



Kerala Finance Minister KN Balagopal presents state budget in Thiruvananthapuram; Andhra FM Buggana Rajendranath Reddy with CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy | PTI & EXPRESS

Anti-incumbency not for BJP, claims Karnataka CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A day after the BJP's overwhelming victory in the Assembly elections to four of the five states, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai noted that the anti-incumbency factor, which ruling parties usually face during elections, does not affect the saffron party. "The BJP is the only one that has the capability of coming back to power again and again, and that was proved again in the poll results of the four states," he said in the Assembly on Friday. He also expressed confidence that the party will come back to power in Karnataka after the 2023 polls. Supporting Bommai's statement, his predecessor B S Yediyurappa said the party is confident of winning 140 seats in the next elections, and added the Congress will have to again sit in the opposition.



The BJP is the only party to come back to power, not twice or thrice, but again and again. In Karnataka too, we will achieve this and we will come back to power in 2023

Basavaraj Bommai, Karnataka CM

He said that in the last 70 years, people have seen all political parties and they simply accepted whatever a party said. "It is not important what they speak, what is important is who is speaking. The BJP's work is speaking for itself," the CM added.

The Assembly on Friday witnessed a heated debate between two big guns — former chief ministers BS Yediyurappa and Siddaramaiah — on the recent polls. Regarding the state budget, Yediyurappa said the revenue deficit is due to Covid, lockdown and economic slowdown. But economic activities are improving. The State Government is borrowing loans just as it had done during Siddaramaiah's time. "Bommai presented a good budget and we will go to the people with it. We are sure to win 140 seats and return to power."

Pointing at Siddaramaiah, Yediyurappa said the Congress is living in an illusion and they will have to sit in the opposition gallery permanently.

Budget: No tax burden, Kerala FM banks on knowledge economy

IT, industries and infra get significant allocation in first paperless budget of the southern state

RAJESH ABRAHAM @ Kochi

AMID the pandemic-induced slowdown, Finance Minister K N Balagopal on Friday presented the Kerala budget for 2022-23 seeking to provide relief to people from rising prices even while putting his bets on the knowledge-driven sectors such as IT, technology, and communications to generate jobs and pull the economy out of the woods.

economy sector. Balagopal also announced setting up four IT corridors parallel to NH-66 for decentralising the IT sector. The budget allocated ₹2,000 crore for land acquisition for the SilverLine rail project, a clear message that there's no going back on its showpiece-but-controversial project.

The finance minister chose not to increase the welfare pension which experts reckoned would have provided much-needed money in the hands of the people and boosted the economy due to higher spending. There was also no mention of any austerity measures given the precarious financial situation of the state treasury. "The government has not adopted an evasive policy of curtailing expenditure in times of crisis. We have adopted a policy of more proactive intervention to resolve issues"

Public finance expert Jose Sebastian said the FM missed the trick by not raising the welfare pensions. "In a consumption-driven economy like that of Kerala, the only option to raise spending is to put more money into the pockets of people."

Andhra gives welfare an extra push for people

KALYAN THOLETI @ Vijayawada

ANDHRA Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy on Friday presented, what could be termed, a "confident, optimistic and welfare" Budget for 2022-23 with a proposed expenditure of ₹2.56 lakh crore, up from ₹2.29 lakh crore in 2021-22.

A whopping ₹48,802 crore has been allocated for 21 Direct Benefit Transfer schemes including ₹18,000 crore for YSR Pension Kanuka, ₹3,900 crore for YSR Rythu Bharosa, ₹6500 crore for Amma Vodi and ₹6,400 crore for YSR Asara among others. Unveiling the Budget, Reddy sounded upbeat, despite facing criticism of fiscal imprudence from the Opposition which has been citing the increasing debt burden for the state ahead.

A cursory glance at the estimates shows revenue receipts are expected to increase from ₹1.54 lakh crore in 2021-22 to ₹1.91 lakh crore while revenue expenditure is projected at

₹2.08 lakh crore, meaning a revenue deficit of ₹17,036 crore. In 2021-22, it was ₹19,545 crore. Fiscal deficit overall is expected to be a staggering ₹48,724.11 crore, up from ₹38,224 crore. Capital receipts are expected to touch ₹65,031 crore, about ₹10,000 crore more than previous year. Of this, open market loans could be ₹55,000 crore.

The State's own tax revenue is pegged at ₹91,049 crore. It was ₹73,689 crore the previous fiscal against the expected ₹85,280 crore. Similarly, the share from Central taxes is estimated to increase marginally by about ₹2,000 crore to ₹33,050 crore and grants-in-aid from the Centre are put at ₹56,033 crore. Last fiscal, the actual grants-in-aid were ₹46,443 crore as against the anticipated ₹57,930 crore.

On the other hand, capital expenditure is projected to be ₹30,679 crore. In the previous fiscal, the government was able to shell out only ₹18,529 crore despite estimated expenditure of ₹31,198 crore.



The government has not adopted an evasive policy of curtailing expenditure in times of crisis. We have adopted a policy of more proactive intervention to resolve issues

K N Balagopal, Kerala FM

'Booze ban in Telangana if Centre does'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

PROHIBITION and Excise Minister V Srinivas Goud on Friday said that the government was ready to implement total prohibition in Telangana if the Centre did likewise across the country.

The Minister also ruled out the possibility of bringing down the cheap liquor rates in the state.

During a debate on the Excise demand in the Assembly, Goud said: "The State government has no intention to earn money through liquor sales. When the neighbouring States are allowing liquor sale, Telangana cannot enforce prohibition in isolation as it will lead to growth of liquor mafia and sale of illicit liquor."

He recalled that when the then AP Chief Minister NT Rama Rao implemented total prohibition, illicit liquor from Karnataka and other neighbouring states flowed into the state, resulting in deaths of several people.

Regressive ideas being pushed by Centre: TN

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Coimbatore

TAMIL Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Friday alleged that the Union Government was using education to "push its regressive ideologies" and education must be moved back to the State list from the Concurrent list to stop this.

During his virtual guest of honour address at the Association of Indian University (AIU), South Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet at Bharathiar University on Friday, Stalin said, "People of Tamil Nadu want universities to function as per the education policy followed in the State. Vice-Chancellors must understand this and act accordingly. Currently, universities are functioning with the aim to produce graduates and get good rank in national and international assessments. But I would like to remind everyone that we have a bigger responsibility to equip students to become job-ready," he said.

Pointing out that Tamil Nadu is a pioneer in higher education, Stalin said former CM M Karunanidhi abolished entrance exams, which was a barrier for students aspiring to join professional courses, and helped those from humble backgrounds reach greater heights.

"As a descendant of Dravidian movement, my government's aim is to eradicate slavery of women and empower them to be socially and economically independent. Education is the key to attaining it," Stalin said. "Tamil Nadu stands first in the country in women's empowerment by opening many women's colleges, giving approval for co-education institutions, creating separate university for women, fee concession for women students in UG, PG and PhD courses, training institutions for all-India services aspirants, and offering computer training for employability," he added.



EXPRESS READ

Another Kerala man killed in Afghanistan: IS

Kozhikode: The Islamic State confirmed that one more Malayali had been killed while fighting in Afghanistan in 2018. The recent issue of the IS magazine 'Voice of Khurasan' said that Najeeb al Hindi, alias K P Najeeb, from Malappuram was killed in the fight against infidels.

Sexual assault complaint against makeup artist

Kochi: Close on the heels of the arrest of a tattoo artist, a Kochi-based makeup artist is in the dock for alleged sexual harassment of women. The Kochi City police have registered cases against makeup artist Anez Anzare after three women lodged complaints.



PLAY TIME

Children enjoy at newly inaugurated Telangana Urban Park in Hyderabad's Uppal area on Friday | VINAY MADAPU

HUMANITY

Stranded Ukrainians, Russians find peace in Tamil Nadu's temple town

VAITHEESWARAN B @ Tiruvannamalai

AT least 22 tourists — six Ukrainians and 16 Russians — have found a common abode of peace in Tiruvannamalai. A resident of the temple town in Tamil Nadu along with his friends is offering free food and shelter to these stranded tourists, including 18 women, for the past eight days.

"We decided to help them as they are stuck due to war and financial issues. It doesn't cost

us much. I provide the place and look after electricity bill. Many of my friends are offering dry ration and other materials," said V S Sathyan Gopalan who offered his guest house for free.

Gopalan said he started doing this after he saw two Ukrainians crying near a temple in Tiruvannamalai. Four tourists — three from Hrishikesh and one from Bengaluru — came to Gopalan's place after his FB post. Currently, 11 out of 14 rooms in

his guest house are occupied and Gopalan said he could accommodate more. "My friends are also ready to welcome more tourists into their homes, he said. We are ready to provide for them till the war is over or till the issue is resolved."

"Even if they want to stay for six months we're ready. We are trying to help Russians and Ukrainians by finding food and accommodation near their locations. We have asked the tourists to open a WhatsApp group for helping fellow travellers," he asserted.



Major Cabinet rejig likely around Ugadi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayawada

IS the much-awaited State Cabinet rejig in the offing? It appears so. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who had announced that the Cabinet will be changed half-way through his term while assuming power in May 2019, made a few interesting comments at the Cabinet meeting on Friday.

Pointing out that several party leaders are in the race, he informed his Cabinet colleagues that those who are not in the government would have to work for the party. Highly-placed sources said the CM made the remarks after a colleague sought to pull the leg of Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy as to why he didn't come in an attire fitting for the occasion of Budget presentation. The exchange between the duo, it seems, prompted the Chief Minister to interject.

"If anyone is dropped from the Cabinet, it doesn't mean he/she has been set aside... having worked in the government, you will be better placed to work in the party as you have a better understanding of how the government functions and how to interact with officials," he was quoted as saying by sources. It is likely that the CM may make sweeping changes in the Cabinet after the Budget session, around Ugadi, the Telugu New Year's Day, in the first week of April. If not, at least within a month, the sources said. It is also learnt that of the 25 Cabinet members, a majority may be asked to work for the party. "Barring three or four, the rest are likely to be dropped, or if the CM so wishes, the entire Cabinet might be changed," a source said, adding the latter option may not happen given the crucial role being played by a few ministers.

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD. (DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA). Head Office: Thycad, Thiruvananthapuram-14. E-TENDER NOTICE. Online bids are invited from manufacturers/direct importers / loan licensees on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the procurement insecticides for NVBDCP & Planfund the year 2021-22.

ICICI Home Finance. Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kuria Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India. Notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.