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NATIONAL ENGLISH

JULY 2024 | ₹ 20

CM Revanth allots
Rs 31k cr to poll promise

Farm Loan WAIVED

SPECIAL
FEATURE

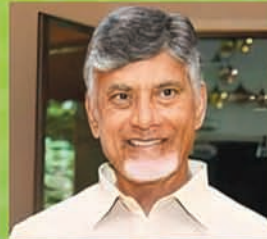


Heart Healer
of India

SPECIAL
FEATURE



RK Group @23
Vision for Innovation



Budget Boost for
Andhra Pradesh



Please All
Budget



Hearty
Congratulations to
Sri. Revanth Reddy
on becoming
CM of Telangana



K. SRINIVAS REDDY

Revanth Anna Sena

Nizamabad District, Telangana.



JULY, 2024
VOLUME: 9 | ISSUE: 07 | ₹ 20

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Printed, published & owned by
Sangem B Rama Krishna at Flat No. G1,
Surabhi Heaven Apts. H.No. 2-2-10/A1,
Opp. OU Gate, DD Colony, Hyderabad-
500 007. Printed at Karmik Press, APHB,
Shop No. 35, OU Road, Vidyanagar
Telangana, India.
RNI No: TELENG/2014/73881

Administrative office:
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EDITORIAL

Budget for a Bright Bharat

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Union Budget for the remaining eight months of 2024-25 fiscal year is hailed by those who want India to further open up to the global economy. Of the Rs 48.50 lakh crore of expenditure, only Rs 32 lakh crore comes from revenue collections and the rest borrowings.



The budget pencils a blueprint of economic reforms for the coming five years of this Modi led NDA government. More opening up to foreign investments, liberalized tax reforms and simplified procedures to attract private capital expenditure –are the key contours of the reforms.

Of course, the Modi government, like in the last two terms, believes in higher capital expenditure that will result in more jobs and removal of poverty. The Opposition termed the budget as that of Please Naidu, Nitish exercise, as AP, Bihar got allocations.

We have taken Telangana CM Revanth Reddy's loan waiver as the cover story as there were doubts over implementation of the scheme, a poll promise of Congress before the elections. Now that an allocation has been made in the state budget, it's only how, but not if – of the doubts.



We carry a special feature on Dr Surya Prakasa Rao, a world class cardiac interventionist in Hyderabad. He eminently deserves to be called Heart Healer of India – his quest for innovations in treating young and middle class people suffering from heart ailments.



So is another special feature of the RK Group of Educational Institutions, Kamareddy in Telangana, which completed 23 years of establishment and is going to celebrate Silver Jubilee soon. These days it's not easy to run a private educational institution, that too from a rural area, and sustain.

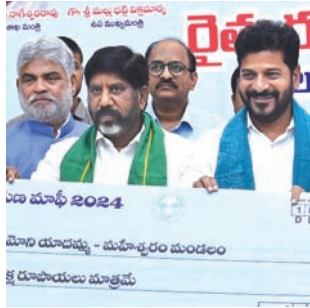


These two stories are of excellence and passion.
Happy monsoon!



Rama Krishna Sangem
Chief Editor

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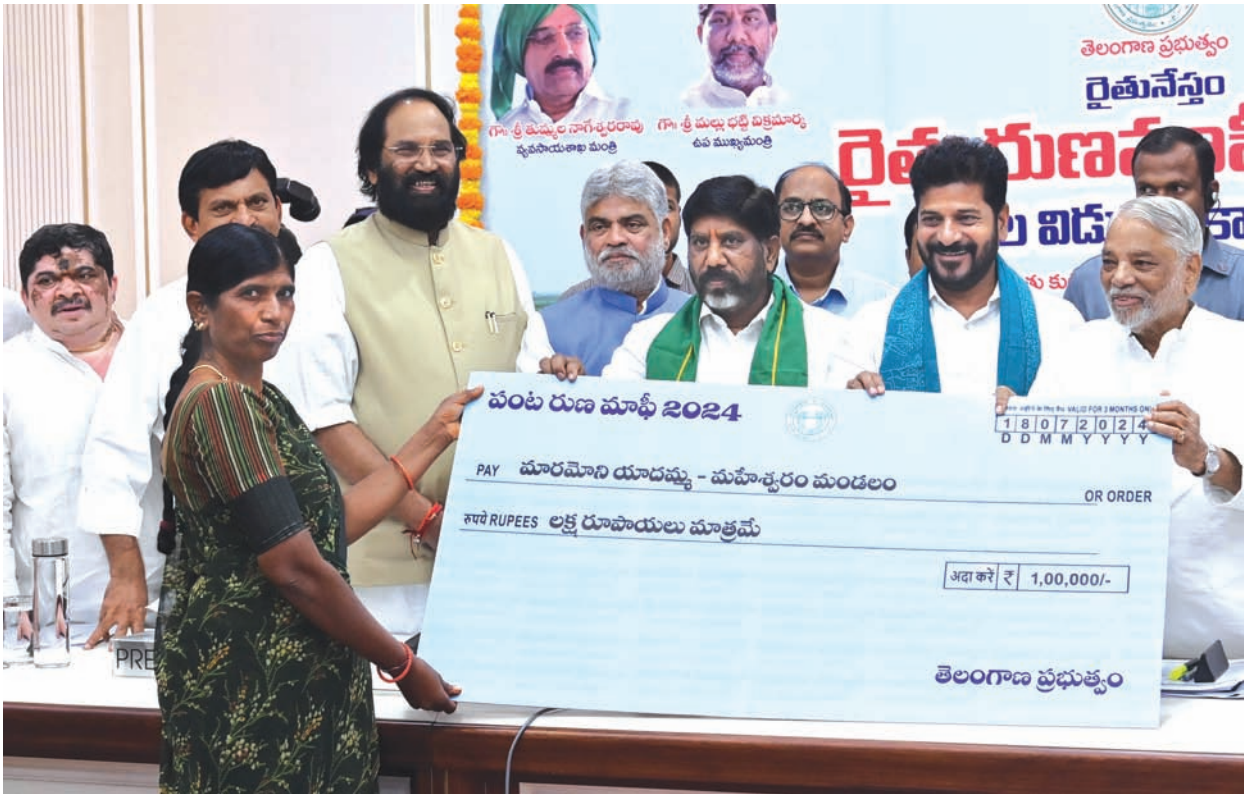
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CM Revanth Reddy's FLAGSHIP SCHEME KICKS OFF

Telangana Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has bitten the bullet – by deciding to go for a total implementation of farmers' loan waiver, up to **Rs 2 lakh**. Until a few days ago, there were doubts over its scale of implementation. As the money needed is **Rs 31,000 crore**, these doubts were genuine.



DINESH AKULA

The doubts were genuine as Telangana's financial condition is not good. Close to Rs 6.70 lakh crore of borrowings, and the growing burden of debt serving – interest and installment payments, have put a question mark over the feasibility of loan waiver in one go.

But, CM Revanth knew that his entire credibility and political career was dependent on this one scheme – farm loan waiver. This is his flagship scheme. Of course, there are other poll promises made by Congress during the Assembly elections. But, they can be implemented in phases.

As some Opposition BRS leaders challenged him to implement the loan waiver at the earliest, CM Revanth has accepted

**Dy CM Bhatti
Vikramarka
allocated
Rs 31,000 cr for
farmers' loan
waiver in his
2024-25 budget of
Rs 2.91 lakh cr**

it and brainstormed with officials to clear farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh by August 15, 2024. This, in Revanth's words, is freeing farmers from loans by the Independence Day.

On July 18, the government deposited close to Rs 6,300 crore in the banks clearing around 11 lakh farmers' loans up to Rs 1 lakh. The balance should be paid by August 15. Now all eyes on how the government will mobilize the remaining funds for the balance loans. In politics, populism is part of economics. The debate over

whether waiving the farm loans is good for the economy or even to the farmers is immaterial here. No one bothers about the long term impact of the populist promises. Five years is too long a period in electoral politics.

Whoever implements their promises is considered as efficient. Revanth has no other choice. He has many other expensive promises to keep in the coming months, if not years. Generating money for them is not easy. Taxing the other influential sections might be counter-productive.

CM Revanth faces three pressure points:

One, a resurgent BJP which wants to unseat him in the next elections, two, former CM KCR who is waiting for staging a comeback and three, AP CM Chandrababu Naidu with whom Telangana CM will be compared for every small and big thing.

It's time for CM Revanth to act fast.



‘Ours a farmer friendly government’

Thummala Nageswara Rao, Telangana Agriculture Minister



Bhaskar Tatikonda

“The Congress which came to power in Telangana last December is pro-farmer and is committed to make agriculture a remunerative activity. We have promised to the people of Telangana before the Assembly elections that we will waive agricultural loans up to Rs 2 lakh and we are totally committed to implement the promise”.

These were the words of Telangana Agriculture Minister Thummala Nageswara Rao while announcing the first batch of waiver of farm loans up to Rs 1 on July 18. Nageswara Rao is a member of Cabinet committee on farmers’ loan waiver guidelines and also implementation of Rythu Bharosa assistance scheme.

These two schemes are the key pillars which brought Congress to power in the last year Assembly elections as well as ensuring a good number of Lok Sabha seats too. Nageswara Rao, a senior politician from Khammam district is the seniormost in the Revanth’s Cabinet. Rao held minister posts since the late NTR government in the 1980s.

He said that the Cabinet committee members, including Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka, Sridhar Babu and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, and the senior



officials from the Finance department have worked hard over the weeks to chalk out details of implementation of this loan waiver scheme.

“This scheme will be fully implemented by August 2024. We are taking steps to ensure the proper distribution of money into the bank accounts of farmers. We requested the bankers to make arrangements to see that all the eligible farmers’ loans are waived once the money is credited to their accounts,” said Rao.

Nageswara Rao told the bank managers to see that the farmers were not subjected to any kind of inconvenience on this front. The money given by the government should be credited to the loan

accounts, if there is due, otherwise, the amounts should be given to the farmers and fresh loans too shall be given, he told them.

Nageswara Rao presided over a meeting in which CM A Revanth Reddy formally launched the waiver of loans up to Rs 1 lakh and interacted with some farmers’ groups. Interestingly, most of the farmers were relieved over the waiver of their loans in one go.

Rs 72,659 crore for agriculture in the budget

Nageswara Rao expressed his happiness over the allocation of the highest amount of funds - Rs 72,659 crore for the agriculture department in Telangana budget for 2024-25. ●

Dy CM Bhatti presents Rs 2.91 lakh cr TG Budget



Bhaskar Tatikonda

A Revanth Reddy led Congress government in Telangana has presented a Rs 2.91 lakh crore budget for 2024-25 in the assembly on July 25, Thursday. This takes into consideration of Rs 31,000 crore estimated to be needed for waiver of farmers' loans up to Rs 2 lakh. This farmer loan waiver is a promise the Congress made to people before the assembly elections December 2023.

Deputy CM and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka presented the budget in the assembly, while Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu did the same in the legislative council. CM Revanth Reddy and his ministers and treasury benches MLAs cheered the budget, while Opposition Leader and former CM KCR said it lacked sum and substance.

The Congress-led Telangana government also prioritised fiscal prudence over excessive public spending-led growth. Bhatti Vikramarka said, "Our government has focused attention on the repayment of loans passed on by the irresponsible previous government... We have raised loans of Rs 35,118 crore, whereas we have repaid loans of Rs 42,892 crore."

He, however, added that the Congress government never ignored the welfare of the people in Telangana despite the extremely difficult financial situation. The



government spent Rs 34,579 cr on various schemes from December until now, said Bhatti while presenting the first full Budget of a Congress-led government since the formation of Telangana.

Major allocations

Rs 26,000 cr allocated to the irrigation department; Rs 40,000 crore for welfare schemes. Rs 3,065 crore to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, Rs 500 crore to Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority.

Rs 33,124 crore allocation to SC/ST Fund Monitoring for SC welfare and Rs 12,056 crore for ST welfare. Rs 2.4 crore for Tablighi Jamat meeting in Vikarabad district; Rs 4.43 crore for Haj pilgrimage. Rs 3,003 cr allocation for the minority welfare department. Rs 72,659 crore for the agriculture sector. Rs 21,292 crore for the education department. Rs 29,816 cr for the Panchayati Raj department

Rs 6.71 lakh crore debt

In his Budget speech, Bhatti said that Telangana was under a debt of Rs 6.71 trillion until December

2023. "The biggest challenge in front of us was the debt the state incurred when the Congress came to power," he added. "The Congress government has paid off Rs 42,892 crore debt until now and has taken a debt of Rs 35,118 crore," Bhatti told the House.

Meanwhile, Bhatti also said that the government is systematically garnering the necessary funds of Rs 31,000 crore needed for the Runa Mafi scheme. He cited that Rs 6,035 crore was transferred in one stroke to the accounts of 11.34 lakh farmers towards Runa Mafi (loan waiver) on July 18. The rest of the loans up to Rs 2 lakh will also be waived off soon, he assured farmers.

A day before the Union Budget, CM Revanth Reddy, who assumed office in December 2023, strongly voiced his disappointment, claiming that Telangana has been left out of the Union Budget. "The NDA government espoused a vindictive attitude towards Telangana," said the chief minister, pointing to a glaring omission of the state's name throughout the budget speech. ●

TELANGANA'S POLITICAL SHAKE-UP: REVANTH REDDY'S TRIUMPHANT CHALLENGE



DINESH AKULA

On the evening of June 4, as the Lok Sabha election results pour in, a significant upheaval is experienced in Telangana's political landscape. The air around Revanth Reddy's residence on Road No. 46 in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, is filled with excitement and anticipation. The usually serene, upscale neighbourhood, known for its spacious bungalows and leafy streets, has become a bustling activity hub.

Supporters, journalists, and curious onlookers have gathered outside the Chief Minister's residence. The crowd is lively, with voices blending into a cacophony of slogans, cheers, and conversations. The scent of marigold garlands, held by many in the crowd, mingles with the subtle aroma of freshly watered gardens, creating a festive yet charged atmosphere.

The recent Lok Sabha elections have brought about a significant political shift in the heart of Telangana, challenging the state's longstanding power dynamics. The Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have secured eight each of the total 17 seats, heralding a new era in the state politics. This unexpected outcome has left the Bharata Rashtra



Samithi (BRS)—a party that once held an unassailable grip on the state—reeling from a dramatic collapse as it failed to win even a single seat.

Inside the residence, a charged atmosphere awaits. The spacious living room accommodates key party members, strategists, and well-wishers. The cool, air-conditioned interior starkly contrasts the lively scene outside. The aroma of freshly brewed coffee and the subtle scent of incense fills the air, adding to the sense of occasion.

In the centre of it stands Revanth Reddy, emanating a calm and confident demeanour. Dressed in his trademark white shirt and dark trousers with the party khanduwa draped over his shoulder, he engages in conversations, commanding respect and attention. His phone buzzes constantly with congratulatory messages and calls

from supporters and allies. The atmosphere inside is one of cautious optimism, tempered by the awareness of the challenges that still lie ahead. Reddy's ascent within the Congress and his subsequent leadership of the state government demonstrate political resilience and strategic brilliance. Under his leadership, the party's fortunes have improved significantly, with its seat count increasing from three in 2019 to eight. This noteworthy achievement has solidified his position and reshaped Telangana's broader political landscape.

Reddy's strategy has mainly targeted rural constituencies, where his efforts have yielded significant results. The Congress's success in areas such as Nalgonda, Khammam, Bhongir, Warangal, Mahabubabad, Peddapalli, and Nagarkurnool, with substantial victory margins, is a testament to this approach. For example, in

Nalgonda, where Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy led the campaign, the Congress secured a remarkable margin of 5,59,000 votes—the highest in the state. These rural strongholds' lush fields and vibrant markets have played a crucial role in the Congress's resurgence under Reddy's leadership."

The Congress party performed well in rural areas but suffered significant setbacks in urban areas. The party lost the Mahbubnagar seat, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's home district, to the BJP by a narrow margin of 4,500 votes. Additionally, the Congress could not retain the Malkajgiri seat, previously held by Reddy, which was won by the BJP. These urban defeats highlight the party's structural weaknesses and the consequences of a delayed candidate selection process.

At a tense press conference held at his residence 24 hours after the Lok Sabha results were announced, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy made severe allegations. He alleged that the BRS had manipulated the elections to favour the BJP. Reddy claimed that BRS president K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) had tampered with votes to benefit the BJP and safeguard his family's interests. He pointed out that the BRS lost deposits in seven of the eight seats won by the BJP, marking a significant setback for a party that had previously been dominant in the state. If these allegations are proven accurate, they could result in severe repercussions for those involved.

Reddy highlighted a significant difference in the percentage of votes cast for the BRS between the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. The BRS received 37.5% of the votes in the November 2023 Assembly elections, but their share dropped to 16.5% in the Lok Sabha



polls. On the other hand, the BJP's share of votes surged from 13% in the Assembly polls to 35.5% in the Lok Sabha elections. Reddy alleged that a BRS legislator from Siddipet, T. Harish Rao, transferred votes to the BJP's Raghunandan Rao, contributing to the defeat of a Congress candidate from a marginalised community. Despite alleged manipulations, the Congress party's performance has been commendable. The party's vote share increased from 39.5% in the previous Assembly elections to 41% in the Lok Sabha elections, and its seat count doubled from three to eight. Additionally, the Congress captured the Secunderabad Cantonment Assembly seat, previously held by the BRS, and increased its total to 65 seats. Reddy argued that these victories indicate public satisfaction with the Congress's governance.

Revanth Reddy remarked that the BJP's 'Modi guarantee' slogan failed to connect with the public, decreasing the party's Lok Sabha seats from 303 to 243. Reddy suggested that Prime Minister Narendra Modi resign, stating that the voters rejected his leadership. As the celebrations at his

residence on Road No. 46 continue into the late evening, there is a sense that Telangana's political scene has been irrevocably transformed. The once-dominant BRS has been dethroned, and a new political competition and dynamism has begun. For Revanth Reddy and his supporters, this moment is both a triumph and a reminder of the hard work ahead in building Telangana's more inclusive and responsive future.

Reddy's leadership and strategic acumen have revitalised the Congress and set the stage for a dynamic and competitive political environment in the state. His ability to navigate the complex political terrain of Telangana, his focus on rural constituencies, and his resilience in the face of challenges have marked him as a pivotal figure in this transformation.

As Telangana adapts to this new reality, Revanth Reddy's leadership will determine the state's future direction. His story is one of perseverance, strategic brilliance, and an unwavering commitment to his vision for Telangana. Standing at the forefront of this political revival, his journey has only just begun. ●

Chandrababu 4.0 Plans & Priorities

Naidu's powerful position as an NDA - alliance -partner crucial to the government at the centre, makes his 4th term more powerful



ARUNA RAVIKUMAR

Nara Chandrababu Naidu is a politician whose indomitable presence and aura remains undiminished even when he isn't wearing the mantle of power, a quality that sets him apart from the rest of his ilk not just within the country but outside it. Gaining international recognition for being a proactive chief minister who transformed Hyderabad into an internationally acknowledged information technology hub, Naidu's penchant to be known as the CEO of the state in his very first stint as chief minister, as he shook hands with 'A listers' of the business world at several World Economic Forum meets at Davos was well known. This tech savvy image was also his undoing when he first lost power, leading his detractors to dub him as anti-farmer and pro-industry. A man who has the ability to bounce back from adversity also has the remarkable distinction of serving as chief minister twice in United Andhra Pradesh and now twice in residuary Andhra Pradesh. The landslide victory that heralded his return in 2024, is an ode to his 'never say die spirit', political



acumen, administrative prowess and people connect. Naidu's powerful position as an NDA - alliance -partner crucial to the government at the centre, makes his 4th term more powerful than all his previous ones even as political pundits speculate on how he leverages his power to propel Andhra Pradesh towards becoming the number one state in the country.

PRIORITIES AND GOALS

Chandrababu Naidu has the unenviable task of completing the unfinished agenda from his earlier stint and delivering populist poll promises which include raising the pension amount, free bus rides, three free gas cylinders per year and promises to carry out welfare

schemes introduced by Jagan on a much larger scale even as he stares at empty coffers as a legacy from him. Adept at tightrope walking in politics, Naidu has shown a generational shift in the composition of his cabinet with the induction of 17 new faces over many seniors who emerged triumphant in the elections. Realizing that time is not on his side, the 74-year-old aims at progressive policies and a people friendly approach to lift the state out of debt, alleviate poverty and reduce the wealth gap with little or no delay. At his very first cabinet meeting, a decision to release several white papers including one on the state's finances explaining how the

flawed schemes of the Y.S. Jagan Reddy government had forced a cash crunch on the state halting all progress was taken. The state needs 2,600 crore every month to meet social pension alone.

THE FIRST FILES

The Mega District Selection (DSC) notification for the recruitment of 16,347 teachers signed by Chandrababu Naidu was in response to a long pending demand and the next one too was for jobs with the government rooting for a skill census in the state to ensure more employment for youth. Another immediate gesture was the revocation of the controversial Land Titling Act brought in by the Y.S Jaganmohan Reddy government to which there was severe opposition. People had apprehensions and felt threatened as data pertaining to land records was handed over to a private company by the government which could tamper with records to benefit land grabbers. The decision to reopen Anna canteens which supplied meals at Rs 5 to the poor, was an important one since the previous government had shut down 204 such canteens throughout the state alleging large scale corruption.

EXPEDITING AMARAVATI AND POLAVARAM

Building the big-ticket greenfield capital Amaravati, as the 217sq km futuristic smart city and completing the prestigious irrigation cum power project at Polavaram on the river Godavari are top priority for the Naidu government. Chandrababu Naidu will use his powerful position in the NDA to secure special funds under the states economic development assistance to complete both these projects as well as secure amounts to fund other schemes.



Allocations from the union budget 2024 could well determine the course of action in this direction since costs have escalated and no progress seen in the last couple of years.

Central grants are required for the construction of the Ramayyapatnam port, the integrated steel plant at Kadapa, the crude oil refinery and petroleum corridor, a new railway zone, industrial parks, a node each on the Vishakhapatnam- Chennai and Hyderabad- Bengaluru industrial corridors, a mega textile park, an integrated aqua park, a green energy corridor and an agricultural university. Investments in electronics, manufacturing, semiconductors and smart phones under centrally subsidized schemes including production linked incentives could play a major part in Andhra Pradesh's transformation.

The two -hour meeting between Chandrababu Naidu and his Telangana counter- part A. Revanth Reddy held in a friendly atmosphere was the first concrete step to put an end to contentious issues in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act 2014, and one held between individuals who share warm ties. Accordingly, two committees, one with ministers from both states and another with officials are set to discuss apportionments of assets and liabilities as per the Act and those not listed in it hopefully working

like a balm on a festering 10 -year-old wound. The 2024 election saw the TDP scion emerge from the shadow of his father as an energetic leader after a 228- day Padayatra covering 3132 km in a year and addressing over 200 public meetings where he interacted with people and gauged first hand the problems on the ground.

Handling the cadre and meeting central leaders when his father was in prison for 53 days helped Lokesh increase his rapport with party leaders and workers and take independent decisions which are important for leadership. Proactive as a minister of IT, Education and RTD departments after his resounding election victory, he had a major role to play in the signing of the DSC and is all set to be a worthy successor to his father.

DOUBLE ENGINE- DOUBLE SUCCESS

Getting preliminary approval for the revival of the Amaravati outer ring road project (ORR) which aims to boost regional connectivity and economic development is the beginning of a slew of measures that will set the ball rolling for the much development that the state needs. With abundant natural resources, economic support from the NDA government at the centre, and a visionary leader like Chandrababu Naidu, Andhra Pradesh is set to be a growth story that will make history. ●

PAWAN KALYAN

POWER STAR TO POWERFUL POLITICIAN



ARUNA RAVIKUMAR

From the 'reel life' idealistic hero out to cleanse society, to a 'real-life' politician imbued with idealism, star turned politician Konidala Pawan Kalyan's meteoric rise on the political firmament has been as dramatic as his films. The moniker 'power star' given by his star-struck fans proved to be prophetic in his case, as he rode to power on a popular mandate that enables him to translate his ideas into action as deputy chief minister of AP.

Referred to as the 'man of the match' after being instrumental in stitching together the match-winning three-party alliance between his Jana-Sena party, the Telugu Desam party and the Bharatiya Janata Party, Pawan's role in the NDA government determined to catapult Andhra Pradesh to a position of prominence remains crucial. Pawan was very much the star throughout his electoral campaign-- donning pristine white Kurtas, striding into venues with his characteristic gait, flamboyant head shake and well-modulated speeches that sent fans and voters into a tizzy. Even after his historic triumph Pawan Kalyan continues to be the antithesis of the regular politician.

STEELY RESOLVE

Enduring personal attacks and scorn, taking a drubbing in the last



election where he lost both the seats he contested, written off as a moody star who has no political acumen by political pundits, Pawan Kalyan's tenacity, grit and self-belief enabled him to deliver a block buster in politics after a ten-year struggle since his party the Jana Sena was formed in 2014. His cent per cent success is a record in itself making his detractors wince as they rue over the unkind personal attacks and aspersions cast on him in the run up to the election.

Although Pawan Kalyan is a first-time MLA and a green horn in politics, Telugu Desam Party President and chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has accorded him high priority in the coalition government of the NDA. Equal importance in protocol at all government functions and meetings, a convoy of bullet-proof vehicles which no other cabinet colleague enjoys and instructions that all public-serving offices and institutions should have framed photographs of both the chief minister and the deputy chief minister, make Kalyan more powerful than most political

veterans.

DILIGENT STUDY

Handling Panchayat Raj and Rural development, Rural Water supply, Environment, Forests and Science and Technology which are said to be subjects close to his heart, Pawan Kalyan has immersed himself in official reviews getting in-depth knowledge of each department for which the shooting of his pending films have been delayed by 3 months. Combining the temporal with the spiritual, his 11-day fast for goddess Varahi purportedly to ward off negativity and for the welfare of the state saw him attend official briefings donning yellow-coloured robes and sporting a vermilion mark on his forehead. Asking temples to distribute prasadam in palm leaf boxes instead of plastic, and people to worship clay Ganeshas in place of plaster of Paris, Pawan has begun his job in earnest. Bringing in fresh perspective and dynamism, the deputy is all set to strengthen the hands of the chief minister in making Andhra Pradesh the promised sunrise state. ●

HEART HEALER *of* INDIA



Dr Surya Prakasa Rao Vithala,
MD, DM, FACC, FSCAI
Senior cardiac
interventionist in India

At a time when India is racing towards becoming a developed country, our people's health issues too are rising alarmingly. Heart diseases or disorders are becoming common, notwithstanding age, gender and economic background. This is the right occasion for us all to celebrate a super specialist cardio doctor – **Dr Vithala Surya Prakasa Rao**, from Hyderabad, India.

Fondly called by his countless admirers, cutting across all sections, from patients to colleagues in the medical fraternity, Dr VSP, a senior interventional cardiologist, so far performed thousands of cardiac procedures – including Transradial and Radial procedures.

Why are we calling Dr Surya Prakasa Rao a heart healer of India? Not just because he is a heart specialist and a world class senior interventionist cardiologist, but due to his close to 34 years of public service through the medical profession. His care and love for Indian patients, most of them youngsters and commoners.

Dr Surya Prakasa Rao not only worked with super specialty hospitals and the affordable patients, he also devoted a number of years with the poor and rural people – specifically speaking the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) coal mine workers of Telangana.

Dr VSP is concerned about the growing numbers of heart ailments vis-a-vis Indian conditions. Of course, the social and economic impact of this killer disease in many forms on the general public and the country as a whole is huge. This restlessness made him tour the world and author books and innumerable publications.

This impatience to solve the burgeoning heart problems made him tour and study the best medical advancements in the world. The best practices, he studied, which can help Indian patients particularly, both in terms of medically and socio-economically. As a result, Dr Surya Prakasa Rao is now a leading luminary of Japanese CTO (Chronic Total Occlusion). This particular method of treating heart patients was found to be useful for Indians. He is currently the president of Indo-Japanese CTO, which held its international conference in June in Hyderabad.

We at **Excel India** thought it is apt and necessary to highlight the service and contributions of Dr Surya Prakasa Rao for over three decades.

Read on..



'He listens to our heart beats' say Dr VSP's patients

“**H**e is like a God to us, not just a doctor. He not only treats our heart ailments, but takes care of our overall health, and well-being and tells how to change our habits and lifestyle,” said Mohammad Yousuf, a trade union leader of coal mines of Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), Kothagudem, in Telangana.

dozens of other coal workers to the doctor. Most coal miners suffer from heart ailments due to their poor eating habits and ignorance.

SCCL general manager (workshop electrical & management), Kothagudem, P J Fitzgerald said: “My association with Dr Surya Prakasa Rao dates back to 2011

when I came here. I

underwent a heart procedure at the time. Later again he treated me in 2020,” recalled Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald says Dr VSP is a caring and supportive cardiologist particularly towards patients from poor and rural backgrounds. “I never felt he was recommending unnecessary tests or costly procedures. Dr Surya Prakasa Rao spends a lot of time monitoring a patient’s recovery progress,” said Fitzgerald.

D Mahaboob Basha from Yerraguntla, in Kadapa district too is of the same view of Dr VSP. “I

This is the coal township from where Dr VSP began his medical career in late 1980s. Besides being treated himself, his elder brother for heart issues by the doctor, Yousuf recommended



have known doctor sab since 2019. I just returned to India from Kuwait where I worked as a driver. I suffered a cardiac problem and he treated me with a procedure. Later, I, my wife and my elder son too were treated by the doctor”.

Basha says Dr Surya Prakasa is like a God for the poor patients. “He is always available on the phone. He pays attention to each and every minute detail of our problem and enquires about our healing,” said Basha.

“Dr Surya Prakasa Rao is one of the most renowned doctors in the twin cities of Hyderabad. He has performed numerous critical procedures, particularly in cases where patients were referred for CABG. Instead of the recommended surgeries, he undertook these cases and successfully performed angioplasties”.

“Dr. VSP is not only an outstanding doctor but also a very good friend and like an elder brother to me. When my mother suffered a severe cardiac arrest, Dr. Rao immediately asked us to bring her to Hyderabad. After a careful examination, he treated her with angioplasty at the age of 79, in the year 2018”, said Syed Aziz Ahmed, a telecom entrepreneur, in Hyderabad.

“The procedure took nearly three hours. Since then, she is doing well. Dr VSP provides exceptional medical care. We will never forget his timely medical help and guidance towards our family”, said Syed Aziz Ahmed.

Care & efficiency

There are many such testimonials about Dr VSP. But what surprises one is his personality – a combination of care and compassion for the patients and acumen for the high end advancements in cardiology. He authored two books and published



dozens of articles for medical journals, national and international.

Dr Surya Prakasa Rao Vithala, a globally acclaimed cardiologist with 38 years of experience, has made pioneering contributions to the field of Interventional Cardiology for over 26 years. Currently, he heads the Department of Cardiology at Care Hospitals in Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, one of the top hospitals in India.

Dr. Rao began his illustrious career at SCCL, in coal belt agency areas of Bhadradri Kothagudem district, Telangana.

Recognizing the lack of advanced cardiac care in this region, he has been conducting regular medical camps for over 25 years, saving numerous lives through preventive screenings, follow-ups, and complex angioplasties. His efforts have earned him immense respect from organizations like Singareni Collieries, BPL, Heavy Water Plant, and TSGENCO.

A trailblazer in interventional techniques, Dr VSP has been a leading figure in chronic total occlusion (CTO) interventions, achieving over 90% success rate. Since 2004, he has performed over 35,000 radial interventions and

more than 10,000 angioplasties, significantly benefiting patients across India.

His expertise in CTO PCI has been instrumental in avoiding bypass surgeries for many, and he is dedicated to spreading awareness and training the next generation of cardiologists in these life-saving procedures.

In India, coronary artery disease (CAD) is a serious condition, responsible for 27% of the country's debts. This prevalence is largely due to lifestyle choices such as unhealthy eating habits, lack of physical activity, and smoking.

While surgery is often used to treat CTOs, it can be challenging. However, a special Japanese technique for clearing CTOs without bypass surgery has shown a success rate of over 90%. Neglecting early treatment can lead to severe complications and heart failure.

Pioneering CTO Interventions Dr. Rao founded the Academy of Interventional Cardiology - CHIP-CTO-PCI to promote the exploration, interaction, and sharing of knowledge in PCI. He also co-founded the Indo Japanese Chronic Total Occlusion Club (IJCTO) to collaborate with Japanese experts in treating 100% coronary artery blocks without surgery. His work with IJCTO and other global forums has advanced patient care worldwide.

IJCTO conference in Hyderabad

Hyderabad hosted an international conference on treating chronic total occlusions from June 7, 8 and 9, 2024, at the Westin Mindspace. The conference was attended by around 1,000 cardiologists and experts from around the world.

The delegates came from India, Japan, the US, Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. ●

‘Heart patients need care & compassion’

Dr Surya Prakasa Rao Vithala, MD, DM, FACC, FSCAI
Senior cardiac interventionist in India

He listens to the sounds of heart and understands their language. Though a human heart is the same across the planet, people of each country or geographies have their own specific need for specific methods of healing, in view of their local and cultural conditions.

Dr Surya Prakasa Rao Vithala, MD, DM, FACC & FSCAI, knows it well. There are many top rated heart super specialists in India. Some of them are masters. Dr Surya Prakasa Rao is one of them. His approach towards any heart ailment is comprehensive.

Total dedication to patients and innovation are his key tools. Dr VSP, as fondly called in his circles, is the president of Indo-Japanese CTO Club (IJCTO) which held its international conference in Hyderabad this June. Now he works with Care Hospital, Banjara Hills in Hyderabad.

Today, Dr Surya Prakasa Rao is a leading expert of IJCTO Club in India, with over 18 years of expertise. He spoke to **Excel India** on his over three decades of journey as people’s doctor. Excerpts from the interview:

Q: What drew you towards this IJCTO?

Right from my medical college days I am concerned about the illness of humans. Incidentally, I joined SCCL in 1990 and did Medical services for 2 years before my super specialty. I am very



much impressed by the medical services, emergency services of the organization in the interior places of the Coal Belt area.

At the same time I recognized the lack of awareness of cardiac illness, high incidence of heart attacks, Cardiac Ailments and diabetes, and I spent a lot of time with that time admin of SCCL to organize emergency cardiac services in SCCL main hospitals and tertiary care at NIMS.

Later on once I finished my DM (Cardio) and settled in Hyderabad. I made it compulsory to attend to the needs of coal belt area patients

and coordinated with higher technology services at corporate hospitals. In this aspect I should say coal workers are lucky they got timely cardiac emergency services by efficient SCCL admin this way and am happy my dedication helped many lives saved in SCCL families. Most of the youngsters are not ready for surgeries and they cannot afford to be hospitalized for longer periods too. That involves many aspects of their life – career demands etc. My search for solutions to this problem took me to IJCTO, which is most suitable to our conditions.

Q: Can you tell us about IJCTO?

This is an effective method to treat CTO or Chronic Total Occlusion, a condition of complete blockage of coronary arteries that supply blood to the heart. For this we found PCI - Percutaneous Coronary Intervention - a non-surgical invasive procedure to resolve blockage or occlusion of the artery.

The developments in CTO-PCI have profoundly impacted the treatment and management of heart diseases. This is driven by collaborative efforts between Indian and Japanese CTO experts.

In 2006, the initiation of the CACTO (Complex PCI and CTO summit) in Hyderabad marked a pivotal moment in India's CTO PCI landscape. The summit provided a platform for Indian interventional cardiologists to learn from global experts, especially from Japan.

Dr. Saito, a renowned leader in CTO and slender PCI, conducted a highly educational CTO course using the trans-radial approach. This event was a significant milestone, setting a new direction for CTO PCI in India.

In 2009, another historic event took place during the CACTO forum. Dr. Ochiai, a highly skilled retrograde operator from Japan, performed the first retrograde PCI in India. This event inspired a broader vision for expanding the CTO program at a national level.

Building on this momentum, CACTO evolved into the Indo Japanese CTO Club (IJCTO) in Hyderabad at Apollo Group of Hospitals. The presence of leading CTO experts like Dr. M Yamane, Dr. Kenya Nasu, Dr. Sainos, Dr. A Galassi, Dr. A B Mehta, and Dr. Samuel Mathew, along with Indian course directors including myself, Dr. N Pratap Kumar, Dr. A V Ganesh Kumar, and Dr. P K Goel, led to fostering further



collaboration. The 2013 IJCTO summit in Mumbai attended by 500 delegates from India and abroad further enhanced our ties on CTO PCI.

Q: How is the collaboration between India and global experts?

Proctorship programs conducted by experts from Japan, Europe, and other global regions have been instrumental in achieving high success rates in CTO-PCI in India. These programs provide hands-on training and mentorship, allowing Indian cardiologists to learn advanced techniques and best practices from experienced operators.

Q: How is your experience in this area?

My 18-year dedication to training young cardiologists across from Kashmir to Kanyakumari through various proctorships and mentorship initiatives has significantly contributed to the growth and success of CTO PCI in India. Sharing my knowledge and experiences at numerous national and international academic meetings has further solidified India's position in the global CTO PCI community. I have immense satisfaction as a doctor saving our patients.

Q: How is the success rate of CTO-PCI?

The success rate of CTO PCI in dedicated centres in India has now surpassed over 90%, thanks to the

combination of skilled operators and the availability of advanced hardware. Following dedicated algorithms crafted by experts in CTO-PCI from Japan, the US, Europe, China, and other regions has further enhanced the approach to these procedures.

Recently, a unified global consensus in CTO-PCI has integrated these diverse algorithms into a single framework, streamlining and improving procedural outcomes. I am a coauthor of the Global CTO PCI Algorithm.

Q: How is the journey and future of IJCTO?

The journey of CTO PCI in India has been marked by advancements in technology and training. Collaborations between Indian and Japanese experts have been remarkable. I am happy to play a major role in CACTO and its evolution into IJCTO. My training and mentorship have shaped the landscape of CTO PCI in India. The future of CTO PCI in India looks promising, with continuous advancements and a strong foundation of skilled operators and advanced tools.

Q: What's your mission as a heart super specialist in India?

I always believed in a humanitarian approach towards patients. Every patient, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds, should be cured and treated properly.

I strongly believe we can definitely see an India of robust hearts and healthy people. This calls for a 360 degree approach and sincere efforts from all - governments, people and medical and health institutions. We have enough talented doctors with commitment and advanced technologies to take care of our people. ●

‘Dr Surya Prakasa Rao Compassionate cardiologist’

Dr Priyen Kantilal Shah

Eminent Consulting Cardiologist, Care Hospitals, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

I have known Dr Surya Prasaka Rao for the last 24 years, right from my budding cardiologist stage to till now. Since those beginning days, what struck me most was his dedication to the profession and integrity,” said Dr Priyen Kantilal Shah, consultant cardiologist at Care Hospital, in Hyderabad.

“I saw Dr VSP spending long hours with patients, sometimes sitting with them in ambulances while treating them. His commitment to save a patient is total and unmatched. I am seeing the same zeal and interest which he had a couple of decades ago, this is quite rare,” said Dr Shah.

Dr Shah said that the medical facilities in India particularly in cardiology and thoracic surgery are on par with the best in the world. We are in no way inferior to the developed west on this front. But, what Dr Surya Prakasa was interested in was to find out what is the best for his patient.

“Dr VSP always sees what can be done to a patient, and what is the best for his future in terms of long term health. He assesses a patient’s overall health and prescribes for his overall wellbeing. He gives his patients detailed teaching,” said Dr Shah.

This approach of Dr VSP gives a patient not only confidence but also knowledge of his own health. Unfortunately, today most of the heart patients are from the younger population. This we have

been observing from 3 to 4 years before Covid and subsequently too, said Dr Shah.

Urbanization, modernization, increasing pollution levels and bad habits and narrow vision of the youth, disorganized lifestyle and ever growing stress levels - all are contributing to rise in heart ailments. Stress in any part of the body too might cause heart problems, Dr Shah pointed out.

Unlike in the past, most of the youth in their 30s and 40s are coming to doctors complaining of heart ailments, but are not ready to go for surgeries that may take long periods of hospitalizations. For the sake of such people, Dr Surya Prakasa Rao researched and found an Indo-Japanese CTO procedure method.

Under this procedure, which involves no surgery, no suture on the patient’s body and recovery from hospital bed time too less, compared to other prevailing methods, explained Dr Shah. Dr Surya Praka Rao is the founder member of the Indo-Japanese CTO Club (IJCTO). CTO means Chronic Total Occlusion.

Along with Dr VSP, Dr Shah, Dr Kaparathi and Dr Narayana Rao from Hyderabad too are the other



**Dr Priyen Kantilal Shah,
Eminent Consulting Cardiologist**

three colleagues of this IJCTO. Dr Surya Prakasa Rao was the prime force behind the recent successful organization of IJCTO in Hyderabad in the first week of June.

Many cardiologists are now veering to this methodology where a heart patient need not undergo surgery or stay in hospital for longer periods. Dr Shah says: “Whether at IJCTO or in his regular duties as a cardiologist, Dr Surya Prakasa Rao never bothered about commercials, he is totally compassionate about his profession”. ●

‘Dr Surya Prakasa cares for poor & rural patients’

PV Rama Chandra Rao,
Past President, Rotary Club, Kothagudem

“I know Dr Surya Prakasa Rao for the last 30 years since he first came as a doctor to Kothagudem, the headquarters of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) coal belt area,” said PV Rama Chandra Rao, social activist and former president of Rotary Club, Kothagudem.

Rao till date maintains close relations and friendship with Dr Surya Prakasa Rao and feels proud of the latter’s professional progress and excellence. Dr VSP first came to the SCCL as an MD (General Medicine). But after seeing the plight of the coal miners, mostly illiterate and poor, he was shocked,” said Rao.

That experience made Dr VSP to take a break and study MD cardiology and again came to the SCCL to serve the coal miners, recalled Rama Chandra Rao. The entire coal belt area that spanned from Bellampalli in Adilabad district to Manuguru and Kothagudem, had many heart patients in those days.

“Dr Surya Prakasa Rao was a meritorious student, but never hankered after money or pelf like other high profile doctors these days,” says Rao. Heart diseases were prevalent in the coal belt area for more than one reason. Poverty, bad habits and poor hygiene and pollution are some of them.

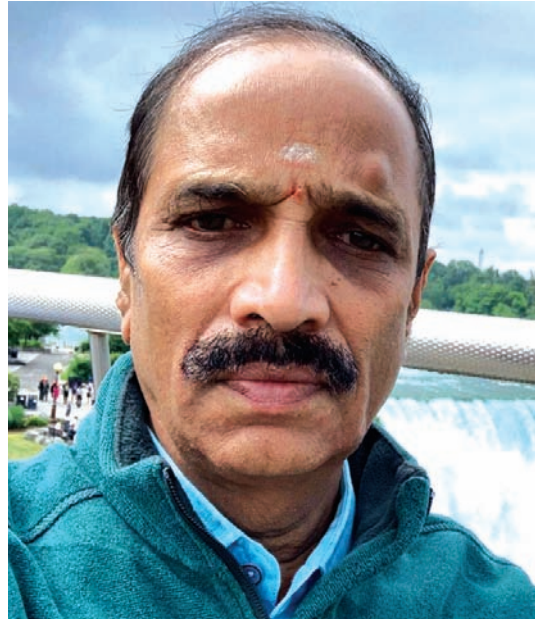
The coal miners were provided good care by the SCCL management, but they had some problems due to lack of specialist

healthcare. Also they needed modern facilities and good support systems like awareness. Dr Surya Prakasa Rao realized the need for proper guidance to them..

“Dr VSP went to Hyderabad to work in corporate hospitals mainly to use modern labs and facilities to test and treat the heart patients. I know from close quarters how he used to help some poor patients who cannot afford even treatment costs. He supported many through his salary money,” said Rao.

Some of the patients from the coal belt area used to have insurance cover for their medical treatment. Dr Surya Prakasa Rao used to take care of all such patients by arranging help in different ways, recalled Rama Chandra Rao. This is uncommon these days to expect from corporate cardiologists, added Rao.

What attracted Rama Chandra Rao in Dr VSP was the latter’s quest for knowledge and constant updating of latest medical research and innovations. “Dr never fails to learn a new thing in his field and goes after the best practices and innovations to serve the patients,” said Rao.



PV Rama Chandra Rao,
Past President, Rotary Club, Kothagudem

“One super specialist doctor who got Padma Shree award told me the other day that Dr Surya Prakasa Rao was not commercialized like many other cardiologists these days,” Rama Chandra Rao recalled. For Rao, Dr VSP is devoted to his professional duties.

Even after performing thousands of surgeries and procedures in the last three decades, Dr Surya Prakasa Rao is as humble as ever and down to earth. Dr VSP’s long list of patients include many rich and famous persons and their families, but he is always there to treat poor patients, said Rao. ●

A SUPER SPECIALIST INNOVATOR SAVIOR

**Dr VSP performed 40,000 heart interventions
with high success rate**

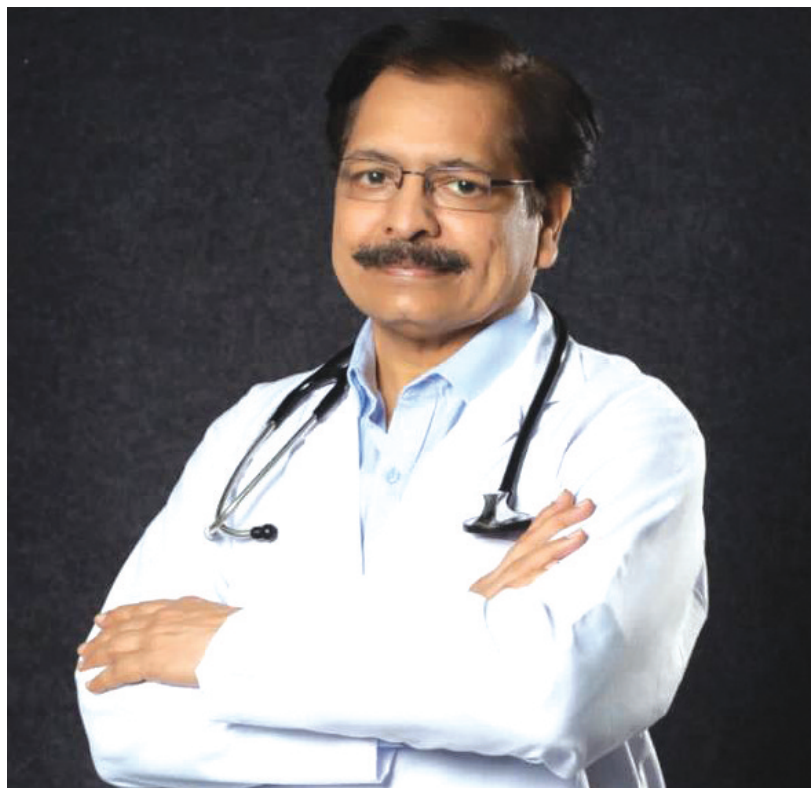
Dr Surya Prakasa Rao presided over 10th IJCTO international conference at Hotel Westin, Hyderabad from June 7 to 9. The conference focused on treating Chronic Total Occlusion (CTO) of Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) problems.

Renowned expert cardiologists from around the world have attended to contribute to scientific learning and knowledge transfer in CTO PCI with academic collaboration. Around 1,000 expert cardiologists from India and other countries, including Japan, the US, Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, attended.

Around 27% of deaths in India are caused by CAD, which can be fatal. This may be due to lifestyle choices such as eating unhealthy food, not moving enough, and smoking. Diabetes is one of the most important risk factors for heart attacks. Nearly 10 crore people in India suffer from Diabetes Mellitus.

The prevalence of Cardiovascular Diseases is 32% among Type II Diabetes patients. Diabetes increases the risk of Cardiovascular Diseases fourfold. Over time, CAD worsens, and arteries become totally blocked and hardened, resulting in Chronic Total Occlusion. This is usually treated with bypass surgery, which can be challenging.

Chronic Total Occlusions can be cleared with a special Japanese technique without bypass,



boasting a success rate of more than 90%. Neglecting early treatment may lead to heart complications and heart failure.

Dr Surya Prakasa Rao and his team have treated many patients with Chronic Total Occlusion using the Japanese Sutureless Technique with special hardware for many years. They also conduct workshops across India to train young cardiologists in this technique. This expertise brings hope to patients facing challenging conditions. As CAD causes many deaths every year, it poses a significant problem for hospitals as

well. Better choices and early intervention can protect our hearts. This academic conference aimed to find easier solutions by exchanging knowledge on complex Heart Diseases.

The conduct of the conference is one aspect of Dr Surya Prakasa Rao's keen interest in promoting India suitable medical procedures to treat heart patients with different socio-economic backgrounds, his expertise in dealing with patients and analyzing their conditions is another aspect. Dr VSP has adopted many novel techniques in

treating chronic heart block. His success rate in operations or procedure is at over 90 per cent. He pioneered radial interventions in India from 2004. Till now, he performed more than 40,000 radial interventions and over 10,000 angioplasties.

Dr. Rao is especially known and respected throughout the interior tribal coal belt agency areas of Bhadradi Kothagudem District (formerly Khammam District) where he frequently conducts medical camps. He follows up and adopts these remote areas suffering from heart diseases with extensive cardiac health camps and serves heart patients.

After gaining mastery in CTO PCI through collaboration with Japanese experts, Dr. Rao saw the need to spread awareness about this lesser-known novel technique, which greatly benefits both young and old people by avoiding bypass surgeries. He has devoted much time to educating the public through various programs. He has trained students and junior cardiologists in interventional cardiology, making CTO PCI a well-known treatment.

Dr. Rao is the Founder Member of IJCTO (Indo Japanese Chronic Total Occlusion Club), a premier academic program focused on treating chronic total occlusions-clearing 100% coronary artery blocks without' bypass surgery using a Suture-less Japanese Technique.

This was done in collaboration with Japanese experts. Many global experts in interventional cardiology are part of IJCTO academic programs, which focus on advanced patient care. IJCTO has collaborated globally with many academic forums like CCT Kobe, Japan, TOPIC Tokyo, CTO Club, Nagoya, Euro CTO Club, IMC LIVE, the Middle East, C3



Orlando, and SCAI in treating chronic total occlusions. Dr. Rao is the Founder Member and Course Director of CACTO (Complex Angioplasty and Chronic Total Occlusion). He has proctored many cardiologists in India and abroad in CTO interventions and complex angioplasties through numerous.

VSP Academy of Interventional Cardiology-CHIPS-CTO PCI

Dr Surya Prakasa Rao launched the VSP Academy of interventional Cardiology-CHIP-CTO-PCI, the first of its kind, to explore, interact and share knowledge of PCI.

He authored a book "RADIAL PEARLS - A Handbook on Tips and Techniques of Radial Interventions". He co authored the Global Consensus Expert Document - Guiding Principles for CTO PCI along with international experts. He is now working to design advanced catheters indigenously for cost-effective strategies to serve poor patients in India.

Dr Rao has numerous publications In high-impact journals, including JACC and peer reviews.. During the COVID-19

pandemic, Dr VSP performed many complex coronary interventions and treated numerous patients with heart disease. He visited many countries from Japan to the Middle East and held seminars, lectures and demos on the emerging heart disease trends and their treatments.

Dr Surya Prakasa Rao is the first Indian cardiologist to perform a complex live demo for Nagoya and CCT Kobe, Japan, for an academic event from Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, on June 15, 2018. He is the first Indian to perform an educational live demo for Middle Eastern countries' Jeddah on January 17, 2019. Dr. Rao is the first person to employ an orbital atherectomy device in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for the treatment of patients with dense calcium in their coronary arteries and at high risk of developing blockages.

Dr VSP is the first Indian CTO operator to use a special device called Stingray for treating CTOs. Dr. Rao performed a life-saving LM angioplasty on an 11-year-old boy for the first time in India. Dr. Rao performed LVAD on a 75-year-old patient, the second in Telangana. ●

Dr V Surya P NATIONAL - K KANYAK & ACROSS T



Prakasa Rao KASHMIR TO KUMARI THE GLOBE



Designer : J Ravikumar

Telangana's DOST Model for India

Prof R Limbadri,

**Chairman of Telangana State Council of Higher Education & Architect and
implementer of innovative & hassle-free admission process for degree colleges**



Bhaskar Tatikonda

DOST (Degree Online Services, Telangana) has become a role model for all other states in the country. This innovative and hassle-free online admission process has eliminated a lot of confusion and chaos that used to be there earlier. This student and college-friendly admission system has completed nine years and now entered its 10th.

Excel India spoke to Prof Limbadri at his TGCHE chambers on the occasion. Excerpts from the exclusive interview:

Q: Congratulations for steering DOST successfully for nine years and entering 10th year. Tell us about its origin and development.

The UGC in 2014-15 has brought in some reforms like Choice Based Credit System and RUSA, etc, to improve the higher education sector. The UGC also wanted a transparent and efficient online admission process in colleges. Until then, we have only a manual process of admissions. In this, every student used to go to



Prof R Limbadri

Chairman, Telangana State Council of Higher Education

different colleges and apply for different courses and combinations. At the time, I was the Registrar of Telangana University. The then officials involved me in a process to find out how best we can replace the manual admissions with online ones and make it beneficial to students.

Then I held a meeting with the college principals in Nizamabad district and discussed the need to

improve the admission system. But doubts were expressed over the online method. Still we went ahead and evolved a mechanism for online processes and introduced the same from 2016.

I came to Osmania University later but was closely associated with the online admission process at the State Council of Higher Education. In 2017, I came to the council as the Vice-Chairman. Since August 2017, I have been

associated with DOST (Degree Online Services, Telangana).

Q: What was the initial experience and response?

It was very good. We have consulted all the stakeholders in this process -- students, parents and principals. We have also utilized services of the Centre for Good Governance. Initially, some problems have come up. One by one, we sorted them out within no time.

In the course of time, we have asked the government degree colleges to set up a helpline to assist students in the admission process. Mobile numbers and Aadhaar were linked for applying online. We introduced a selfie-based face recognition method for applicants. WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Chat Box too were involved in the process.

Q: How was the students and parents feedback?

It was excellent. This DOST reduces a lot of manual work of the earlier system - where students used to visit every college and apply separately for each course. DOST has brought in trust and transparency into the system. A lot of physical strain has been avoided, saving a lot of time and money for students.

Trust and transparency are the two additional benefits of DOST. I know earlier there used to be a lot of recommendations for a seat in Nizam College, Hyderabad. Students from villages and without recommendations found it difficult to get a seat in such top colleges.

But, all that has gone. All seats are allotted in a transparent manner through an online system where there is no scope for manipulation. A student sitting at his home in a remote village can apply for a choicest course in a choicest college. Admission letters



Prof R Limbadri, Vice chairman Prof Venkat Ramana, Secretary Prof Sriram Venkatesh

are sent to the student through mobile and email. So easy is this.

Q: Any other states in India have this kind of system?

We are the first in our country. Even the UGC has appreciated our effort and the smooth functioning of DOST. This is a student-friendly process. With just Rs 200 of application fee, a student can apply for around 1,000 government and private degree colleges in Telangana.

This saved them a lot of money, travel and stress. On the other hand, we have instilled in them confidence that there are no manipulations in the allotment of seats. For example, Koti Women's College used to have students only from some informed sections of society. But, today, we have girls from all 33 districts of Telangana studying there. This is a remarkable change, made possible only because of DOST. Payment of fee too is allowed through online. This empowers students like anything. Colleges too find it convenient and a time saving process.

Q: What are the new improvements in DOST?

We have been safeguarding reservation protections including EWS to different categories of

students. Besides traditional BA, BCom, BSc, with existing combinations, we have been adding all new courses to DOST. Skill-oriented courses like BBA retail marketing, healthcare management are added.

This year, we have introduced courses like BA Policy and Governance, BCom Finance, BA History, Economics, Political Science and BSc Life Science (Honours) and Biomedical Sciences. In fact, we are responsive to new and changing requirements in higher education. For example, we have BBA e-Commerce operations.

The registration trends in DOST for 2023 are good. DOST-Aadhaar OTP registration was 82.13 per cent, Meeseva biometrics registration - 10.92 per cent and TAppFolio facial recognition for Board of Intermediate Education students - 6.95 per cent.

Q: How is the response from other states?

Many states are eager to implement this system. Officials of states, including Punjab and Maharashtra have visited us to study our DOST. Of course, we too are making necessary changes to the system as and when it is needed. Today, 2.5 lakh students are allotted seats through DOST. ●

RK Group @23

Vision for Innovation



SOMASEKHAR MULUGU

Starting any educational institution may not be difficult. But, sustaining it is. That too running a higher education institution in a town over 110 km away from

Hyderabad city is all the more difficult task. If the institution completes 23 years of existence and races towards silver jubilee in two years, we must appreciate all those who are involved with its running.

RK Educational Institutions Group from Kamareddy has done this remarkable achievement. That's the reason we are carrying a special feature on RK Educational Group here. Early 2000s were the days of beginning of opening of new opportunities for private educational institutions across rural areas.

Launching a degree college may not be that tough, but establishing and making a place in the area was not easy. RK Group has taken up that challenge and walked through a maze of challenges and proved to be a credible educational institution that won the support of parents, students and the staff.

Dr M Jaipal Reddy, 42, was a young educational entrepreneur when he took over

the group in 2007, which was in the budding stages. Over the years, he shaped the group that includes junior, degree and postgraduate colleges into a major educational hub in Telangana.

Education field in our country is treated as a service, but not as a business. But, the trappings of running it need all business calculations, given the costs involved with it. At the same time, it should not forego its service motto. This is a delicate task, Dr Jaipal Reddy and his team have walked through successfully.

From a modest degree college with 100 students and 6 full time faculty in 2002, RK Educational Society has travelled a long journey – where it is now of a group of 8 colleges, 8,000 intake and 250 teaching and 50 non-teaching staff. Its portfolio includes a school, a junior college and six degree and postgraduate colleges.

All the modern courses and combinations are introduced in these group colleges. Located on a commercial hub of Kamareddy town, that is fast developing into a city, RK Group of educational institutions today are known for complying with all regulatory norms, winning confidence of parents and the hearts of students and staff.

Read on..

'Quality & Innovation made RK GROUP No 1'

Dr M Jaipal Reddy, CEO
RK Group of Educational Institutions



SOMASEKHAR MULUGU

If RK Group of Educational Institutions are one of the top ranking it's because of relentless efforts and push by a committed team at the top. The group runs 6 Degree colleges, 6 Postgraduate colleges, 2 junior colleges and a school in Kamareddy and Hyderabad, with an intake of 8,000 students and 250 teaching and 50 non-teaching staff.

The group's CEO Dr M Jaipal Reddy, 42, is the face of the institution. He is now leading a team that includes experienced faculty and committed senior academic experts. The past 23 years growth path is only a part of Dr Jaipal's journey. His ambitious vision for the group holds a brighter future.

Excel India spoke to him at the RK Group's main campus in Kamaerddy on his journey and plans. Excerpts from the interview:

Q: How is this 23 years of journey for RK Group of educational institutions?

When we look back, it is a more satisfying and fruitful experience. But, this long and arduous journey is not without ups and downs, like in any other successful venture.



Let me tell you that we have faced each and every of these ups and downs with the same spirit and moved ahead.

When the RK Educational Society launched its first Degree college in Kamareddy 23 years ago, the situation was different. There were not many private colleges and the way of those few colleges too was traditional. Especially, in a rural area like Kamareddy, daring to go big was treated risky.

But, our approach right from

day one was different. We, a small group of committed educationists, wanted to give quality education to the students in and around Kamareddy. We wanted to introduce new standards and encourage innovation in our institutions.

Q: How is the growth in the group's colleges?

It's phenomenal. In 2002, we began with a single degree college with around 100 student intakes and

only 6 full-time and 4 part-time faculty. Right from the day one, this group is known for good standards in Kamareddy town, a major commercial hub on Nagpur-Hyderabad-Bangalore highway.

I took over as CEO from 2007 onwards and accelerated its growth with new standards and work ethos. Interestingly, some of the faculty who were with us at the beginning are still with us now too, for example, Naveen Kumar who teaches computer science and Saidaiah, who teaches mathematics.

This is a matter of pride. Most of the staff that joined us over the years are with us, with lower attrition rate, compared to other private colleges in our area. This won't happen unless we maintain some standards in our work culture. Now we have 8,000 student intake, with 250 teaching and 50 non-teaching staff.

Q: What are the standards and values that led to RK group's growth?

We sincerely tried to adhere to certain standards and values to achieve success in the long run. They include, quest for quality, freedom to faculty in guiding students to success, commitment to providing ultramodern facilities like labs, library etc.

Unlike many other colleges in rural areas of Telangana, we provided world class science labs, air-conditioned seminar halls, and auditoriums etc; You can find our classroom and furniture are always tidy. These small issues make a big difference in a college. Students feel like spending more time in colleges.

Q: What strategies have you followed to make your institutions grow top?

Sincerely complying with the norms set out by the authorities and hard-work are the only



strategies we followed over the years. No short-cuts to achieve the targets. For example, we always kept the interests of our students in our minds. We have introduced all the new and innovative courses offered by the Higher Education Council. We introduced as many as 22 new courses in our degree and postgraduate colleges. In 2018, we added two degree colleges, in 2020, we introduced hotel management and visual arts courses, in 2021 we added two junior colleges – one general and one vocational.

We are aware of the competition at every level and acted accordingly. Quality in teaching and preparing students to find good placement after studies, are the things we followed. Even in faculty recruitment, we ask our aspiring candidates to give demo classes to test their talent.

We encourage our faculty to pursue their higher studies like research etc; So that they can improve further, going by the present fast changing world and job market. Constant updating of their subject knowledge helps our faculty. In the long run, that benefits our students.

Q: In 2 years RK Group will celebrate the Silver Jubilee, what is your vision for that?

Today, we are above the average among other colleges in terms of results under the purview of Telangana University to which we are affiliated. Almost all our students - 99.5 per cent - get 10/10 ranks/marks. This is a high standard and we want to continue this in future too.

We want to reduce stress to both our students and faculty. We want to create more opportunities for students to get decent placement. In 2026, we will be celebrating our Silver Jubilee, and by the time we want to grow to an Autonomous Institution status. We want to add BSc Nutrition, Food technology and data science too.

Q: What are the major issues or goals before you now?

One major issue is the delay in getting tuition fee reimbursement from the state government. This is a problem for all private colleges in the state. We hope the government will realize the importance of solving this as early as possible. Another big goal is to grow the RK Group, one of the best in India. ●

'RK EDUCATIONAL GROUP ONE OF THE BEST IN TELANGANA'

Prof R Limbadri,

Chairman, Telangana State Council of Higher Education

RK Educational Group, based out of Kamareddy, is one of the best in Telangana, both in terms of quality and quantity. I am happy that the group's colleges are celebrating their 24rd anniversary this year and fast racing for silver jubilee by 2025-26. I had an opportunity to know and see their progress over the years in various capacities - at Telangana University and at the higher education council.

I like the group management because they are very willing to take every new course offered by the council. Many college managements are generally careful about introducing new courses for fear of acceptance from the students. But, the RK Group is ready to not only introduce the courses but also encourage students to pursue them.

We from the TSCHE constantly try to introduce relevant new courses from emerging areas of knowledge and technology to cater to both the students and the industry or job providers. Undoubtedly, it is a challenge to run new courses and successfully graduate students. From our side, we offer all help to the institutions on this front.

This approach on the part of educational institutions not just provides students an opportunity to go for new horizons of knowledge and acquire job skills, but also help our industry and the job market to get the talented



youth. At the higher education level, it is our duty to ensure job opportunities to our educated youth. RK Group basically caters to students from rural segments of Telangana. Setting up educational institutions in Hyderabad city and surroundings is easier for any management. But, doing the same in far flung districts is a difficult task and I appreciate those who come forward to do the job. I am also happy that RK Group's all colleges and institutions are doing well.

We from the council encourage more good private institutions committed to providing quality education to the rural youth and ensure under privileged students

access to higher education. Our effort is to increase the GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) of girls and other under privileged students in higher education.

There are some more good private educational institutions in Telangana and it is a matter of pride for us all that they are doing well over the last several years. The very fact that a good educational institution is not just surviving but also flourishing is testimony to its commitment to its responsibility to provide good education to students. My best wishes to the RK educational group's students, management and staff on the occasion of their 23rd anniversary. ●

RK Group committed to high standards & innovation



A Naveen Kumar
Dean Academics,
RK Group of educational
institutions

I am fortunate enough to be with the RK Group of Educational Institutions, Kamareddy right from their inception in 2002. I joined as a founding faculty in the computer sciences department and continue till date. It's heartening to see the growth journey of this group as it expanded in size and stature over the years.

In those early years of our college, RK Degree College, there were not many private degree colleges in Kamareddy town and surrounding areas. They were just beginning to come up here and there. Those limited number of colleges too were running only traditional courses of regular BA, B.Com and BSc.

But, RK began with an out of the box approach to these courses and started introducing new courses and combinations over the years. To start with, we offered four computer science courses in B.Com and BSc. This had drawn the attention of students in this region.

One thing that differentiated RK group from the managements of other private colleges was its way of involving the faculty in running of the institution. Greater freedom to faculty increased student teacher interaction and



that led to better results overall. Our strength almost doubled by the second year. Dr M Jaipal Reddy, our current CEO of RK Group, was in his 20s when he joined our college. Soon, he acquired a talent and style in taking the institutions to a higher scale over the years. He understood the need for quality education with quality facilities. He never compromised on expenditure on infrastructure.

As a result, we got the best of equipment and labs etc. Reddy also displayed a desire to make our institutions grow both in size and stature so that they would be among the best not only in Kamareddy but also in the entire Telangana. He has a vision for the future of our institutions.

Very soon, the RK group of colleges started attracting students from nearby areas like Yellareddy, Nizamabad, Toopran etc. We have students who come from around 40 km away.

The ratio of girls' enrolment too is very good at RK group. Overall, we have 50-60 percent of

girls' enrolment in our colleges. I have seen how the RK group has expanded from a single degree college 23 years ago to one school, two junior colleges, and 6 degree and PG colleges today. All this wouldn't be possible without integrity, dedication and commitment to maintaining high standards and facilities.

In the next two years, we will be celebrating our Silver Jubilee. By the time we intend to become a major educational group with a good quality of education in Telangana. Now we are also focusing on extra-curricular talents of our students like improving leadership qualities and personality development etc.

Last year, our student Mounika went to participate in an elocution event in front of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We want to encourage our students to excel in all fields of academics and outside too.

We want to encourage them in government jobs, civil services and state government groups exams too. ●

‘RK VALUES INNOVATION & FREEDOM’

Say former faculty & a senior student



Even after they leave the RK Group of educational institutions in pursuit of government jobs, most of the faculty cherishes their bonding with the colleges. This is not so common among the private educational institutions today. Excel India talked to some two former faculty members and a student.

A Prameela Reddy who was a faculty in zoology for about 11 years, from 2011 to 2022 has now joined the Telangana government's tribal welfare residential educational institutions society as

a junior lecturer. She also studied BEd besides MSc (Zoology).

Asked about her experience with RK Degree and PG College in Kamareddy, she said: "This is the best college not only in Kamareddy, but in the surrounding areas. RK Group not only focuses on classroom teaching and examinations for students' wellbeing. But also looks at a wider perspective of education".

"They respect traditional values which are most important to students nowadays. Here Indian culture and long held ethos are not only valued but also imparted to

the students. Faculty is well taken care of by the management. There's enough freedom for faculty in classrooms," said Prameela Reddy.

Sharing her experience as a lecturer at RK Group of institutions, she said: "Here we don't teach in a mechanical way. We take enough care to ensure every student gets along with all in the classroom in grasping the knowledge. We, the faculty, feel more at home as the atmosphere is congenial".

"We as faculty try to nurture certain values and inculcate



A Dattatri
Coordinator
RK Group



B Saideaiah
Academic
Principal
RK Degree &
PG College



**A Naveen
Kumar**
Dean Academics
RK Group



S Gangadhar
PG Principal
RK Degree &
PG College



**C Govardhan
Reddy**
Admin Principal
RK Degree &
PG College



**A Prameela
Reddy**
Former
Zoology
Faculty

knowledge that will be helpful to students not only in their studies here, but also guide them throughout their life," she said. A student passing out of a college degree is considered to be ready to face any situation in life.

Prameela Reddy credits the management with the success of the group's colleges for their devotion and value system. "What I found here is the management's commitment to discipline, hard work and punctuality. Unless these are there, no educational institution can grow," said Prameela.

G Santoshi

Santoshi, who was a member of faculty here in the beginning years from 2002 -2007, too complimented the RK group management's commitment to high standards in education and devotion to students. She taught BSc students here and now got a government job as Divisional Accounts Officer in the R&B department.

Sharing her experience at RK college, Santoshi said: "Here enough care is taken of the students and good guidance is given not only for their academic success, but also for their overall future prospects. They have the best faculty which is fully committed to teaching".

Santoshi recalled the friendly nature of the management towards the faculty. "They always listen to our problems and try to solve them, making us comfortable. They take individual care of students and faculty and staff' she said. Santoshi said special classes were arranged for students who were in need of them.

Because of the encouragement and comfortable atmosphere at the RK colleges, Sanoshi could focus her attention to study further and get as many as four government jobs. Even after leaving the college, she maintains rapport with her former colleagues and holds the institution in high esteem.

Mounika

Mounika, is presently a student of RK PG College, Kamareddy in her second year of MSW (Master of Social Work). She shot into prominence last year as she participated in an elocution event in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi.

Sharing her thoughts about the RK group of colleges, Mounika said: "Here students are given not only classroom knowledge, but also other life skills. Enough priority is given to extra-curricular activities". This is rare in the present day when total focus is only on getting more marks.

Mounika participated in the

Youth Parliament conducted for students from all over the country. On December 25, 2022, she spoke in the presence of PM Narendra Modi at an event held in Delhi and won appreciation. In this event, she represented the RK group of educational institutions, Kamareddy.

Mounika attributes her success at the national level to the motivation and support she got at the college. "Without their full support, I wouldn't have achieved this at all. The fact that our college faculty encouraged me in this elocution competition shows their commitment to overall excellence of students," said Mounika.

There are many more former faculty members and alumni who fondly recall their days at the RK colleges, long after they left the campus. This may be normal in great academic institutions with long years of existence. But, it is something special for a rural educational institution which is still growing.

That is the specialty of the RK Group of educational institutions. Most of their admissions are done based on the word of mouth from the alumni or former faculty who vouch for the quality education here. This is indeed a matter of pride for the RK group, which is preparing for the Silver Jubilee in 2026. ●

In Pics



Receiving ISO Certification



Dr M Jaipal Reddy, CEO, RK Group



Felicitation to RK CEO by MLA, MLC, Collector, SP & other officials



Industrial visit



Independence Day



Vinayaka Nimajjanam



Graduation day



A/c Computer lab



Republic Day

FM Nirmala's budget raises India to next level

The full-fledged Union Budget for the remaining eight months of 2024-25 financial year was presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reflected continuation of policy direction the last two terms of the Narendra Modi led BJP government has taken up. Of course, this is NDA government, rather than BJP's as allies, TDP and JDU play a big role for its stability.

Here I share the views of two economic analysts on the budget. The first one is Yezdi Nagporewalla and another Rajiv Memani. Both hailed the budget for its focus on strong fundamentals and long term vision to make India a developed country by 2047.

Budget 2024 has charted the course for transforming India into 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 in the 'Amrit Kaal' with sustained efforts and special focus areas on poor, women, youth and farmer and on nine priority areas: productivity and resilience in agriculture; employment & skilling; inclusive human resource development and social justice; manufacturing & services; urban development; energy security; infrastructure; innovation, research & development and next generation reforms says Nagporewalla. It places special emphasis on education, employment generation and skill development recognising these as crucial components for sustainable economic growth and social welfare.

The Finance Minister gave a significant impetus to the MSME sector to enable them to grow and



compete on the global stage. In a welcome move public sector banks have now been tasked to build in-house capabilities to assess the MSME credit based on their digital footprint in the economy, rather than traditional modes of assessing based on assets and turnover criteria. Realising the importance of innovation in economy, it is proposed that the government will come up with an economic policy framework that would steer next-generation reforms aimed at speeding up the economic expansion. The government also proposes to provide appropriate fiscal support for land reforms over the next three years.

Recognising the advancements in space sector, setting up of a VC fund of Rs 1,000 crore to specifically focus on space economy is another welcome move. Additionally, the government will also focus on the development of spiritual tourism as well as revival of cultural and scenic heritage which provides a boost to culture and identity of India along with providing the impetus to associated economic activities.

Empowering women has always been the focus of the government. This Budget announced several reforms for women ranging from establishing

women working hostels, allocating Rs 3 trillion for schemes benefitting women and encouraging states to reduce stamp duty for properties purchased by women.

On the tax front, the Budget saw a special focus on 'Ease of Doing Business' in India with direct tax announcements focusing on comprehensive review of Income Tax Act to make it concise and lucid, announcement of amnesty scheme 'Vivad Se Vishwas 2024', faster disposal of ongoing litigations, limited reopening of reassessments, additional incentives to IFSCs, reduced rate of corporate tax for foreign companies, withdrawal of 2 per cent equalisation levy, expanding the scope of safe harbour rules, simplification of foreign direct investment rules to ensure healthy foreign inflows in the country and simplification of outbound investment rules to promote INR usage etc.

In a significant move to augment the startup ecosystem, promote employment and investment opportunities, Angel tax is proposed to be abolished for all classes of investors.

Measures such as relaxing personal income taxes and increase in standard deduction under the new individual tax regime would enhance disposable income for mid salaried employees. However, increased rate of LTCG coupled with STT rate increase, taxation of buy back for recipients, removal of indexation benefit could potentially hurt sentiments of the earners in financial markets in the short term.

A few key tax expectations which still did not find mention in the Budget is the implementation of the OECD's BEPS 2.0 - Global Minimum Tax (or GLoBE rules) in India and timelines for its



enactment as well as extension of the sunset date for new manufacturing companies.

On the indirect tax front, Customs and GST reforms focus on simplification and rationalisation of rates to facilitate domestic manufacturing, promote exports, reduction in prices for cancer drugs, removal of duty inversions and reduction of disputes. The government has maintained a well-balanced stance on fiscal consolidation with fiscal deficit target reducing to 4.9 per cent from 5.1 per cent in the interim Budget. This is further expected to lower in the next Budget.

This Budget is laden with a multitude of policy changes and most of them in the positive direction to boost the economy. Its success will however hinge on the effective implementation and collaborative efforts of the central government, state government and the private sector. If executed well, this Budget has the potential to propel India towards a prosperous and equitable future.

"Turning attention to full year and beyond, we particularly focus on employment, skilling, MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) and the middle class," said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, clearly summing up the government's intent while presenting this year's Union

Budget, says Rajiv Memani.

For me, some of the themes stand out that will fortify the foundation for future economic growth. The most transformative proposal is the one aimed at job creation and skill development for the youth. The second relates to direct tax changes and the announcement of a comprehensive review of the Direct Taxes Code. The others are the government's thrust on domestic manufacturing and focus on expanding the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

With a median age of 28.4 years, it is a young India that would reinforce the country's competitive advantage and unleash the consumption potential of the economy. The Budget's innovative proposal for the top 500 companies to train 10 million youth through one-year internships over the next five years is particularly noteworthy.

Under the programme, the government will fund 90 per cent of the internship allowance — that is, over Rs 50,000 per intern — while the training costs and balance 10 per cent allowance can come from the corporate-social responsibility (CSR) funds of companies. This strategy will fulfil the dual objectives of providing businesses with skilled workforce and enhancing the employment rate. ●

ISTA celebrates centenary, led by Dr Keshavulu, from Telangana, India

It's a moment of pride for India, and Telangana in the history of seed industry and agriculture. ISTA (International Seed Testing Association) celebrated its centenary in Cambridge, the UK from July 1-5, under the leadership of Dr K Keshavulu, from Telangana, India. Dr Keshavulu is now the president of ISTA and holds the posts from 2022 to 2025. Seed Quality Assurance is the theme of the centenary celebrations.

The events were hosted by the Government of the UK, the Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and NIAB, Cambridge. The celebrations, held under the presidentship of Dr. K. Keshavulu from Telangana, India with the theme "A Century of Progress in Seed Quality Assurance", promoting quality seeds with global standards to ensure food security worldwide.

It is proud moment for Telangana as the ISTA centenary celebrations were led by Dr. K. Keshavulu, Director, Telangana State Seed Certification Authority.

Centenary Opening Ceremony: The ISTA centenary celebrations were inaugurated on July 1, 2024, by Mario Caccamo, Chief Executive of the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB), Cambridge, under the presidentship of Dr. K. Keshavulu and in the presence of Richard



McIntosh, Deputy Chief Plant Health Officer and Controller of Plant Variety Rights, Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and Rose Riby of the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC), Cambridge.

This significant event in ISTA's history was attended by more than 250 delegates from about 50 countries. Participants gathered to learn about ISTA's past and future strategies, gain knowledge on the latest developments, acquire new perspectives on seed quality assurance and advancements, and enhance professional growth through global networking and collaborative interactions.

Director General of FAO: 'World need to feed 10 billion people by 2050'

During the inaugural session, Dr. QU Dongyu, Director-General of

FAO, delivered an opening keynote address via pre-recorded speech for the ISTA centennial celebrations. In his speech, he highlighted that by 2050, the world's population is projected to reach nearly 10 billion, necessitating a 50 percent increase in food production from 2012 levels. Consequently, he emphasized the critical role of seeds in addressing global food insecurity.

Dr.Keshavulu: 'ISTA's efforts to provide food and nutritional security'

Dr. K. Keshavulu, President of ISTA, highlighted that ISTA has been at the forefront of global efforts to provide food and nutritional security for the ever-growing population. ISTA has supported sustainable development, celebrated



successful quality assurance for the international seed trade, and forged lasting bonds for Agricultural development.

Dr. Keshavulu mentioned that in 1924, the global population was about 2 billion and now it has crossed 8.5 billion, because of the improved quality assurance and high-quality seed access to farmers worldwide over the years, enabled to meet the food demand of ever-growing population. He stressed that, in order to meet the food and nutritional demand of future generations, we need to focus on diversification of crop varieties, under-utilised crops, legumes, cover crops, tree species while conserving soil health and environment.

He announced the ISTA's vision for second century as the "application of internationally agreed and validated methods for seed quality assurance to increase and sustain agricultural productivity, food security, and nutrition for all"

Issues discussed in the ISTA Centenary

On first day (July 01) discussed on "Seed quality assurance is a critical component of food and nutritional security" in the international seminar held conjunction with ISTA centenary celebrations.

Discussed on need for production and supply of quality seeds to farmers for ensuring food

and nutritional security for the future generations. • ISTA's strategy for next 100 years was discussed.

It was decided to support seed sector development, capacity building, awareness programmes for farmers of the developing African countries in collaboration with FAO for enhancing quality seed availability and access.

Discussed on seed storage and new technologies, innovative storage methods to maintain seed quality over time, such as controlled environments, desiccation, and cryopreservation.

Discussed on Phytosanitary and Seed Health aspects for promoting seed trade, evaluating seeds for diseases, pests, and pathogens to ensure better crop yields and reduce disease spread.

On July 2, ISTA Technical Committee meetings were held, that provided more insights into ISTA's activities over the past year in particular and past 100 years in general.

ISTA Ministerial Conference:

On July 4, a Ministerial Conference was held under the Chairmanship of Dr. Chikelu Mba, Deputy Director of FAO with the theme "The Role and Future of ISTA in Seed Testing and Quality Assurance in the Face of Climate Change".

Agriculture ministers and representatives from countries

including Argentina, France, India, Poland, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, New Zealand, Kenya, and the USA attended. The conference provided a global platform for ISTA member countries to discuss crucial subjects related to seed sector development, seed testing, quality assurance, and food security.

During the discussions, Dr. Chikelu Mba highlighted the importance of informal and farmer seed systems in delivering diversified crop varieties to local farming communities. He stressed the need to improve the quality of seeds in informal systems and promoted FAO's "Quality Declared Seed (QDS)" system as a quality control measure for these systems.

ISTA - ISF Global Forum:

ISTA and the International Seed Federation (ISF) held a joint global forum titled "Quality Seed Production for Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture." The forum, held in celebration of both organizations' centenary anniversaries, highlighted the importance of seed quality, crop diversity, and innovation in addressing global agricultural challenges.

Both ISTA and ISF shared their journeys and key developments over the past 100 years, reaffirming their commitment to ensuring farmers' access to high-quality seeds. ●

India pins hopes on athletes in Paris Olympics

India has sent 117 athletes to participate in 16 of the competition's 32 sports, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has said.



Ram Mohan Pulipati

Paris Olympics have just begun. Now all eyes on whether India can double digit medals this time. India will be looking to top its previous medal tally of seven as its best athletes compete in the Paris Olympics 2024. The games will kick off on Friday, with the opening ceremony being held along the scenic Seine river.

India has sent 117 athletes to participate in 16 of the competition's 32 sports, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has said. The contingent includes previous Olympic winners such as javelin champion Neeraj Chopra and boxer Lovlina Borgohain. Here, I share the views of BBC writer from Mumbai Cherylann Mollan on the Indian Olympic medal hopes in Paris this time.

PT Usha, one of India's legendary track and field athletes and president of the IOA, told Times of India newspaper that she was confident that India would have a "double digit medal tally" in the 2024 Olympics. She added that efforts had been made to provide competing athletes with critical support staff, including mental conditioning experts and personal coaches to aid their performance.



India will be looking to its top players to surpass its previous Olympic medal tally of one gold, two silver and four bronze won in Tokyo four years ago.

Here are some of the country's most promising players from the contingent:

Neeraj Chopra

India's most famous track-and-

field athlete, Neeraj Chopra will be hoping to defend his Olympic gold in men's javelin throw from Tokyo 2020. Chopra has performed well in recent competitions, but could face a tough fight from Germany's Max Dehning who, in February, became the youngest javelin thrower to breach 90m. Chopra's best throw in Tokyo was 87.58m, while his overall best is 89.94m.



Nikhat Zareen

The two-time World Champion in boxing will be making her Olympic debut this year. Zareen, who will be competing in the 50kg category, is in great form and sports experts say a medal in Paris is well within her reach. She will undoubtedly be looking to step out of ace boxer Mary Kom's shadow, who has reigned over the sport and made history in 2012 by becoming the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal in boxing. Zareen will be accompanied by Lovlina Borgohain, who will be competing in the 75kg category. Borgohain, who had won bronze in Tokyo, has had a meteoric rise in the sport and her fans hope her upward trajectory continues in this Olympics.

Mirabai Chanu

Chanu clinched a silver in women's weightlifting in Tokyo and she will be looking to up her medal tally in Paris. But she has had a rough couple of months after battling a hip injury that made her lose crucial time needed for training. But with a personal best of 207kg (88kg in snatch and 119kg in clean and jerk) Chanu might just be able to give tough competition to rivals Hou Zhihui from China and Jourdan Delacruz from the US.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty

The duo are India's most promising badminton players in the competition. They currently have a World No 3 ranking in men's doubles, are in great form and have won medals in important tournaments like the Asian Games, Asian Championships and the World Championships. There is also PV Sindhu, who already has an Olympic medal in her kitty and will be looking to up her wins in the women's singles match.

The men's hockey team

In 2020, the Indian team made history by winning an Olympic medal after 40 years. The team will be looking to better their win this year or at least repeat it. Though their performance in recent pro league matches has been lacklustre, fans hope they will put on a better show at the Olympics.

Sift Kaur Samra

In recent years, India has done well in shooting at the Olympics and all eyes will be on the contingent to bring home a medal or two. Samra is a promising young face from the lot, having set a new world record in the recent Asian Games by bagging 469.6 points to win the gold medal in women's



50m rifle three positions - which involves shooting in the kneeling, prone and standing positions.

Antim Panghal

India has performed well in wrestling at the Olympics, having won seven medals in the sport so far. But last year, Indian wrestling was rocked by a controversy involving sexual harassment allegations against its federation's chief, which saw months-long protests by top wrestlers.

Two-time Olympian Vinesh Phogat, who was the face of the protests, will be looking to use her resilience and fortitude to bag a medal in Paris. But Antim Panghal, who qualified before Phogat for the Olympics, is arguably in better shape and has been on a winning spree in recent international competitions.

Some other notable players from this year's contingent include steeplechaser Avinash Sable, Jyothi Yarraji - who is India's first ever participant in women's 100m hurdles - and the men's relay team who put up impressive performances in Tokyo and the World Championships.

Winning as many medals as possible is important to India as we bid for 2036 Olympics to host in our country. ●



Best Wishes

To

Sri A Revanth Reddy garu



on becoming

Chief Minister of
Telangana



RK GROUP OF INSTITUTIONS

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