



HYDERABAD | PAGE 02

**108-year-old staircase of Gandhi Hospital rock solid**



WORLD | PAGE 09

**Russian drones continue to strike Ukraine**

Attacks continue to strike energy infrastructure, says Zelensky



SPORT | PAGE 10

**Evasive IPL trophy haunts Virat Kohli's RCB**

**In a nutshell**

**McDonald's ties up with TG gov't**  
**HYDERABAD:** The Telangana government on Wednesday announced a major partnership with global fast-food chain McDonald's, which will set up its global office in Hyderabad. The global office is being planned with an initial headcount of 2,000 employees, a release from the CMO said. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and McDonald's chairman-CEO Chris Kempczinski closed a major partnership spanning several areas. PTI

**UN worker killed in Gaza strike**  
**DEIR AL-BALAH:** An international United Nations staffer was killed and five others were wounded in a strike Wednesday on a UN guesthouse in the Gaza Strip, as Israel pressed on with a new offensive in the territory that shattered a fragile ceasefire with Hamas. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz threatened to step up the assault, warning Palestinians in Gaza that Israel would again order evacuations. AP

**Centre examining Grok issue**  
**NEW DELHI:** The Information and Technology Ministry is in touch with social media platform X over the recent incident of AI chatbot Grok using Hindi slang and abuses and will be examining the issue, according to sources. Grok, the powerful Artificial Intelligence chatbot on Elon Musk's X, shocked netizens recently with its wild side when its response in Hindi came loaded with abuses and slang after provocation by users. PTI

**Nagpur clashes: Leader arrested**  
**NAGPUR:** Minority Democratic Party (MDP) leader Fahim Khan has been arrested for allegedly leading a protest outside a Nagpur police station on Monday, officials said on Wednesday. Khan was among more than 50 persons arrested so far in connection with Monday night's violence in the city that left several police personnel injured. Police are investigating whether Khan played any role in instigating riots, an official said. NATION PAGE 7

**Ramzan Timings**  
 Iftar Thursday 6:33 PM  
 Sahar Friday 4:58 AM

# JUST ANOTHER NUMBER GAME

**Finer details of TG Budget reveal stark reality of unfulfilled poll vows**

**Rs 18,000 cr earmarked for Rythu Bharosa, but concerns persist**

**Budget looks more like an exercise in political posturing**

**PS DILEEP**  
**HYDERABAD**  
 The Telangana government's latest Budget for 2025-26, touted as a blueprint for growth and welfare, fails to withstand scrutiny. While the numbers, Rs 3.04 lakh crore in total expenditure, a projected revenue surplus of Rs 2,738 crore, and an ambitious goal of transforming Telangana into a trillion-dollar economy, may appear impressive, the finer details reveal the stark reality of unfulfilled electoral promises, misplaced priorities and growing public disillusionment.

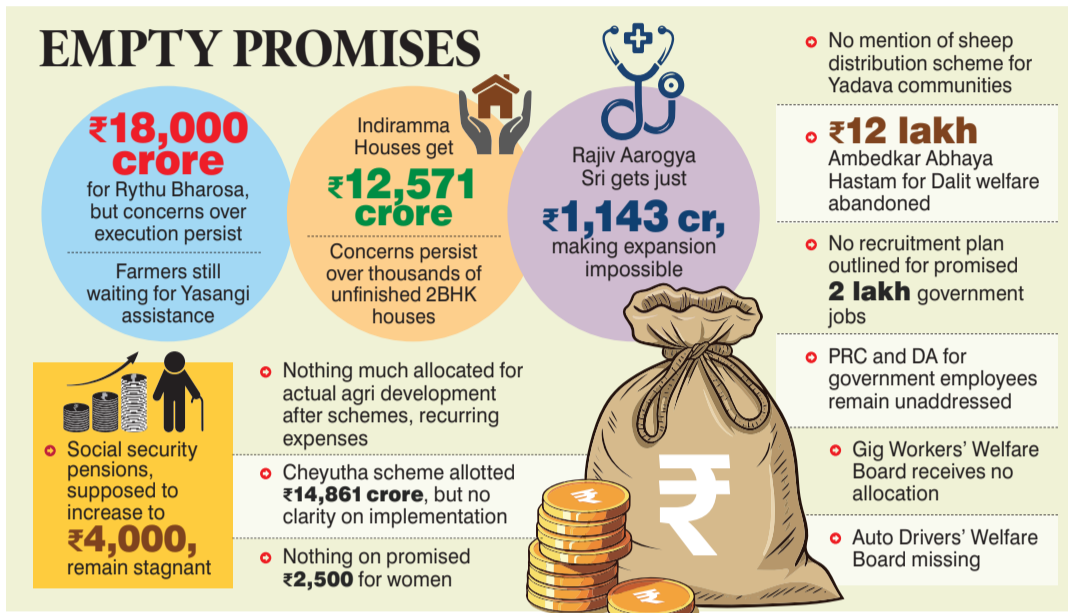
The much-touted Six Guarantees, the Congress party's electoral plank, seem to have been significantly diluted. Though Rs 56,084 crore has been allocated under various schemes tied to these promises, the Budget falls short of expectations in implementation. Take the instance of Rythu Bharosa, which was meant to provide robust support for farmers. While Rs 18,000 crore has been earmarked, concerns over its execution persist. The Congress government had earlier skipped the Rythu Bharosa financial aid for the Vanakalam (Kharif) season, citing the crop loan waiver. Now, with just 10 days left in the fiscal year, farmers are still waiting for payments under the Yasangi (Rabi) season, indicating delays and inefficiencies.

While Rs 24,439 crore has been allocated for agriculture and allied sectors, a closer look shows that Rs 18,000 crore goes to Rythu Bharosa, Rs 1,800 crore for paddy bonuses, and Rs.600 crore for Indiramma Aathmiya Bharosa, leaving only Rs 4,039 crore for the entire department. With Rs 1,297 crore reserved for salaries and recurring expenses, very little is left for actual agricultural development.

**Hollow welfare promises**  
 The Cheyutha scheme, aimed at uplifting weaker sections, has been allotted Rs 14,861 crore, yet no clarity exists on its implementation. Similarly, Indiramma Houses get Rs 12,571 crore, but concerns persist over the thousands of unfinished double-bedroom houses from previous regimes. The highly publicised Mahalakshmi scheme, which promised free bus travel for women, LPG subsidies, and 200 units of free electricity, have allocations far lower than required, raising doubts about long-term sustainability.

Experts highlight that Rs 4,305 crore for free bus travel, Rs 723 crore for LPG subsidies, and Rs 2,080 crore for free electricity fall far short of the demand, leaving many to question if these schemes are merely political showpieces. Rajiv Aarogya Sri, meant to improve healthcare access, gets just Rs 1,143 crore, making its expansion virtually impossible.

**Neglect of key sectors**  
 Beyond the Six Guarantees, the Budget is conspicuously silent on crucial issues. While the Budget speech painted a rosy picture of economic growth and future aspirations, the ground reality tells a different story. Women, who were promised Rs 2,500 financial assistance within 100 days, are left empty-handed. (SEE PAGE 2)  
 (RELATED REPORTS PAGE 5)



## Misplaced priorities, says KTR

**STATE BUREAU**  
**Hyderabad**

Launching a scathing attack on the Congress government's Budget 2025-26 for its misplaced priorities and ignored guarantees, BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Wednesday called it a betrayal of Telangana's people.

Speaking at the Media Point at the Assembly, he alleged that the Congress government had de-prioritised farmers and agriculture, which it had initially claimed as its focus.

The government had prioritised the sole task of sending funds to Delhi to "please the bosses", he said, criticising the Congress for failing to implement its six guarantees within the promised 100-day timeframe.

The bond papers circulated in the public with an assurance to implement the Congress guarantees that were undersigned by Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and A Revanth Reddy had now become things of the past, he said. Calling



BRS working president KT Rama Rao addressing journalists at the Telangana Assembly Media Point in Hyderabad on Wednesday. — Photo: Anand Dharmana

the undermined progress of the State a fall out of a "40% commission scam", the BRS leader also pointed out the reduced budget allocation for weavers' development, which dropped from Rs 1,200 crore during the BRS regime to Rs 370 crore under the Congress government. Government employees, who were given 73

per cent fitment during the BRS regime by the then Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu, did not merit consideration at least for the pending DAs under the present government.

Rama Rao further criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, challenging him to visit Ashok Nagar in Hyderabad. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Budget exposes false Congress claims on debts

**STATE BUREAU**  
**Hyderabad**

The State Budget for 2025-26 has officially pegged the outstanding debt at Rs 4.51 lakh crore as per revised estimates for 2024-25, contradicting Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's repeated claims that the State's debt had skyrocketed to Rs 7 lakh crore under the previous BRS regime.

The figures expose inconsistencies in the Congress government's narrative, raising questions about the accuracy of its financial claims.

As per Budget documents, Telangana's total debt, including borrowings since 2014-15, stands at Rs 4.51 lakh crore till March 2025, of which Rs 1.58 lakh crore was borrowed by the Congress government alone as acknowledged by the Chief Minister in the Assembly last week.

However, Revanth Reddy had earlier claimed in the Assembly that the State had inherited Rs 6.69 lakh crore in loans when Congress assumed power on December 7, 2023.

The outstanding public debt is Rs 3.56 lakh crore in 2022-23 and Rs 4.03 lakh crore in 2023-24. This includes open market loans, loans from the Central government and autonomous bodies, special securities, and also reserve funds and deposits.

Further discrepancies emerge in Revanth Reddy's statements on debt servicing. While the Budget records Rs 30,847.37 crore spent on interest and principal repayment for 2024-25, the Chief Minister has claimed to have repaid Rs 1.4 lakh crore (again in the Assembly last week) — an exaggerated figure with no basis in official documents.

## HARISH TERMS STATE BUDGET 'DECEPTIVE'

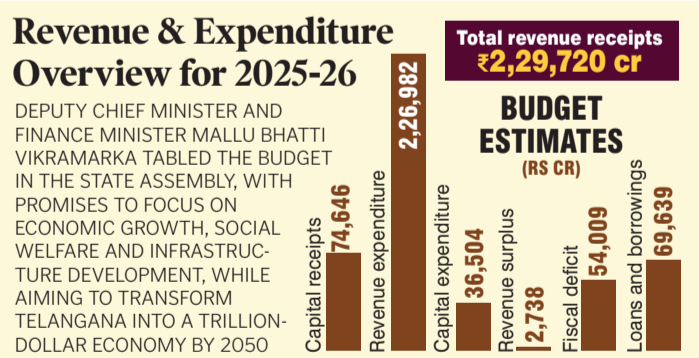
**HYDERABAD:** Terming the State Budget a bundle of lies, former Finance Minister and BRS MLA T Harish Rao charged the ruling party with misleading the public with exaggerated claims, unfulfilled promises and deceptive budgeting. He likened Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka's Budget speech to a political rhetoric rather than a financial roadmap for implementing the much-hyped Six Guarantees and instead, attempting to mislead the public on key welfare schemes. Slamming the Congress for its deceptive budgeting, Harish targeted the Congress over its Six Guarantees. He pointed out that the government promised interest-free loans worth Rs 1 lakh crore to women, but capped it at Rs 5 lakh. (REPORT PAGE 5)

## Congress govt presents Rs 3.04 lakh crore Budget

**STATE BUREAU**  
**Hyderabad**

The State government on Wednesday presented a Rs 3,04,965 crore budget for the financial year 2025-26, marking an increase of Rs 13,806 crore from the previous year's Rs 2.91 lakh crore.

Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka tabled the Budget in the State Assembly, with promises to focus on economic growth, social welfare and infrastructure development, while aiming to transform Telangana into a trillion-dollar economy by 2050.



The Budget estimates total revenue receipts at Rs 2,29,720 crore and capital receipts at Rs 74,646 crore. This is marginally

higher than the previous fiscal (2024-25) with revenue expenditure at Rs 2,20,944 crore and capital expenditure at Rs

33,486.5 crore. While revenue expenditure is pegged at Rs 2,26,982 crore, the capital expenditure is estimated around

Rs 36,504 crore. The State has recorded a revenue surplus of Rs 2,738 crore, while the fiscal deficit stands at a staggering Rs 54,009 crore. The government plans to borrow a massive Rs 69,639 crore in public debt, including loans from open market, the Central government and other sources financing developmental projects. Against budget estimates of Rs 2,91,059 crore for 2024-25, the revised budget estimates are pegged at Rs 2,65,934.51 crore.

Bhatti Vikramarka indicated that the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices stands at Rs 16.12 lakh crore for 2024-25. (SEE PAGE 2)

## ED attaches property of former HCA official

**CITY BUREAU**  
**Hyderabad**

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Hyderabad, has provisionally attached immovable property worth Rs 51.29 lakh on Tuesday under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), in the case of alleged misappropriation of funds of Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) by its office bearers.

The ED initiated investigation on the basis of several FIRs registered by Hyderabad Cricket Association against its office bearers for misappropriation of funds sanctioned for construction of the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium at Uppal, Hyderabad, as well as for misappropriation of funds in the procurement of cricket balls, gym equipment and bucket chairs, said the officials. The investigations allegedly revealed the office bearers of HCA gave contracts for supply of cricket balls, bucket chairs and gym equipment to M/s Sara Sports, M/s Excellent Enterprises and M/s Body Drench India Private Limited respectively at highly inflated prices.

**Attaches immovable property of Rs 51.29 lakh in case of alleged misappropriation of funds of the cricket association**

"The illicit financial gains received by the suppliers, which were Proceeds of Crime (POC) in the case, were transferred to Surenagar Agarwal (Ex-Vice President and Treasurer of HCA) and his family members as quid pro quo," said the ED in its statement. (SEE PAGE 2)

## Sunita, Butch home after 9 months

**WASHINGTON**

Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore returned to planet Earth Tuesday evening ending an unplanned protracted stay on the International Space Station.

The SpaceX Dragon spacecraft carrying them and two other astronauts—Nick Hague and Russian cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov—splashed down into the waters off the coast of Florida just minutes before 6 pm, as NASA said.

The capsule was then carried to the recovery ship, where Hague became the first to exit the spacecraft nearly 50 minutes after splashdown. Williams emerged third. All three



NASA astronaut Sunita Williams is helped out of a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft in Florida. — Photo: PTI

were assisted out of the capsule, smiling and waving. Williams and Wilmore had left for the space station on June 6, 2024 with plans to

stay for eight days and return by the same spacecraft that carried them, Boeing's Starliner. But a malfunction in the spacecraft delayed the

return until now, one board a spacecraft belonging to Elon Musk's SpaceX.

"Congratulations to the @SpaceX and @NASA astronauts for another safe astronaut return!" Musk wrote on X, reporting a video of the splashdown from SpaceX. "Thank you to @POTUS for prioritising this mission!"

This was Indian-descent Williams's third trip to the space station. She and Wilmore spent 287 days on the station. The ISS orbits around the Earth at an altitude of 406.4 km at a speed of 4.76 miles/s. Put together by the space agencies of the US, Russia, Japan, Canada and Europe, it was launched on November 20, 1998. IANS (RELATED REPORTS PAGES 7, 9)

## India concerned over situation in Gaza

**NEW DELHI**

India on Wednesday said it is concerned over the situation in Gaza and called for supply of humanitarian assistance to the affected people as Israel resumed bombing in conflict-hit Palestinian territory shattering its fragile ceasefire with Hamas.

New Delhi also underlined the need to release all hostages held by Hamas. "We are concerned at the situation in Gaza. It is important that all hostages are released," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. PTI