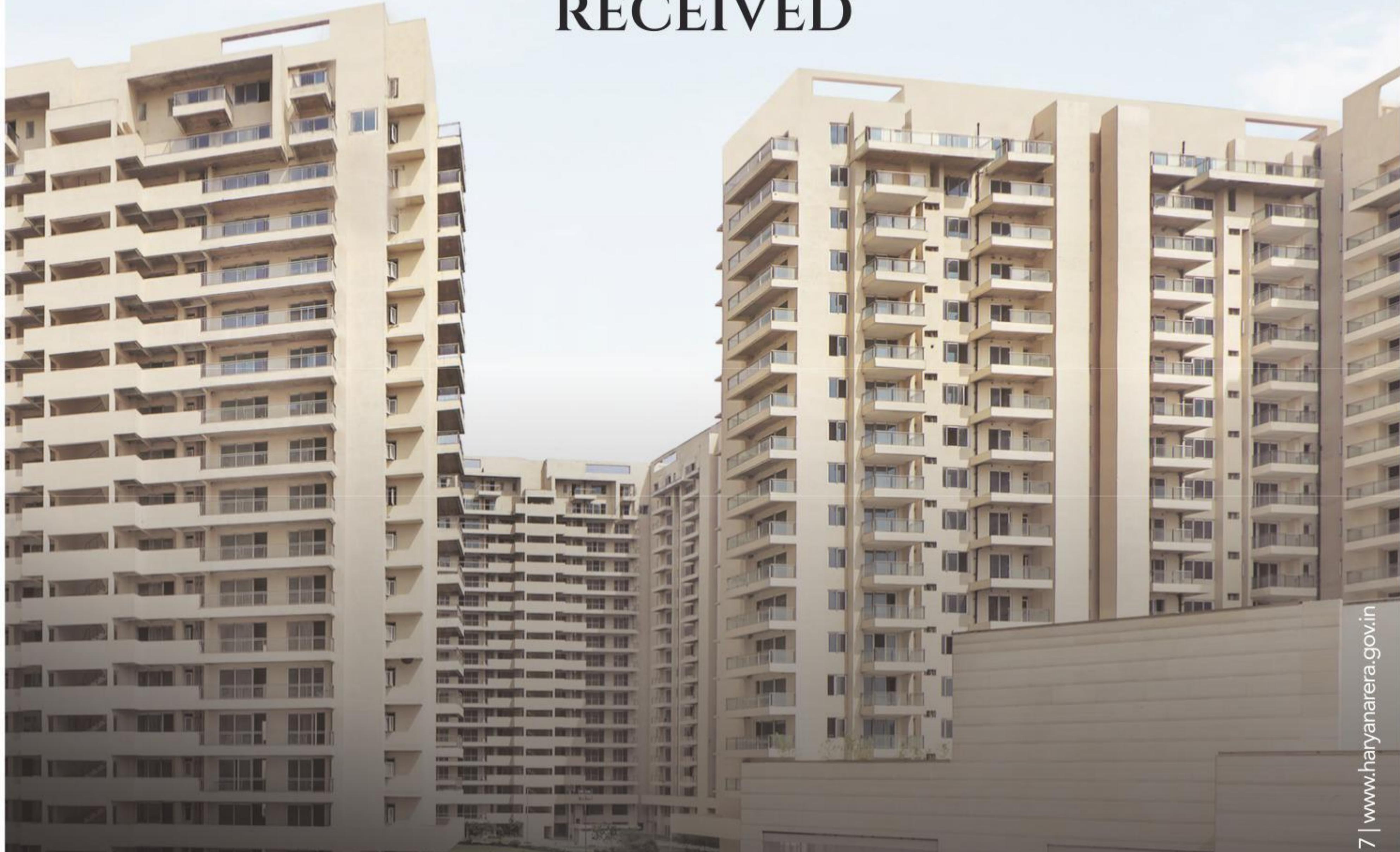




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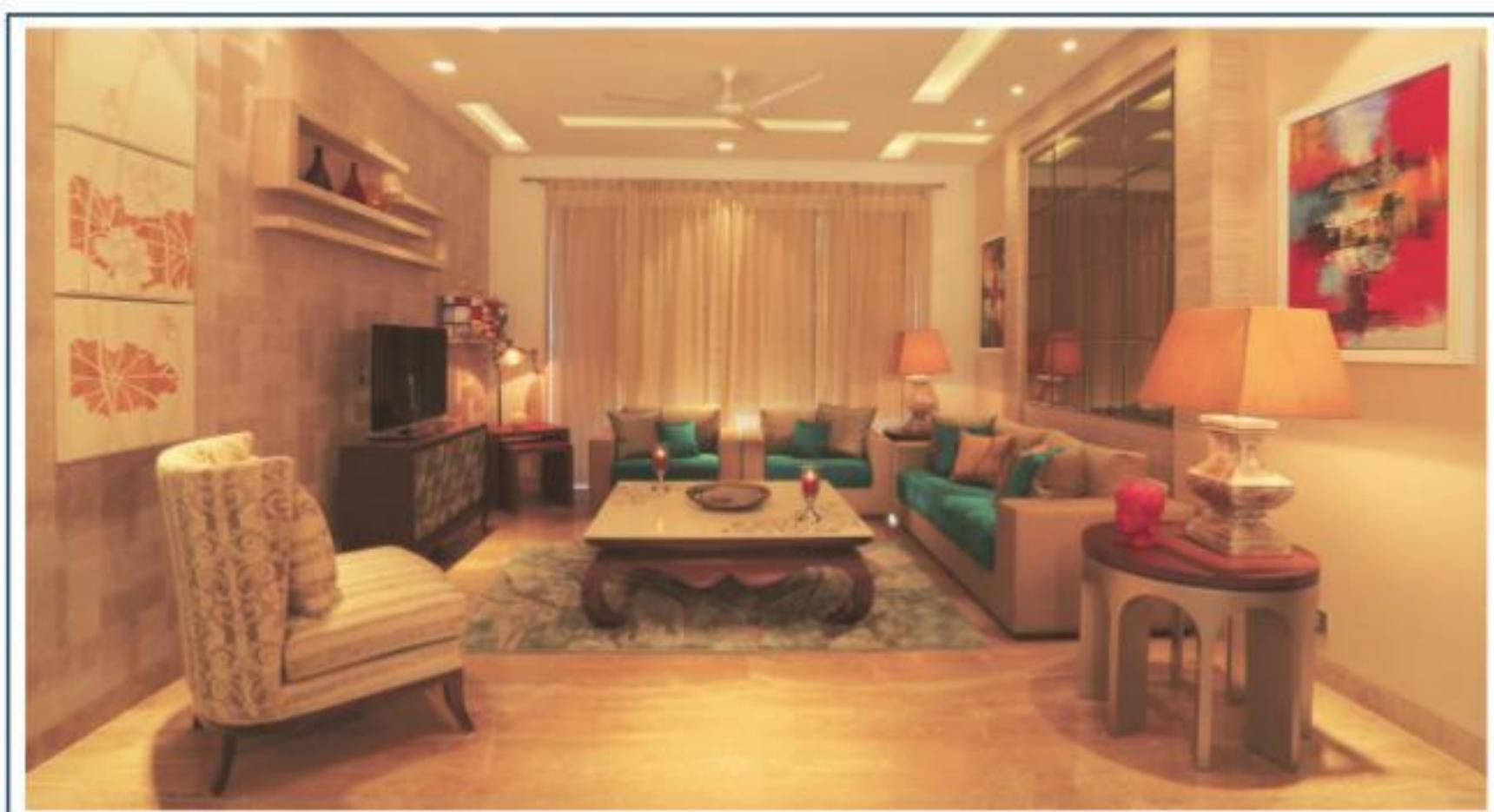
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# Interim Budget: No poll vault, measured step looking ahead

FM signals tapering of Govt spending, wants private sector to step up

ANIL SASI & P VAIDYANATHANIYER  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

IT WAS an interim Budget and Lok Sabha elections are round the corner, but Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stayed clear of any big populist announcements; to the contrary, she signalled the beginning of a slow tapering of government heavy-lifting of the economy. Not only did she pare down the growth in expenditure by a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



Parting shot: White paper on economy under UPA

AANCHAL MAGAZINE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

IF THE Interim Budget in 2019 was all about relief to salaried individuals, farmers and unorganised workers, the one in 2024, in stark contrast, was about sticking to fiscal prudence. But 10

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

years in power later, the BJP's political framing of the economy will be a "white paper" that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has promised in the Interim Budget to show what it was pre-2014, and the "step-by-step mending" this government had to do.

Why India Inc isn't taking the investment baton from FM

SUKALP SHARMA & HITESH VYAS  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

NOTWITHSTANDING THE government's seemingly upbeat expectations from India Inc, a few concerns continue to cloud the outlook for companies which are waiting and watching before they decide to invest and expand capacity.

Excess capacity, high interest rates, and impending elections, are key reasons why new

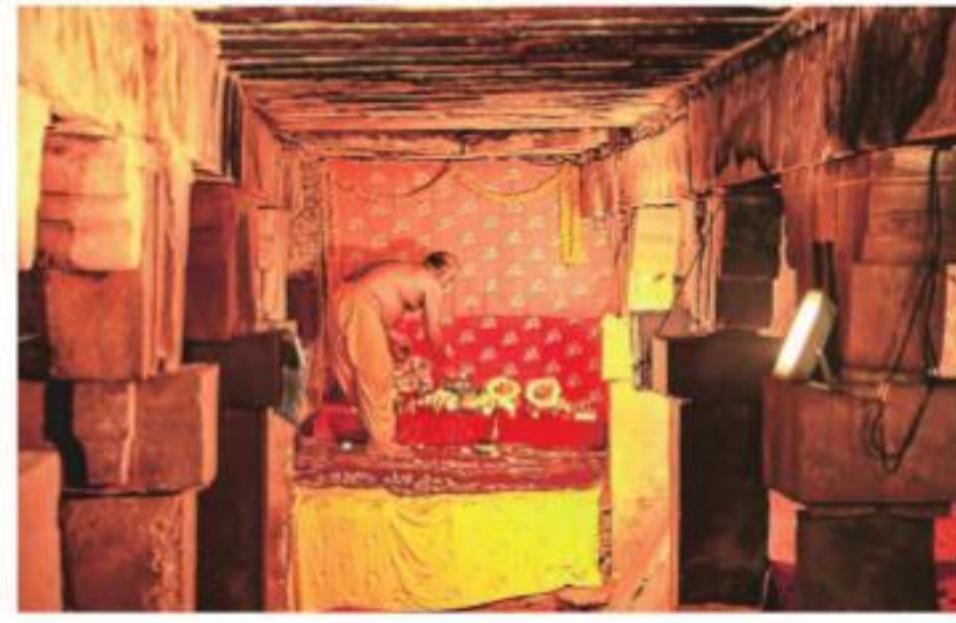
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INTERIM BUDGET



FULL COVERAGE  
PAGES 6-13

**Gyanvapi: Puja starts in cellar, SC sends mosque panel to HC**



A priest performs puja in the southern cellar of the Gyanvapi mosque complex in Varanasi on Wednesday night. PTI

night and continued in intervals Thursday. In the mosque above, namaz continued to be offered during the day.

There was heavy police presence in the area around the mosque complex which is adjacent to the Kashi Vishwanath temple. Officers monitored security arrangements and the flow of people in and out of the two premises. District Magistrate S Rajalingam, who was made receiver of the southern cellar by the district court,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman before presenting the Union Budget on Thursday. Tashi Tobgyal

Uncertainty in Jharkhand ends, Champai Soren is now CM-designate



Champai Soren arrives at Raj Bhavan to stake claim. PTI

ABHISHEK ANGAD  
RANCHI, FEBRUARY 1

JHARKHAND TRANSPORT Minister and JMM leader Champai Soren was appointed Chief Minister-designate by Governor C P Radhakrishnan late Thursday night, a little over 24 hours after Hemant Soren resigned from the post.

The development capped a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPRESS NETWORK

U.S. CLEARS SALE OF 31 MQ-9B ARMED DRONES TO INDIA P 5

The Indian EXPRESS ADDA

PRASHANT KISHOR AT ADDA TODAY P 5

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## AMID RBI ACTION ON PPBL

## Paytm to move nodal accounts to other banks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 1

HIT BY THE Reserve Bank's decision to terminate the nodal accounts of Paytm after February 29, One97 Communications Ltd (OCL) — which owns Paytm — on Thursday indicated that the company will stop its dependency on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd and its nodal accounts and QR codes will be moved to other banks.

Paytm shares fell 20 per cent to Rs 608.80 on Thursday amid worries that the RBI action will disrupt the services of the company.

OCL and PPSL are already in the process of moving nodal accounts to other banks and marketing business services are not affected due to these directions, OCL Chairman and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said in a conference call.

"OCL already works with various banks and Paytm Payments Bank was one of the key banks. From here on, we are clear we will work with various other banks and not PPBL," he said.

"In offline versions, where you see our All-in-one QR, powered by Paytm Payments Bank... now that QR will need to be changed to any other sponsored bank. This will be a large exercise, the new acquisition will start in a week or two," Paytm President and COO Bhavesh Gupta said.

Nodal account is a special purpose account created for receiving money from participating banks and remitting to specific merchants. The nodal account acts as a temporary vault to store and distribute money to relevant parties.

The RBI had prescribed a nodal account in 2009 in order to safeguard interests of the customers and ensure that pay-

ments made by them using electronic modes are duly accounted for. As per RBI mandate, the intermediaries receiving online payments need to collect the money in a nodal account, payments to the seller happen from this account without any delay.

In a big blow to Paytm's operations, the RBI on Wednesday barred Paytm Payments Bank from accepting deposits or top-ups in any of its key products — customer accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets, FASTags and National Common Mobility Card (NCMC), among others — after February 29 in the wake of "persistent non-compliance and material supervisory concerns".

"This is an important moment for all of us, we have seen the update from the RBI. The important thing is that we have been given directions and we are taking immediate steps to comply," Sharma said.

Depending on the nature of the resolution, the company expects the RBI action to have a worst-case impact of Rs 300 crore to 500 crore on its annual EBITDA (earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation) going forward.

"Two years ago, embargo was placed on on-boarding new customers; we had already started to work with banks and we will continue to decline and decrease dependency on PPBL," he said. "...This is more of a speed bump, but we believe in partnership of the banks and we will be able to see to the same in the next few days," he said. "There are no details sent to us (Paytm) separately by the RBI. The key word here is that this is a discussion between Paytm Payments Bank and the central bank."

"With respect to operations, going forward, we will work with large banks who also provide these services to other consumer companies," Sharma said.

## Vacancies mounting, secretary-level rejig at Centre likely soon

JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE CENTRAL government is likely to effect a significant bureaucratic reshuffle on a dozen posts at the secretary level across ministries in the coming days, sources said.

The exercise has been initiated owing to vacancies on at least six significant secretary-level posts, including health and family welfare and women and child development ministries, and superannuation of several senior IAS officers across ministries in the coming months, said the sources.

Given the sensitive and significant nature of the posts lying vacant or soon to be vacated, the sources said, the Centre is likely to order the transfers "very soon".

For instance, Gyanesh Kumar, a 1988-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre, posted as secretary in the Ministry of Cooperation is superannuating on January 31 and three senior IAS officers are scheduled to retire at the end of the next month, said the sources.

Secretary (Labour and Employment), Arti Ahuja, an Odisha-cadre IAS officer of the

1990 batch, Director General of the National Mission for Clean Ganga G Ashok Kumar, a Telangana-cadre officer of the 1991 batch, and Secretary (Women and Child Development) Indevar Pandey, a West Bengal-cadre IAS officer of the 1988 batch, are scheduled to superannuate by the end of February.

Leaving another significant post vacant, Pandey was, on Wednesday evening, appointed a technical member in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal for a period of four years.

Similarly, Rohit K Singh, a Rajasthan-cadre IAS officer of the 1989 batch, posted as secretary in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, is retiring in March.

The post of secretary in the Ministry of Health has been lying vacant since the appointment of 1991-batch IAS officer Sudhanshu Pant as the Rajasthan chief secretary on December 31, 2023.

Secretary-level posts are waiting to be filled in the departments of border management, defence production, ex-servicemen welfare and pension and pensioners welfare as well. Also vacant is the post of chairman of the Inland Waterways Authority of India.

## Both sides aware of traditional grazing areas: MEA after shepherd video

New Delhi: Days after a video emerged of some Indian sheepherds being confronted by Chinese soldiers near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday said the two sides are aware of traditional grazing areas and any incident of friction is dealt with under existing mechanisms. The sheepherds were reportedly stopped by Chinese soldiers in an area south of Chushul in eastern Ladakh last month. "The two sides are aware of the traditional grazing areas in the border areas. Any incident of friction is dealt with traditional mechanisms as appropriate," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Thursday. ENS

Three years after Myanmar coup: India calls for full cessation of violence

New Delhi: As Myanmar marked three years of military coup, India on Thursday called for complete cessation of violence in the country and its transition towards inclusive federal democracy.

The Ministry of External Affairs' official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "We are concerned over the deteriorating situation in Myanmar which has direct implications for us."

"As a neighbouring country and friend of Myanmar, India has long been advocating for complete cessation of violence and Myanmar's transition towards inclusive federal democracy," he said, while responding to questions on Myanmar. ENS

The delay had provoked a

## FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON  
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

## Interim Budget: No poll vault, measured step looking ahead

percentage point to 6% in 2024-25, she also told the markets the government would borrow less, so that the private sector can get the required credit at lower interest rates.

Presenting her sixth straight Budget, Sitharaman said the government had overcome every challenge of the pre-2014 era and placed India on a resolute path of sustained high growth. She sounded certain the BJP would return to power in 2024. "In the full Budget in July, our Government will present a detailed roadmap for our pursuit of 'Viksit Bharat,'" she said.

While Sitharaman did not announce any big-ticket welfare programme, she said the government will launch a scheme for the middle class "living in rented houses, or slums, or chawls and unautho-

rised colonies" to buy or build their own houses. Depending on the scale of the scheme, it has the potential to give a fillip to the construction sector, which not only provides jobs, but boosts domestic demand for capital goods, steel, cement, etc.

The Finance Minister expects the nominal GDP growth rate to be 10.5% (Rs 3.27 lakh crore or \$3.94 trillion assuming 1 USD = Rs 83, in absolute terms) in 2024-25. Even if retail inflation is assumed to be 4%, this would mean a real GDP growth rate of 6.5% next year compared with 7.3% in 2023-24. In its review of the economy earlier this week, the Finance Ministry had expected the economy to clock at least 7% growth over the next few years.

After the Budget presentation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi

said, "This Budget will empower all pillars of developed India — the youth, the poor, women, and farmers. It carries the guarantee of strengthening the foundation of Viksit Bharat by 2047." Given the fast population growth and demographic changes, the Finance Minister said a high-powered committee will be formed for stakeholder consultations, and then make recommendations towards achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat.

Given that spending would slow down in the months after the Model Code of Conduct kicks in, Sitharaman has snipped the fund allocation for 2023-24 across several ministries, which helped her cut the fiscal deficit to 5.8% of GDP in the revised estimate, which is 10 basis points lower than the budget estimate. For the next fi-

nancial year 2024-25 too, she has estimated the fiscal deficit to drop further to 5.1% of GDP, which means lower government borrowings.

While Sitharaman has allocated Rs 11,111 crore (3.4% of GDP), a 17% higher outlay for capital expenditure, or spending that is directed towards creating productive assets, it is lower than the 28% increase she had provided in 2023-24. But this probably comes from confidence that boardrooms in India Inc will now start clearing investment plans. In fact, projecting lower borrowing in 2024-25, she said, "Now that the private investments are happening at scale, the lower borrowings by the Central government will facilitate larger availability of credit for the private sector." Market borrowings are estimated to almost Rs

50,000 crore lower in the next financial year.

The Budget did not make any changes in tax rates, but offered a resolution scheme that effectively will lead to the withdrawal of outstanding direct tax demands of up to Rs 25,000 up to 2009-10, and up to Rs 10,000 for financial years 2010-11 to 2014-15, because of which refunds to taxpayers were held back. "This is expected to benefit about a crore tax-payers," Sitharaman said. Officials said this could mean a benefit to one in eight tax filers.

In line with developments in the technology and startup ecosystem, the Finance Minister also announced the setting up of a Rs 1 lakh crore corpus with 50-year interest free loan. The corpus will provide almost zero or low interest rate loans with a

long tenor for research and innovation by the private sector in sunrise industries. Alongside, she said a new scheme would be launched for strengthening deep tech in defence and for 'atmanirbharta'.

To incentivise states towards more productive spending, the Finance Minister also continued with the scheme to provide a 50-year interest free loan for capital expenditure. For 2024-25, she allocated Rs 1.3 lakh crore, 30% more in 2023-24. This includes Rs 75,000 crore as 50-year interest free loans to support milestone-linked reforms by states under Viksit Bharat. Further, to encourage states to develop, brand and market iconic tourist centres at global scale, she said long-term interest free loans will be provided to them on matching basis.

## ● Gyanvapi: Puja starts in cellar

said, "We have complied with the court's directives."

The Anjuman Intezamia Masajid Committee, which manages the mosque, moved an urgent application before the Supreme Court seeking its intervention against the district court's order, but was told to first approach the Allahabad High Court.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* Thursday evening, Senior Advocate S F A Naqvi, who moved an application in the High Court on behalf of the mosque committee, said, "We moved an application challenging the district court order passed on Wednesday, which allowed puja to be done in the southern cellar. In our application, we have written that despite the district judge saying that the said property be given for puja within seven days, the administration entered it late night Wednesday itself, just hours after the order."

"We have also said that our application on (Civil Procedure Code) Order VII Rule 11 on maintainability (of a suit) has been listed for a later date, while other aspects are being decided. We have said that this order (Wednesday) is virtually a final order in the case in the garb of an interim order. This type of order can only be passed after the evidence is examined by a court, but that has not happened," he said.

"We first mentioned the application before the Chief Justice of the High Court, who said we should submit it to the Registry. We did so... We will wait to see if this matter is listed tomorrow," Naqvi said.

Earlier, in the early hours of Thursday, Fuzail Ahmad Ayyubi, who is the Advocate-on-Record for the mosque committee, moved a "letter of extreme urgency" before the Supreme Court Registrar, stating, "Under the garb of the order dated 31.01.2024, the local administration, in hot haste, has deployed a massive police force on site and is in the process of cutting the grills located in the southern side

cellar, which Hindu plaintiffs call 'Vyasji ka tekhkhan' (Vyasji's cellar), is part of the mosque complex.

The district court's direction

for puja in the cellar came on the petition of Shailendra Kumar Pathak, head priest of Acharya Ved Vyasa Peeth temple, who said that the Vyas family had been offering prayers in the cellar even during the rule of the British but the practice was stopped in December 1993.

Hindu litigants, appearing before the court, have claimed that the Gyanvapi mosque was built on the site of the earlier Kashi Vishwanath temple after

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# SCERT's audit flags lack of gender sensitivity in textbooks

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

WOMEN FREEDOM fighters missing, usage of terms like 'Bacha' or 'Balak', more male than female characters: A lack of gender sensitivity in existing school textbooks has been flagged in in a gender audit report by the Delhi State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT).

Published Tuesday, the audit examined 53 textbooks and curricula of 13 subjects including Social Studies, Punjabi, Home Science, EVS, English (Bridge Course Level I to IV), and Hindi (Bridge Course Level I to IV).

The report said: "The continuation of such content in textbooks, which contain elements of patriarchal dominance and neglected participation of women and other genders, may reinforce similar lessons in the classroom environment."

In the Deshbhakti curriculum, for instance, a key finding listed in the report says there is scope to include 'equitable gender representation'. The observation stated, "There are opportunities to include gender-equal characters in stories in the Deshbhakti manual. Imbalance is predominantly seen in examples of patriots of both pre- and post-independence period where mostly male freedom fighters are highlighted in manuals of classes 6th to 12th..."

On the Happiness Curriculum, one of the observations stated, "There are opportunities to include gender-equal representations."

## DILLI GRAMODAYA ABHIYAN

# List five key problems of villages, find solution in two days: L-G to DMs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1Delhi L-G  
VK Saxena

At a meeting to review the progress of 'Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan', L-G VK Saxena Thursday directed the District Magistrates who visited the capital's villages under the initiative to list five of the most important problems they had observed on the ground and find workable solutions for these within two days.

The DMs, under Saxena's instructions, had visited a few villages on two occasions – on January 7 and 8, and on January 27 and 28 when they even stayed there overnight. Apart from interacting with residents of the identified villages as well as the neighbouring villages, the officials sought firsthand experience and feedback about the problems being faced by them.

"The L-G had instructed for this exercise to be undertaken so that developmental and upgradation projects under the Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan being implemented by the DDA could be in sync with the actual deficiencies and demands on ground," offi-

cials said.

The DMs had visited these areas along with officials of stakeholder departments and agencies, including the DDA, MCD, PWD and DJB, following which they shared their experiences and apprised Saxena of feedback from the ground regarding issues such as lack of civic infrastructure, connectivity and sanitation.

Officials said the L-G directed the DMs to submit a report listing five of the most important issues being faced by villages in their respective districts within two days and also list tangible projects to address them.

"He advised that these projects, to be undertaken as part of the programme, be implemented within the shortest possible time frame so that people could start benefiting from them immediately," the official further said.

"The L-G had instructed for this exercise to be undertaken so that developmental and upgradation projects under the Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan being implemented by the DDA could be in sync with the actual deficiencies and demands on ground," offi-

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## KEY FINDINGS

| Subject books audited   | Recommendations   |
|---|---|
| Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (4 books)                         | Promote gender-neutral language   |
| Happiness Curriculum (9 books)  | Teachers to use opportunities in the text to teach gender issues in class   |
| Deshbhakti Curriculum (4 books)                                       | Content shall encourage students to challenge gender stereotypes and biases |
| Social Studies (English, Hindi and Urdu medium) (3 textbooks in each) | Promote prompt discussions around gender sensitivity                        |
| Punjabi (3 books)   | Balance should be maintained in content to ensure gender inclusiveness      |

tion of characters in the stories in the...handbooks. Most handbooks have male characters exceeding the female ones; for example, in the handbook for class 7, there are 20 stories in which there are a total of 38 male and 4 female characters..." The report further pointed out terms in textbooks like 'Bacha' or 'Balak' which are not gender-neutral. It also said transgender and non-binary persons have not been included anywhere in the manual and textbooks.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, an official at SCERT Delhi, who did not wish to be named, said, "We carried out the audit for textbooks of classes I to VIII on a request by the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR). It is happening for the first time; soon, NCERT shall im-

plement the recommendations of this report while revising their textbooks. The main objective was to sensitise textbook content and promote gender equality."

On the audit committee were gender experts from the NCERT, Delhi University, DCPCR, and other NGOs.

Gauri Sharma, who was with the DCPCR and was among the experts on the committee, said: "...One of the specific recommendations was to avoid content that reinforces stereotypes and to consciously include representations of women in leadership roles. The committee emphasises the importance of gender-neutral language, inclusion of transgender individuals, and highlighting achievements of all genders in unconventional fields."

## No relief from HC for Amanatullah

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

The Delhi High Court Thursday refused to pass an interim order "at this stage" in AAP leader Amanatullah Khan's plea against ED summons in its probe linked to the alleged irregularities in the recruitment of staff for the Delhi Waqf Board. A division bench of Justices Rekha Palli and Rajnish Bhatnagar was hearing the plea.

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The DMs had visited these areas along with officials of stakeholder departments and agencies, including the DDA, MCD, PWD and DJB, following which they shared their experiences and apprised Saxena of feedback from the ground regarding issues such as lack of civic infrastructure, connectivity and sanitation.

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## RESPONSE SOUGHT WITHIN A WEEK

# Demolition of Mehrauli mosque: HC seeks explanation from DDA

Bench asks whether any prior notice was given before undertaking action

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE DELHI High Court has asked the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to inform the court the basis on which Akhoondji Masjid – a mosque located in the city's Mehrauli area and believed to be centuries old – was demolished by the authority on January 30.

A single-judge bench of Justice Sachin Datta, in its January 31 order, said, "Let the DDA file its reply within a period of one week clearly setting out the action that has been taken in respect of the concerned property and the basis thereof and as to whether any prior notice was given before taking the demolition action".

DDA's counsel had submitted that the demolition action was taken pursuant to the "recom-



The mosque was demolished by the authority on January 30.

mendations of the Religious Committee". It was submitted that prior to taking the decision on the demolition on January 4, the committee had given an "opportunity of hearing to the CEO of Delhi Waqf Board".

The petitioner, the Managing Committee of the Delhi Waqf Board represented by advocate Shams Khwaja, had "vehemently" submitted that the Religious Committee has "no jurisdiction to order any demolition

action".

Justice Datta, thereafter, said this aspect shall be considered on the next date of hearing and listed the matter on February 12.

The HC was hearing an application for interim relief pertaining to the demolition of the mosque, the Behrul Uloom madrasa, and various graves, filed in a 2022 pending matter.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Zakir Hussain, who has been the mosque's Imam for the last 15 years, had said, "We were barely given 10 minutes to gather our things before the machines came and demolition started".

The rubble from the demolition was collected and disposed of almost immediately, *The Indian Express* had reported Thursday.

Locals claim the mosque was built during Razia Sultana's reign.

## Attacked in Gurgaon farmhouse brawl over parking, DTU student dies of injuries

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

### A 36-yr-old farmhouse operator was allegedly beaten to death in the same incident after he intervened during the brawl

FOLLOWING A brawl that broke out outside a Gurgaon farmhouse over parking space last week, an engineering student from Delhi Technological University (DTU) died of injuries sustained in the fight after battling for his life for three days.

Praveen, a 36-year-old farmhouse operator, was allegedly beaten to death in the same incident after he intervened during the brawl between the students and a group of locals, police said.

Gajendra, a BTech student whose family lives in Nagaur in Rajasthan, was among the 20-odd students who had organised a birthday party for one of their friends at the Oasis Garden farm-

house on Saturday. Seven students, including Gajendra, were injured in the incident. His condition was critical and he was put on a ventilator at AIIMS. He succumbed to his injuries on Tuesday, police said.

Police said that Praveen had leased the farmhouse recently and would rent it out for events.

Police officers said that the students had booked cabs and were

leaving around 12-1 am when a group of 4-5 residents of Bandhwari village started fighting with them over road space and parking.

According to police, cabs booked by the students were parked outside the farmhouse. Local residents were driving past but found the road blocked by the waiting cabs. A fight broke out between the students and the men, who, as per the FIR, attacked them with sticks and iron rods. Soon, more men turned up.

According to police, the students were hitting the residents on the head and the residents were grievously injured.

After that, the students broke open the gate of the farmhouse and started beating Praveen and the staff present inside, police said.

"I got a call from Praveen who informed me that the men were hitting the students on the head and the students were grievously injured.

A team of the Sikandarpur crime unit arrested two accused, Sachin and Ashish, residents of Bandhwari village. After sending the arrested accused to jail, police are now searching for the remaining accused, they added.

The FIR was registered at the DLF Phase 1 police station under relevant sections for murder and attempt to murder, among others.

The FIR also states that one of the accused men dropped their iPhone during the brawl. The phone was handed over to police.

After the attack, the accused fled and the injured, including the students, were first rushed to a private hospital where Praveen died during treatment.

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A team of the Sikandarpur crime unit arrested two accused, Sachin and Ashish, residents of Bandhwari village. After sending the arrested accused to jail, police are now searching for the remaining accused, they added.



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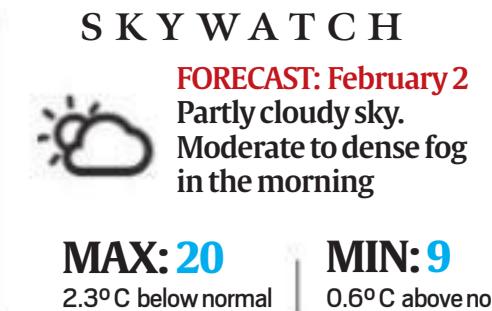
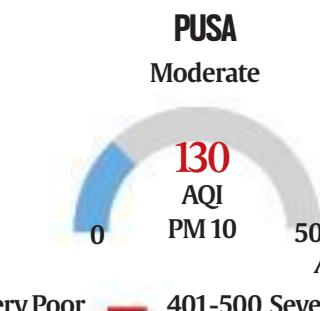
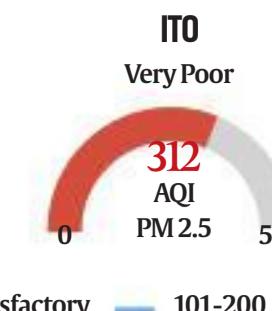
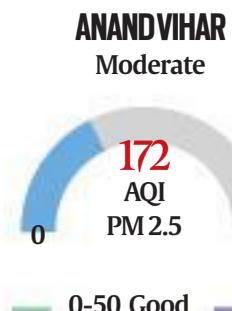
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**CM LIKELY TO SKIP ED SUMMONS**

**Twin protests today: CM Kejriwal at BJP HQ, Sachdeva and others at AAP office**

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

EVEN AS a question mark hovers over Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's appearance before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the excise policy case, the AAP and opposition BJP announced they would hold protests at each other's headquarters on Friday.

AAP sources said Kejriwal was likely to skip the agency's summons — the fifth to be issued — since he would be part of the protest outside the BJP's DDU Marg headquarters along with Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann.

While the AAP's protest is scheduled for 11 am, the BJP's demonstration is expected to begin around 11.45 am. Police said special arrangements would be put in place on the stretch on which both protest venues are located within a few 100 metres.

"We will make adequate security arrangements... Additional forces will also be deployed. No one will be allowed to breach law and order," an officer said.

On Wednesday, the AAP had said that its legal team was examining the fifth summons,



CM Kejriwal. Archive

adding its next step would be in accordance with the law.

This was followed by the party's announcement of a demonstration outside the BJP HQ to protest against the latter's alleged manipulation of the Chandigarh mayoral polls held earlier this week.

On Thursday, the BJP, which has termed the CM "an economic fugitive" trying to evade the ED's four summonses, announced it would stage its own demonstration outside the AAP's Rouse Avenue headquarters.

The protest, which the party said would be held against the "corruption of the Kejriwal government", will be led by Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva and Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri.

**TELLS DDA, MCD Capital has become a slum, stop passing the buck: HC**

**MALAVIKA PRASAD**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE DELHI High Court Thursday told the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to stop "passing the buck" to each other while expressing its concern over their "failure" to act against "unauthorised construction" near Nizamuddin ki Baoli and Barakhamba Tomb, which are centrally protected monuments.

The HC was hearing a PIL moved by NGO Jamia Arabia Nizamia Welfare Education Society claiming that "illegal and unauthorised construction" was done at Khasra no. 556 Ziyarat guest house "near the baoli".

A division bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Mamneet Pritam Singh Arora orally said, "You (MCD and DDA) are supposed to function as one. You are two authorities working simultaneously at the highest position... It is a very sad state of affairs you've reduced the city to... Too much unauthorised construction is going on... This jugalbandi that's going on needs to be stopped. What are you doing to this city? It's become a slum. This is happening in New Delhi area..."

The MCD counsel submitted that "despite the first and second floor of the property being sealed", the erstwhile owner had sold the property to another person (the present owner on the third, fourth and fifth floors of the property), "even though the land belongs to DDA".

This court finds it surprising that encroachment of public land, illegal and unauthorised construction at such a massive scale has taken place in the heart of Delhi virtually under the nose of officials of MCD, DDA, ASI and Police. This court is of the prima facie view that the matter requires to be investigated by the CBI," the HC said and directed the present owner to appear before it on the next date of hearing.

"This ping pong will stop once we get the CBI in, DDA and MCD officials will get active. You are both passing the buck to each other... Between the two, some... had to take a decision and one of the respondents has failed us. Who has failed us, that we will come to know through CBI. You are turning your backs to this. This is not acceptable," the bench orally said. The matter is next listed on February 4.



INDIA ART FAIR IN ITS 15TH EDITION

**Famed modernists, contemporaries & design studios share space at Art Fair**

**VANDANA KALRA**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE DRIZZLE in the morning might have seemed to be a concern in the early hours of the opening of the India Art Fair (IAF), but it was no deterrent for art aficionados who arrived in large numbers for the preview on February 1. While its facade sports Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra imprint, within its large tents are artworks showcased by 108 exhibitors who form part of the fair's 15th edition.

In attendance, among others, were artists Sakti Burman, Manu Parekh, Rekha Rodwittiya, Reena Kallat, Subodh Gupta, GR Iranna and Bose Krishnamachari. Here is a glimpse of what's on ground:

**AT THE MODERNISTS RULE**

With their prices constantly elevating, it is no surprise that at the IAF, too, modernists find considerable recognition. Dhoomimal Gallery has a bronze edition of one of the bigger Himmat Shah sculptures, *Christ*. If the Anant Art has works by Gulammohammed Sheikh that engage with the politics of language, at Art Heritage are works from Somnath Hore's famed *Wounds* series. Ganesh Haloi and Ram Kumar share space in a booth, and DAG is presenting a curated showcase that looks at Indian art from 18th Century onwards.

**INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS**  
More than 13 metres in length, Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei's *Water Lilies* in woman blocks at neuerriemschneider stands as one of the highlights at IAF. Inspired by Edward Monet's meticulously crafted gardens, this is the first viewing of his



The fair is on at NSIC Grounds, Okhla, till Feb 4. Abhinav Saha

version of work rendered in vibrant colours. The Berlin-based gallery has juxtaposed it with a Noa Eshkol's textile work and Olafur Eliasson's *Unseeing the Blind Spot*. At Galleria Continua, the central wall has a stainless steel Anish Kapoor.

**STANDING SOLO**

Premiering at IAF, Jitish Kallat's immersive installation *Antubrat* is a reflection on the passage of time and confinement through South Africa's first black president Nelson Mandela's desk calendars spanning 1976 to 1989. At several places the pages remain blank, but in others are notations of his blood

pressure, records of recent dreams and prison visits. "There are some historical events that find mention, including Indian election results in 1980, but at the same time we find that some other historical events remain unmentioned, possibly because the news did not reach him or there could be deliberate omissions due to scrutiny," says Kallat. Within the Aicon booth, meanwhile, is a solo presentation by Veer Munshi, where the artist creates hand paintings on wood, including fractured carpets that recall his homeland Kashmir and its dying crafts.

**GRABBING ATTENTION**

In its first limited edition and collectible design section, the IAF has seven design studios — including Vikram Goyal, Atelier Ashiesh Shah, Gunjan Gupta, Rooshad Shroff, Studio Renn, de Gournay, and Karishma Swali & Chanakya School of Craft.

The fair is on at NSIC Grounds, Okhla, till February 4.

Comprising large paintings alongside sculptures made with semi-precious stones, Bengaluru-based Shilo Shiv Suleman's immersive space at Art Musings Booth features her body of work, *God is a Woman in Love*, representing eight Ashtanayikas as archetypal romantic heroines. At Latitude 28, Sudipta Das's *Journey Uncontained* represents the hard lives of migrants and Yogesh Ramkrishna compares the political yatras to the Pandharpur yatra in Maharashtra in *Some Journeys are Beautiful but Going Away is Hard*. "The everyday issues are forgotten temporarily," says Ramkrishna.

**ENGAGING WITH ART**

At the Experimenter booth, Afrah Shafiq is inviting audiences to play a game in *The Bride Who Could Not Stop Crying*, warning early on that the choices they make will determine how much she cries. Dhruv Jain, on the other hand, is asking them to navigate narrow paths in a game where they confront buried histories and lost landscapes.

**IN PRINT**

Constantly reflecting on ways people relate to photography, a booth dedicated to Dayanita Singh features her "house museums" that hold different themes, from chairs to Mumbai Cinema halls. Photoink gallery has among others photographs by the late Vinay Sundaram, Madan Mahatta and Ketaki Sheth.

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**Delhi Police sees a dip in its allocation**

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Police has seen a 4.47% dip in its allocation in

the 2024 interim budget as compared to last year. It was allocated Rs 11,397.98 crore in the 2024-2025 interim budget. The force is responsible for maintaining and enforcing law and order in the NCT of Delhi and traffic management.

The budget provision is for routine expenses and for various schemes to be implemented by the Delhi Police such as developing traffic and communication networks in NCR mega cities and model traffic systems, upgradation and expansion of communications infrastructure, upgradation of training, induction of latest technology and installation of traffic signals, etc. ENS

Meanwhile, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Arvinder Singh Lovely said that the Modi government's last interim Budget before the Lok Sabha elections was "totally disappointing" as it was silent on sectors like employment and price rise.

He said that the Budget was a clear indication that the BJP's "Achhe Din" was not for the common people of the country, but a few chosen ones.

The budget is meant for salaries; general expenses for example oil and transport; AMC, CMC equipment; consumables, office expenditure; machinery equipment like MRI and ultrasound machines; major equipment for surgeries like surgery tables.

Every year, the institute sends a proposal to provide a 10-20% increase considering the salary increase and hike in DA. The institute, however, did not disclose how much it had demanded.

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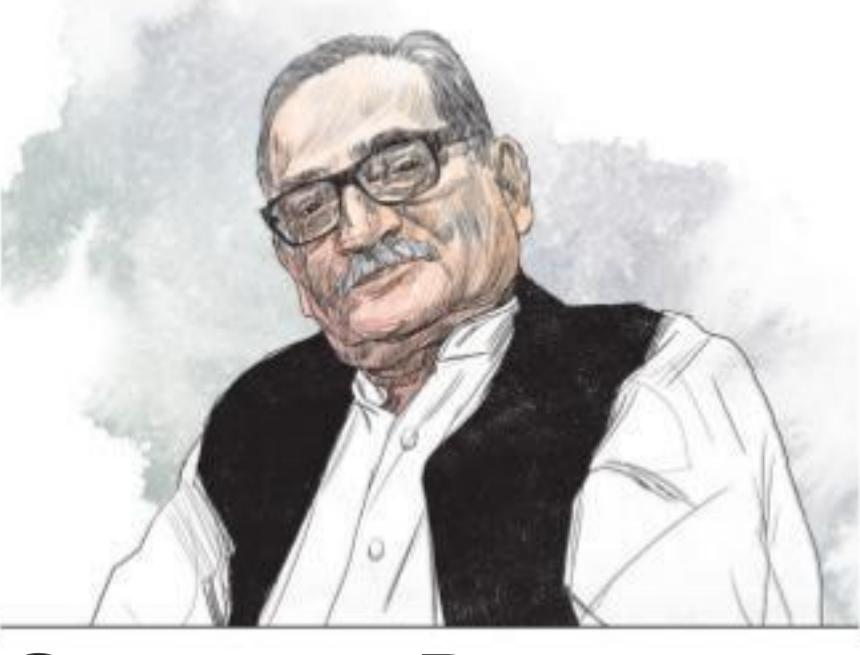
Meanwhile, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Arvinder Singh Lovely said that the Modi government's last interim Budget before the Lok Sabha elections was "totally disappointing" as it was silent on sectors like employment and price rise.

He said that the Budget was a clear indication that the BJP's "Achhe Din" was not for the common people of the country, but a few chosen ones.

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DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## CAMBRIDGE RULE

SENIOR ADVOCATE Rajeev Dhavan often reminisces about his Cambridge connection while arguing his case. On Wednesday, when Senior Advocate Rakesh Dwivedi sought to intervene in the middle of his submissions in the case concerning the minority status of Aligarh Muslim University before the seven-judge Supreme Court bench, Dhavan said: "My Lord, when I was president of the Cambridge Union, we followed the rules of Parliament, that if somebody gets up, I accept his intervention or don't accept his intervention. I do not accept that intervention, My Lord..."

## POLL JITTERS

THE INTERIM Budget and Ram Temple may be dominating the public conversations of BJP ministers and MPs but, in private, they are discussing only one issue — whether they would get the ticket to contest election. For ministers who are Rajya Sabha members, the dilemma is whether they should contest the Lok Sabha election or not. With 28 BJP MPs retiring this April from the Upper House, most of them are nervous. Party sources said any information about the candidates for the February 27 Rajya Sabha election would be out closer to February 15, the last day of the nomination.

## WIN-WIN VIDEO

THE SAMAJWADI Party (SP) last month announced that it will give Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) seven of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh. Both the parties have so far maintained secrecy on these seven seats but the RLD on Thursday posted a video on its social media handle, claiming that it will register a record victory from the Muzaffarnagar seat (which it had lost in 2019). The move is being seen by the leaders of Congress — the third partner in the INDIA bloc in UP — as a tactic to claim the seat. However, a party leader said the video was of a local who believed that RLD can win the seat.

## US clears sale of 31 MQ-9B armed drones to India

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE US State Department has approved a potential sale of 31 armed MQ-9B SkyGuardian drones, missiles and supporting equipment to India for an estimated USD 4 billion, seven months after India announced its plan to buy them during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington DC.

The Pentagon announced it on Thursday, saying the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency delivered the required certification notifying the US Congress of this possible sale today.

"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of India of MQ-9B Remotely Piloted Aircraft and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$3.99 billion," the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said on Thursday night.

It said that the Indian government has requested to buy 31 MQ-9B SkyGuardian aircraft, 161 Embedded Global Positioning & Inertial Navigation Systems (EGIs), 35 L3 Rio Grande Communications Intelligence Sensor Suites, 170 AGM-114R Hellfire missiles, 16 M36E9

Hellfire Captive Air Training Missiles (CATM), 310 GBU-39B/B Laser Small Diameter Bombs (LSDB), and 8 GBU-39B/B LSDB Guided Test Vehicles (GTVs) with live fuses. The other equipment included ground control stations, missile launchers, tactical training rounds, high frequency radios, and radars.

The Pentagon statement read that this "proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to strengthen the US-India strategic relationship and to improve the security of a major defense partner which continues to be an important force for political stability, peace, and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia region."

The proposed sale, it said, "Will improve India's capability to meet current and future threats by enabling unmanned surveillance and reconnaissance patrols in sea lanes of operation. India has demonstrated a commitment to modernizing its military and will have no difficulty absorbing these articles and services into its armed forces."

It also said that the proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

According to the Pentagon,

the principal contractor will be General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Poway, CA. "The purchaser typically requests offsets. Any offset agreement will be defined in negotiations between the purchaser and the contractor," it said.

Earlier in the day, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said, "Of course, Congress plays an important role in the US arms transfer process. We routinely consult with members of Congress on the foreign affairs committees before our formal notification so we can address questions that they might have, but I don't have any comment on when that formal notification might take place."

Miller said the proposed mega drone deal announced during the historic State Visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2023 offers significant potential to further advance bilateral strategic technology and military cooperation in the region.

"This is a proposed sale that was announced during Prime Minister Modi's visit last year. We believe it offers significant potential to further advance strategic technology cooperation with India and military cooperation in the region," Miller said.

FULL REPORT ON  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## Poll strategist Prashant Kishor is guest at Express Adda today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

AS THE architect of many electoral victories, beginning from Narendra Modi's 2014 campaign to Mamata Banerjee's 2021 triumph, election strategist Prashant Kishor has always been considered a sharp political brain to pick on the political situation in the country. Given that he is now travelling across Bihar leading a padayatra under the banner Jan Suraaj of which he is the convener, he becomes an even more important resource of political understanding, especially in the backdrop of a fresh political churning in Bihar.

Kishor will be the guest at 'Express Adda' on Friday where he will be in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express and Vandita Mishra, National Opinion Editor, The Indian Express. He will answer questions on the latest flip-flop in Patna, its impact on the rest of the nation, and if the 2024 Lok Sabha polls are really a foregone conclusion.

In 2015, Kishor had delivered a massive victory for the RJD-JDU combine in Bihar. He later also joined the JDU only to part ways later.

Kishor has had a ringside view of political power, having worked with Narendra Modi,



Prashant Kishor has always been considered a sharp political brain to pick on the political situation in country.

atra, that started on October 2, 2022, has already covered 188 blocks, 1,130 panchayats and 2,348 villages in Bihar.

The exercise is not just aimed at understanding the problems faced by the people but also to identify the right kind of people from across the state who must be ushered into politics, says Kishor. According to Kishor, while he has no personal ambitions, he would use his expertise and resources to help the chosen candidates win elections.

In his public meetings he often berates the gathering for having voted for wrong issues and constantly goads them to think about their children's future while voting. It is likely that the movement will transform into a political party and contest the 2025 Assembly polls in Bihar.

**TATA STEEL LIMITED**  
Registered Office: Bombay House, 24, Horni Mody Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001, India  
Tel No: +91 22 6665 8282 E-mail: cosec@tatasteel.com Website: [www.tatasteel.com](http://www.tatasteel.com)  
Corporate Identification Number: L27100MH1907PLC000260

## POSTAL BALLOT NOTICE AND E-VOTING INFORMATION

Notice is hereby given that Tata Steel Limited ('the Company') is seeking approval of the Members of the Company by way of postal ballot through remote e-voting on the following four ordinary resolutions:

| SN | Description of Ordinary Resolutions  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Material modification in the approved related party transaction(s) with The Indian Steel and Wire Products Ltd   |
| 2  | Material modification in the approved related party transaction(s) between Tata Steel Downstream Products Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Steel Limited and Tata Motors Limited, a related party of Tata Steel Limited, and ancillary entities of Tata Motors Limited |
| 3  | Material modification in approved related party transaction(s) with Tata Motors Limited and Posh Metal Industries Private Limited / ancillary entities of Tata Motors Limited, third party entities  |
| 4  | Material related party transactions with Tata Capital Ltd, a related party of Tata Steel Limited   |

The Postal Ballot Notice and the Statement pursuant to Section 102 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with other applicable laws ('Notice') is available on the website of the Company at <https://www.tatasteel.com/investors/investor-information/postal-ballot/>, the website of the National Securities Depository Limited ('NSDL') at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com) and on the website of the Stock Exchanges on which the equity shares of the Company are listed i.e. BSE Limited at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and the National Stock Exchange of India Limited at [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com).

In compliance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, and the General Circular Nos. 14/2020 dated April 8, 2020, 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020, 22/2020 dated June 15, 2020, 33/2020 dated September 28, 2020, 39/2020 dated December 31, 2020, 10/2021 dated June 23, 2021, 20/2021 dated December 8, 2021, 3/2022 dated May 5, 2022, 11/2022 dated December 28, 2022 and 09/2023 dated September 25, 2023, issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (collectively called 'MCA Circulars'), the Company has sent the postal ballot notice on Thursday, February 1, 2024, ONLY through electronic mode, to those Members whose e-mail addresses are registered with the Company/Depositories/Registrar and Transfer Agent/Depository Participants and whose names are recorded in the Register of Members of the Company or in the Register of Beneficial Owners maintained by the Depositories as on Friday, January 26, 2024 ('Cut-off date'). Accordingly, physical copy of the Notice along with Postal Ballot Form and pre-paid business reply envelope has not been sent to the Members for this Postal Ballot. The Company has completed the sending of the Notice to eligible shareholders through electronic mode on Thursday, February 1, 2024.

The Company has engaged the services of NSDL to provide remote e-voting facility to its members. The remote e-voting period commences on Friday, February 2, 2024, from 9.00 a.m. (IST) and ends on Saturday, March 2, 2024, at 5.00 p.m. (IST). The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by NSDL thereafter. Voting rights of the Members shall be in proportion to the equity shares held by them in the paid-up equity share capital of the Company as on the Cut-off date. Once vote on a resolution is cast, the Member will not be able to change it subsequently. Please note that communication of assent or dissent of the Members would only take place through the remote e-voting system. Only those Members whose names are recorded in the Register of Members of the Company or in the Register of Beneficial Owners maintained by the Depositories as on the Cut-off date will be entitled to cast their votes by remote e-voting.

To facilitate Members to receive this Notice electronically, the Company has made arrangements with its Registrar and Transfer Agent, Link Intime India Private Limited ('RTA') for registration of e-mail addresses in terms of the MCA Circulars. Members who have not registered their e-mail addresses with the Company may register the same with the RTA on or before 5.00 p.m. (IST) on Friday, February 23, 2024, basis which, NSDL will provide the Member with copy of the Notice. The process for registration of e-mail address is provided below and is also provided in the 'Notes' section to the Notice:

- A. One-time registration of e-mail address with RTA for receiving the Notice and casting votes electronically:  
As part of Company's green initiative and to facilitate Members to receive this Notice electronically, the Company has made special arrangements with its RTA for registration of e-mail addresses. Eligible Members who have not registered their e-mail addresses with the RTA, are required to provide the same to the RTA, on or before 5.00 pm (IST) on February 23, 2024.
- B. Process to be followed for one-time registration of e-mail address (for shares held in physical form or in electronic form) is as follows:
  - a) Visit the link: [https://tcpclinkintime.co.in/EmailReg/Email\\_Register.html](https://tcpclinkintime.co.in/EmailReg/Email_Register.html)
  - b) Select the name of the Company from drop-down: Tata Steel Limited
  - c) Enter details in respective fields such as DP ID and Client ID (if shares held in electronic form) / Folio no. and Certificate no. (if shares held in physical form), Shareholder name, PAN, mobile number and e-mail id
  - d) System will send One Time Password ('OTP') on mobile no. and e-mail id
  - e) Enter OTP received on mobile no. and e-mail id and submit.

After successful submission of the e-mail address, NSDL will e-mail a copy of the Postal Ballot Notice along with the e-Voting user ID and password.

For voting process, please refer 'Notes' section of the Postal Ballot Notice. In case of any queries, Members may write to [csg-unit@tcpclinkindia.co.in](mailto:csg-unit@tcpclinkindia.co.in) or [evoting@nsdl.com](mailto:evoting@nsdl.com)

- C. Registration of e-mail address permanently with Company / DP: Members are requested to register the e-mail address with their concerned DPs, in respect of electronic holding and with the Company / RTA in respect of physical holding, please visit <https://tcpclinkindia.co.in/client-downloads.html> to know more about the registration process. Further, those Members who have already registered their e-mail addresses are requested to ensure that their E-mail ID is valid or in case of change, update the same with their DPs/RTA to enable service of notices/documents/Integrated Reports and other communications electronically to their e-mail address in future.

In case of any queries, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Shareholders and e-voting user manual for Shareholders available at the download section of [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com) or call on toll free no.: 022 - 4886 7000 and 022 - 2499 7000 or send a request to Mr. Amit Vishal, Asst. Vice President-NSDL or Mr. Sanjeev Yadav, Assistant Manager-NSDL at [evoting@nsdl.com](mailto:evoting@nsdl.com) or contact at NSDL, 4th Floor, A' Wing, Trade World, Kamala Mills Compound, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013.

The Board of Directors of the Company has appointed Mr. P. N. Parikh (Membership No. FCS 327, CP No. 1228) or failing him, Ms. Jigyasa N. Ved (Membership No. FCS 6488, CP No. 6018) or failing her, Mr. Mitesh Dhabliwala (Membership No. FCS 8331, CP No. 9511) of M/s Parikh & Associates, Practicing Company Secretaries, as the Scrutinizer to scrutinize the postal ballot process in a fair and transparent manner.

The Scrutinizer will submit his report to the Chairman, or any other person authorized by him, after scrutiny of the votes cast for the Postal Ballot through remote e-voting, within two working days from conclusion of the remote e-voting period for the postal ballot. The Scrutinizer's decision on the validity of votes cast will be final. The results of the remote e-voting along with the Scrutinizer's Report will be made available on the website of the Company at [www.tatasteel.com](http://www.tatasteel.com) and on the website of NSDL at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com) and intimated to BSE Limited and the National Stock Exchange of India Limited, where the equity shares of the Company are listed, within two working days from the conclusion of the remote e-voting period for the postal ballot. Additionally, the results will also be placed on the notice board at the Registered Office of the Company.

Tata Steel Limited

Sd/-

Parvatheesam Kanchinadham

Company Secretary &

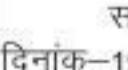
Chief Legal Officer (Corporate & Compliance)

Membership No. ACS: 15921

## भवन निर्माण विभाग

विहार, पटना

प्रेस विज्ञप्ति



संसद

सरकार

# BUDGET



2024 - 25

Illustration: Suvajit Dey

UDIT MISRA

**FINANCE MINISTER** Nirmala Sitharaman Thursday presented the Union Budget for the next financial year (2024-25). It was her sixth budget presentation, but was different from all the others because this was an interim budget.

As such, it was natural for the FM to spend more time recapping the achievements of the two back-to-back governments under Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the past decade than announcing major new initiatives. Here are some of the main takeaways from the interim Budget of 2024-25.

#### Muted outlook on GDP growth

The nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the size of the Indian economy in terms of today's prices. This number when divided by the rupee-dollar exchange rate gives India's GDP in trillions of dollars. The nominal GDP is the actual observed value.

The real GDP growth as well as the real GDP growth rate are derived from the nominal GDP data by removing the effect of inflation. So, if nominal GDP growth in a particular year is 12% and inflation is 4%, then the real GDP growth will be 8%.

However, for all budget-related work, it is the nominal GDP that is used. As such, a tepid growth rate in nominal GDP is not good news for India's real growth rate.

In the chart alongside, it can be seen how the nominal GDP grew much slower in the current financial year. In fact, that India's real GDP grew by over 7% in the current year when nominal GDP grew so feebly created a controversy earlier last year, because it essentially meant that inflation had been almost negligible – contrary to the sense among most Indian consumers.

For the coming year, too, the nominal GDP is likely to grow by just 10.5%. If one considers an inflation rate of 4-4.5% it would suggest a GDP growth rate of 6% to 6.5% in 2024-25.

#### Reduction in fiscal deficit

Fiscal deficit essentially shows the amount of money that the government borrows from the market. It does so to bridge the gap between its expenses and income. Fiscal deficit is the most-watched variable, because if a government borrows more, it leaves a smaller pool of money for the private sector to borrow from. That, in turn, leads to higher interest rates, thus disincentivising borrowings by the private sector and further dragging down economic activity in the form of lower consumption and production.

If the government tries to print more money instead of borrowing from the market, that too leads to negative effects such as inflation, thanks to a sudden surge of additional money chasing the same supply of goods and services.

Moreover, each year's fiscal deficit adds to the pool of government debt. If fiscal deficits continue to grow unrestrained – that is, if a government continues to live on borrowed money – repaying the debt and associated annual interest payments tends to become a critical concern. Retiring old debt eventually requires governments to tax its citizens, which, again, drags down economic activity.

It is for this reason that the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act of 2003 requires the Union government to

crore – more than double the Rs 4.39 lakh crore of 2020-21. For this, the FM had received a lot of praise.

However, revised estimates show that this capex target was not met in the current year – it stands at Rs 9.5 lakh crore. This explains some part of the reduction in fiscal deficit as well as raises some concerns about the likely impact on the overall growth momentum to the economy.

#### Health, education spends cut

The story of cut-backs continues when one looks at some of the key ministries and departments.

Health and education are two key areas for any developing economy. No economy has developed without first investing in improving the health and education of its population. Historically, in India, budget allocations towards health and education have been lower than required. To be sure, most years, health and education allocations range between 2.5% to 1.5% of the total government expenditure.

However, the revised estimates show that even those targets have not been met in the current financial year.

For instance, the government was supposed to spend Rs 1,16,417 crore on education but ended up spending Rs 1,08,878 crore.

Similarly on health, it budgeted an expenditure for Rs 88,956 crore but actually spent only Rs 79,221 crore.

#### Cuts in core schemes

If one looks at some of the most important government schemes across different ministries, the story of cut-backs in expenditure plays out.

For instance, revised estimates for the outlays on major schemes show that most of the so-called "core of core schemes" meant for the most disadvantaged sections of society, such as SCs, STs and minorities, have witnessed cuts.

For instance, the Revised Estimates (RE) for the Umbrella Scheme for Development of Schedule Castes are Rs 6,780 crore against the Budget Estimates (BE) of Rs 9,409 crore.

For STs, the RE is Rs 3,286 crore against a BE of Rs 4,295 crore.

For minorities, the fall has been the sharpest. In 2022-23, budget estimates pegged the expenditure at Rs 1,810 crore. As it turns out, that year the government actually spent Rs 233 crore – just 13% of the budgeted amount. In the current year, the BE was Rs 610 crore but the RE is just Rs 555 crore.

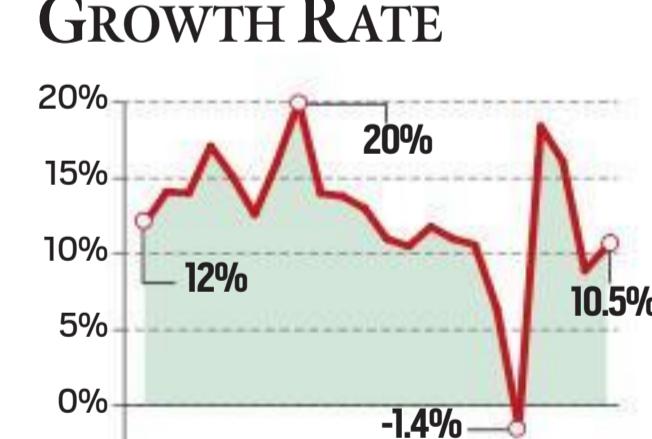
For the Umbrella Programme for Development of Other Vulnerable Groups, the RE is Rs 1,918 crore, down from a BE of Rs 2,194 crore.

#### I-T is biggest income generator

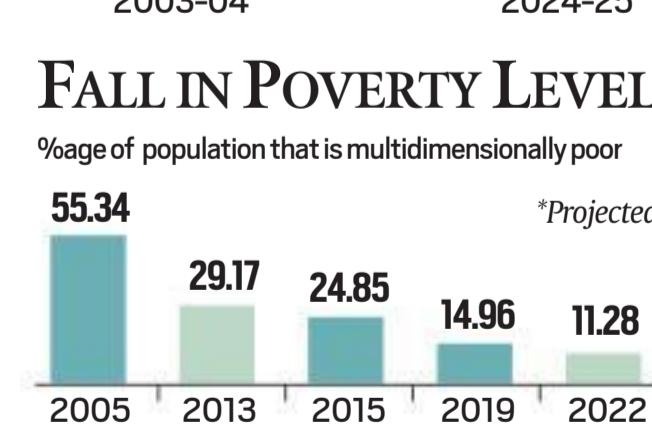
Traditionally, the biggest chunk in the government's financial resources comes from market borrowings. Among the genuine income generators, it is the indirect taxes and the corporate tax that provide the most money. But budget estimates for the next financial years show that income tax collections will be the top contributor (after borrowings).

The Budget documents suggest that income tax revenues will account for 19% of all government resources in FY25. Corporate tax will account for 17%, GST for 18% and borrowings for 28%.

#### NOMINAL GDP GROWTH RATE



#### FALL IN POVERTY LEVEL



#### TIGHTENED PURSE STRINGS (IN ₹ Cr)

| 2023-24        | BE       | RE       |
|----------------|----------|----------|
| Education      | 1,16,417 | 1,08,878 |
| Health         | 88,956   | 79,221   |
| Social Welfare | 55,080   | 46,741   |

#### OUTLAY ON MAJOR SCHEMES TRIMMED

| 2023-24                    | BE     | RE     |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| PMAY                       | 79,590 | 54,103 |
| PMGSY                      | 19,000 | 17,000 |
| PMKSY                      | 10,787 | 8,781  |
| Urban Rejuvenation Mission | 16,000 | 13,200 |
| Swachh Bharat Mission      | 5,000  | 2,550  |
| PMABHIM                    | 4,200  | 2,100  |
| Mission Shakti             | 3,144  | 2,326  |

Sources: NITI Aayog; Budget document  
BE: Budget Estimates; RE: Revised Estimates

#### INTERIM BUDGET

**PRESENTED WHEN:** a government is close to the end of its term and a Lok Sabha election lies ahead. Every election year sees an Interim Budget, also called a Vote on Account.

**ESTIMATES OF** revenues and expenditures in the coming year are presented in the Interim Budget as well. But since the full Budget is presented in July by the new government, the purpose of an Interim Budget is to seek Parliament's authorisation to tax and spend in the intervening months.

**GIVEN THAT BUDGET** Estimates of the coming year are likely to change, it is better to focus on the Revised Estimates (of the current financial year) because they complete the picture for the past 5 or 10 years.

contain its fiscal deficit to just 3% of the nominal GDP. However, barring 2007-08, India has never met this target.

The deficit had worsened in the wake of the Covid pandemic – shot up to 9.2% of GDP – but since then the government has been able to bring it down each year. In the current year, the government had set a target of 5.9% and revised estimates show it is likely to be even lower at 5.8%.

Further, the FM has announced similarly ambitious targets for FY25 – at 5.1% of GDP – and FY26 – at 4.5% of GDP. This is a welcome achievement because it is likely to bring down the cost

of borrowing for the private sector. However, it leads to two key questions: how is this fiscal consolidation being achieved, and what will be its impact on growth.

#### Capex target not met

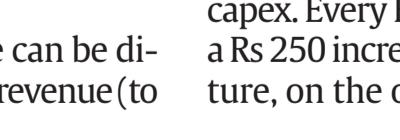
All government expenditure can be divided into two broad categories: revenue (to

meet daily needs such as fuel bills, salaries, etc.) and capital (making productive assets such as roads, schools, bridges, ports, etc.).

There is a clear advantage for the broader economy when the government ramps up capex. Every Rs 100 spent on capex leads to a Rs 250 increase in GDP. Revenue expenditure, on the other hand, returns less than Rs 100.

The cornerstone of the Modi government's last few budgets has been a concerted push to raise capital expenditure. In fact, the highlight of Budget 2023-24, presented last February, was the announcement that government capex would be Rs 10 lakh

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## BUDGET 2024-25

## 8 INFRA



*'Globalisation is being redefined with reshoring and friend-shoring, disruption and fragmentation of supply chains... A new world order is emerging after the Covid pandemic.'*

CAN SAVE UP TO Rs 18K A YR

Households to get 300 units free power under rooftop solar scheme

AMITABH SINHA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

PEOPLE AVAILING of the government's newly-announced rooftop solar scheme will be entitled to 300 units of free electricity every month and help them save up to Rs 18,000 annually, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced Thursday.

The 'Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana' was announced by PM Narendra Modi on January 22, shortly after he returned from Ayodhya where he led the consecration of the new Ram temple. Rooftop solar systems would be installed in "one crore houses", Modi said, though without specifying a time-frame for the target to be achieved.

Although full details of the new scheme were still not available, Sitharaman, in her Budget speech, said it would enable for each participating household "savings up to Rs 15,000-18,000 annually" by getting free solar electricity and selling the surplus power to the distribution companies.

She said the scheme would also help the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) by providing charging stations at home. The scheme was also expected to result in entrepreneurship and employment opportunities in supplies, installation and maintenance, she said.

The 'Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana' adds on to an ongoing rooftop solarisation programme running for at least a decade now. About 40 per cent, or 40 GW, of the government's initial target of setting up 100 GW of solar capacity by 2022 was meant to be through rooftop systems. However, by 2023 end, the country's total solar capacity stood at 73.3 GW, of which grid-connected rooftop systems comprised only about 11 GW, or 15 per cent.

One GW is equal to one billion watts. For perspective, a typical light bulb in homes, if used continuously for an hour, consumes between 60 and 100 watts.

Although the 'Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana' is not aimed at generating capacity, but only the number of households with rooftop solar systems, the scheme will certainly boost it, experts said. Neeraj Kuldeep, senior programme lead with Delhi-based Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) said rooftop solarisation of one crore households could result in the installation of about 20-25 GW of new capacity.

"Further, given that residential consumers receive subsidised electricity from discoms, solarisation of the demand from these households will save about Rs 2 lakh crore for discoms over the next 25 years (the solar plant's life). All states can leverage this opportunity as rooftop solar potential exists everywhere, unlike utility scale solar, which is primarily restricted to a few states," Kuldeep said.

A recent report from CEEW showed nearly 25 crore households across the country had the potential to deploy 637 GW of solar energy on rooftops, though it would be unrealistic to tap it entirely. It said about one-fifth of this potential, about 118 GW of capacity, was certainly doable. Households have so far accounted for a small proportion, about 20 per cent, of India's installed rooftop solar capacity, with the bulk of it in the commercial and industrial sectors.

"Incentivising individuals to save up to Rs 18,000 every year by selling surplus rooftop solar electricity to distribution companies will not only generate income but also help in putting India in a strong position of climate leadership ahead of COP23 (climate change conference in 2028) which PM Narendra Modi has offered to host," Aarti Khosla, director of Climate Trends, a research-based climate change consulting company, said.



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

## NEW SCHEME TO STRENGTHEN DEEP-TECH SOON

## ₹1 lakh crore corpus for innovation by pvt sector

Companies can avail of interest-free loan facility for up to 50 years

AMITABH SINHA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

IN A significant initiative to incentivise research and development in the private sector, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Thursday announced the establishment of a financial corpus of Rs 1 lakh crore that will provide low-cost or zero-interest loans for research and innovation.

In the interim Budget, Sitharaman said private companies could avail of interest-free loans for up to 50 years through this new mechanism. "For our tech-savvy youth, this will be a golden era. A corpus of Rs 1 lakh crore will be established with 50 year interest-free loan facility. The corpus will provide long-term financing or refinancing with long tenures and low or nil interest rates. This will encourage the private sector to scale up research and innovation in sunrise domains. We need to have programmes that combine the powers of our youth and technology," she said.

The new fund is in sync with the governm-

ent Ajay Sood said the new budgetary provision would enable greater private sector spending on R&D, and help create right environment for innovation. "There is no explicit linkage between this corpus (announced in the budget) and the NRF, but it will obviously help the objectives of the NRF. The larger point is the government seems committed to ensure greater and easier availability of money for research, and that is very welcome. Lack of adequate funds has always been one of the major hurdles in improving research output from India. The new corpus is a significant step forward to address this," Sood told *The Indian Express*.

"This will empower the private sector, especially young entrepreneurs, and create enabling atmosphere for research," he said.

Sood said another announcement made by Sitharaman, the one related to promoting deep-tech technologies in defence sector, was also important. In her speech, Sitharaman said the government would soon launch a new scheme to strengthen deep-tech technologies for defence purposes and expanding "atma-nirbharta" or self-reliance.

The government is in the process of finalising a comprehensive national policy on deep-tech start-ups, confined not just to defence but across all sectors. The policy is aimed at addressing challenges faced by start-ups working in these areas and create right conditions for improved output.

## 'Trade corridor will be strategic game-changer'

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

AS INTERNATIONAL trade continues to be rattled by sustained Russia-Ukraine war and the widening conflict in the West Asia region, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Interim Budget speech Thursday reiterated that India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) will prove to be a strategic and economic game changer.

Sitharaman's stress on IMEC, a plan to integrate India, West Asia, and Europe, comes at a time when the maritime corridor between Asia and Europe through the Red Sea shipping route is facing massive disruptions forcing global shipping lines to take a longer and more expensive route via the Cape of Good Hope, hurting Indian exports to Europe.

However, widening conflict in the West Asia region poses a problem for IMEC that has been dubbed as a counter to China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as Jordan and Israel, which had to play a crucial role in building the required infrastructure, are at loggerheads due to Israel-Hamas war.

The current conflict in the Middle East will delay IMEC in the short term given that the attention of the Middle East focus is currently on the dispute between Israel and Palestine and the European Union's attention is on Russia-Ukraine conflict. Further, with 2024 being an election year not only in India but in almost 50 countries, the political and economic tensions will play a role as well," Sanjay Notani, partner, Economic Laws Practice, said.

tion and fragmentation of supply chains, and competition for critical minerals and technologies. A new world order is emerging after the Covid pandemic," Sitharaman said.

"The recently announced India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor is a strategic and economic game changer for India and others," she added.

Quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, she said that the corridor will become the basis of world trade for "hundreds of years to come, and history will remember that this corridor was initiated on Indian soil".

Indian companies use the Red Sea route through the Suez Canal to trade with Europe, North America, North Africa, and parts of West Asia.

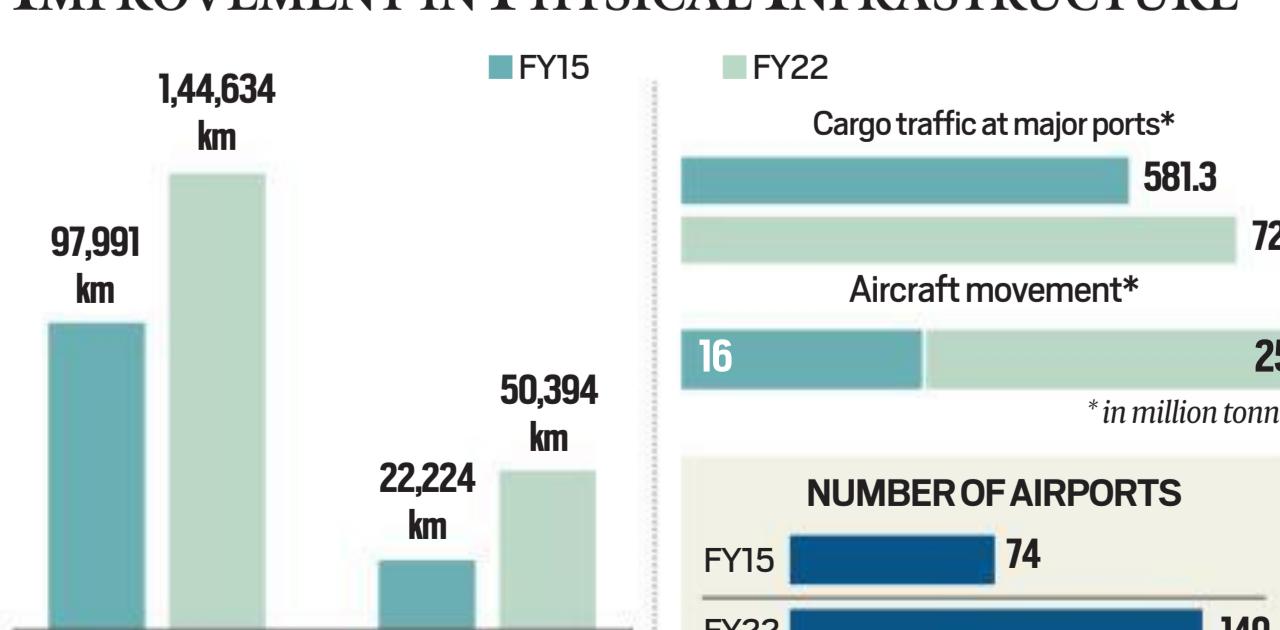
Rating agency Crisil said that these regions accounted for 50 per cent of India's exports worth Rs 18 lakh crore and 30 per cent of imports worth Rs 17 lakh crore last fiscal.

The current conflict in the Middle East will delay IMEC in the short term given that the attention of the Middle East focus is currently on the dispute between Israel and Palestine and the European Union's attention is on Russia-Ukraine conflict. Further, with 2024 being an election year not only in India but in almost 50 countries, the political and economic tensions will play a role as well," Sanjay Notani, partner, Economic Laws Practice, said.

## LENGTH OF NATIONAL HIGHWAYS CONSTRUCTED



## IMPROVEMENT IN PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE



## SITHARAMAN ANNOUNCED IMPLEMENTATION OF THREE MAJOR ECONOMIC RAILWAY CORRIDOR PROGRAMMES

## Fast &amp; safe: 40k bogies to be of Vande Bharat grade

AGGAM WALIA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

AIMING TO improve passengers' travel experience and allowing for faster speed which in turn will reduce travel time, 40,000 normal rail bogies will be converted to the Vande Bharat standards, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in her budget speech Thursday. This comes as a crucial boost to India's railway infrastructure, a central component of the Union government's capex push.

Sitharaman also announced the implementation of three major economic railway corridor programmes to improve logistics efficiency and connectivity under the PM Gati Shakti plan.

The Vande Bharat bogie standards reduce the overall weight of bogies, allowing quicker acceleration and deceleration compared to normal bogies. The bogies are manufactured by Integral Coach Factory,



Vande Bharat bogies allow quicker acceleration and deceleration. File

Chennai, owned and operated by the Indian Railways. Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told ANI in an interview Thursday that the upgradation of normal bogies to Vande Bharat standards will cost around Rs 15,000 crore and take 5 years to implement.

Meanwhile, the three major economic railway corridor programmes are aimed at improving logistics efficiency and reducing costs and focusing on energy, mineral, cement, port connectivity, and high traffic density corridors. "The resultant decongestion of high-traffic corridors will also help in improving operations of passenger trains, resulting in safety and higher travel speed. Together with dedicated freight corridors, these three economic corridor programmes will accelerate GDP growth and reduce logistic costs," she said. Vaishnaw said 40,000 km of new tracks will be laid for these corridors over the next 6-8 years and the entire programme will cost an estimated Rs 11,000 crore.

For financial year 2024-25, the estimated budget allocated to Railways is slightly higher at Rs 2.65 lakh crore compared to revised estimate of Rs 2.6 lakh crore for the ongoing FY24. Of the total budget allocation for FY25, Rs 13,000 crore will be financed through borrowings, a sharp reduction of 35 per cent from the revised estimate of Rs 20,000 crore

for the ongoing financial year. Furthermore, the estimated capital outlay on Railways' commercial lines in FY25 has been increased to Rs 2.52 lakh crore compared to the revised estimate of Rs 2.4 lakh crore for FY24.

As per the Interim Budget, Rs 25.5 lakh crore has been allocated to the Railways Ministry compared to revised estimate of Rs 24.3 lakh crore for the current FY. The revised estimate for FY24 is slightly higher than the Rs 24.1 lakh crore announced in the budget last year. The estimated capital outlay on Railways' strategic lines in FY25 has also increased to Rs 107 crore from the revised estimate of Rs 101 crore for FY24, significantly higher than the initial estimate of Rs 75 crore.

The NHAI has been allocated Rs 1.68 lakh crore, up from the revised estimate of Rs 1.67 lakh crore for the ongoing financial year while Rs 2.5 lakh crore has been allocated to the Ministry of Road Transport and Roadways as capital outlay on roads and bridges, marginally higher than the revised estimate of Rs 2.4 lakh crore for FY24.

## BUDGET 2024-25

## 9 RURAL



*'MGNREGA allocation is not done on the basis of a trend. It is based on the demand coming from the ground.'*

## TARGET FOR LAKHPATI DIDI RAISED FROM 2 CRORE TO 3 CRORE

## Job guarantee scheme outlay stays at ₹86,000 cr, no change in PM-Kisan

Govt hiked outlay by ₹26,000 crore in RE for 2023-24 from ₹60,000 crore in BE owing to high demand

HARIKISHAN SHARMA & HARISH DAMODARAN  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman has provided Rs 86,000 crore for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme in the Interim Budget for 2024-25, retaining it at the same level as provided for in the revised estimate for 2023-24.

While she had provided only Rs 60,000 crore for 2023-24 in her Budget presentation last February, the government had to increase the allocation during the year following continued robust demand for work under the scheme, despite the economy emerging fully from the Covid and Ukraine war-induced disruptions.

The two pandemic years of 2020-21 and 2021-22 saw all-time-high funding and job generation under MGNREGA, which guarantees a minimum 100 days of unskilled manual work in a financial year (April-March) to every rural household on demand. Even 2022-23, which unleashed Russia's invasion of Ukraine, generated higher than average (pre-pandemic) person-days of employment.

The current fiscal was expected to be the first normal year after the pandemic, which also accounted for the MGNREGA budget being slashed to the lowest-ever level since 2017-18 (see table). But as it turned out, work demand under the scheme – launched in February 2006 by the previous UPA government – remained high. If the trend of employment during April-January 2023-24 holds, the fiscal could end up with 300 crore-plus person-days getting generated. That would be the third highest, after the record 363-389 crore person-days of 2020-21 and 2022-23.

MGNREGA is supposedly a demand-driven scheme; the government can always meet additional funds requirements based on demand for works through supplementary demands for grants. The higher provision in the Interim Budget may, nevertheless, send positive signals to states for taking up MGNREGA works, ahead of Lok Sabha elections due in April-May. These are generally high-demand months before the southwest monsoon's onset in June.

While MGNREGA was a UPA baby, the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) is a scheme that was started by the Modi government and became operational from December 1, 2018. The scheme's beneficiaries – roughly 10 crore landholding farmer families, receiving an income support of Rs 6,000 per year – were paid two installments of Rs 2,000 each before and during the last national elections in April-May 2019.

There were expectations that the Modi government would increase the annual payment under PM-Kisan as a pre-poll sop – from Rs 6,000 to about Rs 9,000 – in Thursday's



MGNREGA guarantees a minimum 100 days of unskilled manual work in a financial year (April-March) to every rural household on demand. File

## CENTRE'S SPENDING UNDER MGNREGA

|           | Outlay          | Work Done* |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| 2013-14   | ₹32,994.12 cr   | 220.37     |
| 2014-15   | ₹32,463.40 cr   | 166.21     |
| 2015-16   | ₹37,340.71 cr   | 235.15     |
| 2016-17   | ₹48,214.95 cr   | 235.65     |
| 2017-18   | ₹55,166.04 cr   | 233.74     |
| 2018-19   | ₹61,815.09 cr   | 267.96     |
| 2019-20   | ₹71,686.70 cr   | 265.35     |
| 2020-21   | ₹1,11,169.53 cr | 389.09     |
| 2021-22   | ₹98,467.85 cr   | 363.19     |
| 2022-23   | ₹90,805.93 cr   | 293.72     |
| 2023-24BE | ₹60,000 cr      | NA         |
| 2023-24RE | ₹86,000 cr      | 262.77**   |
| 2024-25BE | ₹86,000 cr      | NA         |

\*Crore person-days of employment generated;  
\*\*Till January 31;  
BE: Budget Estimates; RE: Revised Estimates.

Interim Budget (the scheme was, in fact, officially announced in the last 2019-20 Interim Budget of Piyush Goyal). But this did not happen. The outlay for the scheme in 2024-25 has been retained at the current fiscal's budget and revised estimate of Rs 60,000 crore.

Later, addressing a press conference, Sitharaman said, "MGNREGA allocation is not done on the basis of a trend. It is based on the demand coming from the ground." In response to a query about the states' cooperation in the implementation of the scheme, Sitharaman said the CAG has commented on the way MGNREGA is operating in some states.

In a separate announcement, the Finance Minister said it has been decided to enhance target for Lakhpatti Didi from 2 crore to 3 crore.

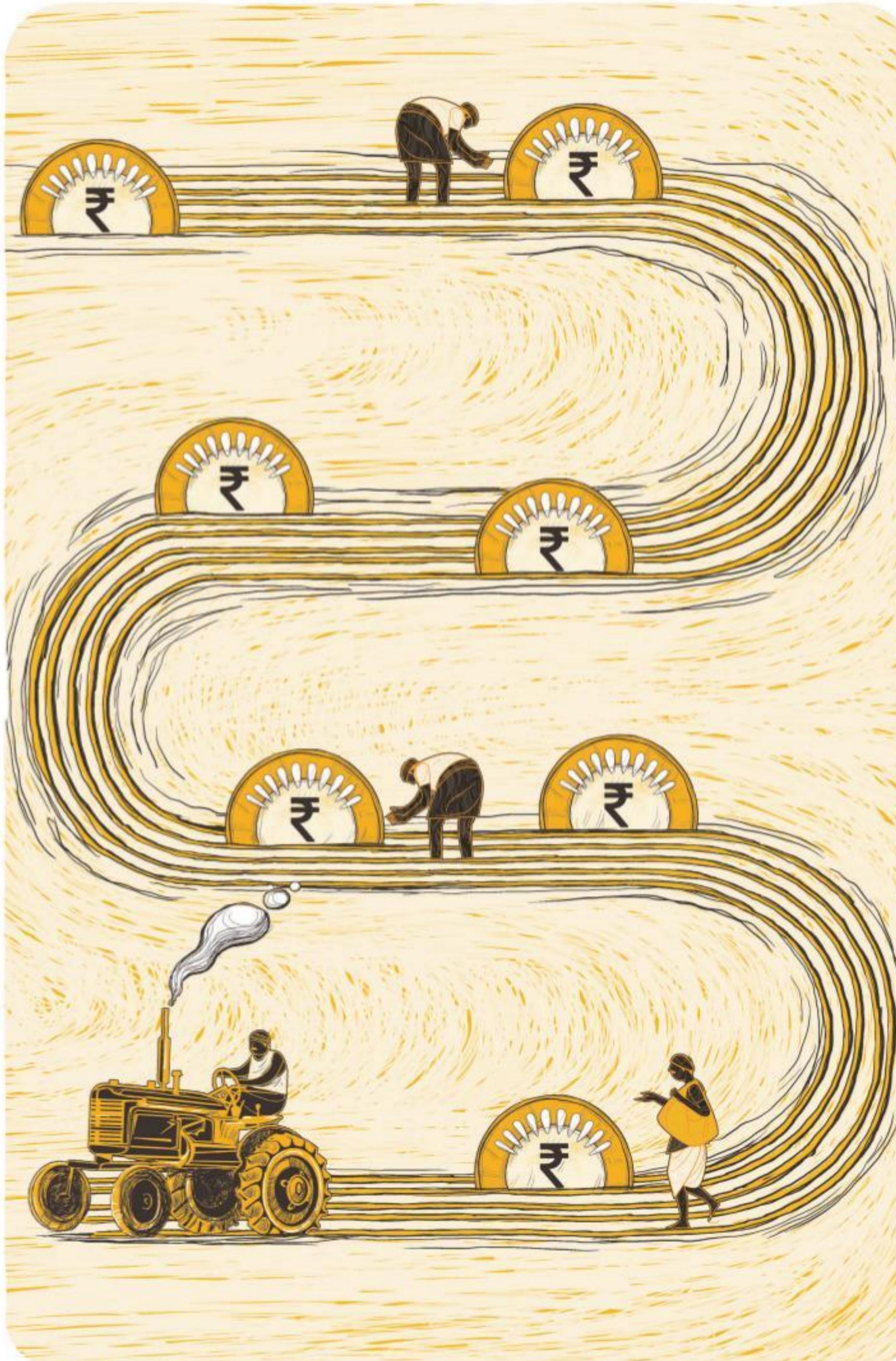


Illustration: Suvajit Dey

₹500 cr for Drone Didis, plan for India's self-reliance in edible oils

HARIKISHAN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE GOVERNMENT will be formulating a strategy to achieve 'atmanirbhartha' (self-reliance) in edible oils through measures including research and modern farming techniques, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Thursday.

Describing farmers as "Annadata", the Finance Minister said efforts will be stepped up for value addition in the agricultural sectors as well as for boosting farmers' income. She also promised promotion of investment – both private and public – in post-harvest activities to boost food processing levels.

Sitharaman allocated Rs 500 crore for the Nano Drone Didi scheme, which aims to provide drones to 15,000 Women SHGs for providing rental services to farmers. In the fisheries sector, she announced, five integrated aquaparks will be set up.

India relies on imports to meet its domestic demand for edible oils. During 2022-23 (November-October), India imported nearly 165 lakh tonnes of cooking oils, worth Rs 1.38 lakh crore.

Presenting the Interim Budget Thursday, Sitharaman said, "Building on the initiative announced in 2022, a strategy will be formulated to achieve 'atmanirbhartha' for oil seeds such as mustard, groundnut, sesame, soybean, and sunflower. This will cover research for high-yielding varieties, widespread adoption of modern farming techniques, market linkages, procurement, value addition, and crop insurance."

Overall, Sitharaman allocated Rs 1.27 lakh crore for the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare – of this, Rs 1.17 lakh crore is for Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, and Rs 9,941 crore for Department of Agricultural Research and Education.

Highlighting that the Government set up a separate Department for Fisheries realising the importance of assisting fishermen, Sitharaman said both inland and aquaculture production had doubled, as had seafood export since 2013-14.

"Implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) will be stepped up to: (1) enhance aquaculture productivity from existing three to five tonnes per hectare; (2) double exports to Rs 1 lakh crore and (3) generate 55 lakh employment opportunities in near future. Five integrated aquaparks will be set up," the Finance Minister said.

Describing farmers as "Annadata", Sitharaman said: "The efforts for value addition in the agricultural sector and boosting farmers' income will be stepped up... we will promote private and public investment in post-harvest activities including aggregation, modern storage, efficient supply chains, primary and secondary processing and marketing and branding." Application of Nano DAP on various crops will be expanded in all agro-climatic zones, she added.

## ON THE BACK OF LESS FREE GRAIN AND EASING GLOBAL FERTILISER PRICES

## Food, fertiliser, fuel subsidy bill to fall to 5-year low

HARISH DAMODARAN  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE CENTRE'S subsidy bill on the '3 Fs' – food, fertiliser and fuel – is slated to fall to a five-year-low of Rs 3,81,175 crore in 2024-25, as per the Interim Budget. There are two main drivers for the decline.

The first is the discontinuation of the free, additional 5-kg monthly grain allocation to the 80 crore-plus public distribution system (PDS) beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. This extra rice or wheat – over and above the regular 5 kg/person/month PDS quota under the National Food Security Act – was given during the post-Covid period from April 2020 to December 2022. That ended effective from the last calendar year.

With the annual grain offtake through the PDS and other schemes falling to 64-65 million tonnes (mt) in 2023-24 (as against 92.9 mt in 2020-21, 105.6 mt in 2021-22 and 92.7 mt in 2022-23) and the government's procurement as well as stocks in godowns also declining (translating into reduced carrying cost of buffer beyond operational requirements), the food subsidy is being projected at Rs 2,05,250 crore for 2024-25.

That's down from the revised estimate (RE) of Rs 2,13,332 crore for this fiscal, Rs 2,72,802 crore for 2022-23 and Rs 2,88,969 crore for 2021-22.

The subsidy hit an all-time-high of Rs 5,41,330 in 2020-21, when a one-time provision was made to enable the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to repay some Rs 3,39,236 crore of outstanding loans taken

## SPENDING UNDER '3F' SUBSIDIES (₹ CR)

| Food      | Fertiliser  | Fuel        | Total     |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 2014-15   | 1,17,671.16 | 71,075.62   | 60,268.82 |
| 2015-16   | 1,39,419    | 72,415.17   | 29,999    |
| 2016-17   | 1,10,172.96 | 66,312.93   | 27,538.71 |
| 2017-18   | 1,00,281.69 | 66,467.57   | 24,460.49 |
| 2018-19   | 1,01,327    | 70,604.8    | 24,836.95 |
| 2019-20   | 1,08,688.35 | 81,124.33   | 38,528.78 |
| 2020-21   | 5,41,330.14 | 1,27,921.74 | 38,454.64 |
| 2021-22   | 2,88,968.54 | 1,53,758.1  | 3,422.6   |
| 2022-23   | 2,72,802.38 | 2,51,339.36 | 6,817.37  |
| 2023-24BE | 1,97,350    | 1,75,099.92 | 2,257.09  |
| 2023-24RE | 2,12,332    | 1,88,893.8  | 12,240    |
| 2024-25BE | 2,05,250.01 | 1,63,999.8  | 11,925.01 |

BE: Budget Estimates; RE: Revised Estimates.

from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). Prior to 2020-21, the Centre wasn't wholly funding the subsidy, arising from the difference between the FCI's "economic cost" (what it incurs in procuring, distributing and storing grain) and its average issue price. To bridge the gap, it had to then borrow from the NSSF at an interest rate of 7.4-8.8 per cent annum.

FCI's economic cost is currently Rs 39.18/kg for rice and Rs 27.03/kg for wheat (budget estimates for 2023-24), while the same grains are issued entirely free to PDS beneficiaries.

The second driver for the Centre's lower subsidy outgo is fertiliser. This bill soared to

a record Rs 2,51,339 crore in 2022-23, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 that led to skyrocketing international prices of fertilisers and raw materials.

Those prices have since eased: Global urea prices averaged \$402 per tonne in December 2023 (as against \$576 in December 2022 and \$990 in December 2021). The corresponding per-tonne landed import prices were \$595 (\$723 and \$898) for di-ammonium phosphate, \$319 (\$590 and \$445) for muriate of potash, \$985 (\$1,175 and \$1,330) for phosphoric acid, \$592 (\$1,120 and \$990) for ammonia, and \$98 (\$198 and \$308) for sulphur.

As a result of the ease in prices, the fer-

tiliser subsidy fell to Rs 188,894 crore in 2023-24 and is budgeted even lower at Rs 164,000 crore for the coming fiscal.

The third major '3F' subsidy head is fuel, which touched Rs 96,880 crore in 2012-13 and Rs 85,378 crore in 2013-14. The petroleum subsidy fell subsequently with benign global crude prices and the Narendra Modi government limiting it only to sale of LPG cylinders and providing connections to poor/low-income households.

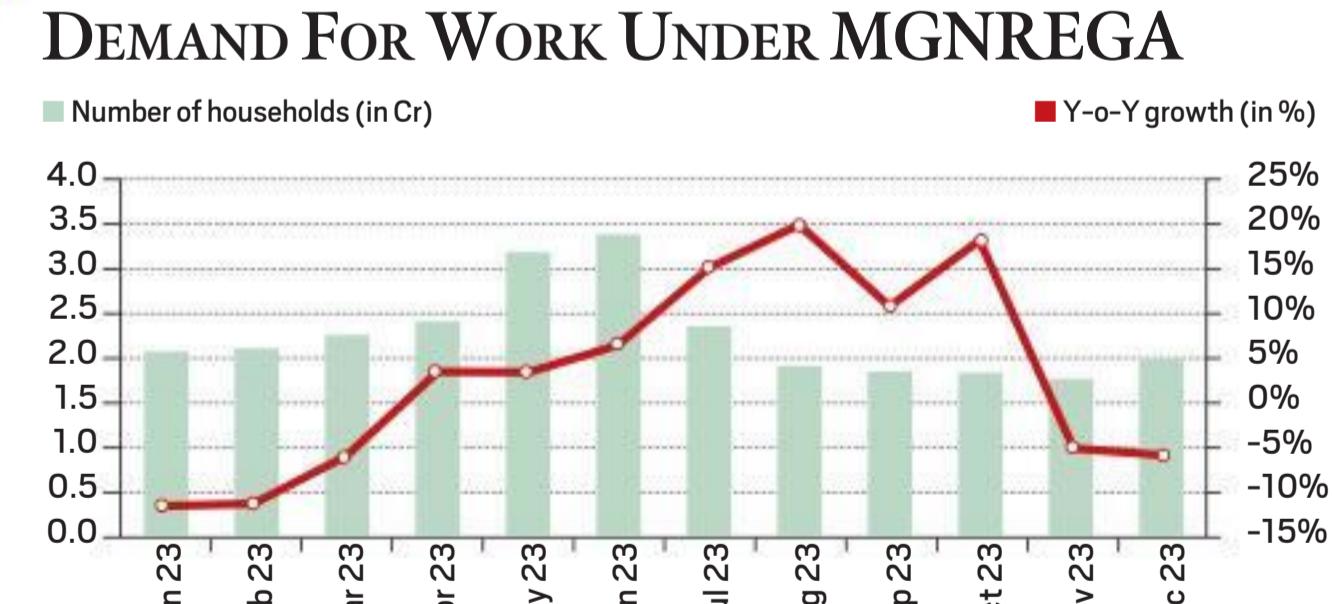
Retail prices of diesel and petrol have, however, not been revised since they were last cut on May 22, 2022. That has pushed up petroleum subsidy to Rs 12,000 crore levels in the current as well as ensuing fiscal.

EXPLAINED  
WITHOUT MUCH CHANGE

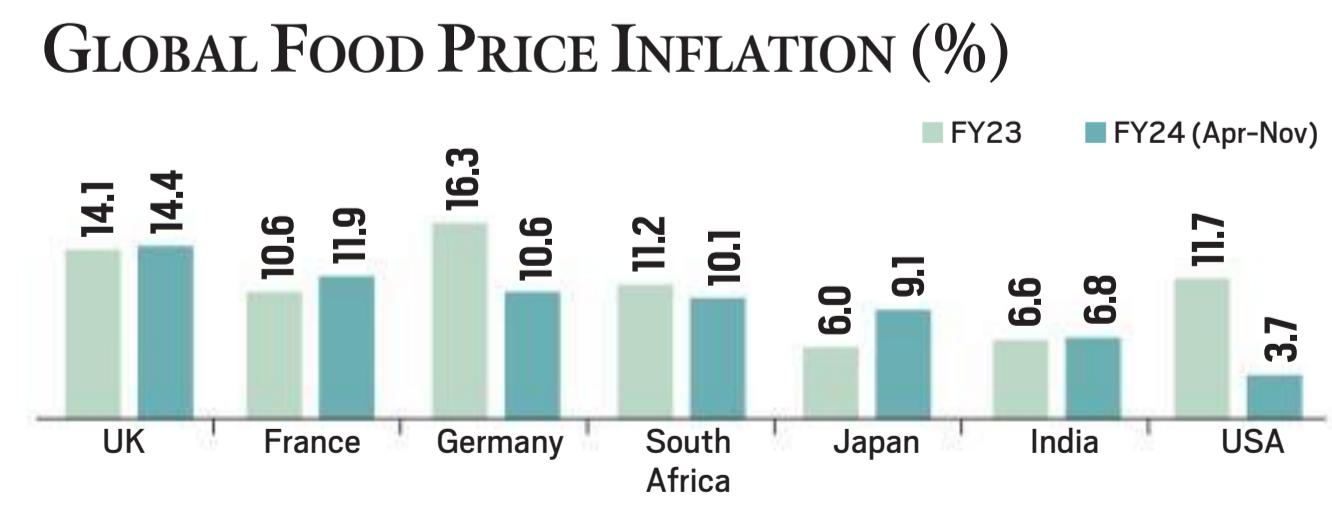
THE INTERIM Budget has predictably not tinkered with the free grain scheme or raised fertiliser and fuel prices. Yet, the Centre's subsidy bill is pegged at a five-year-low, on the back of lower PDS offtake and easing global fertiliser prices. Any further rationalisation can be expected only post the Lok Sabha elections under the next government.

Source: MoSPI for India and OECD for other countries  
\*as on 14.12.2023

## DEMAND FOR WORK UNDER MGNREGA



## GLOBAL FOOD PRICE INFLATION (%)



## WOMEN IN NREGA



## BUDGET 2024-25

10

## WELFARE



'Our vision for 'Viksit Bharat' is that of prosperous Bharat in harmony with nature, modern infrastructure, and providing opportunities for all citizens and all regions...'

## HOUSING FOR MIDDLE CLASS, PM AWAS YOJANA-GRAMIN

## 2 cr new rural houses, scheme for urban buyers

Additional homes under PMAY-G to be built in next five years; new programme for urban areas to help 'deserving sections' of middle class living in chawls and slums

HARIKISHAN SHARMA & DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

KEEPING IN view the emerging demand of households, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Thursday that two crore more houses will be built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) in rural areas in the next five years, while for cities, the government would bring a new scheme to help the middle-class group buy or build their own homes.

In her Budget speech, Sitharaman said that despite the challenges due to Covid-19, the implementation of PMAY-G continued and the government is close to achieving the target of three crore houses. "Two crore more houses will be taken up in the next five years to meet the requirement arising from the increase in

the number of families," the Finance Minister said, while presenting the Union Budget (Interim) 2024-25.

In all, the government has allocated Rs 54,500.14 crore for PMAY-G, which is almost equal to the current year's budgetary allocation of Rs 54,487.00 crore. However, it is around 41 per cent lower as compared to the revised estimate (RE) of Rs 32,000.01 crore.

The PMAY-G allocation has two components — PMAY-program component and interest payment to NABARD for EBR loans. Of these two, the PMAY-program component was allocated Rs 50,486.99 crore in the Budget 2023-24, however, it has been reduced to 28,174.48 crore at the RE stage. The Rs 4,000-crore allocation made for the interest payment to NABARD for EBR loans component has been reduced to Rs 3,825.52 crore at the RE stage. Due to this reduction, the overall allocation of the PMAY-G came down to Rs 32,000.01 crore.



Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin aims to provide pucca houses with a minimum area of 25 square metre. File

The PMAY-G is a flagship central government scheme, involving the states, that aims to provide pucca houses with a minimum area

of 25 square metre with basic amenities to people in rural areas who are homeless or live in kutcha and dilapidated houses.

Each beneficiary gets funds up to Rs 1.2 lakh in the plains and Rs 1.30 lakh in hilly states, difficult areas, and tribal and backward districts under the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). The funds are to be split in a 60:40 ratio between the Centre and states, respectively, with the target of constructing 2.95 crore houses by March 2024.

Against the mandated target of 2.95 crore houses, more than 2.94 crore have already been sanctioned to the beneficiaries by various States/UTs and construction of 2.56 crore houses has also been completed as on January 31, 2023.

To help the "deserving sections" of the middle class living in the urban areas, the Finance Minister said, the government will launch a scheme for those living in rented houses, or

slums, or chawls and unauthorised colonies' to buy or build their own houses.

Quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech last year, where he said: "the weaker sections living in the cities face a lot of problems. Middle-class families are dreaming of buying their own houses. We are coming up with a new scheme in the coming years that will benefit those families that live in cities but are living in rented houses, slums, chawls, and unauthorised colonies. If they want to build their own houses, we will assist them with relief in interest rates and loans from banks that will help them save lakhs of rupees."

When asked for details of the scheme at a press conference later in the day, Finance Secretary TV Somanathan said a token amount had been included in the interim Budget and once the contours of the scheme are finalised, the allocations would be made.

**E.**  
**EXPLAINED**

## BENEFICIARIES AND THE BENEFITS

The dispensation has again trusted the PMAY-G, popularity of which has helped in shaping and cementing the NDA government's base among the beneficiaries. The scheme has also become principal means of pushing capital expenditure in rural areas, creating assets and generating jobs.

Govt makes HPV shot for girls a priority, no separate allocation yet  
PM-JAY to cover all ASHA, Anganwadi workers and helpers

ANONNA DUTT  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

UNION FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday announced that the government will encourage vaccination for girls in the age group of 9 to 14 years for prevention of cervical cancer. The minister, however, did not make any mention of separate allocation for the same.

"The blueprint of how the government will support HPV vaccination hasn't been finalised yet. However, the mention in the Budget speech shows the intention of the government to tackle vaccine-preventable cancer," said a Health Ministry official. Cervical cancer continues to be the second most common cancer among women in India with 1.25 lakh cases and 75,000 deaths reported each year.

Sitharaman in her Budget speech also said that the vaccine management platform U-WIN — on the lines of CoWIN used for Covid-19 vaccination — will be rolled out across the country for the government's universal immunisation programme.

Sources had previously told *The Indian Express* that the government was likely to roll out the HPV vaccination campaign by the second quarter this year, covering all eligible girls in three phases over three years. After the catch-up phase, the vaccine would be included as part of routine immunisation for girls at age 9, as per the source. This was also suggested by the National Technical Advisory Group for Immunization (NTAGI), which guides the government on its vaccination policy.

The campaign is likely to use the indigenously developed vaccine, marketed by Serum Institute of India, called Cervavac. The vaccine is available in the market for Rs 2,000 per dose, which the company is likely to supply to the government at a much lower cost.

Sitharaman also announced that the government's flagship health insurance scheme will be extended to cover all ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers and helpers. The allocation for the scheme has been increased by Rs 300 crore in the Interim Budget to Rs 7,500 crore.

There are over 10 lakh ASHA workers and 24.5 lakh Anganwadi workers and helpers in the country. ASHA workers, who are referred to as the fourth tier of public health in India, are responsible for taking government schemes to people's doors. Anganwadi workers and helpers, on the other hand, are responsible for providing child care and nutrition services. At present, the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) provides a Rs 5 lakh annual family coverage to the poorest 40 per cent of the country.

The Finance Minister also announced plans to set up more medical colleges. There were over 1 lakh MBBS seats in the current batch. "Several youths are ambitious to get qualified as doctors. They aim to serve our people through improved healthcare services. Our government plans to set up more medical colleges by utilising the existing hospital infrastructure under various departments. A committee for this purpose will be set up to examine the issues and make relevant recommendations," the minister said.

The allocation for Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, however, went down by Rs 1,000 crore in the Interim Budget to Rs 2,330 crore. The programme helps in setting up new AIIMS and upgrading government medical colleges by adding new beds, super-specialty departments, and PG seats.



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

## TERMS OF REFERENCE TO BE RELEASED IN DUE COURSE: MINISTRY

## In pursuit of Viksit Bharat, a panel to look at population challenges

HARIKISHAN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

AMID DEMAND for a law for population control, the government Thursday announced plans to form a high-powered committee for an extensive consideration of the challenges arising from fast population growth and demographic changes. The announcement was made by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her speech, presenting the Union Budget (Interim) 2024-25 in Lok Sabha.

Talking about "societal changes", Sitharaman said, "The government will form a high-powered committee for an extensive consideration of the challenges arising from

fast population growth and demographic changes." "The committee will be mandated to make recommendations for addressing these challenges comprehensively in relation to the goal of 'Viksit Bharat', she announced.

The minister said the government will present a detailed roadmap for "pursuit" of 'Viksit Bharat' in the full Budget in July. While no detail on the mandate of the committee was spelt out by the government, a Finance Ministry official said the terms of reference of the panel will be released in due course.

To a question on the proposed committee, Ajay Seth, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, said, "Wait for the terms of reference to come out, and then you will get to know the exact details. But the overall ap-



India's Total Fertility Rate has seen a decline from 2.5 in 2001 to 2.2 in 2011, according to the Census. File

proach is that it is a huge opportunity but there are challenges. Both have to be taken note of and appropriate responses need to be taken. That's really the broad idea I can share with you. The terms and reference will come out in due course".

The announcement comes at a time when some BJP leaders have demanded a law on population control. BJP's Meenut MP Rajendra Agrawal had introduced a Private Member's Bill — The Population (Control) Bill, 2021 — in the Lok Sabha, while the saffron party's Rajya Sabha member Rakesh Sinha had introduced his Population Regulation Bill in July 2019, which he eventually withdrew, following the intervention of Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

While Sitharaman mentioned "challenges arising from fast population growth and demographic changes", the Census data shows that there has been a drop in Total Fertility Rate in India.

India's Total Fertility Rate (children per woman) has declined from 2.5 in 2001 to 2.2 in 2011, according to the Census 2011. According to the National Family Health Survey, India's Total Fertility Rate has further dropped to 2.0 during 2019-21, which is even below the replacement-level fertility of 2.1 children per woman. Some states such as Arunachal Pradesh (1.8), Chhattisgarh (1.8), Haryana (1.9), Odisha (1.8) and Punjab (1.6) have even a Total Fertility Rate that is lower than the national average.

## BUDGET 2024-25

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## INTERVIEW

In this Interim Budget, there is little or no populism. What is the thought that went behind taking such a bold move ahead of the general elections.

Two things... our performance in 10 years... 10 years of taking the route of empowering people and not going by entitlement. When houses reach people, electricity reaches people, and you also have money coming through direct benefit transfer, you financially empower them, you also make sure that opportunities are given to them. So the mantras that we used, whether it was 'sabka saath sabka vikas', whether you are looking at making sure that you don't differentiate between beneficiaries on any other score except (that) he deserves this.

There is actual development reaching the ground. There is no appeasement of sorts. There's no differentiation among people. No caste or religion is brought in. As a result, you will find that in the last 10 years, we have actually laid the foundation for people to now think in terms of meeting their aspirations.

So, the vote on account budget was not seen as an instrument to tell people we can do this or we can do that without having performed in the last 10 years. We didn't want any populism coming here. We knew that our track record would explain it.

**Over the 10 years, you have given out basics... banking, electricity, cooking gas and so on. So, you effectively created 500 million plus new stakeholders in the Indian economy. How do you see this playing out for the economy and society going forward?**

That will be the trigger point for any consumption in the future. Consumption not just of basic necessities, not just of food products, but also of services, education. Not as corporate education, but seeking skills, seeking knowledge, seeking opportunity. And it is for that that the Innovation Fund has been set up and a large corpus is being given over five years.

**What is the vision behind this?**

Economists all over the world agree that if you spend one rupee in capital expenditure, the effect of that will be at least 1 rupee and 45-46 paise.

If you do not do that and spend in revenue, you will not be able to get even 90 paise. Recovery (from Covid) has to be faster, and services should be better, so take the route of capital expenditure. And in the next two years, you will see that recovery has increased and is also sustainable... That is why the importance of capital expenditure is there.

**In your Budget, you have not only stayed on the commitment on the fiscal glide, but you have improved on it. Gross borrowings are obviously down, which means RBI gets more room for manoeuvre in its monetary policy.**

The emphasis we are laying is on being fiscally prudent, without affecting our schemes, without denying funds anywhere, and actually by avoiding wastage. That is why we repeatedly talk about DBT... (Rs) 2.6 lakh crores would have gone waste and no one would have known where it went, because it has gone to unborn children, it's gone to dead people, to people who don't exist and so on. So when you brought in technology and synchronised it with biometric validation, you were able to save money.

So your prudence is not in just cutting expenditure, which we have not done in large cases, but in improving revenue and avoiding wastage. Taxpayers' money has been treated with the due respect that it deserves. And that is why today we have bettered on our fiscal deficit numbers this year and for the next year as well.

**You have increased the target of Lakhs Didi from 2 crore to 3 crore. Is there any timeline for that?**

Yes, in 5 years.

**On growth trends... in the run-up to the Budget, the RBI first revised it upwards pretty sharply, then the Central Statistical Office came out with an even higher estimate. Are you looking at a new trend rate of growth for the economy as opposed to the previous rates?**

**We didn't want any populism... knew our track record would explain it**

FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN says the Interim Budget is premised on the Modi Government's performance in the last 10 years and the mantra of sabka saath, sabka vikas. Edited excerpts from her post-Budget interview with DD News



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

It will be too early for me to say that. However, I am seeing that kind of buoyancy... that kind of energy coming out of every sector. Earlier, you would find that if you had a trend coming in the manufacturer-

revving to move fast.

**We have seen income tax collections exceeding corporate tax collections. Second, when you had put out the**

**earlier estimates, we saw that among the slabs there was a wealth effect which is operational. So is this exactly what you are talking about, that the growing aspirations are now manifesting even in**

#### income streams?

Partly, yes. It is also that newer areas of activity, in which earlier people wouldn't want to tread, are now opening up opportunities. Space is a classic example. India's space industry has been there for a long time, doing well. It's not as if they have succeeded only now. But the energy with which it is growing... private participation, contribution of start-ups are giving it a multiplier unlike before. As a result what is happening is that the contribution to the GDP is coming from areas which earlier did not even exist and that is why your GDP's composition will have to be studied for what it is now..., because areas not recognised until now have suddenly spurred growth and that is contributing.

**You have announced Rs 1 lakh crore corpus for research.... People would like to know more about this.**

Yes, but I won't be able to tell you in detail now, because that department will spend a lot of time there. But largely, we are providing money interest-free, and they will get a cheaper corpus. It can be some of the government companies or some special purpose vehicle which will be created for it.

**But you have joined it with technology. The people who have joined it with technology will fund it.**

Yes, that's why I believe it is a major step forward. In the next five years, when it will be used for many small and big innovations, it will contribute towards development directly. And when one thing gets the benefit because of innovation, it immediately affects the entire sector.

Like, after bringing Bharat digital payment into the system, you see how much payment is being made from small villages, how much receipts are being made. It is not that money is being received there. But some payment is going for some activity.

**You also identified DPI (digital public infrastructure) as a factor of production. Is India now looking to harvest its digital dividends?**

India created public infrastructure, made it available to private parties, made it available for small, medium fellows who all want to get onto that and benefit... Those who contribute now, building on the public infrastructure, also stand to benefit because they themselves are taking that produce, which is essentially a public infrastructure foundation, and building on it. That itself is becoming a commodity for transactions.

#### What is your message for the states?

The government has shown good enthusiasm in this matter. What all? The capital that we are giving to states, 50-year interest free, special assistance, whatever they call it. Whatever is spent through the central department is, at least 30%, investment in states. Today, the states are able to complete their long-term projects quickly. We want to keep that enthusiasm alive.

**You talked of social changes, setting up a high-powered committee to look at population growth and demographic changes. What is the thought behind it and is there any timeline?**

I've said in a different context that there are three Ds about which we are talking: demography, democracy, and diversity. All three are characteristically India's advantage. So now, when this advantage exists for us, are we able to make a long term plan for it? Are we able to really leverage that advantage?... So for this a comprehensive understanding is required. We need to have some group taking all these considerations into their minds and sit and draft up something for the government.

**Everyone will have a role to play in Viksit Bharat?**

It has everyone's contribution. Otherwise the 2047 targets will not be reached. Bharat should take everyone along. We are committed to all the programmes for that. This is the ideal of BJP... all the BJP workers know the party should be *sarvavyapi* and *sarvashashi*.... whatever work we are doing through the government, it should be for overall development. We will work on this 'mool mantra'.

'WE SET A BIG GOAL, ACHIEVE IT, AND THEN SET AN EVEN BIGGER GOAL FOR OURSELVES'

## Budget carries confidence of continuity, empowers Viksit Bharat pillars: PM

HARIKISHAN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Thursday said that the Interim Budget for 2024-25 will build the future of the country and empower Viksit Bharat's main pillars – the poor, youth, women, and farmers.

The PM said: "Today's Budget, though an Interim Budget, is inclusive and innovative. This budget carries the confidence of continuity... will empower all four pillars of 'Viksit Bharat' – the poor, youth, women, and farmers. Nirmala Ji's budget is for building the future of the country. This Budget carries the guarantee of strengthening the foundation of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047."

Observing that the Budget reflects young aspirations of "Bharat", the Prime

Minister said, "Two important decisions have been taken... A fund of Rs 1 lakh crore has been announced for research and innovation. There has also been an announcement to expand the tax exemption for start-ups."

He said that the Budget has allocated a historic high of Rs 11 lakh crore for capital expenditure.

"While keeping the fiscal deficit under control in this Budget, a historic high of Rs 11,111 crore has been allocated for capital expenditure. In the language of economists, this is somewhat of a sweet spot... This will not only lead to the construction of 21st-century modern infrastructure in Bharat, but also create countless new opportunities for employment for the youth." The PM said that the announcement to manufacture 40,000 modern coaches under the



PM Narendra Modi delivers his remarks on the Interim Budget. ANI

'Vande Bharat standard' and induct them in regular passenger trains will enhance the experience of comfortable travel for millions of passengers across the country.

"We set a big goal, achieve it, and then set an even bigger goal for ourselves. We have built more than 4 crore houses for the poor in villages and cities. Now, we have set a goal of building 2 crore new houses. Our initial goal was to make 2 crore women 'lakhs didis'... now, this goal has been increased to 3 crore... The Ayushman Bharat scheme has greatly helped the poor. Now, Anganwadi and ASHA workers will also benefit from this scheme," the PM said.

"In this Budget, significant emphasis has been placed on empowering the poor and middle class, creating new income opportunities for them. Under the rooftop solar campaign, one-crore families will receive

free electricity... people will also earn an additional income of Rs 15,000-20,000 annually by selling surplus electricity to the government. This income will be available to every family," he said.

The Prime Minister said that the income tax remission scheme will provide significant relief to nearly one crore middle-class individuals.

"Previous governments had burdened the common man with a heavy sword hanging over their heads for decades. Today, crucial and significant decisions have also been made for the farmers in this budget. Whether it's the use of Nano DAF, a new scheme for livestock, expansion of the PM Matsya Sampada Yojana, or the Aatmanirbhar Oil Seed Abhiyan, farmers' income will increase, and there will be considerable reduction in expenses," he said.

## ABOUT POPULARITY, NOT POPULISM

A positive offshoot of apparent political confidence is Modi government's renewed emphasis on fiscal consolidation.

Going ahead, challenge is to spur private investment

**T**HE NARENDRA MODI government's interim budget for 2024-25 is a vision statement for the next 25 years — the so-called Amrit Kaal — that will lead to Viksit Bharat, or to India becoming a developed country, by 2047. What it also seems to underline, arguably, is the ruling party's confidence in its own prospects of coming back to power in the April-May national elections. One indication of this is — no new welfare schemes or income tax giveaways.

This is in contrast to the last interim budget for 2019-20 which saw the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) programme, delivering direct income support of Rs 6,000 per year to all farm households in the country. In fact, the scheme was implemented with retrospective effect from December 2018, thereby translating into a huge pre-election sop. Also, the tax liability on individuals with annual income of up to Rs 5 lakh was completely waived off, along with an increase in the standard deduction for salaried persons. This interim budget, by contrast, has not witnessed any increase in the PM-Kisan transfer — there was wide expectation of its going up to Rs 9,000 per year — or any tinkering with income tax rates or slabs.

In short, it has been a simple vote-on-account exercise, seeking Parliament's approval for routine expenditures till the next full-fledged budget is presented. The Modi government has not seen the need for any populist measures ahead of Lok Sabha polls in 2024, unlike in 2019, when it was perhaps more uncertain of the outcome, especially after losing assembly elections in three major Hindi heartland states.

**A** POSITIVE OFFSHOOT of the apparent political confidence is the Modi government's renewed emphasis on fiscal consolidation. Not only has the Centre's gross fiscal deficit in the revised estimates for 2023-24 fallen below the budget target, both in absolute terms (from Rs 17,86,816 crore to Rs 17,34,773 crore) and relative to GDP (5.9 to 5.8 per cent), it is expected to decline even more sharply to 5.1 per cent in the coming fiscal year. More encouragingly, this is coming largely from a cut in the revenue deficit — from 3.9 per cent in 2022-23 to 2.8 per cent in the revised estimates (RE) for 2023-24, and to a budgeted 2 per cent in 2024-25.

On the other hand, the Centre's capital expenditure, which rose by 28.4 per cent in 2023-24 (RE), is budgeted to grow further by 16.9 per cent in 2024-25. This focus on the quantum as well as quality of fiscal consolidation — redirecting spending away from subsidies and other current outlays towards asset-creating capital expenditure — is welcome. It is especially so, ahead of elections.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reiterating the government's commitment to achieving a fiscal deficit of less than 4.5 per cent of GDP by 2025-26, signals two things. First, the Indian economy's normal growth trajectory has returned, so much so that the government feels less pressure to borrow and stimulate or provide extraordinary support to those worst impacted by pandemic-induced disruptions. Second, the impetus to growth is expected to henceforth come from the private sector. Lower government borrowings — yields on the benchmark 10-year-bond eased by nearly 0.1 percentage points on Thursday — will release more resources for private corporates to invest. Macroeconomic stability — be it government finances, external sector balance or corporate and bank balance sheets — along with a government with a decisive majority, could create conditions conducive for a much-overdue revival of private investment.

**T**HERE ARE four primary drivers of economic growth: Private consumption, private investment, exports and government expenditure. Currently, only the last engine is firing, while the other three are sputtering. The expansion in government spending, especially in the last three years, hasn't really crowded in private investment as per the conventional Keynesian prescription. India Inc, to quote Sitharaman, is like Hanuman hesitating to fly — in other words, invest. Without that, there can be no sustained formal job creation leading to higher incomes and consumption.

The two sectors that did well even amid the pandemic were IT services and start-ups. The five big IT majors — TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL and Tech Mahindra — alone registered a jump in their total employee headcount from 11.5 lakh in March 2020 to over 16 lakh in September 2022, on the back of increased digitisation even from businesses that were traditionally based more on physical contact. But the latest data for December 2023 shows their combined headcount falling to just 15.4 lakh.

It has been worse in the case of start-ups, which are facing a funding winter following the drying up of easy money from ultra-low global interest rates. Generating jobs for the Amrit Peethi — leveraging the demographic dividend that a young and growing workforce is supposed to bring — is going to be the single biggest policy and political challenge in Amrit Kaal. For that, Hanuman must fly.

## A DEFINING TEST

Against expectations, England won first Test of series. Win at Visakhapatnam could shake India's proud home record

**A** LAID BACK coastal city, a once powerful kingdom, the bed of several ferocious cyclones, is set to become the centre of the cricketing universe in the coming days. In Visakhapatnam will unfold, arguably, the most defining Test match this year, one that could potentially signal the end of an era and the beginning of another. Against most expectations, England won the first Test of the series. Another one could shake the edifice of India's proud home record. Or will the Indians fight back, as they have in the past? Going in, the Visakhapatnam Test seems layered with intrigues — there are plots within plots.

This much is certain, Rohit Sharma's men find themselves under enormous pressure. They are injury-ravaged and idea-sapped. If they lose at Visakhapatnam, the backlash could be severe — heads will roll, leadership changes could set in. Most damningly, the halo would fade. India would no longer scare visiting sides. They would be less fazed by the turning tracks, knowing that India's spin-shy batsmen could stumble into the same graveyard. That was perhaps the biggest blow that England inflicted on India in the first Test at Hyderabad. They debunked the fear of turners. India's once biggest strength is now their deepest flaw. Thus, England have pushed India into unfamiliar terrain in their own bastion, the first time since Ricky Ponting's Australia breached the final frontier in 2004. The chaos the defeat whipped up, until the 2007 World Cup redemption and the dawn of a new era, is still fresh in memory.

But India have summoned rare courage in distress in the past. Remember their series win in Australia without half their first-choice eleven and after stumbling to their lowest ever total in Tests. They have gifted players to pull them back into the series. There is the wisdom of the seasoned Rohit Sharma and Ravi Ashwin, homing in on 500 wickets, the explosiveness of Jasprit Bumrah, and the youthful promise of Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer. But even as they have the belief and purpose, their calmness and clarity will be gauged in Visakhapatnam, making the game an unputdownable spectacle.

## THE EDITORIAL PAGE

### WORDLY WISE

WE MUST CONSULT OUR MEANS  
RATHER THAN OUR WISHES. — GEORGE WASHINGTON

# Stability over political gestures



NEELKANTH MISHRA

Government is dialing back its spending, marking an unwinding of pandemic-driven fiscal expansion

ECONOMIC THEORY SUGGESTS that governments should spend more when private firms and households do not feel confident and hold back spending. Once the latter feels confident, the government should dial back on its expenditure. This counter-cyclical fiscal strategy smoothens growth and makes it more sustainable. While governments, especially democratically elected ones, find the first part easy to do, they are generally reluctant to step back when the economy recovers.

However, surprising forecasters positively, the government continued to prioritise macroeconomic stability over easy political gestures. The fiscal deficit target of 5.1 per cent of GDP for FY2024-25 (FY25) is lower than even the lower end of the range of economist projections of 5.2 per cent to 5.5 per cent. The finance minister also reiterated the commitment to bring the deficit down below 4.5 per cent of GDP by FY2025-26 (FY26). The targeted primary deficit ratio for FY25 is 1.5 per cent, lower than the primary deficit seen in FY20. If the government achieves its FY26 deficit target, the primary deficit can be 0.8 per cent of GDP, close to pre-Covid levels of 0.4 per cent, marking a nearly complete unwinding of the fiscal expansion driven by the pandemic.

Interest costs, after all, reflect past deficits. The pandemic-era fiscal scars will continue to be visible through higher interest expenses for a while given the nearly 10 per cent point jump in the debt-to-GDP ratio. Fiscal discipline is necessary for many more years for the debt-to-GDP ratio to fall back to pre-Covid levels near 70 per cent. Even that is some distance from the 60 per cent of GDP that the FRBM Review Committee (to which this writer was an advisor) believed in 2016 was appropriate for India.

Improving the quality of spending is important when trying to bring down an elevated debt-to-GDP ratio, one of the major vulnerabilities for the economy. A high ratio limits the state's ability to support growth if the economy sees an unexpected growth shock and pushes up interest costs. This ratio rose due to the government absorbing a large part of the economic losses during pandemic-driven lockdowns.

The ratio will fall if the denominator (GDP) grows faster than the numerator (debt). But this needs deft management. The fiscal deficit ratio must fall to slow down growth in government debt, but if it is brought down too rapidly, it hurts GDP growth. The government seems to be calibrating its tightening as it gains confidence in the economic recovery — from 0.5 per cent in FY23 to 0.6 per cent in FY24 and now 0.7 per cent in FY25. It also needs to keep improving the quality of spending — money spent on building roads or railway tracks boosts GDP when being built, but also supports growth in later years by carrying goods/people. Spending more on consumption, on the other hand, mostly has a one-time impact on growth.

That year-on-year growth in capital expenditure (11 per cent) will continue to be faster than overall spending (6 per cent) is therefore encouraging. A large part of the increase in capex is for the interest-free loan to be given to private firms for research — this would take time to ramp up, and it is unclear whether Rs 740 billion can be disbursed within a year, but the government's focus on medium-term drivers of growth is clear. Expenditure excluding capex and interest costs is budgeted to be nearly unchanged year-on-year. Given the decline in global fertiliser prices, the fertiliser subsidy bill is expected to be lower.

Underlying this consolidation and adding to the quality of the budget are credible assumptions. The 10.5 per cent nominal GDP growth assumption is reasonable, and the increase in tax-to-GDP budgeted is consistent with prior trends. The steady 5 basis points (1 basis point is one-hundredth of a percent) annual improvement in personal income tax as a share of GDP between 2001 and 2019 has accelerated post-Covid, rising 20 bps annually. Corporate taxes as a share of GDP had risen from around 1.6 per cent in 2001 to nearly 4 per cent in 2008, but then fell to 2.3 per cent in 2020. Since then, as corporate profits rebounded, so did corporate taxes, improving to 2.7 per cent of GDP in FY24, and should improve further in FY25. Indirect taxes have been relatively steady as a percentage of GDP, with volatility only due

In the coming years, India should seek to undertake a revenue-based fiscal consolidation, given the rising expenditure needs of the economy (infrastructure, health, education, welfare nets). The interim budget was not the place to do it, but the post-election budget certainly will be. Direct tax reform that further boosts tax/GDP will be crucial for further consolidation. This must be complemented with a strategic asset sales programme. Given buoyant markets and rich valuations, this seems a fertile year to monetise assets and bring the deficit down while protecting expenditures.

## NEGLECTING THE FARM

Allocation for agriculture hasn't gone up, subsidies haven't been rationalised



ASHOK GULATI AND PURVI THANGARAJ

THE FIRST ADVANCE estimate for agriculture GDP in 2023-24 reveals a modest growth of 1.8 per cent, a significant dip from 4 per cent the previous year. This reflects stress in the farm sector. One had hoped that in the interim budget for 2024-25 (FY25), the Finance Minister (FM) would have been more generous towards this sector. However, a major increase in allocations has eluded it. Perhaps the FM is saving such allocations for the main budget in July.

The allocation for the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW) has seen a slight uptick of 0.6 per cent. In real terms, its allocation has gone down. The Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) received Rs 99.4 billion (BE) for FY25, a marginal 0.7 per cent increase over Rs 98.8 billion (RE) in FY24. The two together accounted for just 2.7 per cent of the total budget expenditure (Rs 47.6 trillion) and 4.9 percent of the centre's net tax revenue (Rs 26 trillion). However, the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying witnessed a 27 per cent increase — a commendable step, especially because there is an urgent need to manage foot and mouth disease, increase productivity and reduce methane emissions.

Budgetary support in the agriculture-food sector has primarily revolved around welfare measures and subsidies. Key components in this domain include food and fertiliser subsidies, along with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Though these do not come directly from the agriculture ministry they support the agri-food sector — either the farmers or the

consumers. A major income support for the agriculture ministry comes in the form of PM-KISAN, credit subsidy and the PM-Fasal Bhima Yojana. All these measures combined amount to Rs 5.52 trillion (BE) for FY25, slightly less than INR 5.8 trillion (RE) in FY24. This support accounts for 12 per cent of the overall interim budget and a significantly higher — 21 per cent — of the Centre's net tax revenue in FY25. It is compelling to note that the budget allocations for food and fertiliser subsidies, individually, account for a much higher budget than that compared to the Ministries of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

In FY25, the budgeted food subsidy fell to Rs 2.05 trillion (BE), compared to Rs 2.12 trillion (RE) in FY24 — a 3.3 per cent drop. However, this still underscores a significant bias towards consumers, as the subsidy caters to them rather than the 'annadata' (farmers). Free ration to 800 million people through the PM-Garib Kalyan Yojana is, of course, an accomplishment. But the necessity of extending this support to such a vast number of people must be questioned, especially when the FM says that roughly 25 crore people have been lifted out of multidimensional poverty in the Modi government's 10 years.

We feel there is an urgent need to rationalise the food subsidy, on the lines of what former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee had done in streamlining the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). Under TPDS, wheat and rice were given free to only the Antodaya category (extremely poor) of consumers but charged 50 per cent of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) to Below Poverty Line (BPL) category and 90 per cent of MSP to Above Poverty Line (APL) category. Rationalisation along such lines can save the Modi sarkar at least Rs 50,000 crore, which can be allocated for agri-R&D and more irrigation, especially micro-irrigation. This could help the country to produce "more with less" and ensure food security in the face of climate change. But this is an election year, and one could not expect major changes in the interim budget. Perhaps, it can be taken up in the July budget.

The fertiliser subsidy has come down from Rs 1.89 trillion (RE, FY24) to Rs 1.64 trillion (BE) in FY25. Whether this will finally result in a reduction or not will depend a lot on what happens to gas prices in FY25. But what is needed is rationalisation, especially in minimising the diversion of fertilisers to non-agricultural sectors, including beyond Indian boundaries. It is widely acknowledged in expert circles that around 20-25 per cent of urea is diverted. A potential solution is to shift from subsidising the price of urea to directly empowering farmers through direct cash transfers. This will enable farmers to purchase fertilisers at market prices while reducing leakages. This shift could result in savings of Rs 30,000-40,000 crore. The funds could then be directed towards enhancing development initiatives like PM-KISAN.

The budget for agriculture seems muted. One only hopes that the July budget will have major announcements for farmers and make agriculture vibrant and sustainable.

Gulati is distinguished professor and Thangaraj is a researcher at ICRIER. Views are personal



FEBRUARY 2, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

### US MILITARY BUDGET

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN presented Congress with a \$923 billion budget for fiscal 1985, with \$305 billion for defence — a hefty 13 per cent boost over last year — that seeks to maintain the momentum of his massive rearment programme. Reagan's proposed military spending would make it the largest defence budget since World War II.

### P C SETHI ON J&K

UNION HOME MINISTER P C Sethi has called

for stern action against secessionist and anti-national forces in Jammu and Kashmir. He warned CM Farooq Abdullah of "grave consequences" to the nation's integrity from their stepped-up activities in the state.

### AKALI DAL FACTIONS

AKALI DAL PRESIDENT Harchand Singh Longowal admitted his policy differences with militant Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. He said, "The Akali Dal is committed to maintaining peace and communal harmony. With Bhindranwale, I have basic

policy differences because he talks in the language of motorcycles, revolvers and revenge."

### CONGRESS DEFLECTION

THE EFFORTS OF some central Congress (I) leaders to dissuade M Chenna Reddy, former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, from quitting the party have so far failed. The leaders are keeping a close watch on the response Chenna Reddy is getting from the disgruntled elements both within the Congress (I) and the Telugu Desam.

# Over to the private sector

Steep fiscal consolidation in an election year is bold, necessary and must be complimented. Baton should now be passed



SAJJID Z CHINOY

**MODERN-DAY KEYNESIANISM** has been on full display since the pandemic struck. Advanced economies — scarred by the realisation that fiscal policy had not been counter-cyclical enough after the global financial crisis of 2008 and had deepened the hysteresis — went all in after the pandemic. But this time, as is often the case, policy overcorrected. Fiscal interventions in advanced economies were so large, and their withdrawal so glacial that it kept demand too hot, contributing to very sticky and elevated inflation over the last two years, and inducing the most aggressive monetary tightening cycle in 40 years. The case of the US is particularly instructive. The US fiscal deficit widened by a staggering 3 percentage points of GDP in 2023 even as the Fed was scrambling to bring inflation under control. Fiscal and monetary policy were working at cross-purposes and nullifying each other. On its part, fiscal policy had gone from being counter-cyclical to counter-productive.

The lesson is simple: Counter-cyclical policy is only efficacious and sustainable if it is symmetrical. The need to use firepower during slowdowns and crises is well understood. What's less appreciated is the act of amassing gunpowder during peaceful times — creating fiscal space when growth recovers.

It's against this backdrop that this year's interim budget needs to be assessed. Why was consolidation so important in India this year? To be sure, India's economy is in a different cyclical position from the US. Despite strong growth in 2023-24, output remains below its pre-pandemic path and inflation is coming off. Prima facie, this would argue for continued fiscal support. But this presumes there are no fiscal constraints. Instead, as the last decade has revealed, emerging and frontier economies that operate macroeconomic policy without respecting constraints do so at their own peril.

In India's case, the need to consolidate was both because of the elevated nature of starting points and its impact on inter-temporal public debt sustainability. Even in a strong growth year such as 2023-24, public debt to GDP is expected to increase from around 81 per cent of GDP to 83 per cent. A small increase in debt ratios is, by itself, not worrying in a world where public debt has gone up across the board. Instead, what is important is the signal it is sending: That India's consolidated deficit is too large for peace times and will continue to weigh adversely on debt dynamics if not brought down. This is because even as the Centre was committed to reducing its fiscal deficit from 6.4 per cent of GDP last year to 5.9 per cent in 2023-24, state deficits are on course to widen (from 2.8 per cent of GDP to 3.1 per cent or even wider), such that the consolidated fiscal deficit will stay close to 9 per cent of GDP, and the broader public sector borrowing requirements even higher. If deficits stayed at this level, it would take 8 per cent real growth (11.5 per cent nominal)



C R Sasikumar

year after year just to stabilise public debt/GDP at elevated levels — let alone bring it down. On a more operational level, it would have meant that in a "polycrisis" world, India would have left itself with little ammunition to respond to future shocks.

So, four years after the pandemic and with the economy recovering, meaningful fiscal consolidation was the need of the hour, and the budget should be commended for doubling down on it. Both this year's fiscal deficit (5.8 per cent of GDP) and next year's target (5.1 per cent of GDP) were lower than markets had envisaged. What this front loading of fiscal consolidation by the Centre does is also to take the pressure off the states, which have just begun to find their capex mojo (state capex is growing at 50 per cent this fiscal so far) amidst some revenue shortages. More generally, in walking the talk of symmetrical countercyclicality, fiscal policy deserves a lot of credit.

With the need to reduce deficits uncontested, the goal should now shift to doing so in a manner that extracts the least cost on growth. This involves several principles. First, achieve the consolidation, as much as possible, by raising revenues rather than compressing expenditures. This is because expenditure multipliers tend to be higher than revenue multipliers. Second, asset sales need to be a key part of any revenue strategy because it is the least growth-impinging manner of reducing the deficit. Third, on the expenditure side, health, education, safety nets, and capex must all be preserved, and ideally grown — given the dualities in income and consumption — even as deficits are brought down.

Many of these principles were in play in 2023-24. Capex rose from 2.7 to 3.2 per cent of GDP (a tad less than budgeted) even as the deficit came down from 6.4 per cent to 5.8 per cent of GDP. This was, in part, possible because gross tax revenues rose to 11.6 per cent of GDP — the highest in 16 years — as direct taxes have surged this year. As a consequence, combined tax/GDP could cross 18 per cent of GDP in 2023-24 for the first time.

In the coming years, India should seek to undertake a revenue-based fiscal consolidation, given the rising expenditure needs of the economy (infrastructure, health, education, welfare nets). The interim budget was not the place to do it, but the post-election budget certainly will be. Direct tax reform that further boosts tax/GDP will be crucial for further consolidation. This must be complemented with a strategic asset sales programme. Given buoyant markets and rich valuations, this seems a fertile year to monetise assets and bring the deficit down while protecting expenditures.

That said, in 2024-25, much of the compression is budgeted to occur on the expenditure side. Central capex is expected to increase to 3.4 per cent of GDP. This is important because the broader measure of public capex (Centre, states, PSUs) has increased more modestly from 6.4 per cent of GDP pre-pandemic to 6.8 per cent in 2023-24. Given large capex multipliers and its potential to crowd in private investment, it's important not to take the foot off the pedal. In contrast, revenue expenditure (ex-interest and subsidies) is where the consolidation occurs — budgeted to decline from 6.9 per cent of GDP in 2023-24 to 6.3 per cent in 2024-25. To be sure, this is close to pre-pandemic levels and to the extent that tax revenues are budgeted conservatively (growing at almost 13 per cent in 2023-24 and budgeted at 11.5 per cent next year), there could be some upside surprise on taxes that takes the pressure off revenue expenditures.

But the larger point is that in the coming years, India should seek to undertake a revenue-based fiscal consolidation, given the rising expenditure needs of the economy (infrastructure, health, education, welfare nets). The interim budget was not the place to do it, but the post-election budget certainly will be. Direct tax reform that further boosts tax/GDP will be crucial for further consolidation. This must be complemented with a strategic asset sales programme. Given buoyant markets and rich valuations, this seems a fertile year to monetise assets and bring the deficit down while protecting expenditures.

The large fiscal consolidation in an election year is bold, necessary and must be complimented. Now consolidation must be executed in the least growth-impinging manner. Finally, and more broadly, there is a more enduring signal that the interim budget is sending — the limits of fiscal support may have been reached. Continuing reforms will be needed to bolster growth. And the baton will need to pass from the public to the private sector.

*The writer is Chief India Economist, JPMorgan. Views are personal*

## The what-if of growth

Budget does well on fiscal discipline. But it assumes windfalls will continue



RAJESWARI SENGUPTA

**IN THE RUN-UP** to the interim Union budget, the three pertinent questions in the policy discourse were: Would the government stick to the tradition of an interim budget and refrain from making any major announcements? Would it continue on the path of fiscal consolidation and if so, at what pace? Would its fiscal consolidation roadmap be based on reasonable assumptions? The answer to the first two questions has been a resounding yes. The budget has ticked all the right boxes and prioritised fiscal prudence. The third question merits a deeper analysis.

Unlike a full budget, an interim budget does not usually contain new expenditure plans or taxation proposals. It is an interim measure to keep the current government going for one more quarter before elections take place. Sticking to tradition, the FM presented a "vote on account" budget and did not announce major schemes or tax changes.

This strategy allowed the government to fulfil its promise of fiscal consolidation. For the past few years, the Centre has run a fiscal deficit much higher than the 3 per cent medium-term target set by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act of 2003. This was necessary and inevitable during the pandemic period. But given that the economy has been growing rapidly, it makes little sense for the government to keep running a high deficit. The government too has reiterated its commitment to fiscal consolidation. This is crucial because persistently high fiscal deficits create several

problems. At the most basic level, they raise concerns about financial and macroeconomic stability and can be detrimental to the economy's growth. At a more day-to-day level, they increase the government's indebtedness.

Since the pandemic, India's debt-to-GDP ratio has been 80-85 per cent, compared to the long-term average of 65-70 per cent. This has two adverse consequences: It crowds out borrowing by the private sector by raising their cost of borrowing in the bond market, and it increases the government's interest expenses.

The interim budget assumes that the tax revenues for 2024-25 will continue to exhibit strong growth. It also assumes that capital spending will grow sharply. How credible are these assumptions?

Start with revenue. Between 2022-23 (actuals) and 2023-24 RE, tax receipts grew at 10.8 per cent. This is expected to increase to 11.9 per cent between the RE of 2023-24 and BE of 2024-25.

Hence, an important question was whether the government would continue on the path of fiscal consolidation it had embarked upon in 2022-23. The interim budget not only met but exceeded expectations.

It is important to recognise this achievement. The fiscal math for 2023-24 was indeed helped by robust direct and indirect tax collections. However, nominal GDP growth rate of 8.9 per cent has been markedly lower than the government's estimate of 10.5 per cent. Despite this challenge, the FM announced that this year's fiscal deficit would be held to 5.8 per cent, against the targeted 5.9 per cent. This was largely facilitated by lower-than-budgeted capital expenditure and high growth in non-tax revenues.

Even more striking, the budget projects a fiscal deficit of 5.1 per cent for 2024-25, implying a 0.7 per cent reduction from this year's deficit. Given that most analysts were expecting the fiscal deficit target for 2024-25 to be around 5.5 per cent, this is a welcome surprise.

One reason is that the government resisted announcing populist measures to appease specific electoral constituencies. But there are two other critical parameters.

The interim budget assumes that the tax revenues for 2024-25 will continue to exhibit strong growth. It also assumes that capital spending will grow sharply. How credible are these assumptions?

Start with revenue. Between 2022-23 (actuals) and 2023-24 RE, tax receipts grew at 10.8 per cent. This is expected to increase to 11.9 per cent between the RE of 2023-24 and BE of 2024-25.

The robust growth in tax revenues in the ongoing year is the result of two windfalls, both of which are likely to be temporary: A boom in service sector exports and a decline in commodity prices. The first phenomenon sharply increased the incomes of individuals associated with Global Capability Centres (GCC) and consulting services, thereby expanding the income tax base and giving a boost to direct tax revenues. It also pushed up indirect tax revenues because high-income earners began spending more on items that carry higher GST rates, such as luxury cars.

The second phenomenon, the fall in commodity prices, led to the expansion of corpo-

rate margins, boosting profits and thereby corporate income tax revenues. There is no reason to expect that both these phenomena will continue in 2024-25. In fact, services exports have already been plateauing and corporate margins are narrowing.

Another factor backing up the 5.1 per cent deficit projection is the drastic reduction in capex. From an average year-on-year growth rate of 30 per cent or more over the last three years, the interim budget announced that capex spending by the government will grow by only 16.9 per cent in 2024-25 compared to the RE of 2023-24. With the drastic reduction in government capex, the drivers of growth for the Indian economy might be called into question, given that private investment is still moderate and an exports boom is unlikely amid a global slowdown.

Summing up, if the tax revenue growth for the next fiscal is not as strong as expected, the onus of the 0.7 per cent reduction in the fiscal deficit will fall on capex, as well as another sizeable transfer of surplus from the RBI to the government. This also implies that there is no room left for the government to incur any additional spending in 2024-25.

While the interim budget has checked all the right boxes, it will be interesting to see to what extent the government can adhere to the plan especially when the full budget is presented post elections.

*The writer is associate professor of Economics, ICIDR, Mumbai*

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The challenges in GB and Balochistan are a litmus test for Pakistan's democratic maturity. Will the politicians vying for power heed these voices from the margins, or will these areas continue to be footnotes in the nation's political saga?"

—DAWN, PAKISTAN

# Basket of empty promises

Commitments made in President's address to Parliament in past decade find little mention in current Budget Session speech

ZERO HOUR  
BY DEREK O'BRIEN

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS in the Current Budget Session was the first time it was delivered in the Lok Sabha, and not the Central Hall of Parliament. That is like playing a key match at Wimbledon on (a new) Court One and not the iconic Centre Court.

We swotted up the President's Address speeches delivered in the last 10 years. Here is a list of eight terms repeatedly used by this government in the last decade that hardly got a single mention in the speech they wrote this year.

**Doubling farmers' income:** "My Government is striving day and night to attain the goal of doubling farmers' income."

President's Address, 2019.

No actual assessment of farmers' incomes has been carried out by the Union government since 2013. Incomes needed to grow by 10 per cent year-on-year from 2015 in order to double by 2022. In reality, the growth in farmers' incomes has been around 3.5 per cent. Pipe dreams. Thirty people involved in the farming sector committed suicide every day in 2022.

**Demonetisation:** "To combat the evils of black money, corruption, counterfeit currency and terror financing, my government took the decision on November 8, 2016, to demonetise old five hundred and one thousand rupee currency notes."

President's Address, 2018.

With much ballyhoo, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project's *bhoomi puja* ceremony was held in 2017. Despite initially setting a completion target of 2022, subsequent reports indicate a shift in deadlines, particularly for the Vapi-Sabarmati section. Now slated for completion by 2027, a 10-year delay. Concurrently, the project cost has surged, from the initial estimate of Rs 1.08 lakh crore to Rs 2.1 lakh crore.

**Swachh Bharat Mission:** "It is our collective responsibility to pay a befitting tribute to Puja Baap by making the country Swachh by 2019 when we celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi."

President's Address, 2018.

After all the hype and hoopla, this has now been reduced to just one sentence in this year's address. In an answer to a question in Rajya Sabha in 2023, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment stated that 308 persons have died while undertaking hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks in the last five years. This, despite the fact that manual scavenging has been banned in the country since 2013.

Another speech from Prime Minister Modi's government. Another *jholu* of empty promises.

*The writer is Member of Parliament and Leader, All India Trinamool Congress Parliamentary Party (Rajya Sabha)*  
*Additional Research by Ayushman Dey, Rohini Narayanan*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TRUST ISSUES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A tainted victory' (IE, February 1). BJP won the Chandigarh mayor's post by getting 16 votes, AAP and Congress combined got only 12 votes. Eight of their votes were reportedly declared invalid by the presiding officer, who happened to be a BJP office bearer. Two things are glaring. First, are the councillors so novice in voting that their votes became invalid? Second,

all of them belonged to the Opposition. If such a charade could happen in a polling centre in the process of an election for a titular post with 36 voters, then there is a need for citizens to worry about the risks of distortion and deviation from due process in an election involving millions of booths and voters with much higher stakes.

**LR Murmu, New Delhi**

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A tainted victory' (IE, February 1). Local governments are a crucial aspect of democratic decentralisation and allow for better management of regional issues. Political dysfunction at this level as shown in the proceedings in Punjab can lead to a loss of faith among the people as to the effectiveness of the government and their voice. Proper precautions should have been taken for timely, transparent elections. The perception of the municipal posts being only for power grabbing must be avoided at all costs. The issues must be resolved quickly for regular functioning and handling of the griev-

### ONUS ON BJP

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Muslims should re-look at BJP' (IE, February 1). In recent years, Modi has enhanced India's relationship with Muslim-minority countries to strengthen India's security and economy. At the same time, the government's approach to Indian Muslims domestically has been marred by the proliferation of Hindutva and widespread allegations of discrimination against religious minorities. To strengthen India, the BJP should increase political outreach toward Indian Muslims and ensure that the state serves the interests of all its constituents.

**SP Paul, Nadia**

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'After Niharika' (IE, January 31). The suicide among the students of Kota, validates the theory of Emile Durkheim which considers suicide as a social fact. The causes of suicides in India lie in the structure of society. The high suicide rate among Kota children is a result of high regulation (fatalistic suicide) by coaching and peer groups and low integration (egoistic suicide) with the larger society due to isolation. To prevent it, we need to change the structural reality of our society.

**Nayan Rathi, Dewas**

# Govt shows pre-poll confidence, no populist measures in Interim Budget

LIZ MATHEW & VIKAS PATHAK  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE INTERIM Budget presented by the Narendra Modi government Thursday stayed away from populist announcements and left direct and indirect tax slabs untouched, suggesting its confidence regarding return to power in the coming Lok Sabha elections.

The Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also resonated with themes set to be part of Modi's campaign as he seeks re-election for a third time months from now.

This included a focus on "social justice" with a clear emphasis on garib, mahilayen, yuva and annadata (poor, women, youth and farmers), identified by the PM earlier as the "four biggest castes for me", with Sitharaman calling their needs, aspirations and welfare the government's "highest priority", cutting across strata and geography.

"The country progresses when they progress. All four require and receive government support in their quest to better their lives," Sitharaman said.

In an hour-long speech, presenting her sixth Budget, Sitharaman also countered indirectly the criticism of majoritarianism levelled against the BJP-



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Ministers of State Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad and Pankaj Chaudhary, and other officials outside the Finance Ministry, Thursday. Tashi Tobgyal

describing the Modi government's measures as "secularism in action".

Linking the same to the government's "fight" against corruption, at a time when several Opposition leaders are facing investigation, the Finance Minister said: "Previously, social justice was mostly a political slogan. For our government, social justice is an effective and necessary governance model. The saturation approach of covering all eligible people is the

true and comprehensive achievement of social justice. This is secularism in action, reduces corruption and prevents nepotism."

Sitharaman added: "There is transparency, and an assurance that benefits are delivered to all eligible people, resources distributed fairly. All, regardless of their social standing, get access to opportunities. We are addressing systemic inequalities... We focus on outcomes and not on outlays, so that socio-economic transfor-

mation is achieved."

In another clear announcement aligning with the BJP ideology, Sitharaman proposed setting up "a high-powered committee for extensive consideration of the challenges arising from fast population growth and demographic changes". "The committee will make recommendations for addressing these challenges comprehensively in relation to the goal of Viksit Bharat," she said.

At his annual Vijayadasami

speech in October, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had flagged the need for "a comprehensive population control policy" that would apply to all "equally". In his Independence Day address in 2019, PM Modi too had referred to "population explosion", calling on the Centre and states to devise schemes to tackle it.

Sitharaman's speech also included a mention of the government making instant triple talaq illegal as part of its measures for the welfare of women, including reservation of one-third seats for them in legislatures, and giving over 70% houses under the PM Awas Yojana in rural areas to women as sole or joint owners.

Commanding the Modi government's "humane and inclusive" approach, Sitharaman called it "a marked and deliberate departure from earlier".

"Every challenge of the pre-2014 era was overcome through our economic management and governance. These have placed the country on a resolute path of sustained high growth. This has been possible through our right policies and true intentions."

Hoping to return to power, Sitharaman said in the full Budget in July, "our government will present a detailed road map for our pursuit of Viksit Bharat".

FULL REPORT ON  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## Viability gap funding for tapping off-shore wind leads green push

AMITABH SINHA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

MOVING AHEAD finally to harness the untapped potential of off-shore wind energy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday announced viability gap funding for setting up at least one gigawatt of wind energy capacity.

Off-shore wind refers to wind turbines located in the middle of the sea, rather than at the coastline. Greater wind speeds and lack of any obstruction in the middle of the sea means the turbines are able to achieve higher rates of conversion of wind energy into electrical energy. But these also have higher construction and maintenance costs, thereby raising the entry barrier. The increased costs can be offset only through large-scale systems operating at greater efficiencies. India does not have any off-shore wind project as of now, but several lucrative sites, mainly off the coastline of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, have been identified for potential projects.

Viability gap funding is a financial incentive intended to lower the entry barriers and make a project attractive for investors. Viability gap funding for off-shore wind farms was one of the several green measures announced in the interim budget to signal policy stability with respect to India's quest to aggressively harness clean energy technologies and move ahead on low-carbon development pathways with the objective of achieving net-zero emission status by 2070.



### Budget's Green push

■ Viability gap funding for off-shore wind projects. Would enable off-shore wind farms to be set up

■ 300 units of free electricity every month to households that set up rooftop solar systems. Would incentivise adoption of rooftop solar

■ Support for expanding manufacturing and charging infrastructure for electric

vehicles. Targets rapid adoption of electric vehicles

■ Mandatory blending of compressed biogas in CNG and PNG in a phased manner. Would promote cleaner and cheaper energy, reduce import dependence

■ Financial help for biomass aggregation machinery. Would improve biomass collection for increased production of biofuels

Sitharaman said the government will expand and strengthen the electric vehicle ecosystem by supporting manufacturing and charging infrastructure. "Greater adoption of e-buses for public transport networks will be encouraged through payment security mechanisms," she said.

The minister also revealed the government's intention to make it mandatory to blend compressed biogas in CNG for transport vehicles, and in PNG for domestic consumption. In an effort to increase electricity generation through biomass, the government should have leapfrogged and provided more support to clean energy solutions... The interim budget has just scratched the surface..." Vibhuti Garg, South Asia Director at Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, said.

tion capacity by 2030 with the objective of reducing imports of other liquid or gaseous fuels like natural gas, methanol and ammonia. Gasification or liquefaction of coal does not make it a cleaner source of energy, but it can help in India's energy security by reducing dependence on other imported fuel sources.

"Coal gasification requires high capital expenditure and whether it is the right solution for India to address its reliance on imports is not proven. The government should have leapfrogged and provided more support to clean energy solutions... The interim budget has just scratched the surface..."

There is also a renewed focus on port connectivity and infrastructure development on islands, including Lakshadweep, Sitharaman said.

## 6.17% hike for military upgrade

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE INDIAN military's modernisation budget for 2024-25 saw a hike of 6.17 per cent amid the ongoing stand-off with China along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh and a tense security situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Moreover, the allocation for defence in the Interim Budget for the upcoming financial year has not made public the individual capital budgetary allocations for the Army, Navy, and the Indian Air Force, which has been the norm in the previous years and brought out a consolidated capital budget for the three services.

The overall defence budget earmarked for 2024-25 stands at Rs 6.2 lakh crore – including defence pensions of Rs 1.41 lakh crore – up by just 4.3 per cent from Rs 5.94 lakh crore allocated

in the previous fiscal. This is 13.04 per cent of the total budget outlay for 2024-25.

In her budget speech, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman also announced a Rs 1 lakh crore corpus for Deep Tech for long-term loan to tech-savvy youth/companies and the tax advantage to the start-ups aimed at giving an impetus to innovation in the defence sector.

The capital budgetary allocations to the three defence services for 2024-25 stand at Rs 1.72 lakh crore – up from Rs 1.62 lakh crore in the previous fiscal.

According to sources, the meagre rise in the modernisation budget is attributed to the limited new contracts being signed by the Armed Forces and slippages in scheduled payments and deliveries. This is also reflected in the revised estimates of the capital budget for 2023-24 at Rs 1.57 lakh crore, which was

## Cong: Biased in favour of rich, govt forgot bottom half of people

MANOJ CG  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE CONGRESS Wednesday ap-

peared relieved that the pre-poll Interim Budget delivered no big-bang vote-driver announcements, prompting it to sharpen its political talking points against the BJP government, ranging from "rampan" unemployment, "widening" income disparities, plight of farmers and rise in food inflation, issues that it is focusing on in the run up to the Lok Sabha elections.

Asked about the confidence shown by both the PM and Sitharaman of the BJP returning to power, Chidambaram said "nobody votes on one issue. We maintain our charge that this government is a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich. This government has practically forgotten the bottom 50 per cent of the people. We will take this message to the people. But the people have several messages coming to them. Economic messages, political, religious, cultural messages... What message will prevail with which voter, I cannot say but we hope that the people of India recognise that their economic situation could have been considerably better... it is worse because of the 10 years of Narendra Modi's confidence in returning to power again.

Presenting the Congress critique of the budget with Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi, former finance minister and senior leader P Chidambaram unveiled the talking points.

He said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman spoke about youth but did not speak about unemployment, mentioned GDP, but did not touch upon per capita income, spoke about free grain to 80 crore persons, but made no men-

tion of India's rank in the Global Hunger Index, barely referred to inflation but did not refer to food inflation which is 7.7 per cent.

Asked about the confidence shown by both the PM and Sitharaman of the BJP returning to power, Chidambaram said "nobody votes on one issue. We maintain our charge that this government is a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich. This government has practically forgotten the bottom 50 per cent of the people. We will take this message to the people. But the people have several messages coming to them. Economic messages, political, religious, cultural messages... What message will prevail with which voter, I cannot say but we hope that the people of India recognise that their economic situation could have been considerably better... it is worse because of the 10 years of Narendra Modi's confidence in returning to power again.

The Congress was scathing in its criticism on several fronts, especially on jobs and income inequality. Referring to the findings of the Periodic Labour Force Survey and State of Working India Report, he said: "The FM did not acknowledge the rampant unemployment and did not utter a word on how the government intended to address the problem. By deliberate neglect over the last 10 years, the government has destroyed the demographic dividend story and dashed the hopes of millions."

The Budget is only giving 'gyan'. There is no action on the ground. Bottom 50% population possesses only 3% wealth and household savings are at a 50-year low.

DEREK O'BRIEN  
TMC LEADER

If any Budget is not for development and any development is not for the people then it is useless. BJP has created a shameful record by completing a decade of anti-people Budgets.

AKHILESH YADAV  
SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

The Budget is more of an election gimmick than the ground reality. It is very sad and worrying to ignore poverty, unemployment, inflation, etc.

MAYAWATI  
BSP PRESIDENT

The Budget speech was disconnected with micro-reality and presented a rosy picture of the economy.

D RAJA  
CPI GENERAL SECRETARY

## Bhutan gets lion's share in MEA development aid

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

700 crore against Rs 650 crore in 2023-24. The assistance to the Maldives has been kept at Rs 600 crore as against Rs 770 crore in 2023-24, despite recent strain in the bilateral ties. The allocation for Chabahar Port has also been maintained at Rs 100 crore, underlining India's focus on connectivity projects with Iran.

In continuation with India's special relationship with the people of Afghanistan, a budgetary aid of Rs 200 crore has been set aside.

The ministry was on Thursday allocated a total of Rs 22,154 crore for the 2024-25 fiscal in the Interim budget as against last year's outlay of Rs 18,050 crore.

In line with India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, the largest share of aid portfolio for 2024-25 went to Bhutan with an allocation of Rs 2,068 crore as against Rs 2,400 crore in 2023-24.

Nepal would be provided Rs

heritage, also highlighted India's MICE infrastructure to the world, officials say. Late last year, the Ministry worked out a model for setting up a city-level MICE

Promotion Bureau at important destinations for facilitating and promoting the city as a MICE destination. It also launched a dedicated brand called "Meet in India" to promote India as a conference tourism destination.

The FM also spoke of the potential of spiritual tourism as a contributor towards increasing opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

## Lakshadweep in focus, domestic tourism to get a boost

DIVYA A  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

LAYING SPECIAL emphasis on domestic tourism in her Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the states will be asked to take up comprehensive development of iconic tourist centres, also branding and marketing them at a global scale.

There is also a renewed focus on port connectivity and infrastructure development on islands, including Lakshadweep, this will help in generating employment also".

The development of ports and islands is also in consonance with her opening remarks, wherein the FM spoke about "geographi-

cal inclusivity through the development of all regions of the country". Consequently, the Ministry of Tourism's flagship Swadesh Darshan scheme (for integrated development of tourist circuits around specific themes) has an increased outlay of Rs 1,750 crore for 2024-25, compared to Rs 818 crore in the previous year, and Rs 1,412 crore a year before that.

In a first, the FM has also announced a framework for rating iconic tourist destinations based on the quality of facilities being offered and also offering long-term interest-free loans to states

for developing these destinations.

Sitharaman also spoke about the organisation of G20 meetings at 60 places as having pitched India's diversity to a global audience. She said "India's economic strength has made the country an attractive destination for business and conference tourism", reiterating the Ministry of Tourism's renewed emphasis on MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) tourism in recent years.

The G20 meetings, besides showcasing India's diversity and

## Mamata: BJP putting Opp leaders in jail to win elections

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 1

A DAY after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) president Hemant Soren in an alleged land scam case, West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said that the BJP government at the Centre was putting Opposition leaders behind bars to win the Lok Sabha elections.

Without naming anyone, Banerjee said, "Are we all thieves and are they all saints? They are the biggest of the thieves. Those who scream the loudest are the ones who are guilty. Empty vessels make the most sound. Today they are in power and therefore they are roaming around with the agencies. Tomorrow, they will not be in power and everything will fall flat."

"Sobaike bhoy dekhie jail e poore dileo, amake jodijail e poore dyay, jail theke phuto hoe berie asbo. Mone rakhaben, nirbachone jetar Jonno sobaike jail e poore" (All are being put behind bars

## Conspiracies to acquire assets, bid to falsify papers for ownership: ED note on Soren

ABHISHEK ANGAD  
RANCHI, FEBRUARY 1

HATCHING CONSPIRACIES to acquire properties through corrupt means, an image of handwritten notes showing ownership of illegal properties, physical verification of property being conducted on CMO orders, and an attempt to falsify the actual records to change the ownership are some of the allegations and evidence against former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren according to ED remand papers filed in a Ranchi court Thursday.

The ED sought 10 days custody of Soren for interrogation, as per the papers. ED also said Soren was informed about his arrest at 5 pm January 31, however, he was "reluctant to receive the orders" before he resigned as the CM. ED remand note read. Bhanu Pratap Prasad is a former revenue

ED sought 10 days custody of Soren

funds and properties, to ascertain the role of other persons involved with him, and to confront Soren with other accused. PMLA Judge Dinesh Rai listed the matter for February 2. Till then, Soren will be in judicial custody.

There are strong reasons to believe Hemant Soren knowingly indulges in such activities by which he has acquired landed properties in his name as well as in the name of family... Hemant Soren is a party with one Bhanu Pratap Prasad and there are sufficient reasons to believe Hemant Soren has acquired proceeds of crime," ED remand note read. Bhanu Pratap Prasad is a former revenue

sub-inspector of Baragain Circle Office of Ranchi district. ED alleged that he was part of a syndicate acquiring properties "forcefully as well as on the basis of false deeds, falsification of government records, and tampering with original revenue records." ED stated that Prasad was actively involved in "hatching conspiracies" with other persons including Hemant Soren to acquire properties in illegal manner".

Remand papers stated that ED found out that Prasad was "custodian of several original registers" in which the land records – ownership details – were falsified. ED said that Prasad's phone had "several chats" of information related to "cash transactions, illegal benefits" eman

37<sup>th</sup>

# SURAJKUND

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Craft Mela - 2024

February 2 - 18, 2024

Surajkund, Faridabad, Haryana



Gujarat  
ખુલ્હો ગુજરાતી



Cultural Partner  
નેહડી



Partner Nation  
ટાન્ઝાનિયા

**Theme State : Gujarat**  
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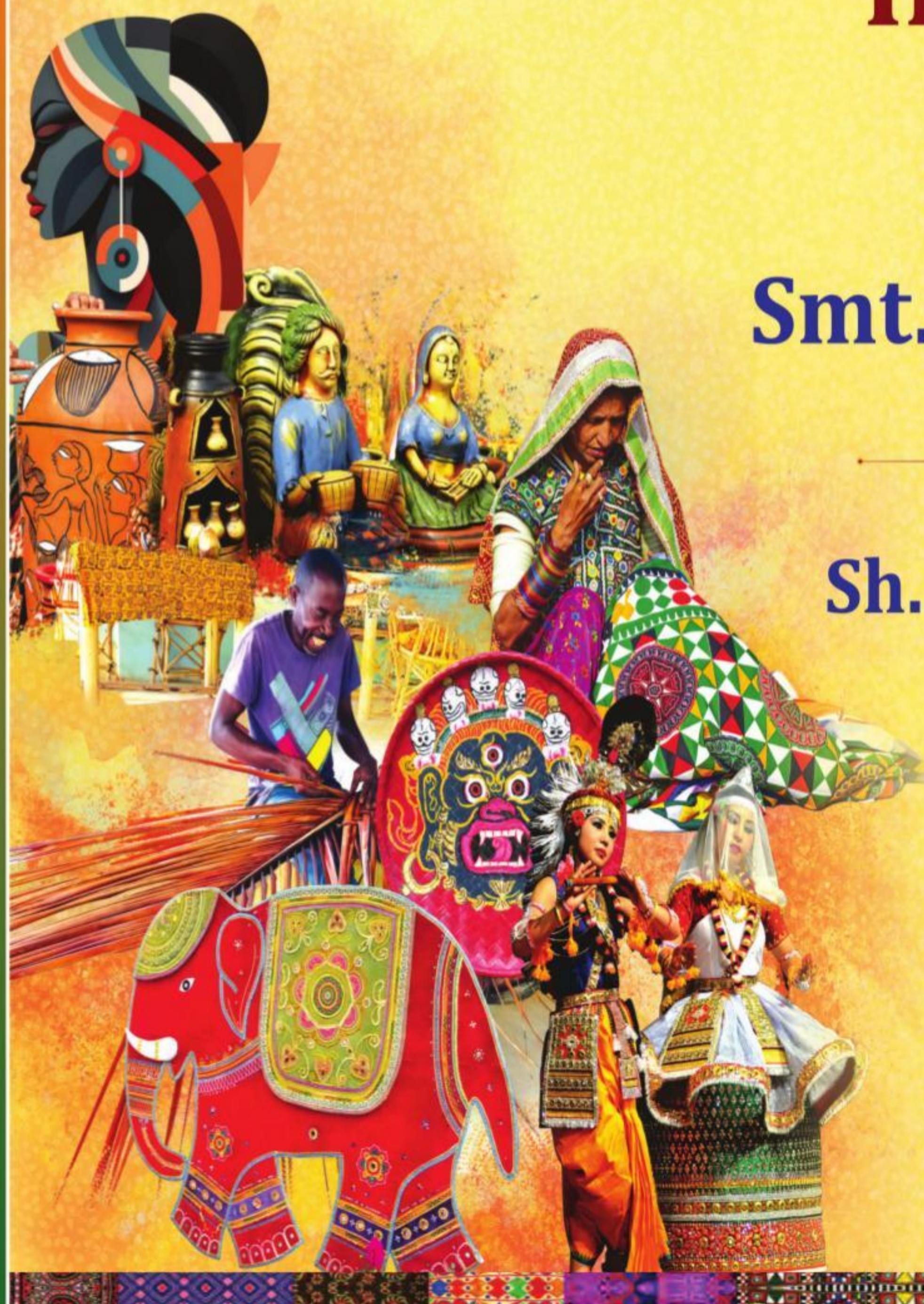
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**BRIEFLY**

**KERALA**  
NIT student suspended over Ayodhya protest

**Thiruvananthapuram:** National Institute of Technology (NIT) Calicut suspended a student who protested at the campus on the day of the Ayodhya temple consecration. However, the suspension of Vysakh Premkumar, a Dalit, was put on hold until an appellate authority decided on his appeal. The suspension of Premkumar, a fourth-year engineering student, triggered student unrest in campus. ENS

**Threatening judge after verdict: 4 held**

**Alappuzha:** Four people have been arrested so far in connection with the alleged threats made against the Mavelikkara Additional Sessions Judge on various social media platforms after the verdict was pronounced in the murder of BJP OBC wing leader Ranjith Sreenivasan, police said on Thursday. Security was heightened for Mavelikkara Additional Sessions Judge-I V G Sreedevi, after taking note of the online threats made against her. PTI

**KARNATAKA:**  
**Stripping row: Belagavi couple gets married**

**Bengaluru:** The couple, whose elopement led to the man's mother being stripped, beaten up and tied to an electric pole at Hosa Vantamuri village in Belagavi on December 10 last year, got married on January 30 amid police protection. The marriage was registered at the south zone sub-registrar office in Belagavi. Police said Dundappa Ashoka Nayak and Priyanka Basappa Nayak had eloped and married as per rituals earlier but were legally wedded Thursday. ENS

**JAMMU & KASHMIR:**  
**Toll in Baramulla accident rises to 10 as 3 more die**

**Baramulla:** The death toll in Wednesday's accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district has increased to ten as three more people who were hospitalised succumbed to their injuries, officials on Thursday said. Three more people died on Thursday, taking the toll to 10, they said. Seven people died on Wednesday when a vehicle they were travelling in skidded off the road and fell into a deep gorge in Baramulla, police said. PTI

## 1981 amendment does a half-hearted job: SC reserves verdict on AMU minority tag

**ANANTHAKRISHNANG**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

established in 1920 was not a minority institution. The bench reserved its verdict on the minority status of AMU.

"A thing that is worrying us is that the 1981 amendment does not restore the position as it stood prior to 1951. In other words, the 1981 amendment does a half-hearted job. I can understand if the 1981 amendment said ok we are going back to the original 1920 statute, confer complete minority character... They were placating that sentiment but when it actually came to the brass stacks, they didn't go back to the positions prior to 1951. And what it did was it brought the Muslim voice into AMU's administration. As we see

it, in the court for instance... but it still stops short. Even Parliament, which had the power to do it, still stops short of taking us back to the 1920 Act... They made a few concessions but they never took it back to its pre-1951 position," the CJ said.

The bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Surya Kant, J B Pardiwala, Dipankar Datta, Manoj Misra and Satish Chandra Sharma, was hearing the matter for the eighth day on Thursday.

The comments came as Senior Advocate Rajeev Dhavan, appearing for AMU, took the court through the Act and amendments to buttress his case

that the university was established and administered by the Muslim community, thereby making it a minority institution under Article 30 of the Constitution, which deals with the right of religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

In 1967, a five-judge SC bench had in the case 'S Azeez Basha vs Union of India' held that AMU was not entitled to minority education institution status as it "was neither established nor administered by the Muslim minority". It was held that it was established by an Act of the British Parliament and not by the minority community. AMU contends

that the decision in the Basha case is incorrect and has urged the SC to revisit the same.

The 1981 amendment was intended to undo the effect of the 1967 judgment. But in 2006, the Allahabad High Court struck down the 1981 amendment holding it "unconstitutional".

While Dhavan pointed to the representation of Muslims in the administration of AMU, the Centre and others opposing the university's minority status claim pointed out that the 1951 and 1965 amendments to the Act further reduced the role of the Muslims in it.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## Manipur: Gory video leads family to son missing since May

**SUKRITA BARUAH**  
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 1

**DAYS AFTER** a gory video emerged from Manipur, which shows a man hacking the throat of a person who appears to be dead, the victim has been identified by his family as a 20-year-old Meitei youth who went missing in May last year.

The seven-second video was widely shared on messaging platforms and social media on January 30. It showed the body of a young man lying on a sheet on the ground outdoors. A man carrying a double-barrel gun over his shoulder, and his head covered with cloth, can be seen standing over the body. He is then seen hacking the body with a knife, and asking in Manipuri, "How does it feel?" When family members of Ngangom Nevy – a Meitei youth who has been missing since May 28 last year from Sugnu in Kakching district – saw the video, they recognised that it was him lying on the ground. They also recognised the surroundings and approached police.

"He had been missing since May 28. The family members identified that the person in the video was their son. After looking

at the video, we could also zero in on exactly where to look for the body. The area was easily recognisable from the structures visible in the video. After a thorough search, we were able to exhume the body in Sokom village in Chandel, close to Sugnu," a senior police officer said. The body was taken to the mortuary at the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal, on Wednesday. Family members have identified it based on clothes and footwear, but DNA testing will also be done, an officer said.

Nevy's brother Ishwarchandra told *The Indian Express* that the 20-year-old had stayed back in Sugnu after the rest of the family fled on May 28, when a massive exchange of fire broke out. Sugnu is a mixed population town in the area bordering Kakching district in the valley and Chandel district in the hills. On the night of May 27, heavy exchange of fire had broken out in many such areas at the border of Meitei and Kuki-Zomi dominated areas, and hundreds had fled from Sugnu. "When the fighting started, my brother said he would stay back with other boys and men to protect our homes. That day, four people were killed and my brother went missing. Ishwarchandra said.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with supporters during Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Murshidabad on Thursday. Partha Paul

## CPM leaders meet Rahul, say Mamata ready to exit INDIA bloc

**ATRI MITRA**  
MURSHIDABAD, FEBRUARY 2

AMID TMC chief Mamata Banerjee's persistent attack on the Congress and CPI(M) – the INDIA bloc partners – a wave of Left workers and supporters joined Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which re-entered West Bengal on Wednesday.

CPI(M) state secretary Mohammed Salim, who met Rahul in Raghunathganj along

with the party's central committee member, Sujan Chakraborty and other leaders, said the Left party joined the Congress Yatra to be part of its fight against RSS-BJP and injustice. "Rahul also came out with Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra to combat RSS-BJP. We are fighting to save democracy in India," Salim said after the 45-minute-long meeting with Rahul.

Claiming that TMC was eager to deboard the opposition INDIA bloc 'train', Salim said: "A lot of people boarded a train from the

originating station, but one cannot say who will continue to be part of the fight against the BJP and who deboard en route. Mamata Banerjee now wants to get down from the train and we welcome it."

Hitting out at the TMC chief for alleging that the CPI(M) was trying to control the Opposition bloc's agenda, Salim said: "The Congress is a pan-India party. Does CPI(M) have such strength?

But still, she is saying that CPI(M) is controlling the Congress," an official said.

The three personnel were identified as Pawan Kumar (30) from Madhya Pradesh and Devan C(29) from Tamil Nadu, both from the CoBRA 201 Battalion, and Lambadhar Singh (35) from Assam, who belonged to the 150

## Parents held at gunpoint, MP teenager gangraped

Vardhaman told *The Indian Express*.

The parents woke up because of the commotion, the officer said, adding, "When they tried to raise the alarm, one of them took out a pistol and pointed it at them, threatening to kill them. Meanwhile, while another accused took the girl to a nearby bush and raped her. After this, he returned and took the pistol from the man and pointed at the parents while the other accused raped her," the officer said.

Police have registered a case and arrested two men while the search is on for two others. The girl was taken to a local hospital where her medical examination was conducted.

Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has called for a prompt investigation and the harshest punishment to the culprits.

**UCC: Uttarakhand Police to step up security during Assembly session**

**AVANEESH MISHRA**  
DEHRADUN, FEBRUARY 1

UTTARAKHAND POLICE have instructed officials concerned to maintain peace and ensure "flawless security" in their respective districts during the proposed Assembly session later this week. The directive comes amid the possibility of a few organisations staging protests against the presentation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill in the Assembly.

Earlier, the five-member expert committee said it will submit UCC draft to the government on February 2. After the draft is submitted, it will be placed before the cabinet and later in the Assembly. Uttarakhand Chief

Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday said bringing UCC in the state was their electoral promise.

with Sujan Chakraborty and other leaders, said the Left party joined the Congress Yatra to be part of its fight against RSS-BJP and injustice. "Rahul also came out with Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra to combat RSS-BJP. We are fighting to save democracy in India," Salim said after the 45-minute-long meeting with Rahul.

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a grudge. Police said that on January 16, a cow head was recovered from Kanwar Path Marg, a road frequented by pilgrims during the month of Shrawan.

"A case was registered against unknown people. On the night of January 28, another incident of cow-slaughter was reported in the same village. Both incidents seemed suspicious and interconnected. The manner in which this information was given aroused suspicion that the incident was planned. There was definitely some hidden agenda," said Hemraj Meena, Senior SP, Moradabad.

He said that in the second incident, when officers reached the spot, they found track pants and a wallet with Mahmood's photo inside.

"When Mahmood was questioned, he told police he had enmity with some people in his village, and an attempt may have

been made to implicate him. The names of Shahabuddin and his brother Jamshed came up. They had taken help from Monu, Rajiv and Raman to send Mahmood to jail," Meena said, adding that Monu had been jailed, and subsequently released on bail, in an attempt to murder case recently.

"First, they planned the

January 16 incident for which they gave Rs 2,000 to Shahabuddin's associate Naeem to source a cow head and dump it in the police station's jurisdiction. In the second instance, Mahmood's photo was planted at the spot... In this case, the accused stole a cow from a residence, slaughtered it and then informed the police," said Meena.

Naeem and Jamshed are absconding, police said. According to police, Shahabuddin wanted to avenge his brother's death, for which he blamed Mahmood and his family.

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# After a flat show, a flat track?

Vizag pitch unlikely to be a raging turner as India wrestle over team composition for second Test against England

VENKATA KRISHNA B  
VISAKHAPATNAM, FEBRUARY 1

AS THE Indian players headed to the team bus after their optional training session on Thursday, their head coach Rahul Dravid walked to the centre of the square. This was his second such visit of the day; at noon with the Vizag sun showing early glimpses of what upcoming summer would be, he had the groundstaff remove the tarpaulin covers to have a feel of the surface. Post his chat with the groundsmen, the tarpaulin covers were replaced with sack-clothes to ensure adequate air flow and the moisture stays intact.

In the first Test in Hyderabad, the early-morning moisture was a reason the ball spun the quickest in the first session of the opening day. And even in the coastal city of Visakhapatnam where the winter is showing signs of withdrawal, moisture has been a factor in the morning. What the sack-clothes cover, that will retain more moisture than the tarpaulin, will do to the pitch on Friday morning is anybody's guess.

Just like guessing India's approach to being 0-1 down in a long series. Against Australia in 2017, after losing the first Test on a rank turner in Pune, they responded in the most aggressive manner at Bengaluru. Then in 2020, after the 36 in Adelaide, they responded by landing the most unexpected punches in the Boxing Day Test. In 2021, last time England toured here, India bounced back from losing the first Test, winning the next three. If anything, this team is known to be slow to get off the blocks in a long series. But time and again when they recover from setbacks, they have shown the most ruthless side of them.

However, as they head to the second Test, the lingering question on everyone's lips is whether India would be able to recover from the hammer blow that Bazballers inflicted on them. Unlike the previous occasions, where India had all the resources to bounce back, and a solid game plan to aid, they seem a pale shadow of themselves at the moment.

They are winless in their last three home matches. And for a team that needs to put its neck up or be buried in the avalanche of Bazball, they have to do without Virat Kohli, Ravindra Jadeja and KL Rahul. They now have to do it with not just inexperienced batsmen, but with two of them -- Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer -- under pressure to find runs.

India resorting to turning tracks has been their way out of trouble in the recent past, backing their batting unit to score more than the opposition. But here, that they are set to play on the most batting friendly surface of recent times tells how much of a worry the brittle batting line-up is to the management. The toss will also play a role as both teams might want to bat first on a pitch that's expected to take turn much later than what has become normal these days.

The last time India played on what is a traditional home pitch which would start to take turn on Day 4 and 5 was in Chennai, where England out-batted them on way to a famous win. It made them switch to turners. Now, the hosts are putting all their hopes on their skilful spinners -- R Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel -- to find a way to crack Bazball. But here is a statutory warning: The Bazball is at its most dangerous on flat decks.

## Playing XI not clear yet

If the pitch-makeup isn't enough, India are huddled in deliberations with regards to the make-up of the XI. For Rahul's spot, India are torn between choosing Rajat Patidar and Sarfaraz Khan. On Thursday both sweated it out at the nets, with all eyes trained on them. And with Jadeja missing, Kuldeep is all set to feature in his first home Test in three years and will make the spin combo. However,



## SNIFFING WICKETS

Security personnel with a sniffer dog inspect the pitch on the eve of the second Test between India and England. PTI

### After crash, Pant feared amputation

New Delhi: Rishabh Pant revealed he feared the amputation of his right leg in the aftermath of the horrific car crash which he survived 13 months ago. "If there was any nerve damage, there was a possibility of amputation. That is when I felt scared," Pant said in Star Sports series 'Believe: To Death & Back' which documents his recovery. "I had taken an SUV, but what I was seeing was a sedan," he quipped as he remembered his mangled vehicle. Pant said the doctor gave him 16 to 18 months to recover. "I asked the doctor how long will it take for me to recover... He (Doctor) said it would take 16 to 18 months. I told the doctor from whatever timeline you give me, I will reduce six months from it." PTI

India are also pondering whether they need a replacement for Jadeja, the batsman. Hence, Washington Sundar is being looked at, and if he has to get a look in, then Mohammed Siraj has to sit-out in a venue that has aided reverse-swing thanks to the out-field, which is relatively hard.

But it is not all doom for India. There might be a lack of clarity, if not a sense of confusion, as a collective unit, but individual brilliance can still save the day. When they bounced back from past set-backs, they did so on the back of strong individual brilliance. If it was Ashwin in Bengaluru after Pune, at the MCG it was Ajinkya Rahane. And in 2021 against Chennai, it was Rohit Sharma in the first innings followed by Ashwin in the second. With England's spin attack missing Jack Leach over here, they would be heavily banking on James Anderson. If one of Rohit and Yashasvi Jaiswal can set the tone at the top, they could well provide the spark that India are desperately seeking. All will be then well with their world again.

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# Opening salvo: Short Duckett and tall Crawley drive England's Bazball engine

SANDIP G  
FEBRUARY 1

POSTING THE team picture before Ashes on Instagram, Ben Duckett wrote: "I should probably find a different spot to stand." Beside the padded-up Duckett, 5 feet seven, was his opening accomplice, Zak Crawley, all of six feet five.

It's the height that strikes first. In a way, everything begins with height. It's their vertical proportions that has shaped their game. Crawley stands tall on the crease, has long levers, a long reach, and his strokes travel clean straight lines. He is strong on the front-foot and an immaculate driver through covers. Duckett squats in his stance, the pad reaching almost to his mid-riff, has short strides, is a strong square of the wicket, and drives on the rise rather than reaching to the pitch of the ball. Whereas Crawley seems to glide along the turf, Duckett bristles in the crease. It's like what Crawley is, Duckett is not; and what Duckett is, Crawley is not.

The effect they have on bowlers could be dizzying. A difference of 10 inches means that the bowlers are pressed to alter and re-alter their lengths. A good-length ball to Duckett is a full length one to Crawley. Duckett would defend the ball, Crawley would emphatically drive. Slightly shorter, Crawley would be in two minds (that is his weakness too) while Duckett would unfurl his pull, one of his most productive strokes. The bowlers have a three or four-yard difference where they need to bowl, especially when they are rotating the strike. Good bowlers would seamlessly, but in the time they take to adjust, they un-clutch a torrent of boundaries, forcing them to revise their plans.

It's the trait that unites them—the opportunism to attack—and perhaps the reason Brendon McCullum and Ben Stokes unified them. Height would just have been a coinci-



ZAK CRAWLEY (L) AND BEN DUCKETT. PTI

dence. Crawley implied as much when told The Wisden: "The physical features are what everyone points out, but I don't think everyone sees how relaxed we are in the middle. Duck is especially good at that, sitting in his spot and looking like he hasn't got a care in the world. We want to play in the same way, and when it comes off it really works." Duckett credits this to the "same wavelength" "We're both looking to get the team off to a flier."

So far it has gloriously worked. In 23 outings, they have combined 1064 runs at 48. Twice they have stitched 100-plus stands, including 233 against Pakistan, besides attaching six half-century partnerships. But it's not really about the runs they score, but how they score those. No opening pair this century has scored at a more frantic rate than their 92. In that scene, they set the Bazballing-tone. Duckett has maintained a strike rate of 87, a few notches higher than Virender Sehwag, since his comeback in the same tour, missing 75 Tests between his fourth and 16, the most by any cricketer—before his comeback in Rawalpindi. In the long haul away from Test cricket, he realised that there is no point trying to be a conventional opener (best exemplified by his reluctance to leave the ball, no shot offered to only one percent of the balls he has faced in Tests). The attacking methods found not only runs but also traced a route back to Test cricket.

Thus, in the most unusual of pairing, England found their most consistent set of openers after the glory days of Andrew Strauss and Alastair Cook. Since the former's departure, 18 different openers revolved through the doors of England. Most of them were the cussed, grinding sort, like Rory Burns and Dominic Sibley. Most England openers were styled that way, until Crawley and Duckett remoulded the tradition in their image with a little help from their physical disposition. Duckett would probably move away from Crawley in the team picture, but in the middle they would be inseparable and the first sentinels of Bazball.

Crawley, nonetheless, inhabited the consciousness of the selectors. But Duckett was a forgotten soul. He feared his career was over after he spilled beer on James Anderson's head in the Ashes tour of 2017-18 and dropped. On the same tour, a hungover Duckett had allegedly puked over then coach Trevor Bayliss during a flight. He seemed thrust into oblivion—missing 75 Tests between his fourth and 16, the most by any cricketer—before his comeback in Rawalpindi. In the long haul away from Test cricket, he realised that there is no point trying to be a conventional opener (best exemplified by his reluctance to leave the ball, no shot offered to only one percent of the balls he has faced in Tests). The attacking methods found not only runs but also traced a route back to Test cricket.

For a captain and coach who haven't hesitated to throw players in the deep end, handing debut to Bashir is the bravest of them all. Unlike even Tom Hartley who has had white-ball experience and more than a dozen FC games, Bashir has played only 6 county games and made his debut only last June. He has only 10 wickets to his name and has an average of 67. But more than Rehan Ahmed and Hartley, England seem to be more excited about Bashir. For sure, India will attack him from the word go and put early pressure on him. But Stokes would definitely back his young spinner like he did in the case of Hartley. Over to Bashir to show what he made of. Like Stokes said, "experience is overrated."

**Rookie Bashir's strengths: Turn, height, bounce and control**

VENKATA KRISHNA B  
VISAKHAPATNAM, FEBRUARY 1

LAST SUNDAY, despite landing in Hyderabad at around 8.30 am after a visa delay, **Shoaib Bashir** (in pic) turned up at the Uppal stadium midway through the morning session of the first Test. It was a Test where he could have made his debut, but he didn't show any disappointment. Ben Stokes told him that he could go back to the hotel and beat the jet-lag. But the 20-year-old would seat himself right next to the boundary hoardings and soak in the atmosphere.

In the next four days, Bashir, who is a player of Pakistani-origin, had just one full training session and on Friday would make his debut. In the net sessions, despite all the adventure that England's batsmen show, it is still hard to miss Bashir, who stands at 6ft 4 inches. He is slim and agile and with a smooth run-up, and a tall trajectory, it is hard not to miss why Stokes was immediately hooked on to the off-spinner just by watching a video-clip. "The first time I saw him was on Twitter. I think the County Championship put a little clip together of him bowling against Sir Alastair. I'm in a WhatsApp group with Keysy (Rob Key) and Baz (McCullum). I just saw something and thought, this could be pretty good for India," Stokes said.

That was that. Having gone to UAE with England Lions, Stokes and McCullum would only see him for the first time during their preparatory camp in Abu Dhabi before they flew to Hyderabad. There is a reason why they thought of straightaway playing him in the first Test. Bowling to batsmen who are constantly looking to get one over you with absolute disdain can be demoralising at the nets. On Wednesday, as India's batsmen brought out all kinds of sweeps at the nets with their spinners feeding them in the arc, R Ashwin started altering his lengths to get one over them. For, Bashir doesn't have enough craft in his game yet to do the same.

But every time he was hit, he would make a point to pick the ball himself and have another go at their batsmen. Joe Root, Ollie Pope, Ben Duckett, Zak Crawley and Stokes went hard at him, but not once did he seek a breather. At times, he would even beat them by going slower through the air and bringing out a broad smile. At other times, he generated turn and bounce with his action and height to trouble the Bazballers.

"His main attribute is, he spins the ball very hard, which I think Swann is a big advocate of," Alastair Cook said on TMS podcast. "You can teach control and discipline and all that when you are young. But not the ability to spin the ball. He's tall and has some very natural attributes which will help. What I was most impressed with when I faced him was he didn't bowl that many bad balls. He had control, he liked the contest. It will be interesting to see how he goes," Cook added.

For a captain and coach who haven't hesitated to throw players in the deep end, handing debut to Bashir is the bravest of them all. Unlike even Tom Hartley who has had white-ball experience and more than a dozen FC games, Bashir has played only 6 county games and made his debut only last June. He has only 10 wickets to his name and has an average of 67. But more than Rehan Ahmed and Hartley, England seem to be more excited about Bashir. For sure, India will attack him from the word go and put early pressure on him. But Stokes would definitely back his young spinner like he did in the case of Hartley. Over to Bashir to show what he made of. Like Stokes said, "experience is overrated."

# Patidar's journey to Tests: A reward for patience after series of rejections

PRATYUSH RAJ  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

"Kai baar pankh aur haule dono hote hai magar udne ke liye aasman nahi hota (Sometimes you have the wings and courage but you don't have the sky to fly)," former India cricketer Amay Khurasia gives a philosophical touch, while talking about 30-year old Rajat Patidar's journey. "Two years ago, when he scored that outstanding hundred in the IPL semi-final against Jofra Archer and co, he should have been drafted into the Indian team. The point is he was consistent. He should have got a chance then only," says Khurasia, who is the mentor of Patidar.

It's not just close mentors who rave about the cricketer from Madhya Pradesh. There is a tale of former India captain and chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar who landed up at ground, enquiring with the coach of MP Chandrakant Pandit about Patidar. "Where is that boy?"

When informed that he was missing that domestic game due to a niggle, Vengsarkar got a bit despondent.

"He saw the potential. He thought that he should be playing very soon for India. Later he was injured and in the next match when Dilip came again and asked me about him, he got a bit sad to know that he missed because of a niggle, he said 'this guy should be playing for India. If I were the selector now, I would pick him.' That's Mr Vengsarkar for you, he has that

knack to unearth the talent," says Pandit.

That's also Rajat Patidar's life: so near, yet so far. Luckily, at times, he has been counselled well during career-turning moments. Madhya Pradesh captain Shubham Sharma, who has been friends with Patidar for the past 15 years, recalls a hilarious incident about how Rajat was hesitant to accept the offer and he had to postpone his marriage due to IPL.

"We were playing division cricket in Indore. He got a call from RCB, as a replacement and he didn't want to go. He told me 'Arey Shubham mai jau ki nahi yaar? (Shall I go or not?) My marriage date is fixed as well. I told him 'You should go, they will definitely give you a chance and will let you bat at No 3 as well.' But he was not convinced and said 'Khilayenge nahi mereko, isse acha shaadi kar leta hun na (They will not play me, instead I should get married). I begged him 'bhai tu ja 100 pratishat khilayenge' (Please go, hundred percent you will play)." laughs Sharma.

He finished that IPL season with 333 runs in eight innings at a strike rate of 152.50. One of his finest knocks came against Lucknow Super Giants in the eliminator, where he hammered a 54-ball 112. Although RCB lost the next match, he carried his Midas touch with a free-flowing 58 in the Qualifier 2 against Rajasthan Royals. A couple of weeks later, he scored a match-winning century in the Ranji Trophy final for Madhya Pradesh against Mumbai.

His mentor Khurasia takes the story for-

ward with a lament. ""If he would have been playing for Delhi, Mumbai or Karnataka, he would have played at least 8-10 Tests by now and would have been a regular in the white ball." "He has been with me at a very young age. We worked a lot on his batting technique. Batting works with pure technique. He is a guy with outstanding patience. I feel sorry that he is getting the break so late. He could have got his break a few years earlier. He will be an as-

set because he is an outstanding fielder in the close-in positions at silly point and short leg. If he gets a chance in two or three matches he will get a big score. He ticks all the boxes: honesty, commitment, discipline, hard work, bravery, you just name it."

Traits that Pandit the coach also stresses. "He is an outstanding talent; one of the classiest cricketers in the Indian domestic circuit. He has done well for the India A and in the IPL. He has got this unique ability to pick the line and length of the bowler early - that is his biggest strength."

**Chandrakant Pandit**  
MADHYA PRADESH COACH

length of the bowler early - that is his biggest strength," says Pandit.

Also, his skill with the sweep shot, adds Khurasia. "He sweeps the ball very well and he knows how to handle left-arm spinners on turners where there is a rough patch on the leg side, which created problems for most of the players in the last Test match. He can easily counter England's spinners. He knows which ball to leave on the raging turner, which is a unique skill set. He is a compact player," says Khurasia. Devendra Bundela, whose captaincy, Patidar made his Ranji Trophy debut back in 2015, recalls the century in the second innings.

"Talent was always there. His timing is exceptional that you don't see in every batsman. Not everyone can hit a good ball for a boundary. I still remember his debut, he scored a fine 60 in the first innings. In the

second he scored a counter-attacking 101, it was an exceptional knock. There are a few batmen, who just don't like to face spinners on helpful pitches but he will go after them. The kind of talent he has will only matter when he gets the chance. He is of a different quality," says Bundela.

Ram Atre, a coach at Vijay Cricket Club in Indore, vividly remembers the first time Patidar came to the academy and how nothing much has changed since in two decades.

"He is patience personified. A guy who has that is set to be successful in Test cricket. I remember he had an excellent U-19 in the division but at the trials for MP, he got out twice for zero. And he was not picked. There were no signs of sadness, he just said 'sir abhi aur mehnat karne hai (I have to work hard). Before the Achilles injury, when he was not being picked for India, his attitude was the same 'Sir apna kaam bas run banana hai (My job is to score runs)," says Atre.

Atre credits his upbringing which has made him the person he is. "They are from Sarjapur, a village in Indore. His father Manohar Patidar has a business of agriculture pumps and he is also a no-nonsense guy. He too speaks less and believes in hard work and I feel Rajat has inherited that from his father," says Atre.

Atre was correct; it is very difficult to get Manohar Patidar to talk about his son. "You can't match this feeling, but we don't talk cricket to him. Just let him play."



Rajat Patidar could make his Test debut against England on Friday. PTI

## BRIEFLY

## Sports Ministry gets Rs 45 crore boost in Union Budget

**New Delhi:** The Sports Ministry was on Thursday allocated Rs 3,442.32 crore, a hike of Rs 45.36 crore as compared to last year, in the interim Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. In the previous budget, the Sports Ministry had got a revised allocation of Rs 3,396.96 crore. The Olympic Games in Paris, to be held from July 26 to August 11, will be the country's main focus during the 2024-25 financial year. The ministry's flagship programme, Khelo India, was allotted Rs 900 crore, an increase of Rs 20 crore from the previous budget. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) saw a Rs 26.83 crore increase in its budgetary allocation from the previous year's revised expenditure of Rs 795.77 crore. The National Sports Federations (NSFs) will receive Rs 15 crore more this time.

## Mumbai Open: 4 Indians get wild cards

**Mumbai:** India's top-ranked women trio of Ankita Raina, Sahaja Yamalapalli and Rutuja Bhosale, along with promising Maharashtra teenager Vaishnavi Adkar, were given wildcards in the singles main draw at the WTA Mumbai Open, to be held here from February 5-11. The WTA 125K Series event, that had witnessed 18-year-old Aryna Sabalenka announcing her arrival with the title triumph in 2017, is returning after six years.

## Harmanpreet to lead India at Pro League

**New Delhi:** Drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh will lead the Indian men's hockey team at the upcoming FIH Pro League matches, which are key to the side's preparation for this year's Paris Olympics. India will play against Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, and Australia twice each across both legs. **SQUAD:** Goalkeepers: PR Sreejesh, Krishan P; Defenders: Jarmanpreet S, Sumit, Jugraj S, Amit R, Harmanpreet S (C), Varun K, Sanjay, Vishnukant S; Midfielders: Hardik S (VC), Vivek P, Manpreet S, Nilakanta S, Shamsher S, Rajkumar P, Rabichandra M; Forwards: Lalit K U, Mandeep S, Gurjant S, Sukhjeet S, Abhishek, Akashdeep S, Arjeet H.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

# Klopp: The most human manager

Liverpool boss seldom publicly mocked a player, rarely talked himself up & put in perspective success, failure

SANDIP G

WHEN JURGEN Klopp leaves Liverpool at the end of the season, the league would not only be poorer for an original revolutionary, but also the most human and democratic of managers. There is a blazing aura around his sharply-tuck black cap, an air of intellectual intimidation at times, like we saw on Wednesday when Liverpool beat Chelsea 4-1 in their Premier League clash. But when he smiles, the broad, warm smile, he suddenly transforms into an uncle-next-door, chatty and amiable, obliging you a cup of coffee and bearhugs, the cloak of a world-beating manager melting.

The tracks and tees, sneakers and caps, the ruffled golden hair and careless stubble, the riot of emotions shed on the touchline, the crackling laughter and snorting, the humour and wit, all made him a common man's manager, one even the man on the street could relate to. He had none of the heavy air or hubris of a high-class manager. He explained tactics lucidly, seldom mocked a player or manager he disliked in public, rarely talked himself up, barely kicked up a scandal, and found meaning and perspective in both success and defeat.

The success he found, alas, would forever be measured against the success of his great adversary Pep Guardiola. A league crown, Champions League title, an FA Cup and Club World Cup compares unfavorably with City's stack in this span (a treble, five league title and a pile of less-glittering trophies). But Guardiola would pay the biggest compliment that Klopp was his biggest rival; that he would sleep more peacefully. No team has come close in challenging City as Liverpool has in the last decade. Twice, Liverpool were denied by a point on the last day; the year before Liverpool were one game away from a quadruple. A goal here, a save there, Klopp could have left England with a more bulging bag of trophies.

They was a rivalry like Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger, a season-defining era-marking rivalry, one built on both respect and competitiveness, both aware that they would be judged on the each other. Their styles affected each other. Both Klopp and Guardiola are at once similar and dissimilar, similar in the unshakable belief that football should be entertaining, dissimilar in how they choose their vehicle for entertainment. Guardiola is the master of order, every player functions like a piece of machine, the movements and patterns elegantly choreographed; everyone has the space to operate and not to operate. He sees football as a ballet, where roles are nuclear-specific, movements precise and fast yet languorous. Contrastingly, Klopp is the conductor of organised chaos, like listening to a rock concert. At a typ-



## NUMBER PLATE

# 200

When Liverpool beat Chelsea 4-1 in their Premier League clash on Wednesday, Jurgen Klopp joined the club of managers with 200 wins in the Premier League. Only Pep Guardiola (269) reached a double century of victories quicker than the Liverpool boss, who needed 318 games.

ical Klopp move takes place at maddening pace, with an overload on flanks, and players interchanging positions, inevitably, breathlessly.

Over the years, there has been a partial exchange of styles. Guardiola has inculcated the pressing side into his team's game while Klopp has embraced more possession-football.

Ferguson and Guardiola won more trophies, but the legacy of Wenger and Klopp cannot be measured in the weight of the plaques they have won. Klopp's own definition of success was "not what people think when you come in but what they think when you leave." Klopp would leave with love and respect, having moulded the club in his image, rendered it an identity, and modernized a club trapped in past glories. He liberated the club from its past,

and showed them the future. The style that he has constructed will outlast him. It shall forever be synonymous with high-intensity pressing and delightful pace.

When he took over Liverpool, the club was not only in shambles, but also teetering without direction. The new owners, the Fenway Group that bailed the club out of bankruptcy in 2010, were still wrapping their heads over the mess. From scouting to transfers, data interpretation to nutrition, they lagged behind the league's cream. Klopp was not an expert in data or scouting, so he and the group hired those they felt could do the job. He is not an all-powerful board-room autocrat, but is happy to delegate, and believes that he does not need to know everything, but just needs to hire people who do.

He gave them absolute freedom and listened to them when making transfer decisions.

Like when Klopp wanted to bring the familiar face of Julian Brandt, the scouts disagreed and urged him to buy Mohammed Salah. The Egyptian would turn out to be Liverpool's totem in the coming year. Extensive data-mining would go behind the acquisition of several players who would later be stars.

The high-pressing game he brought from Dortmund would sweep football in England, but the soul of his team was not tactics, but cohesion. The finest example came after the end of his first season, when Liverpool ended their campaign in eighth spot after a 2-2 draw with West Bromwich Albion. After the end of the

game, the players, clasping each other's arms, walked to the Kop End to thank the crowd for their support. The crowd was bemused as the practice, though common in German football, is rare in England. First, they mocked him, but such gestures helped build a bond with the players and audience. Assistant manager Pepijn Lijnders would say in an interview with Dutch paper De Volksrant: "Jurgen creates a family. We always say: 30 per cent tactic, 70 per cent team-building."

Klopp himself explained his philosophy. "All that we do in life - how I understand it - is about relationships. Otherwise, if you only want to be responsible for the things you do and not anyone else, then live in a forest alone or on a mountain alone. We all win for each other; we do it for kitchen staff, the dressing room attendants and the grass-keepers because we know how important it is for them."

In the process of his team-building, his natural humour would come in handy. The night before the Champions League final against Real Madrid in 2018, he came to the team meeting with his shirt tucked under a Cristiano Ronaldo branded boxer shorts, thus defusing the pre-game tension. He would impersonate Rocky Balboa in post-match chats.

Thus, when Klopp departs, it's not just a revolutionary manager that the league would miss but the most human of the elite managers of the words. And his legacy cannot be weighed in the weight of trophies he has won but how he changed the club and the league.

Qureshi hopes Davis Cup tie will soften sporting relations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
FEBRUARY 1

PAKISTAN TENNIS star Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi said he hopes India's Davis Cup team's tour to Pakistan will act as the first step in softening the sporting relationship between the two countries. The Indian team is currently in Islamabad for their World Group 1 playoff tie, which will be played on February 3 and 4.

The 43-year-old Qureshi, who has decades of experience playing alongside and against Indian players, told the AFP: "Hopefully this tie will act as an example of a bridge between Pakistan and India, as I'll love to see the Indian cricket team play in our country in the near future."

The All India Tennis Association (AITA) tried to have the tie moved to a neutral venue like what had been done in 2019, but after their multiple appeals were rejected, India have reluctantly travelled to their neighbour's shores for the team competition.

Qureshi knows a thing or two about the tennis fraternity in India. One of Pakistan's most accomplished players, one of the biggest results of his career came at the 2010 US Open, when he reached the men's doubles final alongside India's Rohan Bopanna. Together, the duo had been nicknamed the 'Indo-Pak Express'.

Even though two of their top singles players, Sumit Nagal and Sasi Kumar Mukund, have chosen to sit out of the tie, India have a much stronger lineup compared to the Pakistan team on the basis of world rankings. Pakistan, then, will be relying on the grass-court expertise and experience of Qureshi, as well as 44-year-old Aqeel Khan.

Khan, too, is pumped for the tie against India, and believes that it is different from any other match.

"We have competed against the best Asian teams like Japan and Uzbekistan but the Indian team is different. When India is here, the media gets involved, fans get more excited and I am sure there is huge interest among sponsors also because more people will follow," he was quoted as saying by PTI. "It will help Pakistan tennis overall because it will popularise the game further."

**Hopefully this tie will act as an example of a bridge between Pakistan and India, as I'll love to see the Indian cricket team play in our country in the near future."**

- AISAM-UL-HAQ QURESHI

## In race to Paris, Gayatri-Treesa give timely reminder to Ashwini-Tanisha

VINAYAK MOHANARANGAN  
FEBRUARY 1

THERE WERE two streaks of impressive comebacks for Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly in their second-round win against Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto at the Thailand Masters Super 300 in Bangkok on Thursday.

After taking the first game, the pair of 20-year-olds was trailing 5-11 in Game 2 as Ashwini and Tanisha picked up their quality. Soon after, they were trailing 15-20 and a deciding Game 3 was imminent.

But on both occasions, Gayatri-Treesa held their nerves to see out their training partners in an impressive 21-15, 24-22 win to reach the quarterfinals.

The trigger for both comebacks was Gayatri at the net. At 5-11 after the mid-game interval, she nailed a service return as the shuttle flew just wide of Tanisha and drew an error from Ashwini at the back. At 15-20, Gayatri once again played a superb point from the front-court, taking the initiative to intercept the shuttle early to control the rally and eventually forcing an error from the other side of the net.

In those two moments, Gayatri showed why she is the perfect foil at the net for Treesa, the enforcer from the backcourt, as the youngsters prevailed over 40 minutes of see-saw badminton. With Tanisha and Ashwini currently leading the race for India's slot in women's doubles at the Paris Olympics, Gayatri-Treesa received a timely boost that could help them potentially reclaim that spot in the weeks to come.

There is a long way to go, of course, but having struggled for form in the latter half of 2023, Treesa and Gayatri had a point to prove in Bangkok. An injury to Gayatri meant they barely played in the closing stages of last season, suffering a quarterfinal exit at the Syed Modi International in Lucknow at the hands of Tanisha and Ashwini. Last year had started well for them, as they pulled off some huge wins at the Badminton Asia Team Championships and their favourite event on tour, the All England Open. But in the Race to Paris, Ashwini and Tanisha made a big move with their stellar run in the home leg.

That Gayatri was dominant in the closing stages of this crucial match augurs well for the pair with not long left in the qualification phase. In the seven game points they saved, Gayatri hit three winners and was also the finisher when they had their first match point, once again taking charge at the net. Treesa's smashes



Treesa Jolly (left) and Gayatri Gopichand beat Ashwini Ponnappa-Tanisha Crasto 21-15, 24-22 in the second round of the Thailand Masters. Odisha Sports / Twitter

are usually a big weapon for this pair in closing out points, while Gayatri is seen as the steady hand in longer rallies. But here, the roles were reversed as the latter took charge when it looked all but certain that Ashwini-Tanisha were taking this match the distance.

### Tough act to follow

It's not quite straightforward taking up a sport as a young athlete when one's parent is a bona fide legend. There are enough examples of this across the sporting world. Gayatri, daughter of one of India's greatest shuttlers and coaches in Pullela Gopichand, must know this quite well and that tag has often followed her. In her match-winning display in Bangkok, she showed that she was back to somewhere close to her best and it adds more intrigue to how the rest of the Paris qualification race pans out.

Next, the sixth seeds will be up against fourth seeds Febriana Dwipuji Kusuma and Amallia Cahaya Pratiwi of Indonesia as they eye a spot in the semifinals and, possibly, beyond.

While Treesa and Gayatri breathed some life back into their Olympic qualification, there was more disappointment for Kidambi Srikanth. The former world No.1 was defeated by Mithun Manjunath in a three-game affair to end his Asian leg events without a quarter-final appearance.

His win against Jonatan Christie in Malaysia to start his season offered hope that there was a turnaround looming for Srikanth, especially with Lakshya Sen's dip in form and confidence. The second men's singles spot for India in Paris

is dependent largely on one of these two men seizing some initiative, but Srikanth suffered another early exit.

Mithun, who entered the match with a 1-0 head-to-head record against Srikanth on the international circuit, started superbly to take the opening game. The veteran then bounced back to largely control the second. But in the decider, Srikanth was constantly playing catch up and paid the price, once again, for his unforced errors. Mithun, ranked 63 in the world, pulled off an impressive 21-9, 13-21, 21-17 win in 54 minutes. The former national champion will play Netherlands' Mark Caljouw in the last-eight round.

Mithun is the last Indian standing in men's singles after qualifier S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian lost 9-21, 11-21 to fellow leftie Chinese Taipei's Chun-Yi Lin.

In women's singles, there will be a rare quarterfinal appearance at an international World Tour event by an Indian not named PV Sindhu or Saina Nehwal. Ashmita Chalihha, the left-hander from Assam, registered a hard-fought three-game win against veteran Chinese Taipei shuttler Pai Yu Po 21-12, 15-21, 21-17.

Chalihha, in her first quarterfinal at the World Tour since January 2022 at the Odisha Open, will face Ester Nurumi Tri Wardoyo of Indonesia next.

Earlier, Malvika Bansod was left to rue her inability to close the opening game as she lost 22-24, 7-21 to local favourite Busanan Ongbamrungphan.

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# THE WORLD

TOP OF THE  
WORLD

Greta Thunberg gets arrested in London, in October 2023. Reuters

UNITED KINGDOM  
Greta Thunberg faces trial over 2023 oil protest

**London:** Greta Thunberg's arrest at a protest outside an oil and gas conference in London last year followed her refusal to leave after police had given the Swedish climate activist a "final warning", prosecutors said on Thursday. Thunberg is on trial with four others at London's Westminster Magistrates' Court for an offence under the Public Order Act. All five, who are aged between 19 and 59 and have pleaded not guilty, are accused of failing to comply with an order by senior police officers to move their protest to a designated area near the conference.

REUTERS

THAILAND  
New blow for poll winners: Bid to dissolve party

**Bangkok:** An activist lawyer lodged a petition on Thursday seeking to dissolve Thailand's Move Forward Party over its plan to amend a law protecting the monarchy from criticism, in a setback for a party that won an election on a bold agenda of liberal reform. The petition was filed with the election commission a day after the Constitutional Court ruled Move Forward had undermined the crown and national security. AP

MALDIVES  
Two held over attack on top law official

**Male:** Two persons were arrested on Thursday in connection with the "pre-planned" attack on the Prosecutor General of Maldives that left his arm fractured a day before, an incident that triggered a slugfest between President Mohamed Muizzu's government and the Opposition. Prosecutor General Hussain Shameem was out jogging on a street in Male City on Wednesday morning when he was attacked with a hammer by two people on a motorbike. PTI

JORDAN  
Pegasus hacks decives of activists, media

**Boston:** Israeli-made Pegasus spyware was used in Jordan to hack the cellphones of at least 30 people, including journalists, lawyers, human rights and political activists, the digital rights group Access Now said Thursday. The hacking with spyware made by Israel's NSO Group occurred from early 2020 until last November, Access Now said in its report. It did not accuse Jordan's government of the hacking. The Jordanian government had no immediate comment on Thursday's report. "We believe this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the use of Pegasus spyware in Jordan, and that the true number of victims is likely higher," Access Now said.

**HAMAS UNLIKELY TO REJECT TRUCE BID, BUT ISRAEL SHOULD END WAR: OFFICIAL**

## As airstrikes pound Gaza, Netanyahu says UN agency for Palestinians must close

UNRWA could shut down by end of Feb if funding doesn't resume

REUTERS  
JERUSALEM, GAZA, FEB 1

Israeli protesters block aid trucks saying they aren't inspected well before entering Gaza. Reuters

## INDIA 'CONCERNED' OVER ALLEGATIONS ON UNRWA

**New Delhi:** India's Ministry of External Affairs Thursday said it is "deeply concerned" over allegations that some staff of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, were involved in the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel. New Delhi also welcomed the investigations launched by the UN into the allegations. ENS

Thursday that Hamas is unlikely to reject the ceasefire proposal, but will not sign it without Israel's assurance to end the war.

## HEARING ON SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON CHILDREN

## At US Senate hearing, Zuckerberg apologises to kin of abused children

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 1

Mark Zuckerberg at the U.S. Capitol, Wednesday. Reuters

have all been through. No one should go through the things that your families have suffered... we are going to continue doing industry-wide efforts to make sure no one has to go through the things your families have had to suffer," he said.

"Your product is killing people," Hawley told Zuckerberg.

## Nobel Laureate Yunus booked in new graft case

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh's anti-graft agency on Thursday submitted a charge sheet against Nobel Laureate economist Dr Muhammad Yunus on a fresh corruption charge, days after a court granted him bail in a case for violating labour laws.

"I'm sorry for everything you



"We have filed the charge sheet against him (Yunus) and 13 others before the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka," an ACC spokesman told reporters. The court has set March 3 for an indictment hearing of the case.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) accused the 83-year-old economist and 13 others of misappropriating around Tk 25.22 crore of Grameen Telecom Workers' Profit Participation Fund.

The hacking with spyware made by Israel's NSO Group occurred from early 2020 until last November, Access Now said in its report. It did not accuse Jordan's government of the hacking. The Jordanian government had no immediate comment on Thursday's report. "We believe this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the use of Pegasus spyware in Jordan, and that the true number of victims is likely higher," Access Now said.

AP

**AFTER BEING OUSTED FROM POST, HANS-GEORG MAASSEN HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR RADICAL ANTI-IMMIGRATION RHETORIC**

## Germany's former top neo-Nazi hunter now being monitored as extremist

REUTERS  
BERLIN, FEBRUARY 1

**HANS-GEORG MAASSEN**, who until five years ago was responsible for protecting Germany against violent and extremist threats to its democracy, is himself now being monitored by the security agency he ran, the bureaucrat-turned-politician said.

Maassen was dismissed as head of Germany's Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) in 2018 after appearing to play down the threat of violence by right-wing extremists who at the time were rioting in an east-

ern German city. Since, the lawyer has become known for his increasingly radical commentary on the supposed threat immigration poses to Germany, becoming a hero to far-right activists including some in circles surrounding Heinrich XIII Prince Reuss, the aristocrat who led a foiled coup attempt in 2022.

"Germany is clearly afraid of me," he said on X, adding the country was using the internal security agency to monitor him and the party he has founded.

Asked about surveillance of Maassen, the BfV said privacy law meant it could not comment on individual cases. But Maassen



People protesting rightwing extremism, for the protection of the democracy in Hanau, Germany on Tuesday. Reuters

US gets ready for strikes on Iranian targets in Iraq, Syria, says report

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 1

THE US administration has approved plans for multi-day strikes in Iraq and Syria on targets including "Iranian personnel and facilities", CBS News reported Thursday, citing US officials.

The report follows days of conjecture about how Washington will retaliate after three US service members were killed on Saturday by a drone strike in Jordan, the first US deaths in an escalation of violence across Middle East flashpoints.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the United States would work to avoid a wider conflict.

President Joe Biden, under pressure to take firm action without igniting a wider war with Iran, has said he has decided how to respond, without giving details. Tehran has said it will respond to attacks on its territory or its citizens and interests abroad.

The CBS report quoted US officials as saying weather would be a factor in the timing of the strikes, as Washington preferred good visibility to guard against the risk of hitting civilians.

"The fragments seized from the scene, according to their design features, geometric characteristics and available markings, are structural elements of the MIM-104A anti-aircraft guided missile of the Patriot complex of the United States" the committee said.

**'DOCUMENTS OF KILLED UKRAINIANS FOUND'**

## Ukraine used US Patriot missiles to down plane with POWs: Moscow

REUTERS  
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 1

RUSSIAN INVESTIGATORS said on Thursday they had evidence showing that Ukraine's military shot down a Russian Il-76 military transport plane last week with U.S.-made Patriot surface-to-air missiles.

The Russian Air Force Il-76 fell from the skies on Jan. 24. Russia said all 74 people on board, including 65 captured Ukrainian soldiers en route to be swapped for Russian prisoners of war, were killed, and blamed Kyiv for downing the plane.

The investigators released footage of body parts which they said proved those aboard were Ukrainian military personnel.

Kyiv, which is fighting Russian forces in Ukraine, has neither confirmed nor denied that it downed the plane, but has challenged details of Moscow's account and called for an international investigation.

Russia's State Investigative Committee said in a statement that Ukrainian soldiers in the area of Lypky in the Kharkiv region had fired two missiles at the plane.

Showing investigators inspecting some of the missile fragments. One fragment included what appears to be "ATRIOT" in English.

Russia said on Friday it had recovered Ukrainian identity documents and tattooed body parts from the crash site.

Ukraine did not immediately comment on the statement by the investigative committee.



A fragment of the US Patriot missile, according to Russian probe panel. Reuters

**UKRAINE FORCES CHIEF ASKED TO QUIT: REPORTS**

**Kyiv:** A series of Western and Ukrainian media reports this week said that President Zelenskiy had asked for Ukrainian armed forces commander General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, to step aside, a request he declined. A source familiar with the matter told Reuters on Wednesday that ground forces commander Oleksandr Sivskyi had been offered Zaluzhnyi's job but turned it down. REUTERS

Showing investigators inspecting some of the missile fragments. One fragment included what appears to be "ATRIOT" in English.

Russia said on Friday it had recovered Ukrainian identity documents and tattooed body parts from the crash site.

Ukraine did not immediately comment on the statement by the investigative committee.

## Inside Trump's poll team: Lean, mean and largely unseen

REUTERS  
FEBRUARY 1

A VETERAN tactician who worked on Ronald Reagan's campaign. An ex-Marine wounded in the Middle East.

They are among a handful of distinctive figures who form a tight, disciplined inner circle around Donald Trump in bid for White House.

This core campaign team of a half-dozen aides is unwaveringly loyal to their boss and chooses to stay mostly in the background, marking stark departure from his previous, looser orbit of advisers.

"We go to war with people that we trust," said Trump's campaign co-manager Chris LaCivita, a 57-year-old former Marine injured in the 1991 Gulf War who became a political consultant.

"There is no confusion about a chain of command," LaCivita told Reuters. "He's at the top."

The public got a rare glimpse of LaCivita and fellow campaign mastermind Susie Wiles when Trump took the stage to celebrate his victory in Iowa.



Former US president Donald Trump with his team. File

Behind him on the edge of the stage stood Wiles. Poking out behind her was LaCivita's bald head.

The two veteran operators have helped Trump build a huge lead in the race for Republican nomination. They have helped him land major endorsements,

lobby state Republicans, relentlessly mock his rivals, develop the successful strategy of campaigning on his multiple indictments, and make sure events are packed with red cap-wearing supporters.

"They're doing their job every day. And there's one guy whose name is on the plane: It's Trump, and he likes it that way," said Corey Lewandowski, a manager of Trump's 2016 campaign.

AP

**RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE**

Germany's security services as they contend with a burgeoning far-right scene that is profiting from a lacklustre economy and stretched public services.

As BfV chief, he was in effect Germany's chief hunter of neo-Nazis. The documents released to him by the BfV show him being repeatedly praised by far-right figures.

The right-wing extremist Bernhard Schraub, in a letter to Heinrich XIII Prince Reuss, described your client as an "upstanding republican," the BfV's first example reads. Only unclassified material features in freedom of information releases.

behind barriers where the leaders were meeting at European Council headquarters.

"If you see with how many people we are here today, and if you see it's all over Europe, so you must have hope," said Kevin Bertens, a farmer from just outside Brussels. "You need us. Help us!"

Farmers from Italy, Spain and other European countries took part in the demonstration in Brussels, as well as continuing their protests at home. In Portugal, farmers made their way to the Spanish border to block some of the roads links.

France's main farmer union leaders on Thursday called on their peers to lift roadblocks after over two weeks, saying the government has listened to the protests.

around 1,300 tractors, according to a police estimate. Security personnel in riot gear stood guard

bases tracking extremists.

Maassen did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment. Tichys Einblick, a blog that supports him, quoted him as saying: "The allegations are without substance and unjustified."

Last month, Maassen announced he was setting up a party, one of several new launches aiming to capture voters who polls say are increasingly disenchanted with Germany's dominant parties of the centre left and right.

Maassen's post-BfV career as a far-right icon has been a growing embarrassment to

the centre left and right.

Maassen's post-BfV career as a far-right icon has been a growing embarrassment to



**WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA DIVISION**

VARIOUS ENGINEERING WORKS  
e-TENDER NOTICE NO. DRM-BRC 115 TO 118 OF 2023-24  
Sealed Tenders for and on behalf of the President of India are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (W A/C) Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-390 004 for the following works:

| Sr. No. | Tender No. & Name of Work   | Approximate Cost of the work (in ₹) | Bid Security to be deposited (in ₹) |
|---------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 01      | DRM BRC 115 of 2023-24.<br>Vadodara (P) :- Annual Maintenance Contract of under ground drainage system and manholes under the jurisdiction of Sr. Section Engineer (Works) BRCP.  | 11,56,362.59                        | 23,100.00                           |
| 02      | DRM BRC 116 of 2023-24.<br>PRTN (NAIR) :- Annual Maintenance Contract system underground drainage line in NAIR Campus under the jurisdiction of Sr. Section Engineer (Works) Pratapnagar (NAIR).  | 4,80,466.65                         | 9,600.00                            |
| 03      | DRM BRC 117 of 2023-24.<br>Provision for protection of embankment along bridge No. 77, 79, 79A, 79B, 80 between Km. 38 to 39 on DB-EKNR Section.  | 2,49,07,780.59                      | 2,74,500.00                         |
| 04      | DRM BRC 118 of 2023-24.<br>"Vadodara Division :- Disinfection of drinking water supply by chlorination at Railway colony and Railway station and other locations under the Jurisdiction of Sr. Section Engineer (Works) Godhra (For 24 months)" | 13,31,155.50                        | 26,600.00                           |

Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender: Tender is to be submitted on 16-02-2024 before 15:00 Hrs. and is to be opened on same date at 15:30 Hrs. Web site particulars and notice for location where complete details can be seen & Address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased: Web site @ [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) Divisional Railway Manager (W A/C), Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-4.

Corrigendum to Tender Document of Tender No DRM BRC 115 to 116 of 2023-24 of Tender Notice No. DRM BRC 115 to 118 of 2023-24 dated 25.01.2024.

1. Tender No. DRM BRC 115 of 2023-24:- 1. Tender Schedule-A of Tender No DRM BRC 115 of 2023-24 may be read as under: "Maintaining the whole underground system and manholes with contractor's own equipment, tools and plants and auxiliary safety equipment under the jurisdiction of concern SSE(Works) for a period of 24 months. The rate includes pipeline of 100mm, 150mm, 230mm, 300mm and 430mm dia etc. and drainage system and ensuring free flow and keeping them all in working conditions instead of existing item description." 2. Scope of work for NSC item of Schedule 'C' will be maintained as per Schedule-C.

2. Tender No. DRM BRC 116 of 2023-24:- 2. Tender Schedule-A of Tender No DRM BRC 116 of 2023-24 may be read as under: "Maintaining the whole underground system and manholes with contractor's own equipment, tools and plants and auxiliary safety equipment under the jurisdiction of concern SSE(Works) for a period of 24 months. The rate includes pipeline of 100mm, 150mm, 230mm, 300mm and 430mm dia etc. and drainage system and ensuring free flow and keeping them all in working conditions instead of existing item description. The other terms & condition will remains unchanged.

BRCP-318 & BRC-318 A

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**Directorate of Town & Country Planning, Haryana**

Nagar Yojana Bhawan, Plot no. 3, Sector-18 A,  
Madhya Marg, Chandigarh  
Phone: 0172-2543499,  
e-mail: [tcpaharyana7@gmail.com](mailto:tcpaharyana7@gmail.com)

Web site: [tcpaharyana.gov.in](http://tcpaharyana.gov.in)

Memo No. RCP-29-VOL-VII/AD(VK/2024/ 3710 Dated 31/01/2024

**Public Notice**

The Revised Tentative Sectoral Plan of Sector-109, 112, 113, 114 & 115 (Residential, Commercial & Institutional), Gurugram was approved on 23.07.2014 as per Final Development Plan-2031 AD Gurugram bearing Drawing No. DTP(G) 2136/2013 dated 15.01.2013 / 23.07.2014.

2. Whereas a representation was received regarding the realignment of part of 24 mtr wide internal circulation road passing through the licensed land for group housing having an area measuring 10.744 acres (License No.04 of 2013 dated 18.02.2013) in Sector-112, Gurugram Manesar Urban Complex-2031. The representation was examined was submitted for orders of Government.

3. The Government has accorded in-principle approval to amend the Revised Tentative Sectoral Plan of Sector-109, 112, 113, 114 & 115 (Residential, Commercial & Institutional), Gurugram. A copy of earlier approved sectoral plan as well as proposed revised Sectoral Plan has been hosted on the Departmental website i.e. [www.tcpaharyana.gov.in](http://www.tcpaharyana.gov.in).

4. Any person having any objection to the proposed revision of sectoral plan of Sector-109, 112, 113, 114 & 115 (Residential, Commercial & Institutional), Gurugram may file his/her objection alongwith reasons in writing in the office of District Town Planner, Gurugram situated at HSVP Office Complex, Sector-14, Gurugram or Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Haryana, Nagar Yojana Bhawan, Plot No. 3, Block-A, Sector-18 A, Madhya Marg, Chandigarh within a period of 30 days from issuance of this notice. The objections can also be filed through email i.e. [tcpaharyana7@gmail.com](mailto:tcpaharyana7@gmail.com). The objections received after given period will not be entertained.

Sd/-  
(AMIT KHATRI, IAS)  
Dated : Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh.  
Place : Chandigarh 24623/HRY

**INVITATION FOR-TENDER / TENDER  
SHORT TIME TENDER NOTICE**

Expression of interests through online E-tenders/ Tenders are invited by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Nagpur Museum from eligible, experienced Conservator and Restoration Firms/ Conservation and Restoration of Wepans for Anshend and historical Arms its work of Central Museum, Nagpur, District Nagpur.

| Sr. No. | Name of work   | Security Deposit (Rupees)                                     | Time limit in Tender (Calendar Days) |
|---------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1       | Conservation and restoration work of Wepans Central Museum, Nagpur, District Nagpur Rs 65,00,000/- Including All Taxes Amt                 | Rs. 65,000/- ( Sixty five Thousand Only)                      | 01 months                            |
| 2       | Conservation and restoration work of Wepans Mahur Museum, Mhur Under Museum Nagpur, District Nagpur Rs 18,98,151/- Including All Taxes Amt | Rs. 18,982/- ( Eighteen Thousand Nine Hundred Eightytwo Only) | 01 months                            |

| Published Date            | Document Sale Start Date | Document Sale End Date  | 02/02/2024 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Bid submission Start Date | 02/02/2024               | Bid Submission End Date | 08/02/2024 |
| Bid Opening Date          | 09/02/2024               |                         |            |

The bid through any other mode other than prescribed mode shall not be entertained. Bid security receipt of online payment Rs.65240/- (Refundable) and original copy of Power of Attorney (if applicable) Bidding document etc. shall be submitted online by the Bidder on or before 08/02/2024. Detail Notice Publish <http://mahatenders.gov.in>

Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Maharashtra reserves the right to select or reject any or all tenders and to increase/decrease/change any and or all terms & conditions without prior notice to the Bidder after bid submission Hard Copy of Tender Document With All Necceccy Document Submitted office Before 10/02/2024

**SD  
Curator  
Central Museum  
Nagpur**

PR. No. 016345 (B & C) 2023-24

**SIMFED**  
(An Apex Marketing Cooperative Society)  
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM UNDERTAKING  
Gangtok, East Sikkim - 737 101

Ref. No.: SIMFED/2023-24/DIV-UNIT/052 Date: 30.01.2024

NOTICE INVITING QUOTATIONS (N.I.Q.)

Notice Inviting Quotation (NIQ) is invited from the registered/ empanelled dealer of SIMFED, for supply of Liv Guard INVERTER (I2- Verter Pro LG750 (520 Watts) and Liv Guard inverter Batteries IT 1048 ST (100 Ah) as per ISO 9001:2015 BIS registered along with Anchor/ Havells 1.5 sq mm Cu wire (high Insulation resistance/ High heat resistant RoHS Compliant) 90 Metres ISI marked and Anchor/ Havells S/S 5 in 1 (20 A) combine switch and the materials are to be delivered in Tadong Store for Mangan, Gangtok, Pakyong and Sangha and in Jorethang Store for Gyalshing, Soreng and Namchi.

Interested parties may visit the office of the General Manager (I), SIMFED for details of above items to be supplied and other terms and conditions.

Interested parties are requested to submit their EOQ/quotation on or before 15 February 2024 by 12.00 Noon. The EOQ/quotation received after 12.00 Noon of 15 February 2024 shall not be entertained at any cost.

General Manager (I), SIMFED

**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE**  
Office of the Executive Engineer, Project Division,  
Dasarahalli Zone, BBMP, MEI Layout, Bagalaguppe,  
Hesaraghatta Main Road, Bengaluru - 560073.

No: BBMP/DZ/EE/PD/TEND/06/2023-24 Date: 31-01-2024

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**

(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)

The Executive Engineer (Project Division), Dasarahalli Zone, BBMP, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Contractors registered in BBMP / KPWD / CPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the Construction of Works detailed below.

| Sl. No. | Name of the Project  | Amount Put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs) | EMD (Rs. in Lakhs) |
|---------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1       | Providing Security Services & Human Resource to Zonal Office and Other Office Buildings in Dasarahalli Zone. | 119.09                              | 2.00               |

**Calendar of Events:** 1) Tender Documents can be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> 2) Last Date for Tender Queries (only through online): 13-02-2024 upto 3.00 PM.

3) Date of Pre Bid Meeting on 13-02-2024 at 4.00 PM. 4) Last Date for Receipt of Tenders is 17-02-2024 upto 4.00 PM.

5) Date of Opening of Technical Bid is 19-02-2024 at 11.00 AM.

6) Date of Opening of Financial Bid is 22-02-2024 at 4.00 PM if possible. Further details can be had from the above office.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Project Division, Dasarahalli Zone, BBMP.

| TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD<br>Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process) |                           |  | Due Date and Time for Submission of Tender              |
|---|---------------------------|--|---|
| Sl. No.   | Tender Inviting Authority | Description of Works / Materials   | 09.02.2024<br>At<br>14:30 Hours                         |
| 1   | CE/ Mechanical Coal       | TIME CHARTERING OF ONE NUMBER SELF-TRIMMING PANANAK / KAMSAKARNGA GEARLESS BULK CARRIER VESSEL IN EACH TENDER -<br>(i) Coal (Ship)-150 MT/1000 TON/2024<br>WITH THE LAYDAYS FROM 20 <sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 TO 05 <sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024 FOR A PERIOD OF 6 MONTHS +/- 15 DAYS CHOPTION.<br>(ii) Coal (Ship)-152 MT/1000 TON/2024<br>WITH THE LAYDAYS FROM 10 <sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024 TO 25 <sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024 FOR A PERIOD OF 6 MONTHS +/- 15 DAYS CHOPTION.<br>(iii) Coal (Ship)-153 MT/1000 TON/2024<br>WITH THE LAYDAYS FROM 15 <sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024 TO 30 <sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024 FOR A PERIOD OF 6 MONTHS +/- 15 DAYS CHOPTION. |   |
|   |                           |  | DIPR/6127/Tender/2024<br>CHIEF ENGINEER/MECHANICAL/COAL |

The Tender Specification can be downloaded from TANGEDCO websites: [www.tangedco.gov.in](http://www.tangedco.gov.in), [www.tntenders.nicgecp/app](https://tntenders.nicgecp/app) at free of cost. Tender will be opened through the NIC Portal.

DIPR/6127/Tender/2024

Government of Maharashtra

**Public Works Department P.W. Division, Panvel**

Telephone No. 022-27452778

E-Tender Notice No. 160 (Open ONLINE) Year-2023-24

E-mail address : [panvel.lee@mahapwd.gov.in](mailto:panvel.lee@mahapwd.gov.in)

Fax Number : 022-27467440

EXECUTIVE Engineer P.W. Division, Panvel invite B-1

Tender From Registered Contractor with Govt. of Maharashtra Detail Tender Notice Available On

www.mahapwd.gov.in and www.mahatenders.gov.in Portal.

Note - Total 9 Work include in Tender notice.

Online Tender Download & Bid Preparation Period Date - 02.02.2024 At 10:00 AM To Date - 09.02.2024, 18:00 PM.

Online Tender Bid Preparation Last Date 09.02.2024 at 18:00 PM.

Sd/- Executive Engineer P.W. Division Panvel

Date -

DGIPR-2023-24/7574

**TAMILNADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED**  
Unit - 1 : Kagithapuram - 639 136. Karur Dist.  
Tamil Nadu. Ph.: 04324 - 277001 (10 Lines)

Unit - 2 : Mondipatti - 621 306, Trichy District,  
Tamil Nadu, Ph.: 04332 - 261600

<b

**KERALA WATER AUTHORITY / e-Tender Notice**

Tender No : 152/2023-24/KWA/PHC/D1/TM(RT)  
JMM-CWSS to Pallikkal- Supplying and Commissioning of Clear Water Pumping Main to Decentrukkku OHSR Navakulam Panchayat. EMD : Rs. 500000/-  
Tender Fee : Rs. 19518/-, Last Date for submitting Tender : 22.02.2024  
03:00pm, Phone : 04712322303, Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in,  
www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

Superintending Engineer  
PH Circle  
Thiruvananthapuram

KWA-JB-GL-6-2258-2023-24

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

General public is hereby informed that one male namely Bharat Singh S/o Unknown R/o Unknown. Age 60 years, Height 5'5" complexion Fair, Built Thin wearing Red & Blue Colour Sweater, Grey Colour pajama & White Colour Shocks in Feet was found Unconscious Condition at in front of YMCA Near Footpath of Majar Near Bangla Sahib Gurudwara Road, New Delhi He Was Admitted in lady hardinge hospital Vide MLC No. 193/2024 Where during checkup doctor declared brought dead. The dead body has been Preserved in Mortuary of lady hardinge hospital, New Delhi.

In this regard a DD No. 52A dated 06.10.2023 has been lodged at PS Connaught Place, New Delhi. Any person having any information or clue about this deceased male may kindly inform to the following:

**SHO**  
PS Connaught Place, New Delhi  
Ph. 7903248957, 8750870525  
DP/1278/NDD/2024

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED****See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that one accused **Dhani Ram Mittal** S/o Sh. Amit Mittal, R/o H.No. EE-2868, Jhangipuri, Delhi also at H.No. 291, Pahar Ke Niche, Near Dogran Mohalla, Tosham, PS Tosham, Distt. Bhiwani, Haryana have Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 88/2010 u/s 471/411 IPC** has been registered at P.S. Civil Lines, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Dhani Ram Mittal** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Dhani Ram Mittal** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Dhani Ram Mittal** of **FIR No. 88/2010 u/s 471/411 IPC** has been registered at P.S. Civil Lines, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before

**By Order**

**Sh. Gaurav Goyal**  
Metropolitan Magistrate,  
Central District, Room No.247,  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/1247/N/2024 (Court Matter)

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**

General public is hereby informed that one girl Namely **Kanchan D/o Sukeya Baksoi** R/o RZ-53/223 Gali No.03 J block West Sagarpur, New Delhi, has been missing /kidnapped from her house since: 16/01/2024. In this regard, a case **FIR/DD.No.57/24 dated 16.01.2024 has been registered at P.S. Sagarpur, Delhi.** The description of the missing girl is as under.

**Age:** 14 Year, **Height:** 4'5", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Medium, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Suit and salwar. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing girl then please inform **P.S. Sagarpur, Delhi** at following Tel No./ e-mail: cib@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbi.nic.in, providing clue about the person.

**Ph: 011-24368638,24368641**  
**Fax No. 011-24368639**  
**DP/1034/SW/2024**

**Sd/-S.H.O.**  
Sagarpur, Delhi  
Ph No. 28522663

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON****See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Sh. Ankush Dhawan, S/o Shish Kumar Dhawan, R/o C-1/160-161, First Floor, Sector-16, Rohini, Delhi** has committed the offences (or is suspected to have committed) in case **Case Reg. No. 11524/18, U/s 138 NI Act, P.S. South Rohini, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Sh. Ankush Dhawan** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Sh. Ankush Dhawan** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Sh. Ankush Dhawan** accused of **Case Reg. No. 11524/18, U/s 138 NI Act, P.S. South Rohini, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **04.03.2024**.

**By Order**

**Ms. Deepali Srivastava**  
Metropolitan Magistrate (N/W)  
Room No. 107, First Floor  
Rohini Courts, Delhi

DP/1260/RD/2024

**कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय**

पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमण्डल, रामगढ़

रामगढ़ थाना के सामने, गांधी चौक, रामगढ़ कैन्ट, जिला - रामगढ़, झारखण्ड- 829122, इन्सैल- eercdramgarh-jhr@nic.in

एस०बी०डी० आधारित अतिअल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

ई-निविदा प्रसंग संख्या :- **RCD/RAMGARH/ 75 / 2023-24(2nd Call)**

दिनांक :- **31-01-2024**

**1. कार्य का नाम**  
**IRQP Work of Patratu to Saunda 'D' Road from KM 0.00 to 11.35 Under Road Division, Ramgarh for the of Year 2023-24**

**2. प्राकलित राशि (रुपये में)**  
(अ.) करोड़ सालार लाख छ हजार आठ रुपये बासठ) मात्र

**3. कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि**  
पैबसाईट पर निविदा

**4. प्रकाशित होने की तिथि एवं समय**

**5. निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय**

**6. निविदा आमत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता-**

**7. प्रोक्योरेस्ट मार्किट का सम्बन्ध नवर**

**8. ई-प्रोक्योरेस्ट संल का**

हेल्प लाइन नंबर

निविदा की अध्यक्षता संघ वेबसाईट <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।

पथ निर्माण विभाग, झारखण्ड में निविदित निविदाकारी को UCAN से संबंधित

प्रमाण पत्र की घोषणा तिलाने अनिवार्य है।

निविदा की राशि घट-बढ़ सकती है।

**Cost of bidding document (Non-refundable fee) & Bid Security as indicated shall be payable online through**

<http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> कार्यपालक अभियंता

पॉनिंगो पथ प्रमण्डल रामगढ़

PR.31759 (Road)23-24\*D

पॉनिंगो पथ प्रमण्डल रामगढ़

**KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

# 49, East Wing, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Khanjia Bhavan, Race Course Road,

Bengaluru – 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383. Website: [www.kiadb.in](http://www.kiadb.in)

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-48/589/2023-24

Date:31.01.2024

**SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Item rate Tender under two cover system are invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Class-I (Civil) Contractors registered in KPWD who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following work as per the schedule given below:

**Name of the work:** Providing and laying of speed breakers and providing & Fixing Gantry Reflective Board at (Road No.6 & 10) and Signboards at Dobaspet 1st & 2nd Phase Industrial Area. Bengaluru Rural District.

Last date for submission of bids is: **15.02.2024 upto 04:30 pm**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/-

Chief Engineer - 1

DIPR/CP/JA/3358/2023-24

**कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय**  
ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, रॉची

**अति अल्पकालीन ई-पुर्ननिविदा आमंत्रण सूचना**

(PR 314982 (REO)23-24\*D)

पत्रांक:-

अति अल्पकालीन ई-पुर्ननिविदा संख्या:-13/RE/2023-24/RWD /EE/RANCHI

| क्रम संख. | आईडीनीटी फिकेचर संख्या/ पैकेज संख्या | कार्य का नाम          | प्राकलित राशि (रुपये में) | कार्य समाप्ति की तिथि/ अवधि |                 | टेंटर कॉल नं० |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
|           |                                      |                       |                           | अंक में                     | आसर में         |               |
| 2         | RWD/RANCHI/ 18/ STPKG/02/ 2023-24    | ट्रॉली लाइन लाख रुपये | 11,20,14,800.00           | सालार करोड़ रुपये           | सालार लाख रुपये | 15 माह        |
|           |                                      | सालार लाख रुपये       |                           | सालार मात्र                 | सालार मात्र     | त्रिसीधी      |

- वेबसाईट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि:-03.02.2024
- ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय:- 12-02-2024 अपराह्न 5.00 बजे तक।
- निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय:- 12-02-2024 अपराह्न 3.30 बजे।
- निविदा आमत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता-- कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, रॉची।
- ई-निविदा प्रकोपक द्वारा दिया गया संख्या :-0651-2360137

विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाईट [jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in) में देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, रॉची।

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय संख्या:-13/RE/2023-24/RWD /EE/RANCHI

दिनांक:-31.01.2024

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय संख्य



