demand to peak in summer months

SHAKTINAGAR (RAICHUR DISTRICT), DHNS

with the production of hydel energy not on expected lines, there is immense pressure on the state's thermal power stations. And the officials at Raichur Thermal Power Station (RTPS) are gearing up for the task in right earnest.

The low water levels in the hydel reservoirs have led to a dip in output from the

to a dip in output from the

hydel stations.

To make matters worse, the demand for electricity is set to rise drastically in the coming

summer months of March,

summer months of March, April and beyond. The demand is already 300 million units (MU) a day.
Electricity generation has been stopped at the 210-megawatt unit II of RTPS due to a technical defect.
Livis III bet been short down.

Unit III has been shut down for annual maintenance works. Efforts are underway to resume power production in unit II after the repair work. Unit I has also stopped production. The other units

production. The other units are generating 880 MW of powerdaily. Sources said that gen-eration in RTPS and the Yarmarus thermal power



The Raichur thermal power station.

station (YTPS) will be increased to plug the shortfall from hydel stations as well as

solar and wind energy.
Currently, 1,060 MW of power daily is being produced from the two units of YTPS. 'Currently, there is no told DH.

coal shortage for RTPS, with a stock of 2.5 lakh metric tonnes. The eight units of RTPS are currently supplying 30 MU of electricity per day to the state grid," RTPS chief executive officer Suresh Babu

No power shortage in summer: George

Energy Minister KJ George assured the Legislative Council on Monday that there would be no power shortage in the state during the summer months.

Replying to a question by BJP's Chalavadi Narayanas-wamy, the minister said that the state was producing maximum power from the thermal power sources and managing the demand also through short-term purchase and barter system.

"Due to the rain defi-cit, there were some issues during August and September. But even during those months, we have met the demand through alterna-tive sources," said George.

"Considering the drought declared in the state and the estimated power demand, we have taken all necessary mea sures to supply electricity uninterruptedly. We will be getting 8.9 million units (MU) from Uttar Pradesh (MU) from Uttar Pradesh and Punjab every day till May 2024. At the same time, the Centre is provid-ing us an additional 302.36 MW of electricity between November 2023 and June

2024,"the minister said. George said he was convening a meeting with elected representatives soon, to understand problems pertaining to his ministry and to provide solutions for

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3A, Feb, 20, 2024

Charged city drives India's EV growth

With 5,723 Charging Stations, K'taka Surpasses Maha; EV Power Use Also Up

Niranjan.Kaggere @timesgroup.com

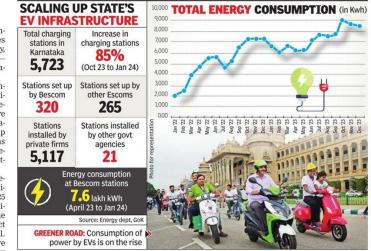
Bengaluru: With the number of electric vehicles (EVs) increasing sharply, Karnataka has the most — 5,723 — EV charging stations in the country.
"We've pipped Maharash-

"We've pipped Maharashtra, which held the top position all these days. At present, Karnataka has more than 5,500 EV charging stations. Efforts are on to set up more charging stations across Bescom limits," a senior official of the public utility said.

Sources in the energy department revealed that Reliance is also set to install 225 charging stations in BBMP limits, 150 in the rest of the Bengaluru Urban district and 75 in Bengaluru Rural. The company is said to have conducted a detailed survey in these areas.

Power consumption by EVs is also on the rise. While EVs account for 6-7% of the total energy consumption in Karnataka, Bengaluru alone accounts for over 5%.

Even though the consumption pattern initially rose month on month by more than 4,000 kWh, the increase has now stabilized at



2,000-3,000 kWh, according to senior energy department officials.

According to Bescom data, EV chargers set up and approved by the company have consumed a whopping 14.8 lakh kWh of power over the past two years.

The gradual increase in the consumption of energy by EVs was driven by the availability of charging points, according to Bescom engineers. "Until Sept 2023, Karnataka had only 584 charging stations - 265 set up by Escoms, 19 by other govt agencies and 300 by private companies," explained a senior Bescom engineer. The rise in energy consumption by EVs also helped Bescom mop up a revenue of Rs 58.5

lakh between April 2023 and Jan 2024.

Jan 2024.
Registration of EVs has shot up considerably in Bengaluru, barring a marginal dip towards the end of 2023, as per the transport department. Rising awareness among the public, multiple options in varieties and models, and affordable costs have prompted many people to

opt for EVs, according to ex-

Interestingly, Bengaluru has been fuelling the demand for electric cars. Sources in the energy department revealed that the city has been topping the national list for the highest registration of private cars.

"But when it comes to twowheelers, three-wheelers and public taxis, we've yet to pick up and are gradually making strides. The state govt is also keen on introducing e-buses to its fleet of both BMTC and KSRTC," the official revealed.

Karnataka's EV policy, apart from providing infrastructure, is drawing huge investments into the state, according to Ramesh Shivanna, a member of the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry and founder-member of Karnataka Renewable Energy Systems Manufacturers Association.

"Going by the recent Eco-

"Going by the recent Economic Survey, India is poised to become a global EV-manufacturing hub and Bengaluru is likely to grab a major share in it. Increasing energy consumption by EVs would eventually help the state and country achieve the renewable energy goals," he said.

Source: The Times of India, p.3, Feb. 20, 2024

Tata Group to invest ₹2,300 cr. in Karnataka to set up MRO and aviation R&D facilities

State government and Air India and Tata Advanced Systems Limited sign MoU; all projects will be located at Bengaluru airport, and also at Kolar and are expected to create 1,650 direct jobs

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

he Karnataka government and Tata Group companies Air India and Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for an investment of ₹2,300 crore, which is expected to create 1,650 direct jobs in the State.

MoU signed

The MoU was signed on Monday by S. Selvakumar, Principal Secretary, Industries Department, and Nipun Agrawal, Chief Commercial Officer of Air India, and Sukaran Singh, CEO of TASL, in the presence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Large and Medium Industries Minister M.B. Patil at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru.

As per the MoU, Tata Group will be setting up various manufacturing and R&D facilities in Karnataka.

MRO facility

Mr. Patil said Air India plans to establish an aircraft Maintenance Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility at Bengaluru airport with an investment of ₹1,300 crore.

The unit is expected to employ 1,200 persons.

"This will be first-of-itskind facility in India, and is expected to further open the doors for a full-scale MRO," he said.



Officials of the Karnataka government and Air India and Tata Advanced Systems Limited signed the MoU in the presence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Minister of Industries M.B. Patil in Bengaluru on Monday.



This will be first-of-its-kind facility in India, and is expected to further open the doors for a full-scale MRO.

M.B. PATIL,

Large and Medium Industries Minister

Air India would also create an aviation hub at Bengaluru airport to increase economic activity and air traffic through Bengaluru, the Minister added.

Tata Advanced Systems Limited plans to invest ₹1,000 crore across three projects: Aircraft Conversion (passenger to freight), gun manufacturing facility, and a Re-

search and Development centre in the aerospace & defence sector.

All these projects are the first of their kind in India. They will be located at Bengaluru airport and also at Kolar, according to the Minister.

"All these will further boost and strengthen the A&D (aerospace and defence) ecosystem of Karnataka," Mr. Patil said.

He assured the Tata Group of all support in resolving any challenges around the execution of these projects.

MRO scenario in India

Currently, commercial aircraft used in India are flown to Singapore, or Toulouse in France, or to other Maintenance Repair and Overhaul (MRO) overseas for major repairs involving technical, electrical or manufacturing

But when aircraft are not in a condition to fly, specialists are flown in to attend to such grounded machines.

India is currently the third largest civil aviation market in the world. The country now has over 700 commercial aircraft, as per Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Airlines, on average, spend up to 15% of their revenue on maintenance and repair, the second-highest cost after the fuel bill.

Most airlines have facilities, workshops or minor MRO capabilities in India to rectify small issues.

Source: The Hindu, p. 4, Feb. 20, 2024

IT fresher hiring at 3-yr low in FY24, dim outlook for Q1 FY25 overall

SHAKSHI JAIN BENGALURU, DHNS

ampus recruitment by major IT services companies in India hit a three-year low in the ongoing financial year 2023-24, and the overall hiring optics do not seem to be looking up at least till the first quarter of the next fiscal, staffing industry executives who spoke to DH, said. However, the situation may improve after that.

"July is when these companies will really begin to add people. There is no indicator to say that anything can change before that," Kamal Karanth, co-founder of specialist staffing firm Xpheno, said.

According to data from staffing firm TeamLease, the total number of freshers hired by Indian IT conglomerates in FY24 is estimated at 1,55,000, which is 33% lower compared to the 2,30,000 recruited in the previous fiscal. Indian IT services firms account for a bulk of the offer letters handed out to the 15,00,000 engineering graduates who pass out of colleges and universities in India every year.

Most of the large IT services companies visited fewer campuses this year,

Year	Freshers hired by IT companies	%
FY 2019	1,50,000	10%
FY 2020	2,80,000	19%
FY 2021	90,000	6%
FY 2022	4,00,000	26%
FY 2023	2,30,000	15%
FY 2024	1,55,000	10%

Source: TeamLease EdTech

and some aimed to hire only for niche roles in very limited numbers, explained Ankit Aggarwal, founder and chief executive of hiring platform Unstop.

"As tech spends reduce, the net staff addition in major IT firms have hit a 5-year low and are projected to remain negative for the rest of the financial year," TeamLease said.

This has compelled many in the class of 2024 to settle for tech roles at traditionally non-tech sectors such as manufacturing, banking, automotive and healthcare. Moreover, even as the higher rungs in the aspirational job pyramid, such as startups and global capability centres, have ramped up their fresher hiring numbers, the gap due to the reduced require-

ment at IT services firms still remains.

As a result, more tech graduates in India may be left devoid of a job till at least the June quarter. The average fresher compensation package of educational institutions is also expected to see a drop, industry watchers who spoke to *DH* said. This would be far more prominent for tier-II colleges, they added.

This has also resulted in higher scrutiny during the candidate assessment process, as companies face reduced competition for talent acquisition. "Companies are now looking for diametrically different skill sets. For example, a UI/UX designer with a degree in Psychology," Shantanu Rooj, founder and CEO, TeamLease EdTech, pointed out.

Hiring in the Indian IT sector has been on a downward trajectory since 2022-23 following a larger global economic slowdown, which compelled international clients to trim discretionary spending and optimise cost efficiency. A bulk of the revenue in the Indian technology industry flows from export of services to international markets such as North America and Europe.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.12, Feb, 21, 2024

Transforming Karnataka's Future

ithin the colossal budget
of Rs 3.71,383
crore for the
listed year
2024.23 the
fiscal year
2024.23 the
fiscal year
2024.25 the
first of the
first of the
principal programmes, alongside unveiling numerous additional propeliand developmental initiatives, all aimed appropeling Karnataka towardaddidaramatich, renowned for, his
daramatich, renowned

sivity across all strata of society.

After returning to power in May last year, the Congress government rolled out all five guarantee schemes promised to the people of the state in the run-up to the elections. The CM allocated Rs.2008 cover to CM allocated Rs.2008 cover to Mayor the State in the state Bhagya: Rs 8,079 crore; Snak-thi: Rs 5,015 crore; Yuva Ni-dhi; Rs 650 crore and Gruha Lakshmi: Rs 28,608 crore.

Lakshmi: Rs 28,608 crore.

"Through the guarantee schemes, an average of Rs 50,000 to Rs 55,000 is transferred to each family every year. Implementation of guarantee schemes has brought us admiration from the entire world," the CM said in the budget.

Embedded within the budgetary framework lies the government's ambition to cultivate a
fertile ground for swift economic expansion. This vision
commic expansion. This vision
commic expansion. This vision
investments in expressways,
investments in expressways,
investments in expressways,
inje-grade rural thoroughfares, airport enhancements,
industrial corridors, and enhanced urban transit networks.
Anticipated outcomes include
the ignition of economic dynamism along proposed industrimism along in Embedded within the budget-

spite lagging in development, despite a number of meastrees tagen by the governments. Chief Minister Siddaramaish has announced several measures for the development of the region, apart from the allocation of funds to the Kalyan Karnataka Development Board.
"Our budget is a livelihoodenhancing manifesto, poised to initiate significant changes in people's lives. It embodies a steadfast dedication to the ongoing development of bengaluru, with a forwardlooking approach that includes irrigation projects," declared Deputy Chief Minis-

Bengaluru Factor

Bengaluru Factor
The budget boasts a forwardlooking strategy for Bengaluu, a pivotal cog in India's economic machinery and the
primary driver of the state's
economic engine. Many ambitious undertakings, such as
Bengaluru's Peripheral Ring
Road and world-class sports
complexes across four locations in the capital, have been
embraced under Public-Private
Partnerships (PPPs), alleviating fiscal burdens on the state.

SIDDARAMAIAH'S BLUEPRINT

vehicle charging hubs, and the integration of petrol stations within Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs), all operate within the PPP framework.

to the development of the entire state by giving equal emphasis to agriculture, farmer empowerment, industry, infrastructure, setting up modern industries, and attention to job creation. Further, the priority places like Srishaila and Mantralaya, push for fishing, and the upgradation of the health sector would yield positive results in the coming days," said Patil.

The interdependence of economic growth and infrastructure development is undeniable. Siddaramaiah has unveiled plans to commission multiple feasibility reports under the Karnataka Infrastructure Scheme Development Fund. Scheme Development Fund. Scheme Development State Sta

Agri Focus
In addition to prioritising welfare programmes and infrastructure initiatives, the budg-ta coorded equal significance to agriculture.
The proposed Agriculture Development Authority, chaired by the Chief Minister, chaired by the Chief Minister, between the control of the Minister, between the control of the Minister, between the control of the Chief Minister, between the Chief Minister, betwe

Education & Health

Education & Health
Siddaramaiah's budget also places significant emphasis on education and healthcare. The establishment of state-of-the-art Critical Care Blocks in each district promises enhanced edistrict promises enhanced cally all patients. Construction has commenced in 15 districts, with plans to extend to Uduyi. Davanagere. Vijaaypur, Wandya, Dharwad, and Kopal districts this year, costing Rs.187 crores. The remaining line districts will see the implementation of Critical Care Blocks in the following year, as announced by the CM in the budget.



Rs.46,636 crore, reflecting a growth rate of 13%. The CM has maintained fiscal disci-pline by constraining the fiscal deficit to within 3% of the Gross State Domestic Product



Beyond the guarantee schemes, the government has allocated substantial funds for infrastructure development, with cabinet approval for projects worth Rs. 21,168 crore and additional funding for various initiatives. Plans are underway to transform Bengaluru into a global hub, attracting talent in emerging sectors such as IT, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and Automobiles.

The Gruha Lakshmi scheme, aimed at women's financial empowerment, has seen substantial progress, with Rs. 11,726 crore already transferred to beneficiaries' accounts, "An allocation of Rs. 28,608 crore for the scheme in 2024-25 will further support women in income-generating activities and household expenses.

Under the Karnataka Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Sub-Plan scheme. Rs. 39,121 crore has been allocated, with Rs. 27,674 crore for Scheduled Castes and Rs. 11,448 crore for Scheduled Tribes. A dedicated Scheduled Tribes Welfare Secretariat has been established, set to become operational in 2023-24.



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's 15th Budget captivated with its clarity, reflecting his vision of progress as achieving optimal functionality with minimal complexity. It served as a testament to the pertinacity, farsightedness, and zeal of the Congress Government towards Karnataka's prosperity, showcasing a budget deeply rooted in purposeful allocation and strategic foresight.

Efforts are underway for the ambitious Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir project, with a separate division established for implementation. Infrastructure in government schools and pre-university colleges received a boost with Rs. 850 crore allocated this year, aiming to enhance education quality and equip students with global competitiveness.

The services and industrial sectors are driving the state's economic growth, with the services sector expanding by 8.7% and the industrial sector by 7.5% compared to the previous year. However, the agriculture sector experienced a downturn of 1.8% due to severe drought conditions

To combat hunger, the Annabhagya scheme provides free food grains, supplemented by an additional five kilograms soon after coming to power. Due to procurement challenges, a direct cash transfer of Rs. 170 per month to beneficiaries has been implemented, amounting to Rs. 4595 crore transferred to 4.02 crore beneficiaries.



Gruhajyoti, Gruha Lakshmi, Yuvanidhi, and Annabhagya, will inject a staggering Rs. 52.000 crore into the hands of millions of citizens in the fiscal year 2024-25, with an average annual transfer of Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 55,000 per family.

Despite global economic challenges Karnataka attracted an impressive USD 2.8 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by September 2023, positioning itself as a favoured investment destination.

In terms of revenue, Karnataka ranks second in GST collections nationally, witnessing an 18% increase in the current financial year compared to the previous year. The state's own tax revenue is expected to grow by 12% in the fiscal year 2023-24, largely attributed to the positive impact of the five Guarantee programmes.

Despite assurances from the Union Government regarding a 14% growth in GST collections, the state incurred a loss of Rs. 59,274 crore over the past seven years, highlighting the need for more robust implementation strategies. The previous administration's failure to address the disparities arising from the 15th Finance Commission's interim and final reports has left the state reeling from significant financial losses. Changes in income calculation methods and the census base year resulted in Karnataka receiving Rs. 62,098 crore less than anticipated in central tax devolution over six years.

Siddaramaiah
 Chif Minister of Karnataka

Source: The New Indian Express, p. 2, Feb. 21, 2024

Siddaramaiah terms five guarantees 'good economics'

We will impose tax on rich people as per law and the collected taxes will be used for the poor, he says; BJP and JD(S) stage walkout, terming CM's reply a 'political speech' ahead of LS elections

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

hief Minister Sidda-ramaiah on Wed-nesday termed the State government's five guarantees as "good eco-nomics" and said taxes are

nomics" and said taxes are being collected from the rich for the empowerment of the poor. In his reply to the de-bate on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address, Mr. Siddaramalah in the Legiclative Assembly training sets of the control of the

backward classes and mi-norities without discrimi-nation on the basis of caste or on religious lines," he said.

"There are no middle-men in the delivery of gua-rantee schemes. All bene-fits reach the eligible beneficiaries' account through DBT," the Chief Minister said.



collected taxes will be used for the poor." Mr. Siddara-maiah said the government kept ₹ 39,000 crore in 2023-24 for the flagship programmes.

'What is Siddanomics?' The Chief Minister said JD (S) leader and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswa-Minister H.D. Kumaraswa-my had coined the term "Siddanomics" to describe his model of State develop-ment. "I don't know what that is. There are no books like that. There is only good and bad economics. Is there Basavarajnomics? Kumaraswamynomics?" Mr. Siddaramaiah asked.

Former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said Mr. Kumaraswamy has given a

new brand to his model of economic development and the Chief Minister should take it as a compliment.

On corporate tax
Mr. Siddaramaiah, who has
tabled 15 Budgets, said corporate tax was 30% during
the UPA government, led
by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Prime Minister
Varendra Modi had reduced the corporate tax to
22.5%, he said, and asked,
"In whose support is the
BJP government?"
Mr. Siddaramaiah, who
also holds the finance portfolio, rebutted the Opposi-

also holds the finance port-folio, rebutted the Opposi-tion's charge that the go-vernment had rolled out a "bundle of lies" through

the Governor's address to the legislature and said the Governor has spoken the truth. "Our guarantees have reached people. In fact, people know that there is no substance in the Opposition's allegations." On Opposition Leader in the Assembly R. Ashok's charge that the Congress government was a 'broken-down whiche', Mr. Siddaramaiah said the BJP administration between 2019 and 2023 was 'a hatefilled, rusted bus that emitted poisonous smoke' and the people voted out the BJP.

r. He also said that the law and order was good in the State and the state had at-tracted ₹77,000 crore in-

Bommai's challenge to State govt.

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

Former Chief Minister Ba-savaraj Bommai on Tues-day challenged the govern-ment to withdraw below poverty line (BPL) cards if more than five crore peo-ple of the State entered "middle class status" be-cause of implementation of five guarantees - Shakti, Anna Bhagya, Gruha Jyothi, Gruha Lakshmi and Yuva Nidhi - by the State government. Intervening during Chief Minister Siddara-maialh's reply on the mo-tion of thanks to the Gover-nor's address to the joint session of the State legisla-ture, Mr. Bommai accused the government of "telling lies" to the people through the Governo's address, where it was stated that more than five crore peo-Former Chief Minister Ba-

ple were coming out of the

ple were coming out of the poverty line and rising to the middle class status owing to guarantees schemes.

Mr. Bommai said incentive of ₹5 per litre of milk amounting to ₹757 crore to 8.65 lakh milk producers had not been transferred. The incentive has not been

paid for six months, he added.

The government has claimed that it had fulfilled 97% of announcements made in the last year's Budget. Mr. Bommai said only notifications have been issued and works have not yet started. The govern-

ment said that ₹3,000 crore had been earmarked for the Kalyana Karnataka bevelopment Board and action plan had been approved for \$5,468 works. But only a few works were completed till last year. The incumbent government had claimed the achievements of the previous BJP government as is achievements, the former Chief Minister alleged. On the Centre's delay in the release of \$5,300 crore for the Upper Bhadra Project, Mr. Bommal said the State government has not submitted a proposal as per procedure to avail randing under the Acceles and the State government has not submitted a proposal as per procedure to avail randing under the Acceles Theorem and the Centre would release funds if the latter followed the procedure, Mr. Bommal said.

vestment during the last Chief Minister said.

vestment during the last nine months.

Mr. Siddaramaiah reiterated his charges against the Central government on devotion of taxes, non-release of drought relief and non-release funds for the Upper Bhadra Project.

A whopping ₹4.3 lakh crore taxes was collected from the State in 2023-24 but the State was expecting only ₹50,027 crore, the

Chief Minister said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah also took a dig at Mr. Kumaraswamy on his remark that the government adopted a
confrontationist approach
with the Centre and said
the State has every right to
seek justice under the federal government.

The State has been reevietive only 122 for overse.

ceiving only ₹13 for every ₹100 collected from the pe-ople in the form of IT, GST,

cess and surcharges, he said.

The State government had written I7 letters to the Union Ministers but it had received reply to only one letter on seeking drought relief.

"How can we call it confrontation?" The entire house should demand drought relief from the Centre, he said. Out of 236 taluks, 223 taluks have

been declared as drought in the State. The House passed the motion of thanks to the Governor's address. The Opposition BJP members shouted slogans against the Govern-ment and termed the Chief Minister reply as a "politi-cal speech" ahead of Lok Sabha elections and staged

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 21, 2024

GIVE SOUTHERN STATES THEIR FAIR SHARE OF TAX REVENUES

OR quite some time now, leaders from the southern states, particularly Tamil Nadu, have accused the Centre of not being fair in the allocation of funds. The focal point of contention lies in changes in the tax devolution policies, particularly with the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax

(GST) and the criterions adopted by the 15th Finance Commission. Before we delve into the distribution of taxes, it is important to understand how the policy decisions have negatively impacted southern states and destroyed their fiscal autonomy in the federal structure.

Before GST, states enjoyed autonomy in deciding value-added tax rates, allowing them to adjust taxation according to their fiscal needs. However, the introduction of GST made them rely on the Union government for the distribution of funds. When GST was introduced, the Centre had assured states of 14 percent increase in tax revenues and fair compensation for any losses during the transition. The GST Compensation Cess was imposed and the southern states are supposed to receive the highest compensation as they tend to contribute more to the divisible pool.

However, the GST compensation to states was stopped last year, though the GST compensation cess introduced for the purpose is still being collected by the Union government; meanwhile states including Tamil Nadu are facing annual losses exceeding ₹20,000 crore.

To make the matter worse, the 15th Finance Commission exacerbated the divide by using the 2011 population census as the determinant for tax devolution. The shift from the previous commission's methodology, which included a blend of the 1971 and 2011 censuses, was intended to reward states for effective population control measures. However, the reliance on the 2011 census has led to a scenario where states with larger populations, such as Uttar Pradesh, receive a substantially higher share, leaving the less populous southern states at a disadvantage. Uttar Pradesh received 18 percent of the devolved taxes, whereas Tamil Nadu got 4.2 percent, Karnata-ka 3.65 percent, Telangana 2.13 percent, Andhra Pradesh 4.11 percent, and Kerala got 1.96 percent.

Tamil Nadu sports minister Udhaya-



nidhi Stalin, a vocal critic of this perceived disparity, questioned Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on the issue and called for fairness for the southern states. In line with these concerns, I raised a question in parliament during the last session, seeking



19 paise, Kerala 62 paise, Andhra Pradesh 50 paise and Telangana 40 paise. In contrast, Uttar Pradesh received ₹2.02 for every rupee it paid during the same period, Madhya Pradesh got ₹1.70 and Rajasthan received ₹1.14

detailed data on GST, direct and indirect taxes paid by states to the Union government, as well as on the funds allocated to each state as part of central taxes over the last five years.

To my shock, the data provided by the Union finance ministry on February 6 as answer to my question No 362 revealed that while Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana and Kerala collectively contributed over ₹22.26 lakh crore through GST and direct taxes (excluding GST) in the past five years, only ₹6.42 lakh crore has been devolved. In stark contrast, Uttar Pradesh contributed only

₹3.41 lakh crore during the same period and was allocated a whopping ₹6.91 lakh crore.

Senior advocate and

member of parliament

I have asked whether the government has considered changing the allocation formula to address the concerns of disparity. No answer has been provided to the question, contrary to the Rajya Sabha rules stipulating that answers to questions by members should be specific and complete.

Furthermore, when examining the proportion of central taxes and duties released to states, for every rupee paid in GST and direct tax, Tamil Nadu on average between 2018-19 and 2022-23 received only 26 paise, Karnataka 19 paise, Kerala 62 paise, Andhra Pradesh 50 paise, and Telangana 40 paise. In fact, Tamil Nadu's share has fallen from 27 paise to 24 paise betwee 2018-19 and 2022-23, Karnataka's from 22 paise to 12 paise, Telangana's from 60 paise to 31 paise, Kerala from 81 paise to 50 paise, and Andhra Pradesh from 56 paise to 49 paise.

In contrast, Uttar Pradesh received a considerable ₹2.02 for every rupee paid to the Union government, Madhya Pradesh got ₹1.70 and Rajasthan got ₹1.14. This clearly portrays the disparity between the southern states and some of the northern states.

These south Indian states receive approximately 25 percent of the share of what they contribute, whereas states such as Uttar Pradesh are allotted more than 200 percent. I am not suggesting that a large portion of the share should not be given to Uttar Pradesh or other northern states. My only concern is why the southern states are being given a lower allocation-why the bias towards them?

Why are the southern states being punished for implementing good policies including measures to control population growth? It is high time that the allocation formula was re-considered and the southern states given their fair shares, as demanded by the southern leaders. (Views are personal)





Source: The New Indian Express, p. 10, Feb. 21, 2024

Centre's cess cleverness is taxing states

The 16th Finance Commission should recommend either stopping the levy of all cesses or bring them under the divisible pool

NAJIB SHAH

he 17th Lok Sabha has come to an end practically, without, as PRS Legislative Research has pointed out, an elected Deputy Speaker. Article 93 of the Constitution requires that the Lok Sabha elect a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker. The stage has also been set for the general election with papers -White and Black-having been released, proclaiming achievements and alleging mismanagement. Without getting into the merits of the 'White Paper-Black Paper war', let me focus on an area of concern expressed by some states about how they are denied their rightful share of taxes by the central government. Constitutional institutions such as the CAG and the RBI, too, have noted the ill-effects of the phenomenon of the Centre collecting revenues by way of cess and surcharges, rather than as taxes that have to be shared with the states.

By way of background, and to put matters in perspective, while the framers of the Constitution had assigned the taxation powers to both the Centre and the states, very many of the responsibilities in the social and economic spheres were given to the states. There was thus a mismatch between resources and responsibilities. It was to address this situation that the Constitution, under Article 280, provided for a Finance Commission to be set up periodically to review and recommend the transfer of resources from the divisible pool of the Union to the states and the formulas that would govern the relative shares of states. The divisible pool is the gross tax revenue (GTR) collected, net of cess and surcharges (excluding the GST compensation cess after the GST came into effect). Thus, the more the cess and surcharges imposed and collected as a proportion of all tax revenues, the less is the amount available for the states in the divisible pool.

Article 270 of the Constitution enables the Union government to levy cess for a "specific purpose under any law made by parliament". The cess itself is levied under the specific provisions of each Act, such as, for instance, the Road & Infrastructure Fund Act or, unless specifically mentioned otherwise, when it is collected as a duty of central excise or customs. Article 271 empowers parliament to levy a surcharge on any taxes that fall within the Union government's taxing powers.

The introduction of the Goods & Services Tax (GST) in July 2017 was expected to end all other taxes and cesses with their getting subsumed in the new levy. That was the promise of GST - 'One Nation, One Tax', if you will. Hence, in the days leading up to the roll-out of GST from July 1, 2017, the budget exercise witnessed the abolishing of certain cesses. Subsequent developments have shown, however, that they weren't going away forever.



The Centre had to resort to the GST Compensation Cess along with the advent of GST. While the need to levy this particular cess was understandable and was a necessary sweetener to bring all states on board the transformational GST train, the continuation of some other cesses and the introduction of new cesses was not.

The very next Union budget of 2018-19 saw 'Road Cess' being enlarged and rechristened to 'Road and Infrastructure Cess', and the 3% 'Education Cess' being replaced by a 4% 'Health and Education Cess', and also the introduction of a 'Social Welfare Surcharge'. This trend has continued and only grown. In the year immediately after the introduction of GST, Rs 1,52,677 crore was collected from various cesses - and this is in addition to the cess collected toward GST compensation for the states. A total of Rs 2,37,500 crore has been the contribution from cesses as per the revised budget for 2023-24. For 2024-25, the Union government expects to collect an even higher Rs 2,49,180 crore in the form of cesses.

The Report of the Auditor General of

the accounts of the Union government -Report No 21 of 2023 (Financial Audit) - gives the details of cess collection as part of the total collection of revenue. A humongous 17.67% (inclusive of the GST Compensation Cess) of the total gross revenue was the cess component in FY2021-22. The Report of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India (CAG) on the accounts of the Union government (No 4 of 2020) had pointed out that in respect of the Road & Infrastructure Cess, Health & Education Cess, and cess on crude oil, there was no proper framework nor any assurance that cess/ levies collected would be used for the purpose for which these were collected. The CAG had observed that the Union government had withheld more than Rs 1.1 lakh crore collected through various cesses in 2018-19. The CAG also pointed out that over Rs 1.24 lakh crore collected as cess on crude oil over the last decade had not been transferred to the designated Reserve Fund. In 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) noted that levying cesses and surcharges neutralises the increase in tax devolution recommended by successive Finance Commissions. While cesses were being collected for specific purposes, these purposes, however, seem to continue forever. Thus, it is estimated that the Finance Commission formula for devolving 41% of the divisible pool has in reality translated into only 32% of the gross tax revenue in 2024-25 as per budget estimates.

The 14th Finance Commission had disapproved of the continuing tendency to levy cesses. Similarly, the 15th Finance Commission report has commented adversely on the increase in collections under cess. The 69th Report of the Public Accounts Committee 2023-24 has made several observations in its report on 'Issues Relating to Accounting of Cess/Levies'. The Union government has simply asserted that it is not keeping cesses for itself.

The discussions and findings of reports above suggest, however, that that is not true. Cess has become for the Union government an important means of revenue collection that it can keep for itself. The recently constituted 16th Finance Commission therefore has its work cut out for it. It should strongly recommend that all cesses be stopped, or, alternatively, that the amounts so collected be made part of the devolution principle. Doing so would strengthen "cooperative federalism".

(The writer is a former Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs)

Source: Deccan Herald, p.10, Feb, 22, 2024

Govt to organise 2-day mega job fair for youth

Over 31,000 candidates have registered online

BENGALURU, DHNS

kill Development and Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil on Wednesday said that the state government will organise Yuva Samruddhi Sammelana, a two-day job fair from February 26 and 27 at the Palace Grounds, to help unemploved youth find jobs.

unemployed youth find jobs.
Addressing a joint press conference at Vidhana Soudha, Dr Patil, along with IT-BT, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge, said that the job fair is aimed at helping youths who have completed degree, engineering, diploma and other job-oriented courses to get job opportunities.

31k registrations

"Over 31,000 eligible candidates from across the state have already registered online for the job fair. We are expecting more candidates to register. More than 500 reputed national and global companies will take part in the job fair with nearly one lakh vacancies. This will be the right platform for the youths to find jobs as per their qualification," both ministers explained.

Dr Patil added that over

600 stalls will be set up to help candidates to find job opportunities as per their qualifications and requirements.

The minister said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has instructed him to organise job fairs to help unemployed youths in the state.

"Similar job fairs used to be conducted during former Chief Minister S M Krishna's tenure. Those who are unable to get jobs in the job fair will be provided training and they can get jobs in the coming days. Many experts have come forward to train them. Those who have registered for the job fair will get messages to visit particular stalls to find suitable jobs. Our efforts will be fruitful if a large number of candidates participate and get employed," he added.

He said that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar will inaugurate the Yuva Samruddhi Sammelana.

"Free food arrangements have been made for the participants and the job aspirants coming from different parts of the state can avail free bus service to the venue from Majestic, Railway Station and Shanthinagar bus station," the minister added.

Kharge charged that PM Modi had promised to create 20 crore jobs, but failed.

"We have lost over 40,000 jobs as per NSO survey and after this report, NSO survey was stopped. The Congress-led UPA government was responsible for the boom of IT companies," Kharge argued

Source: Deccan Herald, p.6, Feb, 22, 2024

EDUCATION

EDU SECTOR GETS ₹850 CR FOR INFRA UPGRAI

Govt to harness funds from CSR, PPP to improve minority institutes and schools in rural areas

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THE state budget bets big on infrastructure development and improving the learning gap in primary and higher education with a focus on upskilling. A major portion of budget allotment for 2024-25 emphasises on upgradation (Rs 850 crore) of not just institutions, but also inclusion of newer grades in already-existing primary schools and introduction of pre-university colleges on school campuses.

The budget aims to bring in more funds from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to improve schools in rural areas and for minorities. A grant of Rs 10 lakh each will be made to upgrade science labs in PU colleges to improve enrol-ment of students in STEM courses and in science streams. A total of 2,000 primary schools will be upgraded to be bilingual, teaching both Kannada and English, given the demand for English medium schools in rural areas

A training programme at a cost of Rs 10 crore will be intro-



KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

The University of Visvesvaraya College of Engineering (UVCE) will be upgraded on the lines of IIT at Rs 500 crore. The government will give Rs 100 crore, while the rest will have to be mobilised through CSR funds.

To help students and teachers file patents, a corpus of Rs 10 crore will be created.

Navu Manuiaru - a two-hour interactive weekly class in all schools and colleges on ideas of social harmony, scientific temper and coexistence -- will be introduced.

Rs 54 crore allocated for Mysuru Maharani Women's Science College and Rs 116 crore for building a hostel at Maharani Arts and Commerce College

duced for 20,000 students preparing for NEET/JEE/CET in government PU colleges, announced Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

He also reiterated the government's promise of providing free electricity and water at all government schools and PU colleges, benfiting 46,829 government schools and 1.234 colleges with a grant of Rs 25 crore.

But recruitment of teachers and lecturers which has been a persistent demand of students and experts has not been addressed nor any allotment made to address the shortage. The budget mentioned, in pass-ing, that "Recruitment of teachers in various subjects in Gov-ernment Primary, High schools and PU Colleges in the state will be started."

To improve the participation of women in higher education, government women' first grade colleges and women polytechnics will be upgraded at a cost of Rs 30 crore. Emphasis has been made on promoting scientific temperament in the state, while Rs 50 crore has been earmarked to provide science and computer labs and internet fa-cilities under a two-year package in high schools.

A majority of the budget for social welfare and minority welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes includes upgradation of residential schools and development of new hostels to cater to the growing demand.

I



Yuvanidhi Plus to create 25k jobs for youth

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

A STATE Skill Olympics and State Skill Policy will be framed for the effective utilization of human resources, announced Chief Minister in the budget.

Upskilling initiative also took centre stage in the budget with the government announcing Yuvanidhi Plus initiative, which will prepare 25,000 voungsters for the job market. under various ongoing skill courses

Several benefits were also announced for youth empowerment and sports, with a state-level olympics and mini olympics for those under the age of 14.

Upskill initiative

- Skill Academy in Sanduru of Ballari at a cost of Rs 300
- First centre of excellence concentrating on CNC (Computer Numerical Control) technology in KGTTI, Kalaburagi at Rs
- 16 crore 50,000 women SHG-owned
- micro-enterprises will be developed over 2 years

 District Level Incubation Centres will be established in a phased manner in all 31 dis-tricts in collaboration with IIM-B
- Affordable and secure transit hostels will be set up for students and working women

Source: The New Indian Express p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

Stipend for ST engineering graduates enrolled in vocational training courses

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

With focus on encouraging technical education among the disadvantaged communities, a stipend of ₹15,000 will be provided to 200 Scheduled Tribe (ST) engineering graduates enrolled in six to 12 months' vocational training courses such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning etc., in IISc, IITs or NITs, said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday.

In his Budget speech, the Chief Minister said upskilling in dronebased photography and videography has immense potential for employment in social-media, and drone training will be imparted to 5,000 youngsters belonging to Scheduled Tribes. In addition, the food allowance for students of government pre-matric and post-matric hostels, Ashram schools and residential schools under Social Welfare, Scheduled Tribes, Backward classes and Minorities Welfare Departments will be increased by ₹100 per month. Ashram schools functioning under ST Welfare Department will be rechristened as Maharshi Valmiki Adivasi Budakattu Residential Schools.

A total of ₹2,710 crore has been provided for construction of residential schools and hostels of SC/ST/BC and Minority Welfare departments and new residential schools will be started by KREIS in 20 hoblis. Thirty-one post-matric hostels will be started in the current year. As many as 50 Morarji Desai Residential Schools with a capacity of 50 students each and 100 Post-matric boys/girls hostels will be started along with 100 new Maulana Azad Schools.

Source: The Hindu, p. 5, Feb. 17, 2024

Science city and telescopes for schools and colleges

The Budget states that to portray the growth of science and technology and to promote science education, a science city in Bengaluru will be established in association with the Government of India at a total cost of ₹233 crore. In order to generate interest among students in stargazing and astronomy, telescopes will be provided to 833 schools and PU colleges under Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KRIES) at a total cost of ₹3 crore.

A Sports City with modern and international standards will also be established across 70 acres in Bengaluru North Taluk, under Public-Private Partnership.

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

EDUCATION

Scheme to inculcate social harmony among students

Jayanth R. BENGALURU

The Budget presented on Friday offers a novel scheme to sow seeds of social harmony at the school and col-

lege level with a programme titled 'Navu Manujaru' (We are human beings). It is an interactive, two-hour, weekly class that will involve discussions and debates in all schools and colleges to promote values such as tolerance and scientific temper.

The Budget saw allocation for education sector jump by ₹6,462 crore in 2024-25 (to ₹44,422 crore from the previous ₹37,960 crore), and announced a programme to help children learn mathematics. 'Ganitha-Ganaka' programme, in collaboration with J-PAL Institute, is for students studying from classes 3 to 5.

'Marusinchana' programme will be taken up at a cost of ₹10 crore to improve learning ability of students of classes 6 and 7.

Among other pro-



(Kannada and English) and Science and Computer Labs and Internet facility under a two-year package in government high schools with higher enrolment.

The Budget also announced NEET/JEE/ CET training programme for about 20,000 students studying in science stream in government PU colleges. In higher education, the Budget announced upgrade of 30 Government Women First Grade Colleges and Government Women Polytechnic colleges.

To bring more efficiency in the working of the Medical Education Department, the Medical Education Directorate will be upgraded to a Commissionerate.

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, Feb. 17, 2024

Rs 393 crore to boost education, employment of minorities

BENGALURU, DHNS: Minorities Development Corporations in the state will undertake many activities at an estimated cost of Rs 393 crore during 2024-25, announced Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in his budget speech on Friday.

Stressing the need for improvement in educational parameters for the holistic development of minority communities, Siddaramaiah announced the launch of 50 new Morarji Desai residential schools, each with a capacity of 50 students.

As many as 100 post-matric boys/girls hostels will be started and about 100 new Maulana Azad schools will be opened. Pre-university colleges will be started in 25 schools, which have their own buildings.

CM announced restarting the scheme to reimburse the fee for students of minority communities pursuing BSc Nursing, General Nursing and Midwifery nursing courses.

The budget allocates Rs 100 crore for developing Wakf properties, Rs 20 crore to develop basic pilgrimage destinations, and Rs 50 crore to develop major pilgrimage destinations of Jains.

While the CM announced Rs 200 crore for the development of the Christian community, he allocated Rs 10 crore for the construction of Haj Bhavan in Mangaluru.

Focusing on empowering people belonging to minority communities, the budget has announced an interest subsidy of 6% on loans up to Rs 10 crore provided by Karnataka State Financial Corporation to set up new micro and small industries and upgrading existing units.

Boost for minorities

- Workshops on current affairs for Moulavis and Mutawallis registered with the state Wakf Board.
- Loans for silk reelers belonging to minority communities through Karnataka Minority Development Corporation and training through the Sericulture department.
- A programme to encourage women self-help groups belonging to minority communities to engage in self-employment at an estimated cost of Rs 10 crore.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.6, Feb, 17, 2024

Allocation good for lower edu, but no clarity on funds for public varsities

RIMARY education is the fundamental right of all children from ages six to 14 under the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act 2002, Article 21-A. It is also considered a human right.

Higher education is always for self-reliance, investment for future development and catalyst for socio-economic change in society to improve the quality of life of an individual and for human development. When India got Independence in 1947, the literacy rate was less than 20% and the current rate is more than 75%. The budget allocation as a percentage of GDP for edu-

cation was less than 1 and now it is around 3%.

There were 21 Universities and 496 colleges in 1947 as against 1,133 universities and 43,796 colleges in 2023. Rs 12,768 is the per capita cost of education.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio of primary education is more than 100%, secondary education 75%, and higher education 27% in India; and 37.2% in Karnataka and ranked fifth in the country. The social accountability of

education encompasses relevance, excellence, equity and cost effectiveness.

For education, the 2024 budget has allocated Rs 44,422 crore as against Rs 31,980 crore in 2023, an increase of 4%. More allocation has been made for schools and colleges of OBCs, minorities and women for augmenting infrastructure, learning resources and recruitment of teachers, keeping in mind the policy of equity and social justice. Importance has also been given for repair of school and college buildings, toilets and other facilities, including provision of computers.

A special allocation to the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS) to bring in awareness about effects of climate change and providing telescopes to 833 residential schools are progressive and novel ideas.

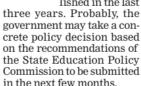
The budget has provided funds for improvement of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and English in school education as a good foundation for multi/interdisciplinary higher education. Accessing CSR and alumni funds for education and upgrading Visvesvaraya College of Engineering to the level of IIT is a good initiative of public private partnership.

Earmarking Rs 10 core for

research and innovation by students and faculty encourages critical thinking and creativity.

However, there is no clarity on the allocation made for state public universities for the development of infrastructure,

learning resources, research facilities and recruitment of teaching faculty, more so because few new universities have been established in the last



The government should focus more on facilities, faculty, finances and flexibility to facilitate quantitative and qualitative improvements in the overall education system by allocating at least 6% of GDP in coming financial years.

I sincerely hope that the government will be able to utilise all earmarked funds by executing and implementing all the proposed projects and programmes in a time-bound manner.





Prof Dr S Chandrashekar Shetty

President, Forum of Former Vice-Chancellors of Karnataka

Source: The New Indian Express p. 2, Feb. 18, 2024

BU aims for big-ticket upgrade with Rs 100-cr central grant

New courses, better infra, research activities on the anvil

BENGALURU DHNS

he Bangalore University (BU) has received a funding of Rs 100 crore under the PM USHA scheme (Pradhan Mantri Uchatar Shiksha Abhiyan).

BU was one of the few universities from the state which applied for PM USHA funds.

The university has received funding under Multi Disciplinary Research University (MERU), mainly for the upgradation of infrastructure and research facilities. As per data available, 26 uni-

versities from across the country applied for this funding.

The university, while submitting a proposal seeking financial assistance under PM USHA, had said that 50%

of the amount will be utilised for new construction, 30% for renovation and 20% for equipment and soft components.

As explained by the university authorities, Rs 50 crore is earmarked for constructing academic blocks, open-air amphi-theatre and hostels for the proposed undergraduate and postgraduate courses, Rs 30 crore is earmarked for upgradation of campus networking, augmentation of sports facilities, establishing smart classrooms, upgradation of health centre, digitization of museum resources and decarbonization activities along with environment protection and creating a green campus.

Advanced equipment

An amount of Rs 20 crore is



The university plans to establish central instrumentation centre and super computer centre, to facilitate inter-disciplinary research in collaboration with other multi-disciplinary research universities and affiliate colleges. DH FILE PHOTO

proposed to be utilised for procurement of advanced scientific equipment and various capacity building, training and

awareness programmes.
With this funding, the university has proposed to start professional courses such as integrated MSc programme in artificial intelligence and data science and machine learning, MSc in climate studies, BCom-LLB, MA in public policy and law, BTech artificial intelligence and data science, BTech in computer science and engineering (internet of things) PG diploma in manuscriptology, digital media mar-keting, Kannada journalism, peace education, interior designing, house keeping management, certificate course in Basavanna's philosophy, poet Kuvempu's philosophy, German, French, Palaeography, translation techniques, nutritional dietics, etc.

The university plans to establish central instrumentation centre and super computer centre, to facilitate inter-disciplinary research in collaboration with other multi-disciplinary research universities and affiliate col-

The allocation covers various facets such as research initiatives, academic enhancements, skill-based training programmes, placements and fostering entrepreneurial collaborations.

Vice-chancellor Dr Jayakara S M said the grant significantly contributes to the students' academic growth and research endeavours and for overall infrastructure development.

Registrar (administra-Sheik Latheef said, "BU isn't just known lo-cally — it's gaining global recognition. This grant will usher in its growth, improving education quality, infrastructure and support systems.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3A, Feb, 19, 2024

යිස්ಯವಾಣೆ 👜

ಸ್ಟೆಲ್ಟಿ, ದ್ವಿತೀಯ ಪಿಯುಸಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ-1ರ ಸಿದ್ಧತೆ ಸಚಿವ ಮಧು ಬಂಗಾರಪ್ಪ ಮಾಹಿತಿ

ುತ್ತೀರ್ಣ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಇಳಿಕೆಗೆ ಮೂರು ಬಾರಿ ಪರೀಕ್<u>ಷೆ</u>

ವಿಜಯವಾಣಿ ಸುದ್ದಿಜಾಲ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಎಸ್ಪೆಸ್ಟೆಲ್ಟಿ ಪಿಯುಸಿಯಲಿ ಮತ್ತು ದ್ವಿತೀಯ ಅನುತ್ರೀರ್ಣರಾಗುವವರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಕಡಿಮೆಗೊಳಿಸುವ ಉದ್ದೇಶದಿಂದ 3 ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಗಳನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಮೂರೂ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆದ ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ಅಂಕಗಳನ್ನು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು

ಎಂದು ಶಾಲಾ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಕ್ಷರತಾ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಸಚಿವ ಮಧು ಬಂಗಾರಪ್ಪ ತಿಳಿಸಿದರು.

ವಿಕಾಸಸೌಧದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಂಗಳವಾರ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ-1ರ ಪೂರ್ವಭಾವಿ ಸಿದ್ದತೆ ಕುರಿತು ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಹಂಚಿಕೊಂಡ ಅವರು, ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ಕುರಿತು ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿ ಗಳಿಗೆ ಎದುರಾಗಬಹುದಾದ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಮಂಡಳಿಯ ವೆಬ್ಸ್ಟ್ರೆಟ್ನಲ್ಲಿ ಉತ್ತರಗಳನ್ನು ಕಲ್ಪಿಸುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಗೊಂದಲ ಪರಿಹರಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂದರು

ಈ ಸಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ದ್ವಿತೀಯ ಪಿಯುಸಿಗೆ 80 ಅಂಕ ಲಿಖಿತ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ಮತ್ತು 20 ಅಂಕಗಳಿಗೆ ಆಂತರಿಕ ಮೌಲ್ಯಮಾಪನ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಹಾಗೆಯೇ ರೆಗ್ಯುಲರ್ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ವಿತರಿಸುವ 80 ಅಂಕಗಳ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಪತ್ರಿಕೆಗಳನ್ನೇ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೂ ವಿತರಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಖಾಸಗಿ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು 80 ಅಂಕಗಳಿಗೆ ಗಳಿಸುವ ಅಂಕಗಳನ್ನು 100 ಅಂಕಗಳಿಗೆ ಪರಿವರ್ತಿಸಿ ಫಲಿತಾಂತ

ಎಸ್ಸೆಸ್ನೆಲ್ನಿಗೆ 9 ಲಕ್ಷ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು

ಮಾ. 1ರಿಂದ ಮಾ. 22ರವರೆಗೆ ದ್ವಿತೀಯ ಪಿಯುಸಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ನಡೆಯಲಿದ್ದು 3,30,644 ಬಾಲಕರು ಮತ್ತು 3,67,980 ಬಾಲಕಿಯರು ಸೇರಿ ಒಟ್ಟು 6,98,624 ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ನೋಂದಣಿ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. 1,124 ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ನಡೆಯಲಿದೆ. ಎಸ್ಸೆಸ್ಸೆಲ್ಸಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಯು ಮಾ.25ರಿಂದ ಏ.6ರ ವರೆಗೆ ನಡೆಯಲಿದ್ದು 4,58,427 ಬಾಲಕರು ಮತ್ತು 4,37,844 ಬಾಲಕಿಯರು ಸೇರಿ ಒಟ್ಟು 8,96,271 ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳ ನೋಂದಣಿ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. 2,747 ಪರೀಕ್ಷಾ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ನಡೆಯಲಿದೆ.

ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿಸಿದರು.

ವಸ್ತಸಂಹಿತೆ ಇಲ್ಲ: ಪರೀಕ್ಷಾ ಕೇಂದ್ರದಲ್ಲಿನ ಸಮವಸ್ತ ಕುರಿತಂತೆ ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟಪಡಿಸಿದ ಅವರು, ಎಸ್ಸೆಸ್ಸೆಲ್ಸಿ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಆಯಾ ಶಾಲೆಯ ಸಮವಸ್ತವನ್ನು ಧರಿಸಬೇಕು. ದ್ವಿತೀಯ ಪಿಯುಸಿ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಸುಪ್ರೀಂಕೋರ್ಟ್ ನೀಡಿರುವ ತೀರ್ಪು ಪಾಲಿಸಬೇಕು. ಹಿಜಾಬ್ ಪಕರಣ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದು ಅಡ್ವೋಕೇಟ್ ಜನರಲ್ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯ ಪಡೆದು ಮುಂದುವರಿಯಲಾಗುವುದು ಎಂದರು.

52 ಅನಧಿಕೃತ ಶಾಲೆಗಳು

ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ 52 ಅನಧಿಕೃತ ಶಾಲೆಗಳಿರುವುದು ದೃಢಪಟ್ಟಿದೆ. ಈ ಶಾಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಓದುತ್ತಿರುವ ಸುಮಾರು 5 ಸಾವಿರ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ಭವಿಷ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ತೊಂದರೆ ಆಗದಂತೆ ಅವರನ್ನು ಪಕ್ಕದ ಅಧಿಕೃತ ಶಾಲೆಗಳ ಜತೆ ಸಂಯೋಜನೆ ನಡೆಸಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ಬರೆಯಲು ಅವಕಾಶ ನೀಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ದ್ವಿತೀಯ ಪಿಯುಸಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ-2 ಅನ್ನು ಏಪ್ರಿಲ್ ಕೊನೆಯ ವಾರ ಹಾಗೂ ಎಸ್ಪೆಸ್ಟೆಲ್ಟಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ -2 ಮೇ ತಿಂಗಳ 3ನೇ ವಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆಸಲಾಗುವುದು. ಆಯಾ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ತೇರ್ಗಡೆ ಹೊಂದಿದ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ತುರ್ತಾಗಿ ಅಂಕಪಟ್ಟಿ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಡಿಜಿ ಲಾಕರ್ನಿಂದ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು. ಒಂದು ವೇಳೆ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿ ಮೊದಲ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಬರೆಯುವ ನಿರ್ಧಾರ ಕೈಗೊಂಡಿದ್ದರೆ ಫಲಿತಾಂಶ ಪ್ರಕಟಗೊಂಡ ಒಂದು ತಿಂಗಳೊಳಗೆ ಅಂಕಪಟ್ಟಿ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವುದು ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿಸಿದರು.

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾಗೋಷ್ಠಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳಾದ ರಿತೇಶ್ಕುಮಾರ್ ಸಿಂಗ್, ಎನ್. ಮಂಜುಶ್ರೀ, ಬಿ.ಬಿ. ಕಾವೇರಿ, ಸಿಂಧು ಬಿ. ರೂಪೇಶ್, ಎಚ್.ಎನ್. ಗೋಪಾಲಕೃಷ್ಣ ಉಪಸ್ಥಿತರಿದ್ದರು.

Source: Vijayavani, p.03, Feb.21, 2024

CONDITIONS APPLY

With no NEP, state varsities stare at losing PM-USHA funds

RASHMI BELUR BENGALURU, DHNS

State-run universities face the threat of losing funds under the PM-USHA (Prime Minister Rashtriya Uchatar Abhiyan) scheme because of the Congress government's decision to scrap the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in Karnataka.

One of the main conditions to receive funds under PM-USHA is that the universities must follow the guidelines given by the Union Education Department, which include administrative and academic reforms under NEP-2020. But Karnataka is set to have its own state education policy that will replace the NEP.

As per the list of expectations under the PM-USHA guidelines, the Union government has asked the universities to undertake administrative, academic, accreditation, and governance reforms detailed in NEP-2020 at state/UT and institutional level. These include Academic Bank of Credits, flexibility in entry and exit, Samarth,

Another condition is the preparation of a PM-USHA plan within the norms of the scheme in the light of NEP and increasing spending on higher education as a percentage of the GSDP.

The PM-USHA funding was announced on Saturday night and a formal virtual inauguration was done



by the Prime Minister at universities across the nation on Tuesday.

In Karnataka, six universities will receive the funds, of which Bangalore University and Rani Chennamma University, Belagavi will get Rs 100 crore each under Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU). Maharani Cluster University,

Bengaluru; Mangalore University; Dharwad University and Gulbarga University will receive Rs 20 crore each under Grants for Strengthening of Universities (GSU).

of Universities (GSU).

The universities have even submitted action plans to get the first installment. Now, worried over the conditions, a vice chancellor said, "When we are struggling with lack of resources, funds under PM-USHA are a boon. But we are worried that we may be denied the funds as the state has announced scrapping of NEP." Another vice chancellor said, "Rs 20 crore is not a meagre fund for a newly set-up varsity. If we lose that because of the NEP clause, will the state government provide the same funds to us?"

Source: Deccan Herald, p.1, Feb, 22, 2024

Environment

Ecotourism, development of ancient monuments take centre stage

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

The State government will request the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to take up research and restoration work on the archaeological monuments and remains at Nagavi in Chittapur taluk of Kalaburagi district, said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in his Budget speech on Friday.

Nagavi is believed to be the first university of Karnataka set up during the reign of the Rashtrakutas.

Mr. Siddaramaiah also earmarked ₹15 crore for the revival of 'karez', a popular ancient water supply system in Bidar and Vijayapura districts.

To provide a boost to ecotourism in Karnataka, Jungle Lodges and Resorts will establish interpretation centres at Bandipur, Dandeli and Kabini at a cost of ₹25 crore, Mr. Siddaramaiah said. The government will also promote ecotourism in Kapatagudda in Gadag district.

Apart from these, he also spoke about revising the Karnataka Tourism Policy 2020-2026 to Tourism Policy 2024-2029 to attract more tourists and investors.

Development of ropeway/cable car facilities in 10 major tourist destinations of the State, ₹100 crore for development of amenities in Anjanadri Hill in Koppa district, constitution of Sri Renuka Yellamma Tourism Development Board, and improved amenities at Gokak falls were the other major announcements made in the Budget.

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, Feb. 17, 2024

Renewable energy projects get a big push

Jahnavi T.R.

BENGALURU

A 300 kw self-sustained Green Hydrogen plant will be installed by Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited (KREDL) to attract more investment to the Green Hydrogen sector, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced in his Budget speech on Friday.

The plant will be installed on a pilot basis at a cost of ₹10 crore using Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) funds. While expressing the government's commitment to make Karnataka a pioneer in energy production, this year's Budget focussed majorly on renewable energy projects. "Renewable energy constitutes 63% of the total energy generated in the State," he said.

He also a proposed Ultra



In a push to sustainable mobility, 2,500 electric vehicle charging stations will be set up in the State under Public-Private Partnership.

High Voltage (UHV) transmission lines of 765 kV capacity, which will be laid by KPTCL to enhance the production of renewable energy on a larger scale and to transmit that energy to load centres and Green Hydrogen hubs.

Another pilot project mentioned in the Budget was to install microgrid solar units of 500 KW battery storage capacity in one backward village in the jurisdiction of each Escom. This will also be implemented by KREDL with the aim of making these villages self-reliant.

In a push to sustainable mobility, 2,500 electric vehicle charging stations will be set up in the State under Public-Private Partnership and 100 will be set by escoms at a cost of ₹35 crore.

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, Feb. 17, 2024

ಮನೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಬೀಗ, ನಗರಗಳಿಗೆ ಗುಳೆ । ಪ್ರಯೋಜನಕ್ಕೆ ಬಾರದ ಗ್ಯಾರಂಟೆ, ಮನರೇಗಾ

ಬರಕ್ಕೆ ಗ್ರಾಮಗಳೇ ನಿರ್ಜನ!



ಗುಳೆ ಹೋಗುವವರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿರುವ ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಲಿಂಗಾಪೂರದಲ್ಲಿ ಬೀಗ ಹಾಕಿದ ಮನೆಗಳು.

ರವಿರಾಜ್ ಆರ್.ಗಲಗಲಿ ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ

ಕೀಲಿ ಹಾಕಿದ ಮನೆಗಳು, ಅಲ್ಲಲ್ಲಿ ಕಟ್ಟೆಯ ಗುಳಿ ಪ್ರಮಾಣ ಮತ್ತಷ್ಟು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿದೆ. ಮೇಲೆ ಹರಟೆ ಹೊಡೆಯುತ್ತಿರುವ

ಕಂಡುಬರುವ ದೃಶ್ಯ. ಕೆಲಸ ಅರಸಿ ಊರಿನ ಕೆಲವರು ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಗ್ರಾಮವೇ ಭಣಗುಡುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಇರುತ್ತಾರೆ," ಈ ಸ್ಥಿತಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಮಳೆಯಾಶ್ರಿತ ಕಲ್ಪಹೊಲ್ಲದ. ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ಇದೆ.

ಕೇಂದದ

raviraj.galagali@timesgroup.com ತಪ್ಪಿಲ್ಲ. ಈ ಬಾರಿ ಬರ ಆವರಿಸಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಬರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಕೂಲಿ, ಉತ್ತಮ

''30 ವರ್ಷದಿಂದ ನಮ್ಮೂರಿನ ಜನ **ಹೋಗುತ್ತಾರೆ**. ವೃದ್ಧರು! ಗುಳೆ ಹೋಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಇದು, ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಗುಳೇದಗುಡ್ಡ ಮಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಟಂಟಂ ಖರೀದಿಸಿ ತಾಲೂಕಿನ ಲಿಂಗಾಪೂರ ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಓಡಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ನಮ್ಮ ಕುಟುಂಬದಲ್ಲೂ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಯುವಕರು, ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ವಯಸ್ಸಾದವರಿಗೆ ಅಲ್ಲಿಯ ಹವಾಮಾನ ಬೀಳದಿದ್ದರೆ ನಗರಗಳಿಗೆ ಗುಳೆ ಹೋಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಒಗ್ಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ ಅವರು ಇಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಉದ್ಯೋಗಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಗುಳೆ ಹೋಗುವವರ ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾರೆ ಯಮನಪ್ಪ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ

> ಒಣಬೇಸಾಯದ ಉಳಿಯುತ್ತದೆ. ಮನರೇಗಾದಲ್ಲಿ ತಾಲೂಕುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ

ಜಾರಿಯಲ್ಲಿದ್ದರೂ ಮಳೆಯಾತ್ರಿತ **ದುಲಪ್ರಭಾ, ಘಟಪ್ರಭಾ** ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಪ್ರದೇಶದ ಬಹುತೇಕರ ಗುಳೆ ನಾಲೆಗಳಿದ್ದರೂ ನೀರು ಬದುಕಿನ ಭರವಸೆಯಿಂದ ಜನ ಗುಳೆ

> -ಮುದಿಯಪ್ಪ ಗೌಡರ ಕೆಲವಡಿ ಗ್ರಾಪಂ ಸದಸ್ಯ

ಮಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಕೃಷಿಯೇ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಮಳೆರಾಯನ ದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಊಟಕೂ ತತ್ತಾರ. ಅಂದಾಜು ಸಾವಿರದಷ್ಟಿದೆ. ಚುನಾವಣೆ, ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೊಮೆ ನಿಲ್ಲದ ಗುಳೆ: ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ನಡೆಯುವ ಗ್ರಾಮದೇವತೆ ಜಾತ್ರೆಗೆ ಗುಳ ಲಿಂಗಾಪೂರದ ಜನಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಅಂದಾಜು ಬಾದಾಮಿ, ಗುಳೇದಗುಡ್ಡ ಹಾಗೂ ಹೋದವರು ಬರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಇಲ್ಲಿಯ ಜನ 1, 100. ಈ ಪೈಕಿ 800 ಮಂದಿ ತಾತ್ತಾಲಿಕ ಹುನಗುಂದ ತಾಲೂಕಿನ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಮಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಮೇಸ್ತ್ರಿ. ಗಾರೆ ಕೆಲಸ, ವಾಗಿ ಊರು ತೊರೆದಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಬೀದಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರದೇಶದ ಜನರು ಮಂಗಳೂರು, ಕಟ್ಟಡ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗಿಸಿ ಸಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೆ ಬೀಗ ಹಾಕಿದ ಮನೆಗಳು, ಗೋವಾಗೆ ಗುಳೆ ಹೋಗುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಈ ಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನಕ್ಕೆ 500 ರೂ.ನಿಂದ ಮೌನ. ರಾಜ್ಯ ಕಾಂಗ್ರೆಸ್ ವರ್ಷವು ಬದುಕು ಆರಸಿಹೋಗುವವರ 800 ರೂ. ಕೂಲಿ ಸಿಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಟೀ, ಸರಕಾರದ ಗ್ಯಾರಂಟಿ ಯೋಜನೆಗಳು, ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿದೆ. ಈ ಮೂರು ಉಪಾಹಾರ ಉಚಿತವಾದ ಕಾರಣ ಹಣ

ಭದ್ರಾ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯ ಕೆರೆಗಳು ಖಾಲಿ!

ಎಚ್. ಕುಮಾರ್

ಹಿರೆಣೋಗಲೂರು (ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ) kogalurkumar@gmail.com ಭದ್ರಾ ಅಚ್ಚುಕಟ್ಟು ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯ ನೀರಾವರಿ ಪ್ರದೇಶದ ಚನ್ಗಗಿರಿ ತಾಲೂಕಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಬೇಸಿಗೆ ಮುನವೇ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರಿಗೆ ಬರ ಎದು ರಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ತಾಲೂಕಿನ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಪ್ರದೇಶ ಗಳ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರಿನ ಅಕ್ಷಯ ಪಾತ್ರೆಗ ಳಾದ ಸೂಳಕೆರೆ ಸೇರಿ ಎಂಟು ಕೆರೆಗಳಲ್ 30ರಿಂದ 60 ದಿನಗಳಿಗೆ ಆಗುವಷ್ಟುಮಾತ್ರ ನೀರು ಲಭ್ವವಿದೆ.

ಈ 8 ಕೆರೆಗಳು ಬಹುತೇಕವಾಗಿ ಭದ್ರಾ ನಾಲೆಯ ನೀರನ್ನು ನೆಚ್ಚಿಕೊಂಡಿವೆ. ಈ ಕೆರೆ ಗಳು ವರ್ಷವೀಡಿ ತುಂಬಿಕೊಂಡು ಬೇ ಸಿಗೆ, ಮಳೆಗಾಲ ಅವಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ತಾಲೂಕಿನ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಗ್ರಾಮಗಳಿಗೆ ಕುಡಿವ ನೀರು ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತವೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಈ ಬಾರಿ ಮುಂಗಾರು, ಹಿಂಗಾರು ಮಳೆ ಕೈಕೊಟ್ಟು, ನಾಲೆಯ ನೀರೂ ಇಲ್ಲದೆ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಕಡೆ ಒಣಗಿಹೋಗಿ ಅಲ್ಲಲ್ಲಿ ಬಿರುಕು ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಕೊಂಡು ಬಣಗುಡುತಿವೆ.

ಬೀದಿ ನಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ರೊಟೇಶನ್ ಪದ್ಧತಿ ''ಮುಂದಿನ ಕೆಲವೇ ದಿನಗಳಲ್ಲಿ

ಜಾನುವಾರುಗಳಿಗೆ ನೀರು

8 ಕೆರೆಗಳ ನೀರು ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಲಭ್ಯತೆ ದಿನಗಳು ಸೂಳಕರ 40 ಹಿರೇಕೋಗಲೂರು 60 ಕೆಂಪನಹಳಿ 30 ಈರಗನಹಳಿ 40 ಮೆದಿಕೆರೆ 35 45 ನಲ್ಕುದುರೆ ಕಂದಗಲ್ಲು 40

ಸಿಗದಂತಾದರೂ ಅಚ್ಚರಿಯಲ್ಲ ಬೇಸಿಗೆ ಮುನವೇ ನೀರಾವರಿ ಪ್ರದೇಶ ಎನಿಸಿ ಕೊಂಡಿರುವ ಗ್ರಾಮಗಳ ಕೊಳವೆ ಬಾವಿ ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂತರ್ಜಲ ಮಟ ಕುಸಿದು ನೀರು ಬತ್ತುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಗ್ರಾಮಗಳ ಅಲ್ಲಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದೆರೆಡು ಕೊಳವೆ ಬಾವಿಗಳಿಂದ ರೊಟೀಶನ್ ಪದ್ರತಿ ಆಳವಡಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಗ್ರಾಮಸ್ಥರಿಗೆ ಬೀದಿ ನಲ್ಲಿಗಳಿಗೆ ನೀರು ಬಿಡಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಕೊಂಡ ದಹಳ್ಳಿ ಗ್ರಾಪಂ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಖಾಸಗಿಯವ ರಿಂದ ನೀರು ಪಡೆದು ಗ್ರಾಮಸ್ಥರಿಗೆ ಸರಬ ರಾಜು ಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ'' ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾರೆ ರೈತರಾದ ಪರಸಪ್ಪ ರೇವಣ್ಣಸಿದ್ದಪ್ಪ



ಚನ್ನಗಿರಿ ತಾಲೂಕಿನ ಬೆಳ್ಳಿಗನೂಡು ಕೆರೆ ನೀರಿಲ್ಲದೆ ಭಣಗುಡುತ್ತಿರುವುದು.

Source: Vijayakarnataka, p.05, Feb.19. 2024

'Simplified procedure' to obtain unified consent letter from KSPCB

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

To promote Ease of Doing Business, the Budget has announced a "simplified procedure" for obtaining a unified consent letter under Water, Air and Environment Protection Act from the KSPCB and a single window mechanism for various permissions and certificates. As many as 17 real time water quality measurement stations and two environment laboratories will be set up by the board, while nine environment laboratories will be upgraded.

On the other hand, ₹10 crore has been provided to strengthen the existing seven elephants, two leopard task forces, and a new task force for Bandipur.

Source: The Hindu, p. 5, Feb. 17, 2024

In 10 mnths, dept nets ₹4.5cr green tax at BRT

S Ramesh TNN

The forest department earned a record Rs 4.5 crore in green tax in the last 10 months at the checkposts of Bandipur Tiger Reserve (BTR). The foresters started to collect the green cess from four wheelers and heavy vehicles, and goods vehicles passing through the tiger sanctuary from the third week of Aprillast year.

The department has been collecting Rs 20 from four wheelers and Rs 50 for heavy vehicles. However, vehicles bearing Mysuru and Chamarajanagar registration, vehicles of locals of living around BTR and KSRTC buses are exempted.

The department has been collecting green tax from vehicles entering and leaving

'Z POINT' REDUCED TO ASHES



MAJOR LOSS: A massive fire broke out around the famous trekking trail 'Z Point' near Kemmannugundi in Bhadra Tiger Reserve limits of Chikkamagaluru Monday. The inferno, which started late afternoon, reduced parts of the shola forest into ashes

the tiger sanctuary plying towards Tamil Nadu via Ooty at Melukamanahalli and Kekkanahalli checkposts, from vehicles proceeding towards Kerala via Sulthan Batheri at Maddur and Moolehole checkposts.

The department has collected daily around Rs 25,000 on an average from all interstate vehicles at all four checkposts. The collection is more during weekend, government holidays, and other special days.

As these highways are frequently used by travellers heading towards Tamil Nadu (NH 67) and Kerala (NH 766) that passes through BTR, the department is seeing approximately Rs 25-30 lakh green cess or entry fees from all its checkposts every month, said the officials.

Project director of BTR P Rameshkumar said the collection of green cess has helped a forest department not only for conservation of forest, to reduce pollution.

Source: The Times of India, p.3, Feb. 20, 2024

Man-animal conflict: ₹10 cr for modernisation of all task forces

SUBHASH CHANDRA N S @ Karwar

HE state government has announced the release of Rs 10 crore for modernisation of all task forces set up for preventing human-animal conflict. The government has also earmarked a sum of Rs 15 crore for grassland tourism in Bidar.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, while presenting the State Budget on February 16, said that 78 km of railway line has been barricaded at a cost of Rs 100 crore so far to prevent elephants from straying into human habitats. The barricading of the lines will continue further, he said.

"A sum of Rs 40 crore has been spent on constituting seven elephant task forces and two leopard task forces so far. Another task force will be constituted at Bandipur this year and Rs 10 crore will be allocated to strengthen it with man power and latest technology. For mitigation of man-animal conflict, a sum of Rs 201 crore has been spent. This has been done to protect crops and lives of people living on the periphery of the forests," he said.



The CM pointed out that as part of Green Karnataka initiative, 2.74 lakh saplings have been planted on 50,225 hectares of land. "This includes road dividers and medians, tree parks and sacred groves," said Siddaramaiah in his 15th budget presentation.

In a lengthy speech which lasted for more than three hours, the CM also announced starting eco-tourism in grasslands at Honnikeri reserve and bio-diversity site known for its black bucks and chinkaras in the state. The budget also announced the setting up of two laboratories and seven investigation centres to check test water quality of 17 rivers in the state.

Siddaramaiah also said that recycling and reuse of water in buildings will be encouraged in apartments in Bengaluru.

Source: The New Indian Express, p.2, Feb, 20, 2024

ಉಷ್ಣಾಂಶ ವಾಡಿಕೆಗಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚಳ। ಮಾರ್ಚ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಇನ್ನಷ್ಟು ಸುಡುವ ಭೀತಿ

ರಣಬಿಸಿಲಿಗೆ ಜನ ಹೈರಾಣ

ವಿಜಯವಾಣೆ ಸುದ್ದಿಚಾಲ ವೆಂಗಳೂರು

ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನದಿಂದ ದಿನಕ್ಕೆ ಬಿಸಿಲಿನ ಧಗೆ ಎರತೋಡಗಿದೆ. ಹದಾಮಾನ ವೈಪರೀತ್ನದಿಂದಾಗಿ ಈ ಬಾರಿ ನಾಡಿಕೆಗಿಂತ ಮುನ್ನವೇ ಜಿಸಿಲಿನ ಕಾವು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿದೆ. ಶೀವಾಂಶ ಭರಿತ ಮೋಡಗಳ ನೆಳಿತ, ಗಾಳಿ ವೇಗ ಇಲ್ಲದಿರುವುದು, ವಾಶಾವರಣದಲ್ಲಿ ತೀವ ಶೇವಾಂಶ ಕೊರತೆಯಿಂದಾಗಿ ಬಿಸಿಲಿನ ಝಳವು ಜನರನ್ನು ಬಾಧಿಸುವಂತಾಗಿದೆ. ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಬೇಸಿಗೆ ಮಾರ್ಚ್ ಸಿಂದ ಆರಂಭವಾಗಿ ಮೇ ಶಿಂಗಳವರೆಗೆ ಇರುತ್ತದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಬಾರಿ ವಾಡಿಕೆಗಿಂತ ಮುನ್ನವೇ ಶುರುವಾಗಿದೆ. ಈ ವರ್ಷ 4 ತಿಂಗಳು ಬೇಸಿಗೆ ಕಾಲ ಇರಲಿದೆ. ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಮಾರ್ಚ್ ಬಳಿಕ ಬಿಸಿಲು ಬೇಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಆದರೆ, ಫೆಬ್ರವರಿಯಲ್ಲೇ ನುಡು ಬಿಸಿಲು ಕಾಣಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಏಪ್ರಿಲ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಉಪ್ಲಾಂಕ ಮಾರ್ಚ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಅಧಿಕರಾಗುವ ಸಾಧ್ಯ ತೆಯಿದೆ. ಈಗ ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ ತಿಂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಬಿಸಿಲು ಝಳ ತುಸು ಹೆಜ್ಞಳವಾಗಿರುವುದು ಅತಂಕ ತಂದೊಡ್ಡಿದೆ. ಹವಾಮಾನ ಅಸಮತೋಲನದಿಂದ ವಾತಾವರಣದಲ್ಲಿ ದಿಧೀರ್ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಪ್ರತಿವರ್ಷವೂ ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಿಗಿಂತ ಉತ್ತರ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಾದ ಕಲಖುರಗಿ, ಯಾದಗಿರಿ, ವಿಜಯಪುರ, ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ, ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ, ರಾಯಚೂರು, ಧಾರವಾಡ, ಕೊಪ್ಪಳ, ಗದಗ, ಬಳ್ಳಾರಿ, ಹಾವೇರಿ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ಮತ್ತು ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಉಷ್ಣಾಂತ ದಾಖಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಹಲವು ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದಲೂ ಉತ್ತರ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ, ಅಂದ್ರಪದೇಶ ಹಾಗೂ ತೆಲಂಗಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ 40 ಡಿಗ್ಗಿಗಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಉಷ್ಯಾಂತ ದಾಖಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದು,

ರಣಭಿಸಿಲಿನ ಜತೆಗೆ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಹಲವು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಉಲ್ಬಣಿಸಿದೆ. ಕಳೆದ ವರ್ಷ ಮಳೆ ಕೊರತೆಯಿಂದಾಗಿ

ಶಾಖ ತರಂಗ (ಹೀಟ್ ವೇವ್) ಕ್ಷಿತಿ ಉಂಟಾಗಿದೆ.



화당 2

ಲಿಂಗನಮಕ್ಕಿ, ಹಾರಂಗಿ, ವರಾಹಿ, ತುಂಗಾ, ಕಬಿಸಿ, ಕೆಆರ್ಎಸ್, ಭದ್ರಾ, ಘಟಪ್ರಭಾ, ಮಲಪ್ರಭಾ ಹಾಗೂ ಅಲಮಲ್ಟಿ ಸೇರಿ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಜಲಾಯಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಕೆರೆ-ಕುಂಟೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರು ಸಂಗ್ರಹವಾಗಿಲ್ಲ. ಶೇಖರವಾಗಿದ್ದ ಅಲ್ಲ- ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ನೀರಿನ ಮಟ್ಟವೂ ತಾಪಮಾನದಿಂದ ದಿನದಿಂದ ದಿನಕ್ಕೆ ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಕಲಬುರಗಿ, ಯಾದಗಿರಿ, ರಾಯಚೂರು, ಕೊಪ್ಪಳ, ಕೋಲಾರ ಹಾಗೂ ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳ ಕೆರೆ-ಕುಂಟೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಶೇ.50 ನೀರು ಬತ್ತಿಹೋಗಿವೆ. ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಹಲವೆಡೆ ನೀರಿನ ಹಾಹಾಕಾರ ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಚಾಮರಾಜನಗರ, ತುಮಕೂರು, ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ಶೇ.60 ಕೆರೆ-ಕಟ್ಟೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರಿಲ್ಲ. 12 ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂತರ್ಜಲ ಮಟ್ಟ ಕುಸಿದಿದೆ. ಜಲಾಕಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರಿದ್ದರೂ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರಿನ ಅಗತ್ಯ ನೀಗಿಸುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಜತೆಗೆ, ಕೊಳವೆಲಾವಿ ಅದಲಂಬನೆ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಮತ್ತಪ್ಪು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಿದೆ.

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ಈ ಬಾರಿ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ತಾಪಮಾನದಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ಏರಿಕೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ 37 ಡಿಗ್ರಿ ನೆ. ವರೆಗೂ ಕಂತ್ಯಾಂಕ ಎರುವ ಸಾಧ್ಯತೆಯಿದೆ. ಫೆಲ್ಲವರಿ ಮೊದಲ ವಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ವಾಡಿಕೆಗಿಂತ 3 ಡಿಗ್ರಿ ನೆ. ತಾಪಮಾನ ಜಾಕ್ತಿಯಾಗಿತ್ತು. 2ನೇ ವಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾಗಿದ್ದು. 3 ಮತ್ತು 4ನೇ ವಾರದಿಂದ ಮತ್ತೆ ಜಾಕ್ತಿಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಮಾರ್ಚ್-ಎಕ್ಕಿಲ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಬೆರಿಲು ಇರುವುದರಿಂದ ಎಚ್ಚರ ವಹಿಸಬೇಕಿದೆ.

l ಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಪರಾಮಾನ ತಕ್ಷ

ಉಷ್ಟಾಂಶ (ಫೆ.20) ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಸೆಪ್ಟಿಯನ್ ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ 37.5 ಕಲಬುರಗಿ 36.8 ರಾಯಚೂರು 35.4 ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡ 35.2 ಮಂಡ್ಯ 34.6

ಟ್ಕಾಂಕರ್ ಮೂಲಕ ನೀರು ಪೂರೈಕೆ

ಬಿಸಿಲಿನ ಸರಿಹಾಮವಾಗಿ ವಿವಿಧ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕುಡಿಯುವ ನೀರಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ವಿಗಾಡಾಯಿಸಿದ್ದು, 782 ಗ್ರಾಮಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ 1,193 ವಾರ್ಡ್ಗಳನ್ನು ಸಮಸ್ಕಾತ್ಮಕವೆಂದು ಗುರುತಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇಲ್ಲೆಲ್ಲ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ಮೂಲಕ ನೀರು ಪೂಲೈಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ಹಲವು ಬಡಾವಣೆಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಉಲ್ಲಡೆಸಿದೆ. ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ಗೆ ದರವನ್ನು ಸರ್ಕಾರ ನಿಗದಿಗೊಳಿಸಿದೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿ ವಸೂಲಿ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ ಕಠಿಣ ಕ್ರಮಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದಾಗಿ ಪಾಸಗಿಯವರಿಗೆ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಎಷ್ಟರಿಕೆ ಕೊಟ್ಟಿದೆ. ಪರ್ಯಾಯ ನೀರಿನ ಮೂಲ ಗುರುತಿಸಲು, ಕೊಳವೆಬಾವಿ ಕೊಲೆಸಲು, ಟ್ಯಾಂಕರ್ ಗಳ ಮೂಲಕ ನೀರು ಪೂರೈಸಲು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಿದ್ಧವಾಗಿಟ್ಟುಕೊಳ್ಳುವಂತೆ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಡಾಯಿತಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಈಗಾಗಲೇ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಡಳಿತ ಸೂಚನೆ ನೀಡಿದೆ.

ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿದ ಗಂಟಲು ಬೇನೆ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು: ಬಿಸಿಲಿನ ಭಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಧೂಳು ಮತ್ತು ಶುಷ್ಠ ವಾತಾವರಣದಿಂದ ರಾಜ್ಯದೆಲ್ಲಿದೆ ಗಂಟಲು ಬೇನೆ (ಅಪ್ಪರ್ ರೆಸ್ಟಿರೇಟರಿಟ್ಯ್ಯಾಕ್ ಇನ್ ಫೆಕ್ಟನ್) ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರದಿಯಾಗುತ್ತಿವೆ. ರಾಜಧಾನಿಯ ವಿಕ್ಟೋರಿಯಾ ಆಶ್ವತ್ರೆ ಕೆ.ಸಿ. ಜನರಲ್ ಆನ್ವತ್ರೆ. ಇಂದಿರಾಗಾಂಧಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಆನ್ವತ್ರೆ ಹಾಗೂ ವಾಣಿವಿಶಾನ ಅವ್ಯತ್ರೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನಿಕ್ಕ 10–20 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ವರದಿಯಾಗುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಪ್ರತ್ರೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ಸಿತ್ಯದ ಕೇಸ್ಗಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಳ ಕಂಡುಬರುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಆರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಗಂಟಲು ಕಟ್ಟಿದಂತಾಗಿ ಕಿವಿಯ ಕೆಳಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ನೋವು ಕಾಣಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತದೆ. ಬಳಿಕ ಒಣಕೆಮ್ಯು, ನೆಗಡಿ, ತಲೆನೋವು, ಮೈ-ಕೈ ನೋವಿನೊಂದಿಗೆ ಜ್ವರ ಕಾಣಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತದೆ. ತಂಪುಹಾನೀಯ, ಕಪ್ಪಿನಹಾಲು, ಮಜ್ಜಿಗೆ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ದ್ರವಾಹಾರಗಳು, ಐಸ್-ಕ್ರೀಮ್ ಹಾಗೂ ಕತ್ತರಿಸಿದ ಹಣ್ಣುಗಳ ಮೊರೆ ಹೋಗುವವರಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಕಾಣಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಶುಣಿತ್ರಕ್ಕೆ ಒತ್ತು ನೀಡದ ಕಾರಣ ಗಂಟಲು ಬೇನೆಯಂತಹ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ಹೆಚ್ಚುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ಅವರಲ್ನೂ ಸೈನಸ್ ತೊಂದರೆ ಇರುವವರು ತಣ್ಣನೆಯ ಪದಾರ್ಥಗಳನ್ನು ಸೇವಿಸುವುದರಿಂದ ನಮಸ್ಯೆ ಮತ್ತಷ್ಟು ಉಲ್ಲ ಣಗೊಳ್ಳಲಿದೆ ಎಂದು ವೈದ್ಯರು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. ರೋಗನಿರೋಧಕ ಕತ್ತಿ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಇರುವವರಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ವೈರಾಣು ಸೋಂಕು ಬೇಗ ಹರಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ ಹೊರಗೆ ಹೋಗುವವರು ಮಾಸ್ಕ್ ಧರಿಸುವುದು, ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಅಂತರ ಕಾಯ್ಕುಕೊಳ್ಳು ಪುದು, ಕೈಗಳು ಸೇರಿ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಸ್ಪಪ್ತತೆ ಆದ್ಯತೆ ನೀಡುವುದು ಒಳ್ಳೆಯದು ಎಂದು ವೈದ್ಯರು ಸಲಹೆ ನೀಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

Rengelore Talifor Per Di. 2011 Page St. 1

Source: Vijayavani, p.03, Feb.21, 2024

Health

HEALTH

Focus on upgrade of infrastructure

Afshan Yasmeen

BENGALURU

While the overall funding for the health sec-

tor remains the same as last year at 4% (₹15,145 crore) of the total Budget, the focus this time is

only on upgrading public health infrastructure, strengthening lab services, and establishing critical care hubs in every district.

Apart from construction of 100-bedded taluk hospitals at a cost of ₹280 crore in Anekal, Nelamangala, Hoskote, Sringeri, Khanapura, Shirahatti, and Yelandur taluks where there are no taluk hospitals, the Budget has proposed to start daycare chemotherapy centres in each district at a cost of ₹20 crore.

On cancer

For early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer and cervical cancer, the incidence of which is on the rise, the Budget has announced that digital mammography equipment will be provided to 20 district hospitals. Besides, colposcopy machines will be provided to K.C. General hospital in Bengaluru

and district hospitals of Udupi, Kolar, and Davangere at the cost of ₹21 crore.

While there is no mention of any new health scheme or provision of manpower to effectively run the

existing facilities, allocations have been made for repairs and renovation and infrastructure development.

C.N. Manjunath, former director of Jayadeva Institute, said the need of the hour is to reinforce and strengthen the existing facilities with adequate manpower to improve their functionality.

"We should optimally utilise the existing facilities and should move from construction to creation of posts with exclusive budgetary support for quality care. The Ayushman Bharat Arogya Karnataka health scheme should have got some allocation for revision of package rates. Because of the poor package rates, many private hospitals are not keen on empanelment and this in turn is resulting in more patient load on the public facilities," he said.

Source: The Hindu, p. 8, Feb. 17, 2024

Revision of package rates under Ayushman Bharat-Arogya K'taka need of the hour

HEALTH

EALTH is a priority sector, hence there is a need to increase the budgetary allocation to 5% of GDP. It is essential to strengthen the existing medical colleges and hospitals at all levels with adequate manpower. The focus should move from construction to creation of essential posts with exclusive budgetary support. Just mere equipment and buildings are not enough to deliver quality healthcare. At present, medical colleges are in excess, diluting the hands-on training opportunities, resulting in un-trained doctors which is harmful to patient care.

Bengaluru with 20-25% of the state population needs at least 350bed multispeciality hospitals in each zone (East, West, North and South) so that timely treatment can be given in greater Bengaluru sectors.

Neurological services need special attention since NIMHANS has not expanded

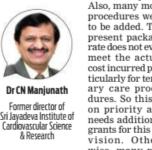
further. The state government should think of establishing a 500-bed autonomous institute of neurosciences on the lines of Jayadeva Hospital, Sanjay Gandhi and KIDWAI. It is a welcome move that many trauma and critical care health centres have been announced in the budget in district and rural areas attaching telemedicine and artificial intelligence (AI) technology, Nearly 13% of deaths are due to road traffic accidents, so they should be made fully functional. This will be able to treat severe trauma patients in the golden hour and it can bring down death rates

HUB AND SPOKE MODEL IN ALL TALUK HOSPITALS

It is a good decision to extend the hub and spoke model for treating heart attacks and stroke which accounts for 30-40% of total deaths in all taluk hospitals. Patients in rural areas will be immensely benefited. At present, streptokinase is used for thrombolysis. It is better to fast-track the procurement of Inj Tenecteplase since it is a more effective drug which can be administered in just 2-3 minutes.

Though the Ayushman Bharat-Arogya Karnataka scheme which is in place for BPL patients, it is not truly a universal scheme. It is said that the coverage is up to Rs 5 lakhs which is not for an individual patient but for the entire family. There is a need to revise the package rates scientifically and it has never been revised in

the last five years. Also, many more procedures were to be added. The present package rate does not even meet the actual cost incurred particularly for tertiary care procedures. So this is on priority and needs additional grants for this revision. Otherwise, many pri-vate hospitals may not be em-



panelled and the entire burden falls on government hospitals which cannot cope with the patient load. Ultimately, quality care is also compromised and medical staff at a government hospital will end up with burnout syndrome.

The government's decision to provide chemotherapy for cancer treatment in all district hospitals is a boon to patients.

The Medical Education Directorate has been upgraded to Commissionarate to bring more efficiency to the department. However, decentralisation and delegation mechanisms will fasttrack academic decisions. There is a long-standing demand for Asha and Anganwadi workers for enhancement, which is worth allocating in the budget.



Source: The New Indian Express, p.4, Feb, 17, 2024

Emphasis on developing health infra in taluks, villages

For better health

Critical Care Blocks to be set up in all districts; 46 Primary Health Centres (PHCs) will be set up in the Kalvana Karnataka region; 430 laboratories to be set up in the next two years in Bengaluru

Strengthening health infra-structure, particularly in rural areas, taluk-level facilities and North Karnataka districts, were the focus areas in the leath sector in the budge tresented on Friday, said that the government will es-balbish "state of-the-art" Critical Care Blocks in each district to pro-vide better care to patients with critical illnesses. Construction is set to begin this year in seven districts

critical illnesses. Construction is set to begin this year in seven districts, including Udupi, Mysuru and Dharwad, at a cost of Rs 187 crore.

An amount of Rs 280 crore has been earmarked for the construction of 100-bed taluk hospitals in seven taluks, including Anekal and Nelamangala. The CM announced that 46 Primary Health Centres



Rs 130 crore.
Similar to the previous year's announcement, the government will upgrade 25 PHCs in rural areas to Community Health Centres (CHCs) at a cost of Rs 350 crore over the next two years to provide 24X7 emergency healthcare services.

services, Integrated and Public Health Laboratories (IPHL) will be set up in seven districts this year be set up in seven districts this year and cover every district hospital over the next four years. Similarly, 430 laboratories will be set up over the next two years in Bengalum at a cost of Rs 20 crore. Talluk-level Block Public Health Laboratories (BPHL) will be established in Hunagunda, Sira and Hagaribommanahalli this year, at a cost of Rs 11 crore.

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Source: Deccan Herald, p.5, Feb, 17, 2024

CM to launch 'Asha Kirana' eye care programme today

MANGALURU. DHNS

inister for Health and Family Welfare Dinesh Gundu Rao said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will launch 'Asha Kirana - Eye Care at Your Doorstep', under the aegis of National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCB&VI), at Haveri on Sunday.

Speaking to media in the city on Saturday, he said that under Asha Kirana, comprehensive eye check-ups will be done for individuals across all age groups. Free spectacles will be provided for the needy and cataract surgeries will be done free of cost for the identified beneficiaries.

With the objective of reducing the prevalence of avoidable blindness, Asha Kirana is being implemented successfully in eight districts across two phases.

The first phase covered Chikkaballapur, Kalaburagi,

Haveri and Chamarajanagar, while the second phase covered Chitradurga, Mandya, Raichur, and Uttara Kannada districts.

Health personnel and ASHA workers conduct primary eye check-ups for individuals of all age groups directly at their homes. Those who have eye problems during the screening are referred to the Primary Health Centre (PHC) for secondary screening. Individuals requiring spectacles undergo examination by ophthalmologists at the primary health centre and will be provided with spectacles, Rao said.

Free surgeries will be performed for cataract patients at government hospitals and hospitals of registered voluntary organisations.

In the first phase, a total of 56,59,036 people underwent primary screening (averaging 84%), of whom 8,28,784 underwent further screening in the four districts.

Out of these, 2,45,587 beneficiaries have been identified for distribution of spectacles, and 39,336 people have been selected for cataract surgery and the surgery has already commenced. The CM will symbolically distribute spectacles to the needy at Haveri during the official launch of the programme, the minister said.

The total budgetary allocation for four districts is Rs 22

In the second phase, a total of 52,77,235 people underwent primary screening (averaging 71%), out of which 9,43,398 people were diagnosed with eye-related problems in the four districts.

The minister said that the Asha Kirana programme will be extended to all the districts in a phased manner. Ramanagara, Yadgir, Kodagu and Gadag are earmarked for the next phase (2024-25), followed by Chikkamagaluru, Bidar, Kolar, and Bagalkote in 2025-26.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.5, Feb, 18, 2024

BUDGET FOR HEALTHCARE SEEMS WELL BALANCED

HE Karnataka budget has many plus points for the healthcare sector. It is good that they have set up many stateof-the-art critical care blocks across many districts of the state and are building new taluk-level hospitals and renovating old buildings. This will certainly add to the critical care services which were the need of society and became obvious during Covid-19. This is unique and necessary way to take healthcare to the masses.

The setting up of a child hospital in Bengaluru and the provision of 24/7 emergency healthcare services to rural people with the upgradation of community health centres and building of pri-

mary health centres is commendable and the need of the hour. Emphasis on primary care health and wellness centres and strengthening of district hospitals with tele-ICU systems is again a necessity, especially with the epidemic of noncommunicable diseases in-

creasing in the country and am glad the government is implementing it.

There is a dire need for cancer care and chemotherapy centres in view of huge increase in the number of cancers and it is welcome that the government has set up daycare therapy centres in each district for various cancers and is also working on early diagnosis of cancers in women. Treatment of acute MI at the earliest can save lives and the hub-and-spoke model at all taluk hospitals is a welcome move.

Investment in the diagnosis of tuberculosis and other illnesses and budgetary allocation for safety measures including firefighting systems in district hospitals is another welcome measure. In addition to setting up new medical colleges, a huge grant that is going to be provided for the construction and purchase of equipment for medical colleges will certainly increase the supply of doctors and hopefully, they will be adequately staffed. Since severe kidney disease numbers are increasing, the extension of a 40-bed nephro-uro hospital in Mysuru to a 100-bed hospital will help a large number of patients on dialysis.

Upgradation of hospitals by investing in state-of-theart robotic surgical machines, modular OTs and setting up of super-specialty hospitals in various parts of

the state will improve tertiary and quaternary care in the state. Multiple projects in areas of women and child development will go a long way in improving paediatric care and child health and women's health. Strengthening Anganwadis and support to caregivers

of people with neurological disabilities is again a muchneeded investment.

In conclusion, the budget for healthcare overall seems well-balanced, taking into consideration, primary and preventive health, promoting wellness and health in rural and semi-urban areas, child and maternal health, critical care and emergency services which became very important during the Covid times, super-specialty services and also the care of the differently abled. It also addresses the need for increased healthcare professionals in the state, but the proof of the pudding as always would be dependent on how well this is implemented.



Dr Sudarshan Ballal, Chairman

Chairman, Manipal Hospitals

Source: The New Indian Express, p.4, Feb, 17, 2024

Union Ministry reveals funds to CoERDs grossly under-utilised

Afshan Yasmeen

BENGALURU

While nearly 2,420 patients have been enrolled with the 11 Centres of Excellence for Rare Diseases (CoERDs) in India, data furnished by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the Lok Sabha during this Budget session revealed gross under-utilisation of funds disbursed to these centres in the last three years.

In reply to an unstarred question by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, data furnished on February 9 by Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Bharati Pravin Pawar revealed that only 48.7% of around ₹109 crore disbursed by the Ministry in the last three years was utilised.

Providing year-wise details of the allocation and utilisation of funds by each of the CoERDs., the Minister informed that only around ₹53 crore of the ₹109 crore disbursed by the Health Ministry to all centres in the last three years had been utilised.

The National Rare Disease Policy (NRDP) that was formulated in March 2021 was amended in May 2022. The one-time monetary aid of ₹20 lakh per patient announced under the original policy only for Group 1 patients (who need only one time treatment), was revised to a one-time aid of ₹50 lakh per patient for all groups of rare diseases. While Group 2 diseases can be managed through dietary supplements, Group 3 diseases have approved therapy and clinical evidence of patients leading quality lives post therapy. Treatment is lifelong for this category.

Fact sheet

Centre of Excellence for Rare Diseases	Funds in last 3 years	Funds utilised	Funds utilised (%)
Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics with Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad	₹7,38,47,943	₹33,42,416	4.53
Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi	₹4,40,10,000	₹77,56,644	17.62
Sree Avittam Thirunal Hospital, Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram	₹3,00,00,000	₹53,00,000	17.67
All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Jodhpur	₹3,00,00,000	₹91,17,801	30.39
All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi	₹43,03,29,854	₹14,90,69,430	34.64



Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad, is among the CoERDs with the least utilisation of funds.

According to the data, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi has recorded nil utilisaton of ₹1.4 crore released in March 2023. This centre has carried forward the amount to the next financial year.

"Unspent balance of financial year 2022-23 has been carried forward by the CoERDs for continuing treatment of the patients. The Institute of Child Health and Hospital for Children, Chennai is the only centre that has surrendered the unspent balance of ₹96.03 lakh," the reply stated.

Expressing concern over the poor utilisation, L. Hanumanthaiah, Congress Rajya Sabha MP from Karnataka, who is also a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) on Health and Family Wel-

fare, said the Ministry should monitor the utilisation on a day-to-day basis.

"The Ministry should also ask the CoERDs to explain the poor utilisation and submit a detailed report. I have been consistently raising this issue in the Rajya Sabha, and had also written to the Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in 2023 expressing serious concern over inordinate delay by several CoERDs to start treatment of rare disease patients," he said.

Disturbed over the poor utilisation, patient advocacy groups alleged sheer negligence by the CoERDs. They contended that many eligible patients, who could have been saved by this financial assistance, have unfortunately lost their lives due to lack of timely commencement of treatment by the CoERDs.

"It is unfortunate that less than half of the funds disbursed by the Ministry has been utilised by the centres. The unutilised amount can still be used to save the lives of several eligible rare disease patients across India," said Manjit Singh, founder and honorary president, Lysosomal Storage Disorder Support Society (LSDSS).

KFD peaks, vaccine efforts stalled

Private manufacturer's reluctance hampers vaccine production in Karnataka

STATE OF PLAY

G. T. Sathish

sathish.gt@thehindu.co.in

arnataka's Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dinesh Gundu Rao, while answering a question on manufacturing a vaccine for Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), a viral infection, during the legislature session in December 2023, said that private manufacturers were not showing any interest in taking it up. The reason for the companies' reluctance, he said, was that the number of people getting infected by the disease was too small and it does not make business sense for them, given the investment required for the research and development of a vaccine. This underlined the limitations of relying on private players in matters of serious public health issues.

Since the Minister made this statement, two people have died due to the disease in Karnataka. From January 1 to February 18, as many as 103 people have contracted the infection in three districts of Shivamogga, Uttara Kannada and Chikkamagaluru in Karnataka, stressing the need for an effective vaccination to contain this tick-borne disease. The positivity rate stands at 2.52 and the fatality rate at 1.94.

The disease has a history dating back to 1956 when it was first noticed in the Kyasanur forest areas of Sorab taluk in the hilly Shivamogga district. Since then, many experts have conducted research on its origin, spread, and impact on health. The disease is also known as "monkey fever", as it also affects monkeys. The death of monkeys serves as a forecast for



the KFD outbreak. Studies have shown that it spreads through tick bites. The ticks that come into contact with KFD-affected monkeys carry the disease to human habitats.

For the first 15 years, the disease was confined to Shivamogga district. However, gradually, it has spread to other areas. It was noticed in Uttara Kannada district in 1972. Later, cases started being reported from Koppa in Chikkamagaluru, in 1980. By 1982, cases were reported in Dakshina Kannada district. It was traced in Chamarajanagara in the Old Mysore region in 2012. Then, in Belagavi in 2016, reached Gadag in 2017 (both in north Karnataka), and cases were reported in Mysuru and Hassan districts in 2019.

The virus has shown its presence in neighbouring States as well. An autopsy of a dead monkey in the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu in 2012 showed KFD virus. Six people were infected with the disease in Wayanad and Malappuram, Kerala, in 2013-14. An outbreak of KFD was reported in north Goa in 2015-16. Maharashtra also reported cases in 2016.

The number of people who have died since 1956 is above 560. The highest number of deaths in a year was reported in 1983 (110) and 1984 (171), forcing the government to give approval for the manufacture of a vaccine to avoid the

spread of the disease.

With the help of the National Institute of Virology in Pune, the vaccine was developed from chick embryo fibroblast culture. It was administered in the KFD-affected areas until 2019-20. In the last year alone, 1.79 lakh people were covered by the vaccination programme. The data shows that the vaccination drive brought down the number of confirmed cases in the 1990s. However, recent tests have shown that the vaccine is now ineffective and the department stopped administering the vaccine. As of now, there is no vaccine and no proper medicine to treat the patients. Treatment symptomatic.

The trends show that KFD human positive cases peak between December and June. During the rainy season, cases are hardly reported. Those who work in forests, firewood collectors, wildlife personnel, and those who enter forests for trekking are among the most vulnerable. The State government has been distributing tick-repellent oil to the people in the affected areas. Residents of villages close to forests have been advised to consult primary health centres as soon as they develop symptoms like high fever, redness in the eyes, and body pain. The Department of Health and Family Welfare has made it mandatory to treat all KFD patients in hospitals.

Karnataka government has approached the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) about manufacturing vaccines. The ICMR in turn, is in consultation with Indian Immunologicals Limited. However, it is not clear when an effective vaccine will be available. As cases mount, it is clear vaccine will not be available this season for certain.

Source: The Hindu, p. 11, Feb. 20, 2024

Health dept plans to roll out monkey fever vaccine by next year

BENGALURU, DHNS

high-level meeting for Kyasanur Forest Disease convened by the health department on Monday discussed the possibility of a vaccine roll-out for the disease before next year.

The meeting was prompted by a spike in the number of cases of KFD or monkey fever in three districts of the state.

A Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical company has shown interest in the production of vaccines for the disease. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has agreed to support the company with a funding of about Rs 10 crore, said D Randeep, commissioner, health and family welfare services. "We plan to roll out a vaccine before the next infection cycle begins."

Measures taken by the health department to curb the spread of KFD include increased surveillance and immediate testing of all fever cases in patients, reporting of all monkey deaths, admitting all positive cases to hospitals and identifying KMC Manipal, SIMS Shivamogga and KRIMS Karwar as referral hospitals where treatment is free of cost.

Besides providing free ambulance facilities to transfer patients to higher referral centres, the department is planning to increase the number of ambulances for patients and raise awareness locally with the help of ASHA workers and health workers. The department plans to set up testing centres at Sirsi and Sagar taluks.

The health department said although there are 10 districts in the state that the disease is endemic to, cases are being reported by only three districts Shivamogga, Uttara Kannada and Chikkamagaluru - this vear.

Between January 1 and February 19, a total of 4,122 blood samples have been tested for the disease and 104 cases have been reported positive in these three districts. The total number of active cases now stands at 30, with a positivity rate of 2.52%.

Shivamogga and Chikkamagaluru districts reported one death each till date and both the victims had comorbidities.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.3A, Feb, 20, 2024

Disease prevalence in Kolar, Chickballapur reduced by 67%'

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Debunking allegations by some people about treated water from K.C. and H.N. valley of Bengaluru let out to the tanks of Kolar and Chickballapur being harmful, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Tuesday told the Legislative Assembly that a study by IISc. experts showed that prevalence of diseases had, in fact, reduced in those areas by 67%.

Replying to the BJP member Dheeraj Muniraju during the Zero Hour, the Minister said the quality of available water in these areas had actually improved after taking up the project of filling up tanks in these parched districts from the treated water from K.C. and H.N. valley of Bengaluru.

This had reduced the prevalence of diseases like typhoid, dysentery and viral hepatitis, he said.

Study by experts

Mr. Byre Gowda said the government had got the IISc. experts to study the project right from its inception in 2017-18 so that any negative impact on people's health or environment would come to light immediately.

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, Feb. 21, 2024

Gender

Rs 86,423 crore boost for women empowerment

RASHMI BELUR BENGALURU, DHNS

The chief minister prioritised women's empowerment in the 2024-25 budget by announcing various schemes for women, especially rural women, including women-run cafes and training to become coffee entrepreneurs

The budget announces support for one lakh women's self-help groups (SHG) in fisheries, beekeeping, poultry, sheep, and goat rearing with forward linkages to markets at a cost of Rs 100 crore. About 50 women-run cafes named 'Sanjeevini', aimed to serve healthy, hygienic and affordable cooked food in rural areas, will be launched across the state at a cost of Rs 7.50 crore.

With the collaboration of the Coffee Board, one lakh women SHG members will be trained as coffee entrepreneurs and 2,500 kiosks managed by SHG women will be setup at a cost of Rs 25 crore. The government also aims at developing 50,000 SHG-owned micro-enterprises.

Incubation centres will be established in all the districts in a phased manner in association with the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore to nurture and empower local women's enterprises.

To help working women in cities, the chief minister announced affordable and secure transit hostels in cities, which SHGs and urban local bodies will manage. The scheme to be launched in five cities, including Bengaluru, has been allocated Rs 2 crore. The chief minister has earmarked Rs 86,423 crore for women-oriented schemes and Rs 54,617 crore for children-oriented schemes. Gruha Lakshmi, one of the guarantee schemes, has been provided Rs 28,608 crore for 2024-25.

The chief minister set

Highlights

1000 new Anganawadis at a cost of Rs 200 crore

Gratuity facility for Anganawadi workers and helpers

Monthly pension under Mythri scheme for gender minorities will be increased from Rs 800 to Rs 1,200

Monthly allowance of former Devadasis will be increased from Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000

Financial assistance for construction of houses for former Devadasis through Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation

A detailed survey on the socio-economic status of former Devadasis

Skill Connect summit will be organised in Global Investors meet

Dual system of training extended to all ITIs

English & communication skill training at ITI and GTTCs at a cost of Rs 5 cr

Addl diploma courses: Electrical & Electronics engg, robotics etc. to be introduced at GTTCs

New GTTCs at Ballari, Chitradurga and Gadag

GTCC multi-skill development centre in collaboration with VTU

Govt will soon frame a 'State Skill Policy' to equip youngsters with necessary skills. Skill Academy will be set up in Sanduru of Ballari at a cost of Rs 300 crore.

aside Rs 90 crore to provide smartphones for Anganawadi workers to help them in their routine work and Rs 10 crore to conduct capacity-building workshops for 20,000 Anganawadi workers and helpers.

Under the Prerana scheme, menstrual cups will be distributed to rural women frontline workers, SHG and Gram Panchayat (GP) members. 100 GPs will have vocational skill training for women. Cold press oil units, each at a cost of Rs 1 lakh, will be established through SHCs.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.7, Feb, 17, 2024

Shakti scheme to cost Rs 4,300 cr in FY24, Rs 6,000 cr in FY25

MUTHI-UR-RAHMAN SIDDIQUI BENGALURU, DHNS

The free bus travel scheme for women will likely cost the state government nearly Rs 4.300 crore in the current fiscal year. over 40% more than the budget estimate of Rs 2,800 crore, a well-placed source in the government said.

In his budget speech, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the government had spent Rs 3,000 crore on the scheme, which had benefited over 155 crore women so far.

The Shakti scheme, which

allows local women to travel for free in all non-premium government buses within Karnataka, is the only over-utilised of the state government's five guarantees. Besides Rs 2,800 crore, the

government has given the four Road Transport Corporations (RTCs) motor vehicle tax exemptions worth Rs 580 crore. So the outgo for the Shakti scheme has been Rs 3,380

This is expected to cross well over Rs 4,000 crore, the source added.

Shakti scheme cost the gov-

ernment Rs 3,678 crore from June 11, 2023, until February 15, 2024. More than 65 lakh women travel for free under the scheme every day, costing the government Rs 15.45

If this trend holds good, the scheme will cost another Rs 695 crore, and the overall outgo will reach Rs 4,300 crore.

While the government has earmarked Rs 5,015 crore for the scheme, the source said the expenditure would likely reach Rs 6,000 crore.

The government will build Official data shows that the automated driving test tracks at Udupi, Chikkaballapur,

Nelamangala, Madikeri, Madhugiri and Hunsur for Rs 36 crore, and seizing yards at Devanahalli and Tumakuru at Rs 10 crore. Automated test centres will be developed at 32 places under public-private partnership to facilitate fitness testing of all transport vehicles seeking renewal of fitness certificate.

The Transport Department will also roll out a scheme to digitise documents of all registered vehicles. Records in Bengaluru central, Belagavi, Mangaluru and Bhalki divisions will be digitised in 2024-25 on a pilot basis.

Railway overbridges will be built for Rs 350 crore at Kukkarahalli and KRS Road in Mysuru, Shivamogga-Bommanakatte, Mallapur (Gadag district), Channapatna-Byrapatna and Chikkaballapur.

Karnataka will contribute Rs 9,915 crore to the nine railway lines being constructed at Rs 12.147 crore.

It will also bear 30% of the land acquisition for the construction of Satellite Town Ring Road in Bengaluru.

The government has earmarked Rs 2,000 crore to develop 1,700 km of state highways.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.8, Feb, 17, 2024

More dhan for Lakshmi: Eye on LS polls, Siddu allocates ₹34,406 crore

RASTHIK KK @Wpsuu

RS 5,676 coro under the tenue of former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai.

THE Congress government in the state, led by Chief Minister aministy of the congress government in the state, led by Chief Minister aministy of the congress government in the state, led by Chief Minister aministy of the congress government in the state, led by Chief Minister aministy of the congress government has augmented pensions around the congruent of the congruent

been disbursed directly to the accounts of beneficiaries.

or indirectly.
Shashidhar Gowda, a social activist and entrepreneur from Mysuru, commends the state government's allocation of budget for women, children, and gender minorities. Specific

Source: The New Indian Express, p.5, Feb, 17, 2024

Governance

Revenue Dept. to provide all services online

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Revenue Department has decided to provide all its services online. "Under the Digi-Kandaya scheme, action will be taken to provide all services provided by the Revenue Department to the public through digital platforms. Offices from village level to the State level will be covered under digital service," the Budget said.

"Digitalisation of Aakarbands will be undertaken for the speedy delivery of services to landholders by interlinking the land extent in Akarband and RTCs,"



the Budget further said. "In order to provide good governance, action will be taken to ena-

ble the mutations without notice (except pouthi

through J-slip) to be automatically approved in prescribed software," it further said.

The Budget also announced that 'Bhoo-Suraksha' scheme will be rolled out on a pilot basis to provide the citizen computerised records online by scanning land, survey and registration records of the Revenue Department. "By this we can computerise and maintain the old records permanently without allowing us to create fake records," the Budget said. "Action will be taken to make revenue records available to the public through a transparent and online system by modernising 240 record rooms of the Land Survey Department. By using Land Beat App RTC's of flagged government land in Bhoomi software will be monitored and preserved against encroachment," the Budget further said.

Source: The Hindu, p. 9, Feb. 17, 2024

Over 1,000 industrialists get notices for failing to fulfil project obligations

In Bengaluru city alone, 43 IT sector and 14 hardware sector industrialists have violated lease terms for 58 acres of land

BENGALURU

The Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) has initiated stringent actions against numerous industrialists across the State for failing to fulfil project obligations on government-allotted The department issued notices to a total of 1,061 industrialists from all 30 districts of Karnataka throughout January, signalling an effort to ensure adherence to the Board's

Land unutilised

Under the terms set by KIADB, industrialists who were granted land leases



Over the past decade, 1,061 industrialists from across the the State and Bengaluru have failed to complete construction projects.

for 10 years must complete project within five years of acquiring the lease. However, over the past decade, 1,061 industrialists from across the the State and Bengaluru have failed to complete construction projects, leaving a total of

7,002.93 acres of government land unutilised.

The provision for land allocation aims to bolster Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and large industries to stimuemployment

opportunities.

However, amidst the pandemic, many small and medium-scale industries are facing financial challenges, hampering their ability to invest and meet project deadlines, according to a KIADB official.

Mahesh M., Chief Executive Officer of KIADB, emphasised the Board's commitment to reclaiming unused land, stating that 931.78 acres have already been recovered from 40 industrialists in recent months.

He said that industrialists failing to meet construction deadlines will be served notices, and efforts are underway to reclaim a total of 7,002 acres of government land.

The leasing procedure outlined by KIADB necessitates a 30% deposit upon land allocation, and remaining amount should be paid within three months. Industrialists failing to adhere to construction deadlines face a series of notices under the KIADB Act, culminating in the termination of lease agreements.

Notices have been issued across various sectors, including IT, hardware, manufacturing, and food parks.

In Bengaluru city alone, 43 IT sector and 14 hardware sector industrialists have violated lease terms for 58 acres of land. Similar notices have been served in other districts.

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, Feb. 17, 2024

Shops, business establishments in city to be open till 1 a.m.

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

In a major boost to business establishments, the State government has extended the deadline for operational hours for shops and business establishments in the city and 10 other corporations in the Budget.

At present, bars, restaurants, pubs, and hotels are operating till 1 a.m. in Bengaluru. This has now been expanded to 10 other corporations, though the Budget has not mentioned the names of other corporations apart from Bengaluru.

The government is also yet to provide clarity on the types of shops and establishments that will be allowed to remain open till 1 a.m. The Chief Commis-



BBMP will hold discussions with all the stakeholders in connection with the deadline for operational hours.
FILE PHOTO

sioner of BBMP, Tushar Giri Nath, told *The Hindu* that the BBMP will hold discussions with all the stakeholders like the Labour Department and others in connection with the deadline for operational hours. "At present, we do not have clarity on the

types of establishments which can remain open post midnight."

Businesses welcomed the move. Bengaluru Hotel Owners Association president P.C. Rao said the decision by the State government will encourage trade and boost profits. He added that the hotel association had requested the state government to allow business establishments to function round the clock.

Sushma Reddy and Shravya Reddy, founders of Nusa, said, "It is imperative that the government prioritises safety and security measures, particularly for women... With careful planning and attention to safety, the extended hours promise to enhance Bengaluru's economy, culture, and overall quality of life."

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

Rs 200 cr allotted; more villages to get Cauvery water

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a relief to citizens residing in the city's peripheral areas, the state government has earmarked Rs 200 crore to provide drinking water supply to villages like Mallasandra and Lakshmipura that were added to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits since 2016.

While the Cauvery Stage V project caters to the drinking water needs of the 110 villages added to BBMP limits since 2008, these villages that were added later were left out of the project and the new allocation comes as a boon to these villagers.

"Though we are able to get water under the Cauvery Stage V project, we could not service these villages since there was no plan to lay a pipeline here. The new announcement will help fill in the gaps," a senior BWSSB official said.

That apart, CM Siddaramaiah, in his budget speech assured that the Cauvery Stage V project would be completed by May and this would help provide Cauvery water supply to the residents of the 110 villages. "In May 2024, Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board will operationalise Cauvery Phase 5 project of 775 MLD capacity to provide 110 litres of drinking water daily to 12 lakh people, at an estimated cost of Rs. 5,550 crore," Siddaramaiah said.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.4, Feb, 17, 2024

The enormity of the Indian electorate and its State-wise variances

The prospect of delimitation based on electorate variances in States will have to grapple with federal questions

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan, Rebecca Rose Varghese & Srinivasan Ramani

ith 97 crore voters eligible to register their mandate in the general elections later this year, India will yet again go through a process confirming its status as the world's largest electoral democracy. The electorate will register a 6% rise this year in comparison to the number of eligible voters in 2019.

India's 28 States and eight Un-

India's 28 States and eight Union Territories are home to a large number of voters comparable to some of the world's biggest nationstates. Map 1 shows the countries whose electorate numbers come close to those of the States in India, with the name of the country printed over the respective State.

printed over the respective State.
For example, the electorate size of Uttar Pradesh (14.6 crore) is comparable to that of the world's seventh most populous country – Brazil. Maharashtra's and Bihar's electorates match those of Mexico and the Philippines, respectively. Even Goa's electorate size compares well with that of Bahrain and Cyprus.
There is also significant var-

There is also significant variance State-wise in the number of electors that the winning Member of Parliament represented in the Lok Sabha from 2019 to 2024. While an elected MP from Delhi, on average, represented 20.5 lakh voters, an MP from Uttar Pradesh represented 18.3 lakh voters, from Andhra Pradesh 15.8 lakh voters, and Tamil Nadu 15.4 lakh voters, the corresponding numbers for Kerala and Tripura were 13.1 lakh each. Map 2 shows the State-wise average number of voters for each MP there.

Table 3 lists out the constituencies that commanded the top five and bottom five electors among major States. Telangana's Malkajgiri (31.5 lakh) and Karnataka's Ban-

galore North (28.5 lakh) had the highest number of electors.

The variance across States in the number of electors that each elected MP represents is also a consequence of the frozen delimitation exercise, last conducted after the 1971 Census, that has not updated the numbers corresponding to the one-person-one-vote principle. This was done to encourage States which controlled the population effectively. But the idea of delimitation in its present form is fraught with consequences. It could affect States that have worked hard to limit their birth and death rates, and who could see their total number of MPs being reduced if the Lok Sabha size is retained in a prospective delimitation exercise or a modest rise in an expanded House compared to some of the most populous States which have not addressed the birth and death rates to the same extent.

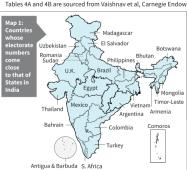
A recent paper (Vaishnav et al, Carnegie endowment) pointed to the fact that U.P. and Bihar might gain II and IO seats each if the size of the Lok Sabha is retained as it is, while Tamil Nadu and Kerala will experience a net decrease of eight seats each (Table 4A). On the other hand, if the Lok Sabha size is increased to 848 based on the projected population in 2026, the increase in the number of MPs for U.P. and Bihar will be 63 and 39 each, in comparison to IO and zero for Tamil Nadu and Kerala (Table 4B).

This is why experts have cau-

Inis is why experts have cautioned against a delimitation exercise that could result in a skewed federal representation hurting the numbers for States that have done the most to address the issue of population explosion. Various ideas ranging from continuing the freeze in delimitation to retaining the size of the Lok Sabha and its representation as it is nationally while increasing the size of the State Assemblies in respective States have been espoused.

One election, many issues

The maps and tables are based on data collated from the Election Commission of India and Ashoka University's Lok Dhaba. Tables 4A and 4B are sourced from Vaishnay et al, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace



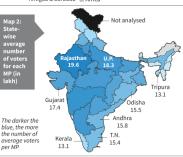


Table 3: Constituencies that commanded the top five and bottom five electors among major States

Highest	Highest electors per seat			Lowest electors per seat		
State	Seat	Voters (lakh)	State	Seat	Voters (lakh)	
Telangana	Malkajgiri	31.5	Assam	Auton- omous	8.0	
Karnataka	Bangalore North	28.5	Assam	Silchar	12.0	
J.P.	Ghaziabad	27.3	Jharkhand	Khunti	12.0	
Karnataka	Bangalore Rural	25.0	Kerala	Idukki	12.0	
Telangana	Chevella	24.4	Kerala	Kot- tayam	12.1	



Table 4A: If the number of seats is retained at 543 and reapportioned among States based on the projected population in 2026

State	Seats at present	Seats projected	Net gain/ loss
U.P.	80	91	11
Bihar	40	50	10
Rajasthan	25	31	6
M.P.	29	33	4
Tamil Nadu	39	31	-8
Andhra+ Telangana	42	34	-8
Kerala	20	12	-8
Karnataka	28	26	-2
Punjab	13	12	-1
Himachal	4	3	-1
Uttarakhand	5	4	-1

Table 4B: If the number of seats is increased to 848 based on the projected population in 2026

State	Seats at present	Seats projected	Net gain
U.P.	80	143	63
Bihar	40	79	39
Rajasthan	25	50	25
M.P.	29	52	23
Tamil Nadu	39	49	10
Andhra+ Telangana	42	54	12
Kerala	20	20	-
Karnataka	28	41	13
Punjab	13	18	5
Himachal	4	4	-
Uttarakhand	5	7	2

Source: The Hindu, p. 11, Feb. 19, 2024

Making sense of electoral bond judgment through data

Data published by the Association for Democratic Reforms played a vital role in assessing electoral bonds' impact

DATA POINT

Sonikka Loganathan Vignesh Radhakrishnan

ast week, the Supreme Court ruled the electoral bonds Scheme unconstitutional, saying that the anonymous influx of funding to political parties, especially from corporations, hinders democratic legitimacy. The unanimous judgment squashed the government's argument that the scheme is transparent because donors have to go through official banking channels to purchase these bonds, despite their identity being hidden.

The Bench agreed that the vo-

The Bench agreed that the voters' right to know was violated, by the anonymity electoral bonds provide. In Justice Sanjiv Khanna's opinion, "access to information which can materially shape the citizens' choice is necessary for them to have a say in how their lives are affected." This meant Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's argument that no black or unaccounted money can be used for bonds was not strong enough as, "denying voters the right to know the details of funding of political parties would lead to a dichotomous situation."

Data from the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), one of the petitioners in the case, shows that the share of unknown sources of income has only increased after the introduction of the electoral bond scheme, in direct contradiction to the government's claim. The ADR categorises the income of political parties into two primary categories: known and unknown. Known income is further divided into two subtypes – voluntary contributions over \$20,000 with donor details provided to the Election Commission of India, and other known sources of income such as the sale of movable and immovable assets. The unknown income encompasses voluntary donations under \$20,000 where

donor details remain undisclosed.

Table 1 shows that the share of unknown sources of income for national parties increased from 66% between FY15 and FY17 to 72% between FY19 and FY22. The transition year FY18, the year in which the scheme was introduced, was not considered for analysis. The BJP's share of unknown income increased from 58% to 68% in the period, while the Congress' remained at around 80%.

remained at around 80%.

A reason behind the call for transparency is that a bulk of these donations were made by corporations. This, gives unfair power to a certain section. "... [The] amendment to Section 182 by permitting unlimited corporate contributions (including by shell companies) authorises unrestrained influence of companies on the electoral process. This is violative of the principle of free and fair elections...", the court observed. Justice Khanna noted that the 255th report by the Law Commission of India states that when importance is given to certain groups, it violates, "the right of equal participation of each citizen in the polity." ADR data shows that the BJP received a lion's share of corporate donations in the FY17 to FY22 period — ₹3,300 crores or 84% of them (Chart 2).

Over 90% of the electoral bonds sold in terms of value and over 50% sold in terms of numbers belonged to the ₹1 crore denomination. The share of other denominations − ₹10 lakhs, ₹1 lakh, ₹10,000 and ₹1,000 − in electoral bond sales, paled in comparison as shown in Chart 3. The court observed that this data pointed to the influence of corporates in the scheme, as not many individuals can afford to donate in crores. Finally, the court also observed that a bulk of the donations from electoral bonds were done in favour of the BJP. ADR data shows that in the FY18-FY22 period, the BJP earned ₹5,272 crore through electoral bonds − 57% of the money donated to all parties in this route (Chart 4).

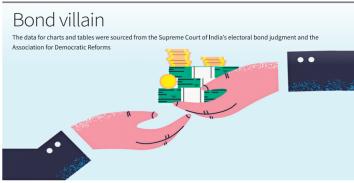
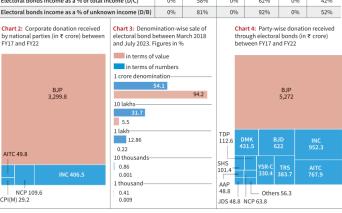


Table 1: Income of national parties from known and unknown sources and their share in the total income of parties

Figures in ₹ crore, unless otherwise mentioned		National parties		BJP		Congress	
Parameter			FY15-17	FY19-22	FY15-17	FY19-22	
Known income from donations > ₹20,000 (A)	1,314	3,340	1,046	2,620	204	458	
Total unknown income (B)	2,550	8,489	1,431	5,516	757	1,823	
Total income without other known sources (C = A+B)	3,864	11,829	2,477	8,136	961	2,280	
Total income from electoral bonds (D)	0	6,841	0	5,062	0	947	
% of known income from donations > ₹20,000 (A/C)	34%	28%	42%	32%	21%	20%	
% of unknown income (B/C)	66%	72%	58%	68%	79%	80%	
Electoral bonds income as a % of total income (D/C)	0%	58%	0%	62%	0%	42%	
Electoral bonds income as a % of unknown income (D/B)	0%	81%	0%	92%	0%	52%	



Source: The Hindu, p. 11, Feb. 21, 2024

Assembly passes Bill to prevent illegal layouts in urban areas

Aim to simplify the registration of documents, says minister

BENGALURU, DHNS

registration of properties in urban areas in the state, the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday passed a Bill which will replace the present system of 'paper or handwrit-ten khata' with electronic doc-

Piloting the Registration (Karnataka Amendment) Bill in the House, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the legislation also aims to sim-plify the registration of documents such as mortgage deeds and pledge deeds without the

physical presence of both par-ties at sub-registrar offices.

"Presenting documents electronically will first be tried with scheduled and nationsed banks besides with state

government agencies and public sector undertakings to enable e-registration and remote registration of some compulsory registrable documents without the physical presence of either party in the sub-reg-istrar's offices," he explained. He added that the state gov-

ernment has taken cue from Maharashtra's successful mod-el to simplify the registration of select documents. "Once it is successfully implemented by banks, the state may perhaps even think of extending the same facility to the Real Estate Regulatory Authority-Karna-

Regulatory Authority-Karna-taka approved projects as well," Gowda claimed. Underlining that property software will be integrated to prevent illegal registration of properties in urban areas, the minister conceded that



Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda speaks in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday. Ministers Priyank Kharge and Dinesh Gundu Rao are seen.

PHOTO: INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

the state had been facing the menace of unauthorised lay-outs for long and the finance department had written to the revenue department on De-cember 22, 2023, explaining in detail about how the paper khatas were being misused to

register properties illegally.
"In our previous tenure,
Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah

had ordered an inquiry on 28 sub-registrar officers for reg-istering properties illegally which resulted in losses of Rs 400 crore to state exchequer but they were acquitted when (Leader of the Opposition) R Ashoka was revenue minister. As revenue minister, I had to close the inquiry file recently. The system needs to be recti-

Registration (Karnataka Amendment) Bill

- e-registration facility will be introduced for registration of select records that require mandatory registration without either parties' presence.
- Anytime-Anywhere Registration initiative will be launched across the
- Integration of software related to registration of immovable properties.
- Certified copies will be made available through centralised virtual distribution system to avoid delay.

fied from within and this Bill aims to do just that," he said. He added that E-Asthi registration would be mandatory and the department was also planning to do away with the option of "Other" in the property registration software in order to prevent misuse.
"Whether paper khata is

issued from agencies like Ben-galuru Development Authori-ty, Karnataka Housing Board, Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board or any such agencies, they will not be accepted to register the prop-erties across urban areas in the state," he explained.

He further said the state gov-ernment had taken up the scan-ning of deeds as old 100 years in a war-footing and planned to accomplish the project in an year. "Once all old deeds are converted into electronic format, the state government will completely stop accepting any paper document," he ex-plained.

In a related development, In a related development, the Assembly also passed the Karnataka Stamps (Amend-ment) Bill, which prohibits the stamps and registration department from collecting stamp duty charges through demand draft or pay order to prevent pilferage of collection. "The state government will now permit the department to

collect the stamp duty through UPI payment system,"

Source: Deccan Herald, p. 6, Feb. 22, 2024

Social Issues

CM focuses on tackling cybercrime, fake news

Vigil gets bigger

Information Disorder Tackling Unit to be set up in collaboration with the IT/BT Department

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA BENGALURU, DHNS

Benoacubu, Umos that were registered in the year 2021.

The Karnataka government will upgrade 43 Cyber, Ecornic police stations across the state, given the rise in deep fake and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday.

The CENstations will be upgraded "to strengthen the cybercrime branch in the State to investigate and take effective action against those who deceive innocent people," the CM said.

those who deceive innocent people," the CMs. and Crime Records As per the National Crime Records As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, 12,555 eybercrime cases were registered in Karnataka in 2022 — a whopping to "increase efficiency in Fire and to "increase" in Fire and to "increase" in Fire and to "increase" in Fire and to "increase efficiency in Fire and to "increase in Fire and to "increase efficiency in Fire and "increase efficiency in Fire



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will be provided in 262-25 to construct 95 better 100 cr.
will be provided in 262-25 to construct 95 better 100 cr.
which costs Rs 800 cr.
Own buildings will be constructed for the police stations and offices that domit stations and offices that domit stations and offices that domit strengthen the mobile forensis cand audio-visual branch of 751 at 8 to 0 cr.
Astroduct hockey ground a Police Sulfan Playsground in Bengaluru at Rs 3 cr.

(IDTU) in collaboration with the ITBT Department to "take strin-gent action against those who cre-tate insecurity and fear in society by spreading fake news." In the Home department, a spe-cial cell will be formed and empow-ered to take suitable legal action against them," the chief minister said.

Equipment and software to strengthen the mobile forensis and audio-visual branch of 1854 at 8 to 20° comment of 1854 at 20

Source: Deccan Herald, p.6, Feb, 17, 2024

'89% of money you lose to cybercrooks is lost forever'

Yashaswini.Sri @timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: A 62-year-old Bengalurean's life savings of Rs 9 crore crumbled to dust with a single fake OTP. After reporting it to the cops, he could only recover around Rs 80 lakh. Every day, tales of shattered trust, financial ruin, and digital deception unfold in various parts of the country because of cybercrime.

In this era of evolving technology, how many people know how to actually safeguard themselves on the internet, asked C Vamsi Krishna, deputy inspector general of police, economic and cyber offences, CID-Karnataka, at a workshop conducted on cybersecurity on Saturday. "Millions of us use UPI in our day-to-day lives. However, how many know the backend process of a UPI transaction? It is a simple process actually, and if a criminal understands it, he can get crafty and commit a cybercrime," he said.

"Most of us have this habit of first using the technology, falling prey and then doing research like this. While some recover funds, a staggering 89% of the money remains unrecovered. Bengaluru, a cybercrime hotspot, wit-

HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF

- There is no easy money. Question everything you see and hear. Take a moment to consider why someone is offering you money/job
- 2 Keep your passwords, devices, apps updated regularly
- 3 Never share OTPs or passwords with anyone
- 4 Read and learn about trends in crime and teach children
- 5 Report any fraud to police immediately on https://www.cybercrime.gov.in and 1930
- Types of cybercrime in recent
 - Fedex/courier/ customs-related fraud
 - Fraud based on WFH/Google ratings/movie ratings/simple tasks
 - Instant loan and other applications
 - Fingerprint cloning and AePS-based fraud
 - Al-generated deepfake videos and audios
 - Sextortion and crypto investments

nessed a doubling of cases from 2022 to 2023, with a disheartening decline in detection rates. According to city police, only around 12% of the total Rs 900 crore lost was returned to complainants, leaving a substantial amount irretrievable. The city recorded 1,200 detected cases in the past year alone, undoubtedly a fraction of the actual occurrences," Krishna said.

AI & cyberfraud

Artificial intelligence (AI) plays a key role in many cy-

bercrimes recorded in the past few months, continued Krishna. "If I input thousands of passwords into the system, the AI machine could guess the next password. Its potential extends to various tasks, like crafting convincing emails or messages to easily deceive you. Deepfakes and manipulated audio notes have been prevalent in the mainstream media recently. AI has made organizing cybercrime easier and busting it complex," the officer explained.

Source: The Times of India, p.7, Feb. 18, 2024

Cauvery pact: a controversial journey

Visvesvaraya (1860-1962), rightly called engineer-visionary, [as Chief Engineer of Mysore] came up with a proposal in October 1910 to build a reservoir, now called Krishnarajasagara (KRS). Eventually, in September 1911, an agreement was arrived at building a smaller reservoir of about 11.3 thousand million cubic feet (tmc) capacity in the initial phase of the dam project. But, friction developed immediately on the execution of the next phase of the project. As both Madras and Mysore had agreed for referring the matter to an arbitrator, the Government of India appointed Sir H.D. Griffin, Judge, High Court, Allahabad, as Arbitrator, who commenced his job in July 1913.

Griffin took less than a year to arrive at his award on what was then popularly called – Kannambadi Arbitration Case – and delivered his award on May 12, 1914. The takeaway of the award was the nod to the upper riparian State's plan of constructing KRS with a full reservoir level of 124 ft and capacity of 41.5 tmc ft.

Madras, which had about 1.5 million acres of land under cultivation in its territory of the Cauvery delta, was naturally worried about possible adverse consequences of the KRS dam project and it sent its formal response to the Government of India (GoI) in April 1915.

Three months later, Mysore took up the matter with Resident in Mysore Hugh Daly, seeking modification in the award. Madras suffered a setback in March 1916 when it was informed by GoI that the award had been ratified. Four months later, Madras conveyed to GoI that it desired the matter be referred to the Secretary of State for India

In November 1919, Secretary of State Edwin Samuel Montagu informed Resident Henry Venn Cobb that his government did not approve the award. Subsequently, GoI indicated to Mysore that the latter could enter into negotiations



T. Ramakrishnan

The 1924 Cauvery agreement. intended to settle disputes between the Madras Presidency and Mysore, remains contentious. While Tamil Nadu saw it as a saviour, Karnataka deemed it detrimental

with Madras or it could submit the main questions to arbitration by a new tribunal. It took over five months for Mysore to convey its willingness to have negotiations with Madras.

The discussions between the two sides paved the way for framing a draft set of rules for the regulation of the KRS by July 1921.

But, it was felt that the proposed rules were, by themselves, "incomplete and inoperative" in the absence of an enabling agreement. This led to another round of negotiations. Mysore, while agreeing to ensure the prescriptive right of Madras, did not want the lower riparian State to have further locus standi in its future projects. Madras, which was aware that the 1892 Agreement had placed the upper riparian State on a strong footing, was, however, not satisfied merely with the retention of the prescriptive right. It favoured a share, on an "equitable basis" of all the surpluses of the Cauvery

[S.] Guhan [the author of The Cauvery River Dispute] points out that even though three broad approaches came up for discussion, what eventually was agreed upon was that both sides should "lay all their cards on the table" which would enable them to share their intentions for future storage and irrigation extension; arrive at a "broader settlement," which would include KRS and Mettur but would not be confined to the two dam projects and allow for re-assessment of surpluses and their possible utilisation, preceded by review, after a reasonable period of time.

On the 33rd anniversary of the 1892 Agreement, the two parties entered into a fresh agreement at Fort St. George, Madras, on February 18, 1924, which even today remains the last such understanding between the two States. A.R. Banerji, Mysore Dewan, and P. Hawkins, Public Works Department's Secretary of Madras, were the signatories to the pact.

The main messages of the agreement were essentially two. The pact paved the way for the construction of KRS up to the height of 124 ft with a capacity of about 44.83 TMC and Mettur dam in Tamil Nadu which would be twice the size of KRS. The pact allowed a review of certain stipulations of the agreement after 50 years, which became the most controversial feature of the agreement.

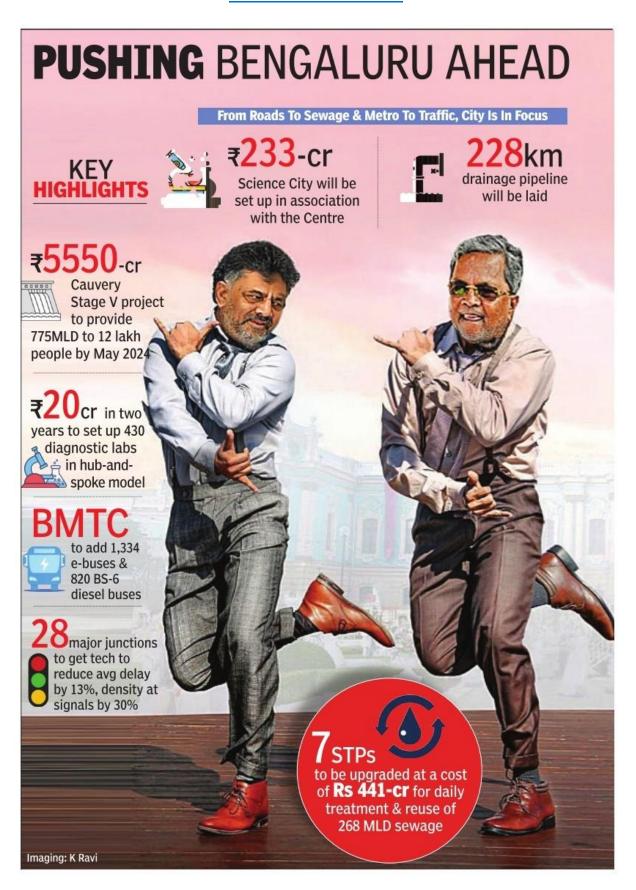
Among the major elements of the pact were the lower riparian State's consent for limiting the new area of irrigation under the Mettur project to 3.01 lakh acres and the formulation of the Rules of Regulation of KRS and other reservoirs, if and when built, in such a manner that there should not be "any material diminution in supplies" to Madras, as assured in the KRS rules.

Contrary to the subsequent campaign by political leaders of Karnataka that the 1924 Agreement was imposed on Mysore, which was a "vassal Princely State," a statement issued by Banerji, the Dewan of Mysore, and published by The Hindu on February 21, 1924, did not betray any such feeling. Banerji called the agreement "a fair and honourable settlement." While lauding technical officers on either side, Banerji said their work "will stand out in history as of first rate magnitude and excellence in view of the fact that while the spirit of 'give and take' reigned throughout, there was not on either side of the slightest determination or willingness to give in on the vital points." No one would argue that there was "no British hand" behind the settlement. But, to interpret it to say that Mysore's interests were brushed aside wholly in the process and to its detriment would not be an act of fairness to history. (Excerpts from a publication Cauvery: a long-winded dispute - to be brought out by The Hindu Group

ramakrishnan.t@thehindu.co.in

Source: The Hindu, p. 11, Feb. 20, 2024

Urban Affairs



Source: The Times of India, p.2, Feb. 20, 2024

Mobile substations to relieve city of frequent power cuts

TEAM TOI

ower cuts in the name of 'regular maintenance' may become a thing of the past in the tech capital, with the chief minister announcing the procurement of mobile substations to ensure uninterrupted power supply.

The vehicle-mounted substations are expected to spare citizens frequent power outages, especially in large housing societies and apartment complexes where there is a considerable load on energy installations. Unlike unexpected power outages throughout the year, the scheduled cuts due to maintenance works have almost become a regular phenomenon across Bengaluru over the past few years. **Bangalore Electricity Supply** Company (Bescom) and Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPT-CL) are bound to take up upgrade or maintenance work because of the mounting energy load on the 66-kV and 110kV domestic feeders, given the addition of new houses and commercial and industrial establishments. These works often result in outages either lasting a few hours or half a day, affecting the daily chores of people.

Power outages have been more common on the outskirts of Bengaluru, including in the areas merged with



INTERRUPTED: Scheduled power cuts due to maintenance works have almost become a regular phenomenon across Bengaluru

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). Mahadevapura, Bommanahalli, Sarjapur Road, and RR Nagar are among the worst-affected areas in the city.

To do away with the problem posed by maintenance works, CM Siddaramaiah has announced the procurement of mobile 66-kV and 110-kV substations by KPTCL.

"These mobile units will ensure there are no power cuts when maintenance work on feeders is under way. The load of the feeders will be transferred to these mobile units until the completion of maintenance works, and citizens will be provided with uninterrupted power. Once the work is completed, normal transmission will be re-

stored and mobile units will be moved to different locations. This will be a win-win situation for both citizens and Escoms," energy minister KJ George said.

Siddaramaiah has also approved a proposal to upgrade the existing substations of various capacities in Bengaluru to withstand the increasing energy load.

"The mushrooming of multi-storey buildings has left a considerable load on the existing system. If we don't upgrade them, they'll collapse and affect the functioning of the grid, besides triggering electrical mishaps. Hence, these stations will be upgraded on the PPP model," a senior official from the energy department said.

Source: The Times of India, p.2, Feb. 20, 2024

Metro rail to be extended to Tumakuru, Devanahalli

<u>Darshan Devaiah B.P.</u> BENGALURU

The State Budget has outlined plans to expand the Namma Metro to Tumakuru and Devanahalli cover-ing approximately 15 km in north Bengaluru. "The feasibility report

for extending the metro rail from Bangalore International Exhibition Centre to Tumakuru and from Kempegowda Internation-al Airport to Devanahalli al Airport to Devanahalli on a Public-Private Part-nership basis will be pre-pared," Chief Minister Sid-daramaiah said in his Budget speech on Friday. He said over eight lakh people use metro services daily, and by March 2025, an additional 44 km of me-tro lines will be incorporat-

ed, supplementing the ex-

isting 74 km. "The completion of the Outer Ring Road-Airport Road works under Metro Rail project Phase-2 and Phase-2A is expected by June 2026. A draft Detailed Project Report is being pre-pared for the construction of a Metro line from Sarjapur to Agara, Koramanga-la, Dairy Circle, and con-necting to Hebbal via Mekhri Circle under Namma Metro Phase-3A. The proposal will be submitted for the approval of the Central government" he added.

Meanwhile, Mr. Siddaramaiah announced that the BMTC will add 1,334 new electric buses and 820 BS-6 diesel buses to its fleet

in the coming days. Regarding Bengaluru Regarding Bengaluru suburban rail project, he said that the initiative is gaining momentum, with the rapid implementation of civil works for Corri-dor-2, stretching from Baiyappanahalli Chikkabanavara.

Srinivas Alavilli, Fellow, WRI India said that public transport got a boost in the budget with new buses and budget with new buses and a strong commitment to metro and suburban train timelines. "This Budget lacks sig-nificant measures for ad-

dressing transport-related issues, with particular neglect of non-motorised transport. Moreover, it predominantly focuses on high-cost projects without sufficient attention to es-sential aspects," said Vinay Srinivas, member of the Bangalore Bus Prayanikara

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

Namma Metro gets Rs 650 cr for Phase 3

Transport

Tunnelling on the Pink Line will be completed in the third quarter of this year.

MUTHI-UR-RAHMAN SIDDIQUI BENGALURU, DHNS

arnataka has allocated Rs 650 crore for Phase 3 of Namma Metro in its state budget for 2024-25, official sources in the BMRCL said. The agency had sought Rs 1,003.47 crore.

The metro operator has been given Rs 1,435 crore in this budget, as against Rs 2,831 crore last year.

It will spend the funds on the groundwork of the 44.65-km Phase 3, which will have two lines — JP Nagar 4th Phase-Hebbal, 32.15 km; and Hosahalli-Kadabagere; 12.5 km.

The BMRCL has undertaken pre-construction activities for the Hebbal line, including shifting of utilities, enumeration of trees and land acquisition.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the state had given administrative approval for the Rs 15,611-crore Phase 3, and the union government's approval was awaited.

He said that the city's metro network would add another 44 km by March 2025. The present network is 74 km long.

Although he didn't specify the new lines that will open next year, they will most likely be the Green Line's Nagasandra-Madavara extension (3.14 km), Yellow Line (RV Road-Bommasandra, 19.15 km) and Pink Line (Kalena Agrahara-Nagavara, 21.26 km). All these lines are in advanced stages of construction.

Tunnelling on the Pink Line will be completed in the third quarter of this year. It usually takes a year to open an underground line after tunnelling.

Siddaramaiah said the Blue Line (Silk Board-KR Pura-Airport; 58.19) km) would be ready by June 2026.

He said a draft DPR was being prepared for Phase 3B (Sarjapur-Hebbal) and would be submitted to the central government for approval.

The BMRCL will also prepare a report on the feasibility of extending the metro from BIEC (Madavara) to Tumakuru and from the airport to Devanahalli on a PPP model, he added.

The state has allocated Rs 400 crore for the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project. It had given Rs 1,000 crore last year but released only Rs 665 crore, according to an official in the project implementing agency K-RIDE.

Siddaramaiah said the state would draw the Centre's attention to the project and seek additional grants. The state will release matching grants, he added.

The BMTC will add 1,334 electric buses and 820 BS-6 diesel buses. The has been given Rs 150 crore.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.4, Feb, 17, 2024

Building Brand Bengaluru: Insights from the Karnataka Budget

¶he 2024 Karnataka Budget

The 2024 Karnataka Budget strengthens the unique global identity of Bengaluru with a new aspirational vision of building a world-class city under "Brand Bengaluru". The government's emphasis on resource augmentation, raffice reduction, quality roads, clean water, and improved public transport aligns with India's broader developmental goals and is imperative for heralding a new era of sustainable growth in one of the fastest growing cities of the world. While these reforms enhance residents' quality of life and attract global investors

to India's Silicon Valley, a more

to India's Silicon Valley, a more detailed roadmap for their implementation would provide clarity on on-ground impact creation. The budget has earmarked many prominent sustainable growth avenues for the state-which indicate a positive, people and climate-oriented development pathway for Karnataka. For instance, the budget promises an upcoming Green Hydrogen Policy that will set the stage for decarbonizing hard-to-abate sectors in the state. The policy will be preceded by the establishment of a 300 kW pilot project under

Hydrogen Mission. Karnataka has already positioned itself as a leader in solar power development and has plans to further play to its strength by setting up more solar parks and projects.

The budget has rightly focused on allied infrastructure development to ensure the growth of renewable energy sources in the state by strengthening transmission lines and sub-stations. Additionally, the state's decision to set up 2,500 electric vehicle charging stations and 1,334 electric buses is a welcome move for India's overarching net-zero target for 2070. However, considfor India's overarching net-zero target for 2070. However, consid-

ering that electrification of public transport is one of the highest impact areas for decarbonizing

impact areas for decarbonizing our economy, the proposed introduction of 820 diesel buses in the BMTC fleet is disappointing. Despite Bengaluru's improvement in the TomTom Traffic Index 2023, ranking as the sixth most congested city globally, traffic remains one of the biggest pain points of the city dwellers. The budget allocates funds for white-tenging Id/T len of major white-topping 147 km of major roads and constructing under ground tunnels, aiming to alleviate traffic on primary routes. Integrating various modes of

public transport, expanding the Namma Metro Rail project, and quickly implementing suburban rail initiatives are pivotal steps to enhance Bengaluru's connectivity. However, successful implementation hinges on seamless integration and timely execution. To further enhance mobility in the capital city, the pending Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transit Authority Bill (BMLTA) should be implemented to coordinate between transport agencies, local bodies, and infrastructure development agencies, fostering development agencies, fostering a more multimodal transport system. Reliable, affordable, and

many residents, necessitating collaborative efforts between government agencies to en-sure reliable first and last-mile

sure reliable first and last-mile connectivity. In conclusion, the Karnataka Budget 2024 lays out a comprehensive roadmap for Bengaluru's future, addressing crucial aspects like sustainable development, traffic management, and public transportation. While the initiatives hold immense potential, a more detailed breakdown, clearer timelines, and increased public engagement will be crucial for successful implementation.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.4, Feb, 17, 2024

Four integrated waste management processing centres to come up

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

The Budget has proposed to set up an end-to-end waste management system from households to the waste processing centres. For this, Bengaluru Urban district will be divided into four different parts.

The outlay has proposed to identify four land parcels measuring between 50 acre and 100 acres to establish integrated waste processing units. These lands will be identified on the outskirts of Bengaluru. Earlier, the State government had proposed to identify land in Ramanagara too, but it was faced with opposition. In the Budget, the proposal to set up a new processing The State
government had
proposed to identify
land in Ramanagara,
but it was faced with
opposition, so in the
Budget the proposal
has been dropped

unit at Ramanagara has been dropped. However, recently, a waste management unit was opened at Bidadi.

The Budget said the establishment of integrated waste management units in four places will solve Bengaluru's landfill problem for the next 30 years. The Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited will invite tenders to select the integrated waste management operators.

Source: The Hindu, p. 6, Feb. 17, 2024

Business will buzz with economic corridors from B'luru to Tier-2 cities

Siddaramaiah gives ₹18,115 crore for improving urban moblity, housing in state

URBAN MOBILITY BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

TO address the rising demand from industries, improve economic activities and address global competition, CM Siddaramaiah announced the creation of dedicated economic corridors from Bengaluru to Tier-2 cities. A long-pending proposal to develop satellite townships around Bengaluru Devanahalli, Nelamangala, Hoskote, Doddaballapur, Magadi and Bidadi - has been revived. It will enhance horizontal growth of Bengaluru, along the lines of Navi Mumbai and Delhi-NCR.

The announcement has been made on the lines of the Central government's plan to create dedicated corridors to other cities, like the Mumbai-Chennai corridor.



The CM allocated Rs 18,115 crore for improving urban mobility and housing, which is less than last year's budget of Rs 21,660 crore.

In the budget, the CM announced the creation of a Bangaluru-Mangaluru port corridor for speedy access to ports, and reduce the freight transport time to Europe and West Asia. He also announced a corridor between Bengaluru and Bidar to accelerate economic development of Kalyana Kar-

nataka region.

"The Bengaluru-Mangaluru corridor was a long-pending demand. Karnataka is losing business to Hyderabad, and the creation of a corridor to Bidar will help. Also, Rs 73 crore will be given as the State's share for improving the 74-km Bengaluru-Mumbai corridor. While all these are being announced, the government must ensure they are completed within the stipulated time," said FKCCI president Ramesh

Chandra Lahoti, referring to snail-paced work on the Bengaluru-Chennai corridor.

An official from the urban development department said the government knows there is no land available in Bengaluru to create townships or economic corridors. Besides, a large number of migrants are coming to Bengaluru from these townships and firms are also shifting to these places. The government has taken a leaf from the Andhra Pradesh government in creating a South Korean township in Hindupur, that is boosting its economy.

The CM also announced that a feasibility report will be prepared for extending Namma Metro services to Devanahalli and Tumakuru. Mobility experts said this is a clear indication that the demand from the city outskirts for better mobility is only increasing.

Source: The New Indian Express, p. 2, Feb. 17, 2024

Rail link for 6 towns around city: CM

Move aimed at decongesting state capital, efficient and sustainable transportation not just a goal but a commitment we make to the people of Bengaluru, says Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU, DHNS

na bid to develop satellite towns around Bengaluru, the Congress-led government has proposed to extend rail connectivity to six fast-growing localities including Devanahalli, Nelamangala and Bidadi. Confirming this, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the proposal will go a long way in the congesting the state capital. "To alleviate the pressure on Bengaluru city, we are committed to developing towns on the outskirts as satellite towns by ensuring to glaces like and train connectivity to places like bendaring the conditional point of the condi

ral address at DHBengaluru 2040 Summit.

The government, a senior official said, is planning a mix of rail and metro connectivity to the nearby cities and towns. At the moment, Namna Metro is studying the feasibility of taking the metro to areas like Bidadi, Harohalli, Kunigal Cross and Attibele. Similarly, KenIDE is planning to extend the suburban rail network, comprising four corridors, by 452 km in the second phase.

"We are acutely aware of the mobility challenges that plague our ciry," the CM said, assuring that the government is working irrelessly with a result-oriented and multi-mensional approach to address this issue. "Efficient and sustainable transportation is not just a goal, it is a Bengaluru," he said.

Siddaramaiah also recalled some of the announcements in his recent state budget, including funds to strengthen public healthcare facilities, housing,



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at the inauguration of DH Bengaluru 2040 Summit, in Bengaluru on Saturday. DH PHOTO/BH SHIVAKUMAR

education and mobility. "Bengaluru is not merely a city; it is a symbol of innovation, diversity and progress. As the CM of Karnataka, I am committed to ensuring that Bengaluru continues to thrive and reach global scales by focusing on critical aspects such as infrastructure, quality of living, and citizen amenities," he said.

He also appreciated the summit and promised to consider suggestions

and insights that come out of this programme. "Decean Herald and Prajavani have their roots in Bengaluru and they have been the conscience keepers of the society for several decades. It is apt for an institution like Decean Herald to organise such a summit and deliberate on the transformation and erowth of Bengaluru." the CAS said.

'Can't replicate B'luru model in other cities'

The Bengaluru model of innovation and entreinnovation and entre-preneurship cannot be replicated in other cities in Karnataka unless niche capabilities of these cities are leveraged. IT/ BT Minister Priyank Kharge said. He was ad-dressing the possibilities of the Bengaluru formula of success in the Hubba-lisand Belagavis during a panel discussion at the DH Bengaluru 2040. Details on Page 7

Premium FAR Bill soon

Bill soon

Four years after proposing 'premium' floor area ratio (FAR), the state government is planning to formally roll it out in the form of a legislation. The Urban Development the form of a legislation. The Urban Development tabled in the Assembly, officials said, At DH's Bengaluru 2040 Summit, Additional Chief Secretary of UDD flakesh Singhs said the government has approved the premium FAR policy of the Secretary of UDD flakesh with the premium FAR policy of the Secretary of UDD flakesh some second of the Secretary of UDD flakesh singh said the government has approved the premium FAR policy of Secretary of UDD flakesh some second of the Secretary of UDD flakesh some second of UDD flakesh

Experts, citizens pitch ideas for future-ready B'luru



Guests and dignitaries at DH Bengaluru 2040 Summit on Saturday.

Say city has shown remarkable resilience in facing challenges but needs course correction to avoid falling behind

BENGALURU, DHNS

Inclusivity, cultural cohesiveness, passionate adoption of emerging technologies and a can-do spirit unit remain Bengaluru's guiding lights as it looks to be a global city amid daunting local challenges.

The third edition of the DH Bengaluru2040 Summit, held here on Saturday, sawinfluential thought leaders and com-

mitted citizens come together to discuss ideas that would make the city better, sustainable and ready for the future. Decean Herald's flagship annual sumiccovered asseries of though-provoking sessions that ranged from the sublime to the mundane and focused on actionable solutions rather than just talk about problems.

Problems.
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah set the tone as he called for a compassionate appropriate to the compassionate appropriate to the compassion of the co

Chel Minister Siddaramania Set to toneashe called for a compassionate ap-proach to urban problems. "Clitzens of Bengaluru, the corporates and every stakeholder should contribute to the city that has given use everything." he said. Many speakers noted that while Ben-tian defressing some of its challenges, it risks falling behind if it doesn't take ur-vent course correction.

Experts, from Page 1

f actor Sindhu Sreenivasa Murthy lamented that Bengaluru's vibrant architecture of the past has been demolished, environmentalist Harini Nagendra talked about an incredible opportunity. "Half of what Bengaluru will look like in 2040 has yet to be built. We must not squander this opportunity.

Some other takeaways

- Bengaluru needs an alternative water source to meet its single-biggest challenge. Rainwater harvesting, treatment of wastewater and lake conservation are viable solutions but cannot work without citizens' par-
- The government and the healthcare industry must focus on upgrading public health infrastructure. The future of healthcare lies in primary and preventive healthcare and the use of Artificial Intelligence
- (AI) for early diagnosis and treatment.

 Given Bengaluru's pre-eminence as a tech hub and startup capital, the city needs to upskill its workforce at a faster pace and continue to foster a culture of entrepreneurship. Bengaluru should now invent technologies for the world.
- Comprehensive planning, better regulation and integrated real-estate development can address Bengaluru's traffic chaos, water shortage and unplanned growth.
- Bengaluru is prone to extreme rainy events, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. It needs to formulate an urgent policy to address climate change concerns or it will run into tipping points. Increasing climate change awareness, planting trees on roadsides, increasing public transport and building walking/cycling tracks are some of the achievable goals.
- Bengaluru should aim to be a global education hub, attract students from across the world and build depth in its academia.
- Creating enabling infrastructure and aiming for glory at the highest levels are key to making Bengaluru India's sporting capital.
- With its diverse culinary cultures, Bengaluru's food scene looks bright. In the future, we could see robotics in the kitchen and drone food deliveries.
- The modern Bengaluru cinema represents the city more accurately than before but this has come at the cost of simplicity. The city should hold onto its cosmopolitan outlook in cinema.

Source: Deccan Herald, p.1&10, Feb, 18, 2024

Bill likely at session on allowing higher floors than permissible



Rajat Rastogi CEO, West Region & Commercial Assets Pan India, Puravankara Ltd., H C Kishore Chandra, Chairman, Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Rakesh Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Urban Development Department, and Mallanna Sasalu, CEO, Provident Housing Ltd take part in a panel discussion at the DH Bengaluru 2040 Summit

Govt eyes big revenue through initiative; fetches larger open spaces



BENGALURU, DHNS

our years after proposing 'premi-um' floor area ratio (FAR) that the citizens, including builders, can buy to construct additional floors on and above what is permissible, the government is planning to formally roll it out in the form of a legislation.

The urban development department (UDD) has drafted a bill that is likely to be tabled in the ongoing legislature session, officials said.

At Deccan Herald's Bengaluru 2040 Summit, additional chief secretary of the urban development department Rakesh Singh revealed that the government had approved the premium

FAR policy just two days ago.
"It will soon be tabled in the session. It will allow larger open spaces in Bengaluru," the officer said, while speaking at the panel discussion on Balancing Commercial and Public Interests: Strategies for developing Bengaluru sustainability' organised at the Summit.

Premium FAR

Premium FAR
In the state budget presented on Friday, Chief
Minister Siddaramaiah had said that both the
advertisement policy as well as the premium
floor area ratio policy could fetch an additional
revenue of Rs 2,000 crore to the exchequer.

The new legislation is expected to provide details such as maximum FAR, on top of the permissible limit, as well as fee structure.

Integrated city at Bidadi

During the panel, Singh spoke about govern-ment's plan to revive the formation of an inte-

grated city on the outskirts of Bengaluru.
"We have 10,000 acres of land in Bidadi. The blueprint is ready. We have had two interactions with stakeholders. We want to develop a new township where the mainstay will be commercial, but totally integrated with residential, sports, health and other related activities," he

Comprehensive plan Mallanna Sasalu, CEO of Provident Housing,

said that the government should prepare a com-

prehensive development plan for all the areas in and around Bengaluru.

in and around Bengaluru.
"Bengaluru hassurpassed what was planned in 2015. Today, the development is seen around BIAAPA (airport) region, Hoskote, Ramanagara and Magadi, etc. The planning should not be restricted to different entities, but there should be an integrated plan which is not limited to land use alone," he said.

Realty complaints

To a question, H C Kishore Chandra, chairman of the Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (K-RERA) said the state had received one of the

(K-REA) said the state had received one of the highest number of complaints in the country.

"Date of delivery is very important. The consumer has an absolute right to either seek refund from the developer with interest or get interest till he gets possession of the property. Both are substantial," he said. The authority had also received consider from the consumer of the consume had also received complaints from consumers for not paying instalments on time, Kishore Chandra added. Rajat Rastogi, CEO of West Region and Commercial Assets, Puravankara Ltd. moderated the session.

Source: Deccan Herald, p. 10, Feb, 18, 2024

Bengaluru city needs a collective effort to tackle climate change, say experts

Carbon negative buildings is way forward, says IIHS director

engaluru needs to make bet-ter use of treated water and implement more rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems to ensure the city does not runout

Commissioner, Bruhat
Bengaluru Mahana,
gara Palise (BBMP),
Speaking on
Air, Water, and
Infrastructure:
Can Bengaluru
set an example
in climate resilience at the
third edition
H
Bengaluru
2040 summit, Girinath said that lack
of water was the only
limiting factor for Bengaluru's growth.
We have everything else required the city's growth, and water is the critical factor owing to high dependence on River Cauvery. While the government is looking for an alternate source of water from Shivamogga, there is an immediate need to focus on the use of treated water. Also, citizens should work along-This experience has left an invaluable mark on their lives, showcasing their creativity, passion, and dedication. Gurinder Kaur. the use of treated water. Also, citizens ould work along-the government tall RWH systems," Principal, EuroSchool Chimney Hills



Aromar Revi, Director, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Harini Nagendra, Professor of Ecology, Azim Premji University, Tushar Girinath, Chief Commissioner, BBMP and HS Sudhira, Founder, Gubbi Labs at a panel discussion at DH Bengalui 2040 Summit on Saturday, OH PROTO

through the Bengaluru Climate Action Plan (BCAP), were working on chalking out measures to be at climate change. However, Sudhiral HS, founder of Gubbi Labs, expressed concerns over the implementation of BCAP.

"There have been multiple planschalked out in the last two decades. However, implementing these plans is critical since they are guiding documents and cannot be enforced according to the law, he said. Addressing the concerns over the rail of the said of the control of the co

impact on dimate change.

Aromar Revi, director of the Indian Instance of the Indian Instance of the Indian Instance of the Indian Instance of the city.

Word need the environmental needs of the city.

"Not net zero, but we should construct buildings that have a carbon-negative foot-print. This is the way forward," he said.

Panelists also pointed out the need for various government agencies to work together. "I think the biggest challenge bringing allowerment agencies together."

to implement the measures suggested to beat climate change. We must go back to planting trees on the roadside and near construction sites since they reduce the particulate matter. Also, the ecosystem should be kept at the core of growth; "said Harini Nagendra, professor of Ecology at Azim Preniji University. The pamellists also spoke about the need to work closely with the citizens, adminis-rative reforms, the use of public transport, and the push for renewable energy to make Bengaluru's climate resilient.

Source: Deccan Herald, p. 10, Feb, 18, 2024

INTERVIEW

Tunnels are costlier, but we're left with no viable alternative for city: DKS

Another way out is to create satellite towns and cities around Bengaluru

eputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shi-vakumar is the man at the centre ofitall, from managing inter-state river water disputes to being in-charge of the state's economic growth engine - Bengaluru. As the city is grappling with the flip-side of being the economic powerhouse, Shivakumar is tasked with improving the qual-ity of life in the city. Excerpts from a conversation with DKS as a part of the DH Bengaluru

city like Chandigarh or Delhi. But citizens are contributing huge taxes to both state and central governments. So it is our duty to ensure proper facilities for their development and brand them in a proper way.

Ease of doing business and quality of life in Bengaluru is a concern now. Surveys have shown that Bengaluru could be losing Rs 19,000 crore and 7 lakh productive hours annually to traf-

fic jams. How do you plan to address this?

Now, in our economy and our policies we allow any common man to buy a car But we cannot expand road infrastructure due to growing costs, including high compensation for land. The only solution is

to go for public transport options like Metro and suburban rail. And some tunnels have to be built. Tunnels are costlier, but we are left with no viable option. So, through the metro, suburban rail and adding more buses for the common man, we can sort this problem out to some extent. It is not a permanent solution but still that is the only option available to us. Another way out is to create satellite towns and cities around Bengaluru, 30-40 km away from the city.

Bengaluru's founder Kempegowda envisioned the city as a city of lakes. But now many of the lakes are being encroached by land grabbers. How do you intend to address it?

It is a concern. We have a Lake Development Authority to protect, develop and modernise the lakes. We are removing the encroachment of lakes. We need to protect water bodies for greener Bengaluru and to improve the water table. The government is committed to develop all the lakes.

Bengaluru has lost a lot of green cover to development projects. What is the government's plan on improving the

green cover?
As the city embraces high rises, some of its green cover may have disappeared. But we are committed to improving the city's green cover. I have come up with a plan that school kids will take up one area and plant the trees with the Forest Department and BBMP there. We want to make sure more trees are grown along footpaths and wherever it's possible to keep the city greener. This is one of the important initiatives I have taken up after taking charge as Bengaluru Development minister.

You have proposed renaming Ramanagara district as Bengaluru South and extending the Metro network to Bidadi. What is the progress on these proposals?

We want to modernise Ramanagara and I am committed to it. Bidadi Industrial Area has made rapid strides and we want to extend the Metro to this area. The area . I think Raman-agara itself is part of Bengaluru and it was renamed for various reasons. I think it is in the best interest of all to revert to the old name



Source: Deccan Herald, p. 10, Feb, 18, 2024

'BBMP Act should be amended to implement self-declaration of building plans'

While the Bruhat Bengalu-ru Mahanagara Palike While the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) will soon bring a self-declaration scheme for building plan approval, experts and architects argue that the government has to amend the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Act, 2020 to implement this policy.

Recently, Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D.K.



Shivakumar said the policy will be tweaked to empower tects to self-declare the

plan based on building by-laws, after which on the ba-sis of "trust and verifica-tion model" the Town Planning Department will approve the same without approve the same without inspecting the sites. The sources in the civic body say that this may be intro-duced next month.

duced next month.

At present, citizens who wish to construct or reconstruct buildings have to apply for approval after which the BBMP will inspect the site and grant sanction for the plan. Alth-

ough the BBMP claims that

ough the BBMP claims that the process is carried out digitally, the plans are being approved offline.

An empanelled architect said the BBMP Act, 2020 needs to be amended for self-declaration building plans. Changes should be made under Section 240 of the Act.

According to 240 (I), "If any person intends to construct or reconstruct a building, he shall by way of an application as prescribed should apply to the

permission with such doc-uments as may be pre-scribed to undertake such construction or re-con-

As per 240 (2), "Upon receipt of the application under sub-section (), the Zonal Commissioner shall verify if the application confirms to the building bye-laws and grant permission to undertake construction or if the application does not confirm to the building bye-laws re-

ject such applications".

In these sections, the rules should be changed to include self-declaration. Mr. Shivakumar said a government order will be passed to introduce the new policy. The architect said the government order has no be blickling. said the government order has no legal binding. Amaresh S., an activist, also argued that the orders cannot be passed without an amendment to the law.

an amendment to the law. For the amendment to happen it needs approval from the Cabinet. The

BBMP has not sent any pro-posal. If the Urban Deve-lopment Department is-sues orders the same can be challenged in the court, he said.

A senior BBMP official argued that the present system is an internal arrangement made by the BBMP and this can be changed through a government or-der. There are multiple in-stances of policy being changed through a government order and this is not

a new practice, he said

Source: The Hindu, p. 2, Feb. 18, 2024

Seasonal lakes do dry in summer, but it is time to desilt to raise storage capacity

Increasing the depth of lake-beds uniformly with only capacity upgrade as objective is not the way to go, say activists in Bengaluru. In fact, it can prove counter-productive

Rasheed Kappan BENGALURU

akes drying up as the scorching sum-mer heat intensi-fies. Should this spreading spectacle be a cause for worry or an opportunity for Bengalureans? Remindfor Bengalureans? Remind-ing that the city's lakes were never perennially filled right through the year, environmentalists in-stead see the next two months as critical to de-still and de-lutical to de-still and de-sludge the water bodies, a sure-shot way to keep them alive.

keep them alive.

To address the city's mounting summer-time drinking water demands, lakes were seen as potential storage tanks. But the accumulation of sewage accumulation of sewage and silt over decades have made most lakes unthinka-ble as complementing the piped Cauvery water. So, is increasing the capacity of lakes the best option? It is complicated, lake experts say.

Flat lakebed depth,

a no-no Increasing the depth lake beds uniformly wi only capacity upgrade as objective is not the way to go, notes Raghavendra B. Pachhapur, Senior Project Lead with ActionAid Assoinstitution. Lake rejuvena-tion is not only about re-moval of residual silt but al-

moval of residual silt but al-so about building a habitat around the water bodies for birds and wildlife to thrive, he explains. The foreshore area is where water enters a lake from multiple streams and the rajakaluve. He re-minds, "That area will be naturally shallow. The depth increases towards depth increases towards the other end of a lake at the bund region to a maxi-mum of 10-12 ft. This was







uniform increase in depth."

This design, dubbed as This design, dubbed as 'soup bowl' to help in-crease water capacity and suit fisheries, is inevitably hostile to migratory birds that usually flock to shallow areas within a lake. But has the capacity really in-creased in rejuvenated lakes and in what manner?

Alarming fecal coliform Lake water quality moni-tored by the Karnataka State Pollution Control

State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) shows an alarming rise in Fecal Coliform (measured as Most Probable Number (MPN)/100ml) in most city lakes. Fecal Coliform is a bacteria found in human faeces, confirming that the inflow of untreated sewage into lakes is still extremely high.

into lakes is still extremely high.

The National Greens Tribunal (NGT) has mandated that the Fecal Colliorm in water flowing out of the Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) into the lakes should not exceed 230 MPN/100ml, with the desirable at an even lower standard of 100

MPN/100ml. Within lakes. it is expected to be within 300 to 500 MPN / 100ml. But the reality is a different

A file photo of little work done at Bellandur lake. K. MURALI KUMA

But the reality is a different story.

In UIsoor lake, categorised as 'D' by KSPCB for fish breeding, the Pecal Coliform is 4,000 MPN / 100ml. But this pales in comparison with 92,000 in Herohalli lake, 40,000 in Varthur lake, 79,000 in Kaikondrahalli Lake and 79,000 in Puttenahalli

lake. These are December 2023 figures published by

2023 figures published by the KSPCB.
Inevitably, this would seem to puncture claims that many rejuvenated lakes now have water. Raghavendra points out that the Bruhat Bengahru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) feels the civic body is happy when water is seen all through the year. "But the Palike never thinks of what sort of water is entering

the lake and the groundwa

Flawed dissolved oxygen tracking Dissolved Oxygen (DO) is another critical measure of lake water quality. Sample test results put out by KSPCB show surprisingly good results. A majority of lakes have DO levels within the permissible 5 mg/L.
But scientists and lake ex-perts have questioned

legal sampling," he explains. Corrective measures

can happen when the lake

Corrective measures can happen when the lakes go dry, says Ramprasad. "And, Bengaluru lakes drying during summer season is a very normal thing. None of these lakes are perennial, they are all seasonal lakes. If urban dwellers are crying that the lake is dry, then they don't know Bengaluru lakes. We are 100% opposed to this urban elitist mentality that lakes should have water 24/7, 365 days, and should be fully filled. That imagination is really wrong, because you need some time to de-sludge." De-sludging, the process of taking out decayed organic master due to sewage inflow, provides good to any farmland. "Varrhur lake has done it. About 350-400 farmers are using that manure. This was a very traditional method of maintaining a lake. But if a lake."

that manure. This was a very traditional method of maintaining a lake. But it has now taken a bad beating due to chemical farming. This tradition saw to it that lakes had enough water, while at the same time the land got its nutrients

not follow the Dawn/ Dusk method.

Simply put, the water samples have to be tested before dawn or after dusk to get a correct measure. During day time with sun-light, plants and organisms take oxygen from the sur-face and thus the DO levels remain high.

The samples are collect-ed and tested during day time, giving high values. But night time OD could drop dramatically. Fisskill is a clear symptom of this phenomenon.

phenomenon.

Not perennial lakes
Ramprasad V., Founder,
Friends of Lakes (FoL)
finds the 'grab sampling'
methodology currently being followed as flawed. 'At
12 noon, Ob will obviously
be very high due to photosynthesis and other things
going on in the lake."
"Do it at 11 pm. We had
done a testing in Ulsoor
Lake at 11 pm. By 1 A.M.,
the dissolved oxygen levels
had dropped to zero.
There are high chances
that it could lead to fishkill. At 11 A.M., the OD read
6-7. We need to push for a

from the same soil. It was a sustainability cycle," he recalls.

Different functionalities

However, not every lake needs this treatment. "Ev-ery lake need not be the same. Some can be shallow to maintain the biodiversity, and there can be some others deep enough to hold enough water and aid groundwater recharge. Dif-ferent lakes can have different functionalities. Paint

rent functionalities. Painting everything with the same brush is not right."
Yet, the functionality and purpose of a lake to be either for rainwater harvesting or as a recharging structure is not clearly defined. This, says Ramprasad, does not figure in any of the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for lake rejuvenation. Lakes, he is convinced, should be scientifically rejuvenated.

vinced, should be scientifically rejuvenated based on the topology and hydrological characteristics of the water bodies. This lack of clarity is evident even in Bellandur and Varthur lakes, he says. "They claim they have dredged the lake. Is there a spatial analysis done to show the increase in depth to their original waterholding capacity? Are these lakes aiding in the percolation of water for groundwater recharge?" The Lingatheeramahalli lake on the city's outskirts near NICE road might be a telling example of the rejuvenation exercise going wrong. As Raghavendra recalls, this was a nesting place for birds, a reflection of the comfort level the avian species had in the ecosystem. On the lake's foreshore, a big patch of land is now being cleared for rejuvenation. They say they will have new plants there. But it will take another 15 years for those plants to come back. There is no use, they have des-troyed it."

Source: The Hindu, p. 7, Feb. 19, 2024

Digi Yatra used 1.4cr times, Delhi and Bengaluru lead

Available At 13 Airports Across India

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Digi Yatra, the facescan biometric technology that allows travellers to pass through airports without a boarding pass or an identity card, has been used by a total 1.4 crore passengers in the 14 months since its launch in December 2022. Delhi and Bengaluru have recorded, by far, the most Digi Yatra users, according to a source from the civil aviation ministry.

Available at 13 airports across India, the Digi Yatra app's usage has risen steadily even as passenger traffic soars and queueslengthen. It was downloaded by 46 lakh users as of Feb 10, 20% up from 38 lakh users as on January 1.

Digi Yatra was initially launched at Delhi, Bengaluru, Varanasi in December 2022, followed by Vijayawada, Kolkata, Hyderabad, PuNUMBER OF TIMES DIGI YATRA WAS
USED AT AIRPORTS SINCE LAUNCH (Numbers in lakh)

	As of Dec 31, 2023	As of Feb 11, 2024	
Delhi	34	42	III in a
Bengaluru	30	38	
Varanasi	07	08	
Hyderabad	11	15	c c
Kolkata	16	20	La la
Pune	0.8	11	
Vijayawada	02	02	
Cochin	0.58	01	
Mumbai	01	03	
Ahmedabad	01	02	
Lucknow	0.2	0.5	
Guwahati	0.2	0.5	
Jaipur	0.2	0.4	
TOTAL	112	144	

ne in April 2023. Mumbai airport, a late entrant, introduced it in Aug 2023, but only at terminal 2. As of Feb 11, close to 3 lakh uses have been recorded at Mumbai T2.

At the end of the first year, 1.1 crore passengers had used it across India for a seamless travel experience through airports. Apart from a smooth entry into the terminal, separate Digi Yatra queues for access to the security checkpoints make the

app popular. By Jan 31 this year, users had gone up to 1.36 crore and by Feb 11, the number was 1.44 crore passengers, said the ministry source.

At Delhi T2 and T3, about 28% and 26% domestic passengers, respectively, are using Digi Yatra daily, said sources.

So what can a passenger expect from the Digi Yatra experience? For one, Digi Yatra passengers have exclusive gates. But the popular aspect is

the shorter waiting time, as social media posts show. Tej Kapoor, managing partner of a venture capital firm, posted a photo on social media showing a long queue outside the conventional gate for airport entry and a short one for the Digi Yatra gate. "Digi Yatra line vs normal line, saved me 20 minutes at least? India tech stack," he tweeted on Saturday. Ashish Nathani, a "technologist" posted: "In my last Bangalore trip I got the flight due to Digi Yatra. Good use of technology..."

Even if the Digi Yatra queue is longer—as appears to be the case at Bengaluru where uptake has been swift—the queue moves faster than the conventional one. According to the Delhi airport website, processing time per Digi Yatra passenger at a gate is 3 seconds. Within 3 seconds a passenger can scan the bar-code on the boarding pass, look into the facial recognition camera and have the e-gate open to allow entry into the terminal building. As X user @pankaikanal tweeted on Saturday: "Drop at T2 Mumbai: 6.54 am. Security through: 7.14 am. Digi Yatra working..'

Source: The Times of India, p.7, Feb. 20, 2024