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BESCOM puts ASD into action

Kiranmai Kagadas

BENGALURU: Under the Gruha Jyothi Yojana, the interest on the security deposit is credited to the account of customers who receive zero bills. This interest will be adjusted against future electricity charges once the consumer gets a net bill or non zero bill, said Suraj, (name changed) manager of Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM) office.

BESCOM has implemented The Additional Security Deposit (ASD) system to manage electricity consumption for its customers effectively based on the annual average electricity consumption.

Speaking to The Beacon, Suraj said, "The ASD of BESCOM is determined based on the electricity demand of new customers. It is not a tax or extra charge. It is calculated based on the customer's annual average electricity consumption."

"At the beginning of the next fiscal year, we examine the average consumption from the previous year. If the average is higher than the demand, the customer will be asked for an extra security deposit; if the average is lower than the demand, the security deposit will be refunded," said Suraj.

The Assistant Executive Engineer (AEEs) is responsible for the respective subdivisions to notify the customers about the additional security deposit. The newly determined security deposit can be paid through BESCOM official website or through BESCOM Mitra mobile app, he added.

Union Budget FY 2024-25 strengthens 'Defence'

Sinchan Saha

BENGALURU: The Defence received the highest budget allocation, constituting nearly 13% of the central government's overall budgeted expenditure. The Union Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25 allocated Rs 4.54 lakh crores for this sector.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government introduced its first Union Budget under Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday, 23 July. In February, the Interim Budget allocated Rs 6.22 lakh crore for FY 2025, which was slightly lower than FY 2024 revised estimate. This allocation still remains the highest among other ministries.

India's agricultural ministry received Rs 1.52 lakh crore, said Financial Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting her seventh



Nirmala Sitharaman, the Finance Minister

economictimes.com

consecutive Budget. FM announced her new plan for agricultural upgrade. She unveiled the release of 109 high-yielding and climate resilient varieties of 32 fields and cultivation crops in this financial year.

The agriculture allocation is approximately 26% more as compared to last year's

Rs 1.25 lakh crore. "In the next 2 years, 1 crore farmers will be initiated into natural farming supported by certification and branding," the FM said.

Under the third term of the Union Budget of the Modi-led government, the standard deduction limit has been increased to Rs

75,000. This would provide more money for the salaried class. Additionally, the FM proposed raising the long-term capital gains tax from 10% to 12.5% in the Budget for 2024-25.

The tax rate structure is to be revised, the FM announced. For zero to three lakh rupees, tax rate is

zero. For three to seven lakh rupees, it is five percent. While seven to 10 lakhs is under 10% slab; Rs 10 lakh to Rs 12 lakh is 15%; For Rs 12 lakh to Rs 15 lakh is 20% and for Rs 15 lakh and higher is 30%.

FM Sitharaman allocated ₹1.48 lakh crore focusing on employment, skilling, Micro Small Medium Enterprises and the middle class. This was dedicated to the education, employment and skilling sector. With a need to focus on the poor, women, youth and farmers, the Minister said, the government has extended the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana for five years which is benefiting 80 crore people of the country.

Further, the Budget also allocates Rs 2 lakh crores for job creation, 10 lakh crore for urban housing and Rs 90, 958.63 crore (increased 12.96% from the interim budget) for healthcare.

Re-NEET refusal by the SC fuels students' outrage

Aatreji Bose

Nation-wide student agitation movements kindled over the alleged systemic misconduct of the national medical entrance test by the National Testing Agency (NTA), involving unjustified grace marks and distribution of incorrect question papers.

On July 23, All India Students Association (AISA) led a march to the Vidhan Sabha demanding re-conduct of NEET, resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, and scrapping of NTA. Tuesday onwards, the Supreme Court continued hearing of over 40



Students march to the Bihar Vidhan Sabha Special Arrangement

pleas on irregularities related to NEET-UG 2024, and has passed an order to not conduct as it "can't conclude sanctity breached." Several student bodies have announced a parliamentary march in New Delhi on August 9.

Speaking to The Beacon,

Shairik S, an AISA activist and one of the organisers, said, "The whole idea of one central agency for an all India merit test is a fundamentally flawed idea in itself, and it's strengthened by the Nation Education Policy. Corruption appears to run deep in the NTA, it can't be waived

off as innocent mistakes made by an agency trying to do its best." The immediate reason for the dissent is the mishandling of NEET by NTA, and thousands of students' careers being jeopardised through its actions, he added.

Shairik mentioned that AISA is presenting facts on the paper leaks in specific states, and the march in Bihar brings up issues of state level importance while the parliamentary one puts forward demands of pan-India relevance. Collectively we have to ensure that education doesn't become a commodity or service for the rich, only then can we truly progress as a society, he stated.

Not just another marriage comedy

Kessiah Joseph

Nagendran's "Honeymoons", featuring Malayalam actor Suraj Venjaramoodu, is now streaming on Disney Plus Hotstar since July 19, and it is the fourth Malayalam web series on the platform.

The plot follows Nagendran, an unemployed youth who dreams of moving abroad to gain societal approval. His unorthodox method of marrying multiple women to gather dowries creates a storyline filled with humor and interesting twists. Venjaramoodu delivers a compelling performance as Nagendran, supported by an impressive cast. The series is accessible to a broad audience, available in multiple languages. However, the idea of Nagendran's method of trapping vulnerable women into marriage is repetitive.

The series is redeemed by its changing locations across Kerala, from backwaters to highlands. Crafted by Nithin Renji Panicker, who also wrote, directed, and produced it, "Nagendran's Honeymoons" features cinematography by Nikhil S. Praveen and music by Ranjin Raj. Mansoor's editing keeps the narrative crisp. This series is a delightful blend of humor, drama, and unique storytelling, making it a must-watch.

Opposition confronts triple challenges

Utsav Pradhan

BENGALURU: The three primary challenges for the opposition in defeating the BJP are the party's strategic adaptability, the internal disjunctions within Congress, and the fragile cohesion of the INDIA Alliance, said Yogendra Yadav, a renowned political and social activist.

On Monday, Bangalore International Centre (BIC) organised a discussion titled "Mandate 2024 and the Future of Our Republic" where speakers Yogendra Yadav, Dr. Vasu HV, and journalist Bukhari



The panellists at BIC

Utsav Pradhan

Ahmed Sayeed, delved into the implications of the 2024 Lok Sabha election results. Stressing on the need for sustained electoral defeats for the BJP, Yadav said that grassroots movements, and a cultural and ideological battle is crucial to reclaim the republic.

He emphasised that the BJP's ability to continuously evolve its strategies makes it a formidable opponent.

Citing a disjunction between Rahul Gandhi's vision and the party's grassroots, he said that there are significant internal conflicts within Congress.

Kerala faces major data breach

Sneha Thomas

Data breaches are often a result of negligence and are becoming increasingly common, and in many of these cases, even the higher officials are involved, said K Shinoj, a Cyber Intelligence Officer.

Kerala Police Cyberdome, in an investigation on Monday, found that personal information has been leaked from the websites of seven central government organizations and the Kerala Public Service Commission (PSC), resulting in a data breach of documents and

information that could affect internal security.

The growing instances of malware attacks and cyber threats has made cyber security for Kerala. "Consistent cases in recent years highlight the mishandling of sensitive information and employee negligence to be the major causes of these breaches," said Shinoj.

Data of around 65 lakh candidates have been leaked from PSC alone. This poses a high risk in the misuse of candidate photos, Aadhaar documents, fingerprints etc.