

Top CSR Spenders Likely to Lead PM's Internship Scheme

Ministry of corporate affairs in talks with stakeholders to roll out the scheme within a month; state-run banks may also be asked to join

Banikinkar Pattanayak

New Delhi: Top corporate social responsibility spenders such as Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, ONGC, Infosys and NTPC will get priority as the government prepares to launch the PM's Internship scheme within a month, people aware of the development told ET.

The top 500 companies to offer internships to 10 million youths under the scheme could be chosen based on their average annual spending on CSR obligations over three years through 2022-23, they said.

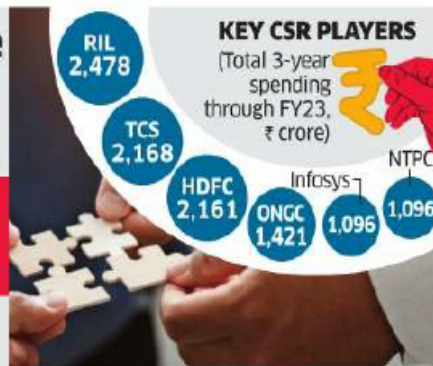
"Industry players had given the suggestion to choose the top 500 companies on the basis of their CSR spending, and the govern-

At a Glance

Scheme roll-out likely in a month | A new portal to be launched

Absorption capacity of firms to be assessed

MCA steps up consultations



Source: MCA

ment has accepted it," one of the sources said. "Additional criteria are also being finalised."

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), which is spearheading this initiative, is in talks with

stakeholders to roll out this scheme within a month, the source said.

The higher the CSR spending, the larger could be the intake of interns for companies, they said.

On an average, each company would be expected to accommodate 4,000 interns a year for five years under the scheme where the government will bear most of the cost. The current employee strength of large companies would be evaluated for their absorption capacity, ET has learnt.

The government could ask state-run banks, which are not formally categorised as companies as they are not governed by the Companies Act, to join this scheme as well, people cited above said.

Given that the adoption of the scheme will be voluntary, the MCA is engaged in talks with various stakeholders to persuade large companies to do their bit for this programme, they said.

"PSUs (public-sector units) will have to play a greater role if some

private companies back out or don't show much interest," one of the sources said. "Of course, a large number of private companies seem to be interested as of

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now," the person added.

A new portal will be launched to implement the scheme. Internship aspirants can apply directly to the companies through this portal, sources said.

Each selected intern will get a monthly allowance of ₹5,000 for one year, on top of a one-time aid of ₹6,000. The government would bear ₹54,000 towards monthly allowance and the one-time aid – spend-

ing ₹60,000 for each intern. Participating companies would pay for the training cost and 10% of the monthly allowance (amounting to ₹6,000 for each candidate) from their CSR funds.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in the full budget for 2024-25 presented in July, had announced the scheme. "They (interns) will gain exposure for 12 months to real-life business environments, varied professions and employment opportunities," she had said.

Unemployed youth aged 21 to 24 with no income-tax payee in the family and without education in elite institutions like the IITs and IIMs would be among those eligible for the scheme. The scheme is focused on youth from mainly poor and lower middle-class households.