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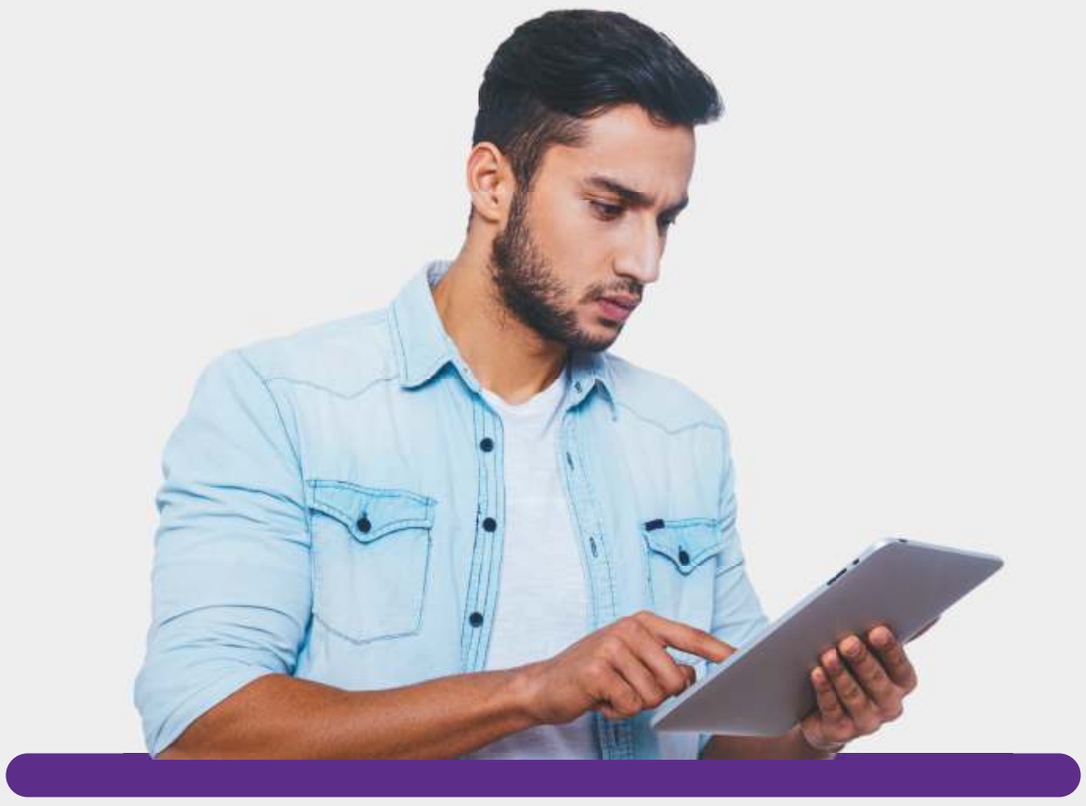

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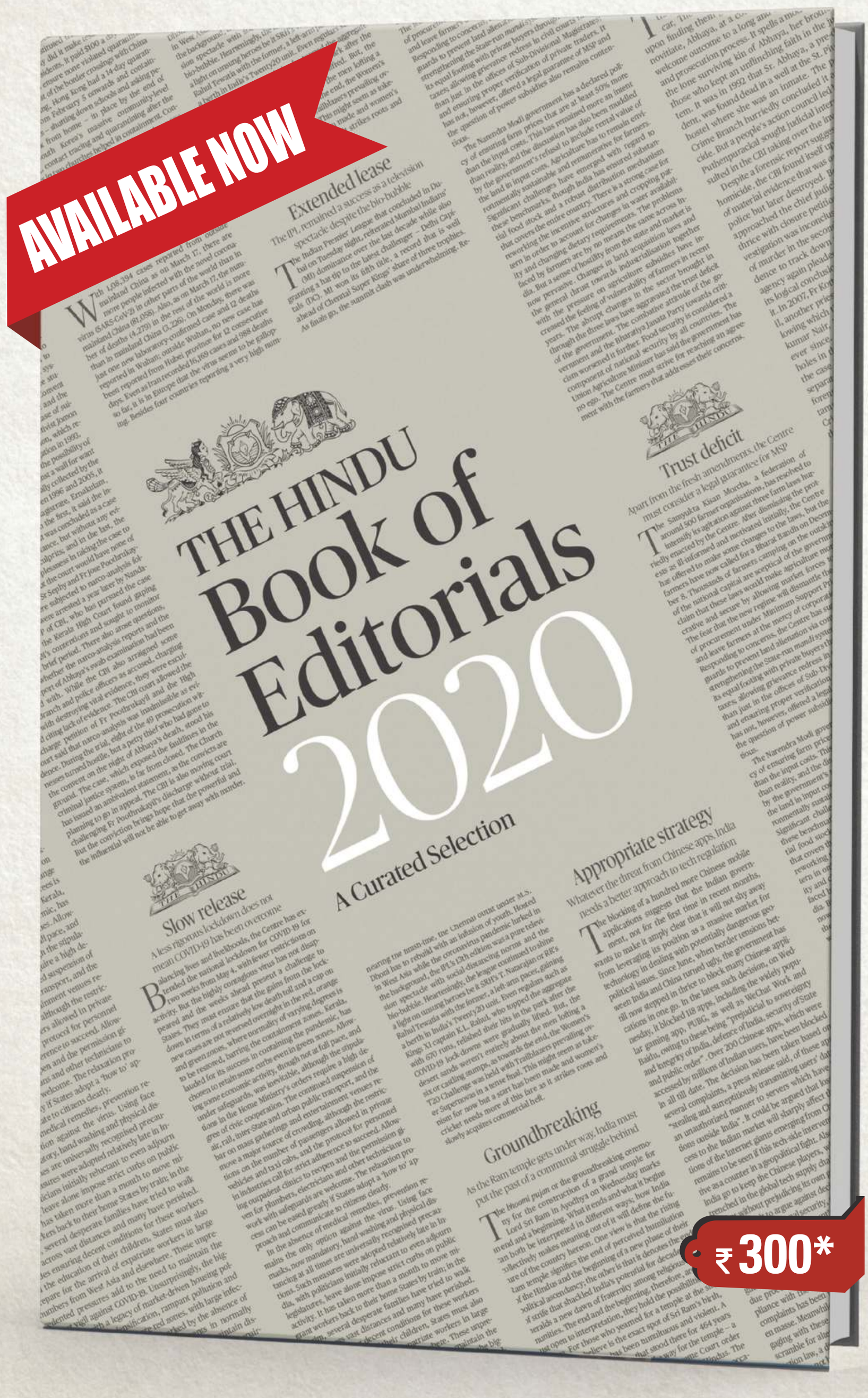

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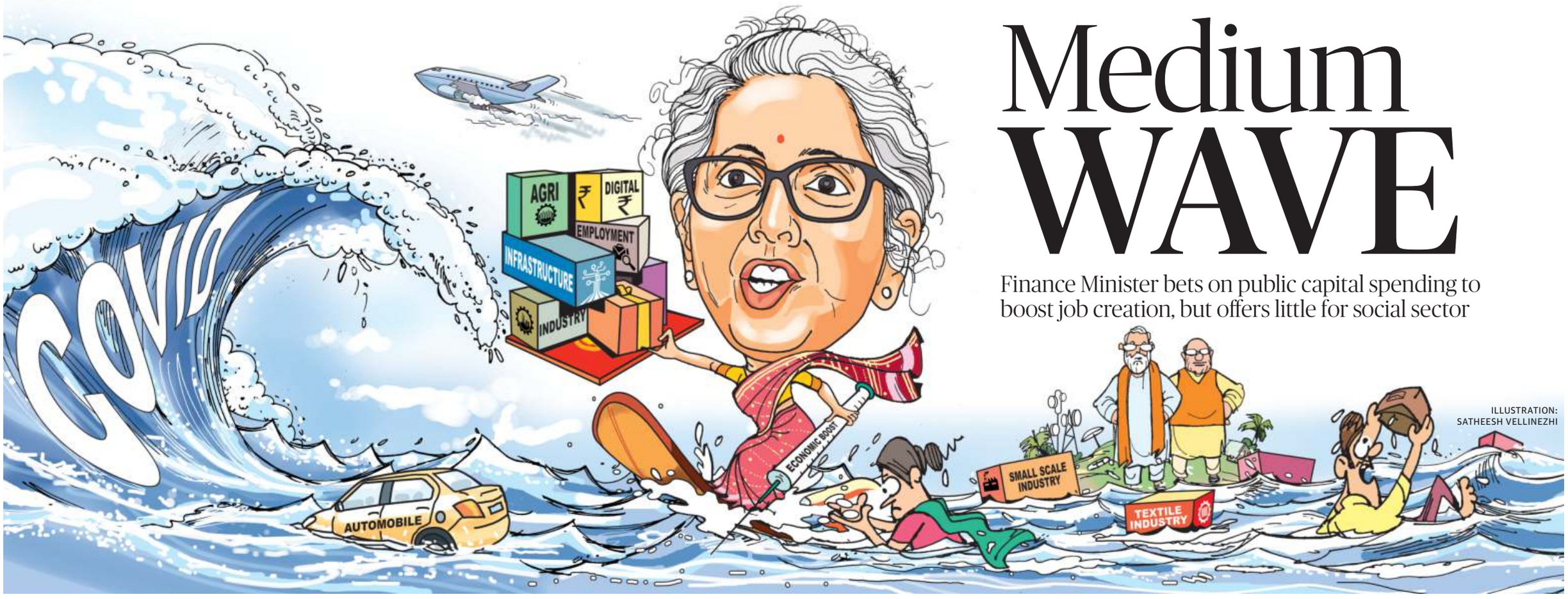

ILLUSTRATION: SATHEESH VELLINEZHI

Medium WAVE

Finance Minister bets on public capital spending to boost job creation, but offers little for social sector

Financial inclusion
In 2022, all post offices will come on the banking system, enabling financial inclusion and access to accounts, and also provide online transfer of funds between post office accounts and bank accounts

Infrastructure
Four hundred new-generation Vande Bharat trains with better energy efficiency and passenger riding experience will be developed and manufactured during the next three years

Digital currency
Digital Rupee using blockchain and other technologies will be issued by the Reserve Bank of India starting 2022-23. It will lead to a more efficient and cheaper currency management system

Capex
Capital expenditure is being stepped up sharply by 35.4% from ₹5.54 lakh crore in the current year to ₹7.50 lakh crore in 2022-23. This is more than 2.2 times the expenditure of 2019-20

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, presenting her fourth Budget and the second one in a pandemic-hit economy on Tuesday, largely stuck to the broad script from last year, scaling up the wager on public capital spending to revive private investments and job creation through a virtuous growth cycle, while keeping an eye on fiscal health.

This Budget, presented in the 75th year of Independence, sets the stage for an *Amrit Kaal* (time of nectar) over the next 25 years, culminating in a vision for India in 2047 as enunciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address last year, she said.

Beginning her 90-minute speech with an expression of empathy for Indians who grappled with the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Sitharaman invoked a verse from the Mahabharata before placing her tax proposals for 2022-23. "The king must make arrangements for *Yogakshema* (welfare) of the populace by abandoning any laxity and by governing in line with dharma, along with collecting taxes which are in consonance with the dharma," the Minister quoted.

The salaried and the middle class, however, got no direct relief in the form of tax breaks to counter inflation and the COVID impact on incomes and jobs; nor was there any significant nudge to spur private consumption that is likely to end 2021-22 below pre-pandemic levels.

Ms. Sitharaman pointed out that the government has not raised taxes in these COVID-affected budgets, but stressed that several proposals aimed at helping farmers, start-ups, micro, small and medium enterprises as well as affordable housing projects will ultimately benefit the middle classes. "There are times when you can give [relief], there are times when it will have to wait a bit longer," she noted.

Contact-intensive services sectors such as hospitality that are also languishing under 2019-20 levels, did get a helping hand with the expansion of the existing ₹4.5 lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme to ₹5 lakh crore, with the window to avail this support extended by a year till March 2023.

The Minister conceded that jobs have been affected due to the pandemic's effects around the world, but emphasised that the government has been taking steps to help. Production Linked Incentives for 14 sectors alone have the potential to create 60 lakh new jobs in the coming five years.

Some omissions

While the Budget marked a continuation of strategy adopted last year to lift the economy from the COVID lockdown-induced plunge of 2020-21, with the Minister reiterating several measures announced previously with fresh outlays, there were some omissions.

> **The Budget is full of new possibilities for more infrastructure, more investment, more growth, and more jobs**
> NARENDRA MODI
> Prime Minister

> **M0di G0vernment's Zer0 Sum Budget! Nothing for - Salaried class - Middle class - The poor & deprived - Youth - Farmers - MSMEs**
> RAHUL GANDHI
> Congress leader

For instance, a fresh push was made on creating liveable cities and a better planning framework for urban areas where half of Indians could live by 2047 but there was no talk of the government's existing programmes to build smart cities.

Separately, without mentioning the border with China, the Budget promised a convergence of existing border area development programmes to provide better physical and digital connectivity to villages with sparse populations on the 'northern border'.

While the economy has shown strong resilience over the past year, the Finance Minister said greater capital spending was needed to sustain the recovery and enhanced the Centre's capex plan to ₹7.5 lakh crore in 2022-23, which she emphasised was more than 2.2 times the outlay in 2019-20.

50-year loan for States

Separately, in a move that should help reduce federal friction, she announced a ₹1 lakh crore 50-year interest-free loan for States to pursue critical capital spending projects, aligned with the PM Gati Shakti programme, digitisation or urban reforms. A similar ₹10,000 crore window announced for 2021-22 has been enhanced to ₹15,000 crore in deference to State CMs' requests, the Minister said.

The Minister said the listing of the Life Insurance Corporation of India was expected shortly, which may well translate into a lower fiscal deficit than the 6.9% of GDP projected for 2021-22. However, the ambitious ₹1.75 lakh disinvestment target for the year was pared to ₹78,000 crore, with the 2022-23 expectations set at a modest ₹65,000 crore.

Moody's Investors Service, reacted with caution to the Budget math that pegs fiscal deficit in 2022-23 at 6.4% of GDP. "This suggests the government is relying on strong economic growth to help drive fiscal consolidation in light of the large bump in capital expenditure," noted Moody's sovereign risk group senior vice president Christian de Guzman.

FM moots tax on virtual assets

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday proposed a 30% tax on income from virtual digital assets, such as cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens (NFTs).

Noting that there had been a phenomenal increase in transactions in virtual digital assets, she said the magnitude and frequency of these transactions had made it imperative to provide for a specific tax regime.

"Accordingly, for the taxation of virtual digital assets, I propose to provide that any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset shall be taxed at the rate of 30%," Ms. Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

The Minister added there would be no deduction allowed while computing such income except the cost of acquisition.

"The government has set a fixed 30% rate to ensure all investors pay a percentage of their gains to the government in the form of taxes," said Abhinav Soomaney, CEO, Cryptotax Pvt. Ltd.

"Most commonly used cryptocurrency tax calculation methods include highest in, first out (HIFO); last in, first out; and highest in, first out," he said.

"The HIFO approach is most beneficial for investors who would like to use their highest cost basis coins," Mr. Soomaney added.

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MGNREGS outlay cut by 25% to ₹73,000 crore PAGE-9

5G services to roll out in FY23: Sitharaman

TRAI setting auction terms: Vaishnaw

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the government would auction telecom spectrum in 2022, which will facilitate private players to roll out 5G services before March 2023.

"Telecommunication in general, and 5G technology in particular, can enable growth and offer job opportunities," the Minister said in her Budget speech. "Required spectrum auctions will be conducted in 2022 to facilitate roll-out of 5G mobile services within 2022-23 by private telecom providers," she added.

Speaking to reporters later, Telecom and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India was deciding its recommendations for the spectrum auction and these were expected by March. "As soon as the recommendations come, we can go ahead with the auction."

Ms. Sitharaman said to enable affordable broadband and mobile service proliferation in rural and remote areas, 5% of annual collections under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) would be allocated. This would promote R&D and commercialisation of technologies, she added.

BSNL to get ₹44,720 cr.

The government will make a capital infusion of ₹44,720 crore in state-owned BSNL in 2022-23 – the majority of the telecom ministry's estimated capital expenditure, Budget documents show. "The provision is for capital infusion for 4G spectrum, technology upgradation and restructuring in BSNL," the Finance Ministry said.

Bouquets, brickbats from poll-bound U.P.

CM praises Budget, Oppn. pours scorn

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In poll-bound Uttar Pradesh, the principal combatants reacted to the Budget along expected lines with BJP leaders showering praise on the Central government and Opposition leaders saying it has little by way of relief for the common man reeling from the pandemic.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath welcomed the Budget 2022-23 as "progressive" for farmers, women and the youth. "It has important provisions for MSP and also to achieve the target of doubling the income of farmers," he said.

However, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the Budget has not addressed concerns arising out of reduced incomes, savings and job losses. "Now another Budget by the BJP has come to bite into the savings of the people," he tweeted.

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati wondered how the Centre is free from worries of poverty, unemployment, inflation and suicides by farmers and patting its back. She said the Budget has been brought to "woo the public with new promises", while Congress general secretary and the party's campaign face in U.P. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said it was nothing but old "*jumlas*" (rhetoric). "No tax exemption has been given to the middle class. No relief from inflation, no relief to small industries. No employment for youth," said Ms. Vadra.

'Zero marks'

Bharatiya Kisan Union national spokesperson Rakesh Tikait said peasants would give "zero marks" to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. "The Budget has been prepared keeping in mind the interests of the corporate friends of the government," he said.

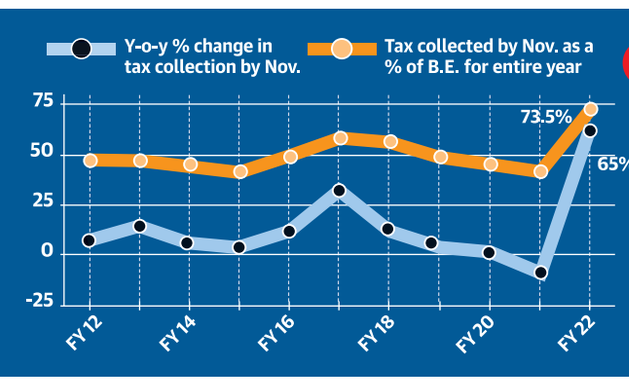
BUDGET SPEECH

Any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset shall be taxed at 30%; loss from such transfer cannot be set off against any other income

Tax push

By November 2021, close to 73.5% of FY22's estimated tax revenue had been collected, highest in at least 10 years. Tax collections increased by 65% y-o-y in FY22 (upto November), the highest in at least 10 years

Source: Office of the Controller General of Accounts



The Budget offers welcome steps to build a strong foundation for our journey towards becoming a $10 trillion economy

Sunil Bharti Mittal
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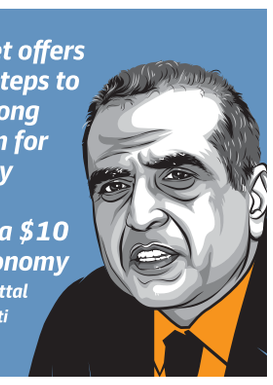


VIEWPOINT

RAJEEV DIMRI
National Head of Tax, KPMG in India

'Unchanged tax slabs disappointing'

The Finance Minister's Budget Speech was a short one, and she made only a handful of references to the direct tax changes envisaged. Nonetheless, the Finance Bill is a detailed one, and contains several important, albeit low-key amendments on the direct tax front.

On the all-important topic of personal tax rates, the Budget contains no major changes. This will come as a disappointment to many who were expecting relief from changes to slabs, a lowering of rates, or at least through an increase in key tax deductions. Some benefit by way of COVID relief is, however, provided both in respect of treatment costs as well as in respect of sums paid to family members of those who passed away in the pandemic. In a sense, with strong domestic demand and the looming threat of inflation, perhaps the government chose to adopt a wait-and-watch approach towards tax relief, despite the imminent elections in key States. However, this is something that the government may have to consider in the coming years, especially if tax collections continue to remain buoyant.

On the procedural side, there is an important change that will enable taxpayers to update their returns beyond the short existing time limits for filing belated returns. This will now be possible up to 2 years from the end of the assessment year, but comes with a cost – the taxpayer has to pay an additional tax between 25% and 50% on the additional income declared in the updated return. This is a far reaching change, and will enable taxpayers to address inadvertent errors and obtain certainty without going through a complex and time consuming litigation process.

> The restriction on set-off of realised losses against gains is unusual

For businesses, the tax proposals are something of a mixed bag. On the positive side, extensions have been provided for start-ups and new manufacturing companies. Start-ups established up to March 31, 2023 (instead of March 31, 2022) will now be eligible for tax relief.

Similarly, to avail of the concessional 15% tax rate, new manufacturing companies had to commence manufacture by March 31, 2023. This date has been extended to March 31, 2024.

On the other hand, the scope of TDS has been extended to benefits or perquisites arising in the course of business. Last year, a new provision was introduced requiring a higher rate of withholding on payments made to persons who had not filed their income tax returns for both years preceding the year of payment. This provision is being made more rigorous by restricting the testing period to one year. In fact, over the past few years, the scope of TDS provisions has been gradually increasing. Many taxpayers have expressed concern over this trend and suggested that the scope of TDS on domestic payments should be curtailed since this imposed significant compliance costs and led to significant litigation. The current amendments could add to this burden. Another important change is the withdrawal of the concessional 15% rate available in respect of dividends earned from foreign subsidiaries. Such dividends will now be taxed at normal rates. Certain important changes relating to deductibility of expenses are also proposed. Education cess has been made expressly non-deductible, retrospectively from 2004-05. The Budget also provides a detailed set of rules for taxing virtual digital assets, which would include crypto currencies and Non Fungible Tokens (NFTs). Gains from their transfer have been subject to a flat tax rate of 30% with no deduction for any expenditure (other than cost) or any set off of losses.

TDS on payments for their transfer has also been introduced, and provisions relating to gifts have been expanded to include them. The restriction on set-off of realised losses against gains is unusual, considering that income tax law has long allowed set off and carry forward of losses in speculative businesses, albeit with a restriction that such losses can be used only against speculative profits. It is not clear why this principle could not be applied to virtual assets.

POCKET | RAVIKANTH

"I think we have ended up capturing the vote bank of people who won't go out to vote!"

FM retains tax slabs, allows updated returns

Revised returns may be filed within two years of end of the relevant assessment year

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

The Union Budget 2022-23 has kept income tax slabs unchanged while allowing tax payers an additional two years to update their returns.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday while presenting budget proposals said the government's objective was to further simplify the tax system, promote voluntary compliance by taxpayers, and reduce litigation.

She introduced the 'Updated return' option to provide taxpayers an opportunity to 'correct errors' while filing returns or not having reported certain transactions. "I am proposing a new provision permitting taxpayers to file an Updated Return on payment of additional tax. This updated return can be filed within two years from the end of the relevant assessment year," she said.

'Trust reposed in payer'

With this proposal now, there will be a trust reposed in the taxpayers that will enable the assessee herself to declare the income that she may have missed out earlier while filing her return, she said. To bring parity between employees of State and central governments, she has proposed to increase the tax deduction limit from 10% to 14% on employer's contribution to the National Pension System (NPS) account of State Government employees as well. This would help in enhancing the social security benefits of State government stff and bring them at par with central government employees.

To establish a globally competitive business environment for certain domestic companies, a concessional tax regime of 15% tax was introduced by our government for newly incorporated domestic manufacturing companies.

The FM has prosed to extend the last date for commencement of manufacturing or production under section 115BAB by one year i.e. from March 31, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

She has also proposed to cap the surcharge on long-term capital gains arising on transfer of any type of assets at 15%, from graded surcharge of up to 37% currently. To track transactions involving businesses passing on benefits to their agents, the budget has proposed to provide for tax deduction by the person giving benefits, if the aggregate value of such benefits exceeds ₹20,000 during the financial year.

It also proposed to reduce customs duty on cut and polished diamonds and gemstones to 5%. Simply sawn diamonds would attract nil customs duty. To disincentivise import of undervalued imitation jewellery, customs duty on imitation jewellery has been imposed.

The Minister proposed to reduce customs duty on methanol, acetic acid and heavy feed stocks for petroleum refining, while duty is being raised on sodium cyanide for which adequate domestic capacity exists. "These changes will help in enhancing domestic value addition," she said.

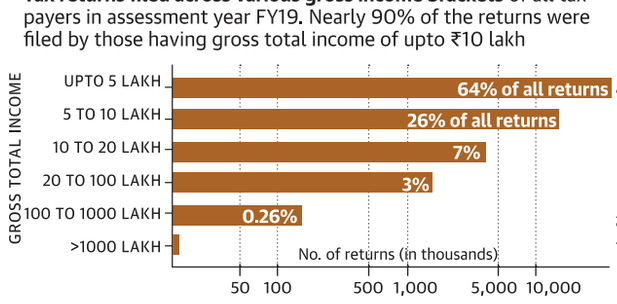
Duty is being reduced on certain inputs required for shrimp aquaculture so as to promote its exports.

To encourage the efforts for blending of fuel, unblended fuel shall attract additional differential excise duty of ₹2/ litre from the October 1, 2022.

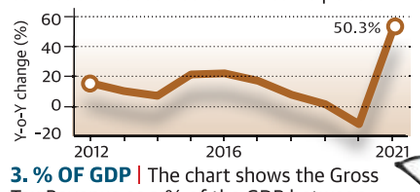
TAX SLABS UNCHANGED, BURDEN REMAINS

Personal Income Tax rates were unchanged in the Budget for FY23. Data show that the share of Income Tax and corporate tax collections of the Central government in 2021 were almost the same

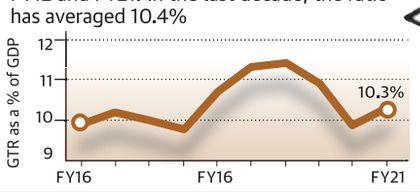
1. RETURN COUNT | The chart shows the number of **Income Tax returns filed across various gross income brackets** of all tax payers in assessment year FY19. Nearly 90% of the returns were filed by those having gross total income of upto ₹10 lakh



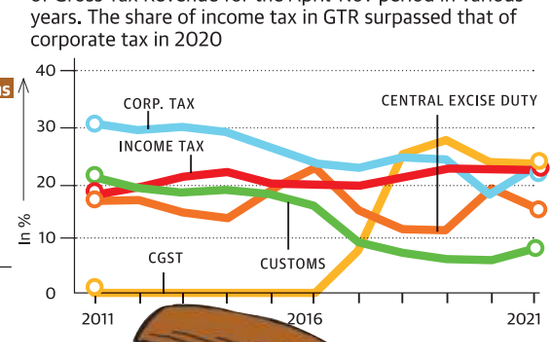
2. BASE EFFECT | Between April and Nov. 2021, Gross Tax Revenue increased by 50% y-o-y. The sharp rise was due to the low base effect as tax collections nosedived for the same period in 2020



3. % OF GDP | The chart shows the Gross Tax Revenue as a % of the GDP between FY12 and FY21. In the last decade, the ratio has averaged 10.4%



4. TAX BUILD-UP | The chart shows the composition of Gross Tax Revenue for the April-Nov period in various years. The share of income tax in GTR surpassed that of corporate tax in 2020



SOURCE: CGA, CENTRE'S INCOME TAX PORTAL

'Duty tweaks to spur electronics manufacture'

Some 'nuisance' duties remain: ICEA

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced rationalisation of customs duties for certain components to facilitate domestic manufacturing of high-growth electronic goods, wearables and electronic smart meters.

"Electronic manufacturing has been growing rapidly. Customs duty rates are being calibrated to provide a graded rate structure to facilitate domestic manufacturing of wearable devices, hearable devices and electronic smart meters," she said in her Budget speech. She said duty concessions were also being given to parts of transformers of mobile phone chargers and camera lens of mobile camera modules and certain other items. "This will enable domestic manufacturing of high-growth electronic items," she observed.

'Long road remains'

The India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) welcomed the calibration of customs duty for hearables and wearables and on parts as described in the FM's speech. However, "a long road remains, especially for the continued high basic customs duty of high-end mobile phones [phones with a CIF value higher than ₹20,000]."

"We emphasise that rationalisation of the BCD is essential to curb the grey market, increase revenue generation, and give a fillip to the industry," it noted.

The ICEA has written to her Budget proposal on Tuesday.

> **Duty calibration for wearables and hearables will bolster growth in 2022. Impetus for Make-in-India will spur job creation**

Ajay Prakash Swahney, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and IT, stating that while basic customs duty (BCD) rationalisation on camera lens for use in manufacture of camera modules from 15% to 2.5% was welcome, "we had asked for revert to the position before February 2021, because even 2.5% is unnecessary".

"The nuisance tariff on 2.5% on various inputs, eg. ferrite inductors for the PCBA of chargers and inductors for the PCBA for mobiles, continue. Other parts of the camera module like actuator assembly and parts of sensor continue at 2.5%, which is again unnecessary," it added.

Nikhil Mathur, MD, India, & Head, Data Partnership & Innovation-APAC, GfK, said the government's growth-oriented goals led by the digital economy and tech-enabled developments would boost the consumer and electronics industry penetration across the country. GfK insights indicated similar positive trends as the consumer landscape was evolving in lower-tier towns.

"The underlying theme of 'Atmanirbhar' & 'Make in India' will undoubtedly create job opportunities, bringing a positive outlook towards domestic demand of consumer tech products in India."

Budget extends more sops for IFSC

International Arbitration Centre to be set up in GIFT City

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

Taking forward its efforts to further promote the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Gujarat, the government has proposed Income Tax incentives to promote various business activities such as ship leasing and financing, offshore fund management and offshore banking activities at GIFT City. The Union Budget has proposed to provide that income of a non-resident from offshore derivative instruments, or over-the-counter derivatives issued by an offshore banking unit, income from royalty and interest on account of lease of ship and income received from portfolio management services in IFSC shall be exempt from tax, subject to conditions.

Further, it has allowed world-class foreign universities and institutions to offer courses in Financial Management, FinTech, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, free from domestic regulations, except those by IFSCA to facilitate availability of high-end human resources for financial services and technology in GIFT City, Gujarat.

"An International Arbitration Centre will be set up in the GIFT City for timely settlement of disputes under international jurisprudence," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

"Services for global capital for sustainable and climate finance in the country will be facilitated in the GIFT City," she added. Manoj Purohit, partner and leader - financial services tax, BDO India, said, the move to allow financial institutions and universities to set up base will give boost to human resources development and expansion in GIFT IFSC.

Tapan Ray, MD & Group CEO, GIFT City, in a statement said , "International arbitration centre will strengthen the dispute resolution mechanism at GIFT IFSC and enhance ease of doing business at GIFT," he said.

Cooperative societies get tax, surcharge relief

Alternate Minimum Tax slashed to 15%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Centre, in the Union Budget 2022-23, has slashed the alternate minimum tax rate and surcharge for cooperative societies to provide them a level-playing field with companies.

Currently, cooperative societies are required to pay Alternate Minimum Tax at the rate of 18.5%. However, companies pay the same at the rate of 15%.

"To provide a level-playing field between co-operative societies and companies, I propose to reduce this rate for the cooperative societies also to 15%," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, announcing her Budget proposal on Tuesday.

> **The Finance Minister also proposed to reduce surcharge on cooperative societies from 12% to 7%**

Ms. Sitharaman also proposed to reduce the surcharge on cooperative societies from the present 12% to 7% for those having a total income of more than ₹1 crore and up to ₹10 crore.

"This would help in enhancing the income of cooperative societies and its members who are mostly from the rural and farming communities," the Finance Minister said.

BUDGET BOOST

Tax incentive to start-ups extended for a year

They have emerged as drivers of growth for our economy, says Sitharaman

MINI TEJASWI
BENGALURU

The Finance Ministry has proposed to extend the period of incorporation of eligible start-ups by one more year, that is, up to March 31, 2023, with a view to offering tax incentives to more entrepreneurs in the country.

Eligible start-ups established before March 31, 2022, had been provided a tax incentive for three consecutive years out of 10 years from incorporation. With Tuesday's Budget announcement by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, entrepreneurs starting ventures until the end of March next year will be eligible for tax incentives.

"Start-ups have emerged as drivers of growth for our economy. Over the past few years, the country has seen a manifold increase in successful start-ups. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union Finance Ministry proposes to extend the period of incorporation of the eligible start-ups by one more year," the Finance Minister said while presenting the Budget.

According to Jitendra Chouksey, Founder and CEO, Fittr, a facilitator of fitness and well-being solutions, the start-up ecosystem in the country is on an uptick with increasing job opportunities, tax benefits and investments. The extension of tax benefits proposed in the Union Budget will further strengthen the business ecosystem of the country, he said.

Reacting to the proposal, Gaurav Chadha, Business Tax Partner, EY India, said, "Given that start-ups have emerged as drivers for growth, to give a further push to the sector, the time limit for incorporation for eligible start-ups for claiming income-tax holiday incentive has been extended by one more year to March 31, 2023."

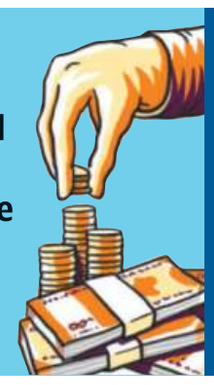
K.T. Chandy, Partner and Leader - Private Tax, EY India said, "Indian start-ups have been a celebrated story during the past 2 years with record numbers hitting the unicorn status in the period."

"One could see the shift in the narrative in Budget 2022 with start-ups, focus on capital mobilisation, new technology themes like fintech, drone as a service, EV and battery swapping technology, edtech, etc.. finding due mention in the Budget speech," he added.

BUDGET 2022

BUDGET SPEECH

Amendments will be carried out in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code to enhance its efficacy and facilitate cross-border insolvency resolution



Mixed bag

The BSE Sensex rose on Tuesday by 1.46% with a majority of sectors registering an increase. However, the increase was much lower than last year's 5% rise on Budget day. The table lists the change in index value across select sectors on Budget day compared to the previous day's closing value

Source: BSE

Energy	-0.44% ▼
Healthcare	+1.76% ▲
Fast moving consumer goods	+1.85% ▲
Industrials	+1.69% ▲
IT	+1.63% ▲
Auto	-0.71% ▼
Banks	+1.28% ▲
Telecom	-0.31% ▼
Finance	+1.26% ▲
Realty	+1.74% ▲
Oil and gas	-0.91% ▼
Capital goods	+2.93% ▲
Power	+0.49% ▲

The most significant announcements in the Budget are higher allocation to capex and extension of the credit guarantee scheme

Dinesh Khara, Chairman, State Bank of India

Sensex rises 1.46% on govt.'s infra plan

Benchmark jumps 848 points as Budget avoids new taxes; metals, realty counters witness interest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Sensex soared 848 points while the Nifty reclaimed the 17,500-mark on Tuesday after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a bigger, ₹39.45-lakh crore Budget, with higher spending on infrastructure to spur economic recovery and create jobs.

Metal, realty and cement stocks saw robust buying, while selling in auto and telecom counters capped the gains. After a strong start, the BSE Sensex succumbed to a sudden bout of selling following the Budget presentation, but staged an immediate rebound to end 848.40 points or 1.46% higher at 58,862.57, marking its second straight session of gains. On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty surged 237 points or 1.37% to end at 17,576.85. Tata Steel hogged the limelight in the Sensex pack, zooming 7.57%, followed by Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank, L&T, UltraCement, ITC, Titan and HCL Tech.

In contrast, M&M, PowerGrid, SBI, Bharti Airtel, NTPC, Maruti and Reliance closed in the red, shedding up to 1.67%.

"It is a long-term growth oriented budget which the market has welcomed, given no headroom for cautiousness and populist measures. It is expected to support growth in the future; however, it is missing some balancing measures in the context of current inflationary and slowing economy," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

On a high: Sector-wise, the BSE metal index soared 4.92%, followed by basic materials, capital goods and FMCG. • PTI

"High capex, fiscal deficit and borrowing plans in the background of a high inflation, commodity and oil prices and rising interest rates will be challenges in the short to medium-term,"

"The [FM] provided a springboard for an investment cycle with the highest ever share of capex, focus on development of national manufacturing capabilities and clean energy, tax rationalisation... while maintaining its continuous growth focus on Aatmanirbhar Bharat," said Ashishkumar Chauhan, MD and CEO, BSE.

Sector-wise, the BSE metal index soared 4.92%, followed by basic materials, capital goods and FMCG.

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled 17 paise lower at 74.82 (provisional) against the U.S. dollar. Foreign institutional investors remained net sellers in the capital markets, pulling out ₹3,624.48 crore on Monday.

Firms' exit process to get shorter

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Union Budget 2022-23 has proposed to establish the Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit (C-PACE) for speedy winding-up of companies.

"Several information technology-based systems have been established for accelerated registration of new companies. Now the Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit (C-PACE), with process re-engineering, will be established to facilitate and speed up the voluntary winding-up of these companies from the currently required 2 years to less than 6 months," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her speech.

The Budget has also proposed to carry out necessary amendments in the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code to enhance the efficacy of the resolution process and facilitate cross-border insolvency resolution.

The main aim of the Code is resolving corporate debtors in distress.

"Necessary amendments in the Code will be carried out to enhance the efficacy of the resolution process and facilitate cross-border insolvency resolution," Ms. Sitharaman said.

(With PTI inputs)

'Panel to enable connect between VC/PEs, authorities'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Union Government has proposed to set up an expert committee to examine and suggest measures to boost venture capital (VC) and private equity (PE) investments.

'Aim is to reduce friction'

Finance Miniser Nirmala Sitharaman said VCs and PE investors infused more than ₹5.5 lakh crore last year facilitating one of the largest start-up and growth ecosystems. "Scaling up this investment requires a holistic examination of regulatory and other frictions. An expert committee will be set up to examine and suggest appropriate measures," she said in her Budget speech.

The committee will help address issues around coordination among multiple agencies and departments such as the RBI, SEBI, Finance Ministry, DPIIT and Commerce Ministry, said Naganand Doraswamy, Founder and Managing Partner, Ideaspring Capital.

> **A holistic review of regulatory and other frictions is needed to further spur investments**
>
> NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, Finance Minister

"The combined value that Indian start-ups so far have generated is more than $400 billion and this is expected to reach $1 trillion by 2025. The ecosystem hence needs specific policies and recognition as a sector. Proposal to set up an expert committee is a positive step and the industry is hopeful that some of the key issues will be resolved soon," he added.

Mark of importance

The proposal only highlights the importance the government was giving the role of PE/VC industry, said Andy Khanna, partner, Deloitte India.

"Setting up an expert committee to examine the ecosystem from regulatory and other perspectives and suggest measures should help in the growth of the business. It will boost employment generation and will also lower the cost of raising capital in the country," he added.

VIEWPOINT

KUMAR MANGALAM BIRLA
Chairman, Aditya Birla Group

A catalyst for inclusive growth

The Budget has attempted to balance near-term growth imperatives with long-term priorities.

In line with expectations, a big push has been accorded to infrastructure and logistics via Gati Shakti. The National Master Plan aims to massively upgrade India's infrastructure; this will not just support near-term growth but will enhance the competitiveness of the Indian industry. The focus on 7 key engines helps to bring about much-needed synergy between infrastructure and logistics sectors. National Highway expansion by 25,000 km is a vital cog in this scheme. Gati Shakti is expected to create 60 lakh new jobs. The financing plan for these investments now looks much more robust and credible; both the Centre and States will now need to focus on its speedy implementation.

Delivery of digital and hi-tech services, the use of drones and a fund to finance agri start-ups are steps to ensure that agriculture growth does not falter. The agriculture sector has strong backward and forward linkages, which impacts the industry and overall economic growth. The Centre's capex outlay of ₹7.5 trillion is significantly beyond expectations. This is a morale booster for corporates betting on capital spending in the future as public investment crowds in private capex. This reinforces my firm belief that a 'Capex Mahotsav' is on the anvil in India.

As the third COVID wave ebbs, demand outlook improves and recovery takes shape, private capex is sure to follow suit. Signs of this are evident in announcements made by many companies. In short, the budget aims to achieve overall macroeconomic growth and human welfare with a sharp focus on infrastructure, inclusive development, thrust to sunrise sectors, climate action and financing of investments.

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Evening Batches
Medium : English | Time : 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM
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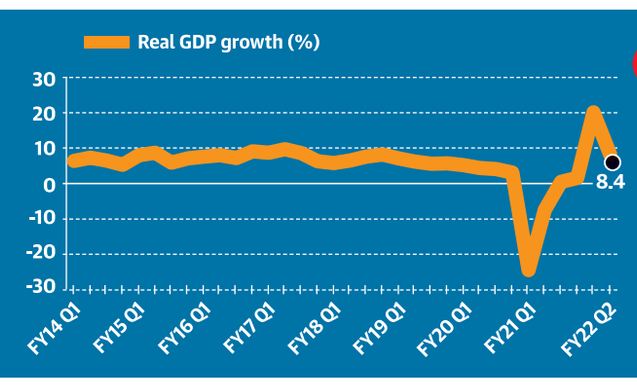
BUDGET SPEECH

Over 25,000 compliances were reduced and 1,486 Union laws were repealed as a result of our strong commitment to 'minimum government & maximum governance'

Base effect

In the July-September (Q2FY22) quarter, India's real GDP expanded by 8.4% y-o-y. The high growth came on the back of low base in the same period last year when the economy contracted by 7.4%

SOURCE: MOSPI



The Budget is consistent with our PM's vision of making India Atmanirbhar and is backed by allocations to support Indian ambitions

N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons

Defence outlay witnesses marginal increase

Finance Minister announces steps to boost domestic manufacturing, reduce imports

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Continuing the push for Make in India in defence, the Government on Tuesday announced additional measures to boost domestic manufacturing and reduce imports, while the total allocation for defence in the Budget has gone up marginally to ₹5.25 lakh crore.

This is 4.43% higher than the revised estimates of last year and 9.8% higher over the Budget estimates of last year.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that defence Research and Development (R&D) will be opened up for industry, start-ups and academia with 25% of R&D budget earmarked for them. Capital allocation for R&D stood at ₹11,982 crore for 2022-23.

"Private sector will be encouraged to take up design and development of military platforms and equipment in collaboration with DRDO and other organisations under special purpose vehicle (SPV) model," Ms. Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

"An independent nodal umbrella body will be set up for meeting a wide ranging testing and certification requirements."

The allocation of ₹5.25 lakh crore constitutes 13.31% of the total Union Budget 2022-23 which envisages a total outlay of ₹39.45 lakh crore, a Ministry statement said. Of the ₹5.25 lakh crore, the revenue allocation is ₹2.33 lakh crore, capital allocation stood at ₹1.52 lakh crore and defence pensions at ₹1.19 lakh crore.

Within this, of the ₹1.52 lakh crore capital allocation which is meant for new purchases and paying for past procurements, 68% or ₹84,598 crore from the allocation for the three Services would be reserved for procurement from domestic industry, Ms. Sitharaman announced. In last year's Budget, ₹70,221 crore of the capital allocation, which is about 63%, was reserved for the domestic industry.

Last year, the defence Budget saw a major increase in the backdrop of the standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh and the Services had also made several emergency procurements in the second half of 2020.

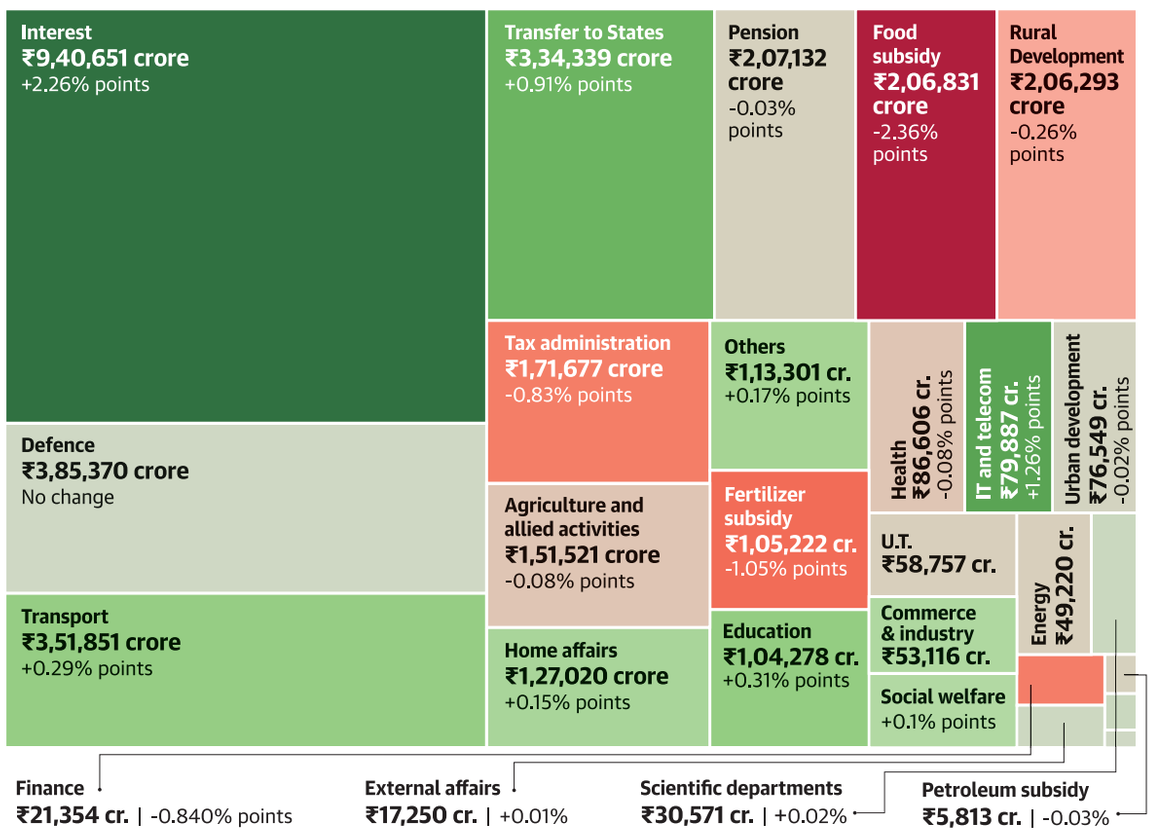
In contrast, the Budget data show for 2021-22, the Army had returned around ₹11,100 crore while the Navy got an additional allocation of ₹12,767.99 crore compared with the Budget estimates to the revised estimates. Overall, the Navy's capital allocation shows an year-on-year increase of more than 43% going to 47,591 crore which the MoD said is "aimed at acquisition of new platforms, creation of operational and strategic infrastructure, bridging of critical capability gaps and building a credible maritime force for the future."

The Army got ₹32,015 crore and Air Force ₹55,586 crore for 2022-23 under the capital budget. Overall, the capital allocation saw an increase of 12% compared with the Budget estimates of last year. Atul Keshap, president U.S.-India Business Council said the 12% increase in the capital Budget expenditure for defence will help support India's border security and Indo-Pacific ambitions.

"Still, increasing targets for indigenisation of production may slow India's access to the equipment it needs to safeguard its security. Making India a more friendly manufacturing environment for international defence companies will be critical if they are to supply India's defence needs in a prompt manner."

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

The graph depicts budgeted expenditure (₹ crore) in FY23 and the change from FY22 (in % points). Food and fertilizer subsidies fell 2.36% and 1.05% points respectively while interest payments and transfers to States went up 2.26% and 0.91% points respectively between FY22 and FY23



Textile sector allocation to increase 8.1% for FY23

Bulk to fund CCI for cotton purchases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE

Allocation for the textile sector will see an 8.1% increase in FY23 compared with the revised Budget allocation for FY22.

According to the Union Budget presented on Tuesday, of the total allocation of ₹12,382 crore for the textile sector for next financial year, ₹133.83 crore is for Textile Cluster Development Scheme, ₹100 crore for National Technical Textiles Mission, and ₹15 crore each for PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel parks scheme and the Production Linked Incentive Scheme.

The Centre has also allocated ₹105 crore for FY23 towards the Raw Material Supply Scheme.

Committed liability

The main increase is for cotton procurement by Cotton Corporation of India under the price support scheme. The Cotton Corporation will see allocation of ₹9,243 crore for the next financial year as against ₹8,440 crore in the revised budget allocation for the current year. This is for the committed liability of the government to the Corporation, said an official.

On duties levied, with no changes in the 10% import duty on cotton, the industry's expectation of measures to control cotton prices, which is the raw material, was not met. Trimmings, embellishments, labels and the like that attract 5% import duty will now be available as duty-free imports for exporters of textiles and leather garments. But, it looks like made-ups and home textiles have been excluded from the duty-free import of trimmings, etc.

Customs duty includes ad valorem tax and specific duty. Specific duty may be rationalised for some fabric items and removed for some garments

At present, machinery such as for knitting and weaving machines are included in the list of machines having Concessional Custom Duty of 5%. All these machines will attract 7.5% import duty.

'Review of exemptions'

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman touched upon the review of customs exemptions and tariff simplification for certain items. "This comprehensive review will simplify the customs rates and tariff structure particular for sectors like chemicals, textiles and metals, and minimise disputes," she said.

Industry sources said customs duty includes the ad valorem tax and specific duty. The specific duty is likely to be rationalised for certain fabric items and removed for some of the garments.

Battery-swapping policy on anvil

Move to address issue of space constraints in urban areas for charging stations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI / NEW DELHI

The Centre is planning to come out with a battery swapping policy with interoperability standards for Electric Vehicles (EVs).

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that considering space constraints in urban areas for charging stations at scale, a battery swapping policy will be brought out and inter-operability standards will be formulated. The private sector will be encouraged to develop sustainable and innovative business models for 'Battery or Energy as a Service'. This will improve efficiency in the EV ecosystem, she said.

The Budget aimed at strengthening the EV industry ecosystem, which will spur the demand for green vehicles, such as electric 2-wheelers and 3-wheelers, cars and buses, said Sohinder Gill, Director General, Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV).

He added that these announcements would help to develop EV infrastructure and increase the use of EVs in public transportation. It would motivate businesses engaged in delivery and in car aggregation to incorporate EVs into their fleet.

Mr. Gill added this would spur companies to venture into the battery-swapping business. Shamsher Dewan, VP & Group Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA, said if implemented efficiently, these steps were likely to go a long way in reducing range anxiety with regard to EV adoption while also aiding economies of scale in battery production.

"The inclusion of energy storage in the harmonised List of Infrastructure will facilitate cheaper finance for EV battery makers," Mr. Dewan said.

Emergency credit line for MSMEs extended till March 2023

Budget provides additional credit to more than 130 lakh units

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

The Union Budget for 2022-23 has announced several measures for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector that included extension of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) till March 2023.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while tabling the Union Budget, said ECLGS had provided much-needed additional credit to more than 130 lakh MSMEs. This helped them mitigate the adverse impact of the COVID-19. Hospitality and related services, especially those provided by micro and small enterprises, were yet to regain their pre-pandemic level of business.

Considering these aspects, the government extended the scheme by ₹50,000 crore taking the total cover under the scheme to ₹5 lakh crore, with the additional amount being earmarked exclusively for hospitality and related enterprises. Further, the Centre said Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises scheme will be revamped with the required infusion of funds. This will facilitate additional credit of ₹2 lakh crore for Micro and Small Enterprises and expand employment opportunities. To help the MSME sector become more resilient, competitive and efficient, the Centre will roll out Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme with an outlay of ₹6,000 crore over 5 years.

The Budget document also said that Customs-duty exemption given to steel scrap last year was being extended for another year to provide relief to secondary MSME steel producers.

Budget gives MEA funds for Taliban-ruled Afghanistan

It will also dedicate ₹600 crore for Myanmar

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

The Budget has allocated funds for projects related to Afghanistan. The Ministry of External Affairs will have ₹200 crore to spend on Afghanistan.

The MEA will also dedicate ₹600 crore for Myanmar which is currently reeling from a civil war since the military coup of February 2021. Bhutan, as usual has received the biggest allocation of ₹2,266.24 crore.

India does not have a diplomatic presence in Kabul where its embassy has remained shuttered since the Taliban took over the country in August.

India has showcased its assistance to Afghanistan as aid-oriented and focused on development projects.

Over the last two months India had sent several consignments of medicine and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. A large scale wheat consignment is expected to be delivered to Afghanistan in the coming weeks. The allocation for Afghanistan is expected to be spent on similar assistance during the year.

The allocation for Myanmar continues unchanged as the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had received similar allocation last year for the country. India has maintained diplomatic contacts with the trouble-torn country. MEA's allocation for Mongolia, the northern neighbour of China had significantly increased from ₹2 crore to ₹12 crore.

The second highest recipient of the allocation will be Mauritius which has an allocation of ₹900 crore. The MEA, which is aiming to open new embassies in several locations in Africa, has an increased budget of ₹250 crore for the continent. The Ministry will get ₹300 crore and ₹750 crore respectively for Bangladesh and Nepal.

VIEWPOINT

RENU SUD KARNAD
Managing Director – HDFC Ltd.

Growth Budget

Hon'ble Finance Minister Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman presented a balanced and growth-oriented Budget with a strong emphasis on long-term growth and avoided any announcement of election-related populist measures.

It focussed on four pillars – productivity, climate action, financing investments and PM Gati Shakti plan and has laid a road map for economic revival against the backdrop of uncertainty amid COVID infections.

Though the fiscal deficit is a tad higher at 6.9% for 2021-2022 and at 6.4% for 2022-23, given the 35% increase in capital expenditure, the government has chosen to be pro-growth and has rightly refrained from undertaking aggressive fiscal consolidation at this early stage of economic recovery.

Disinvestment target

The disinvestment target of ₹65,000 crore seems to be conservative given that the divestment candidates have been clearly identified and the government now has a well-oiled process for divestment in place as it has successfully divested 'Air India,' one of the most difficult ones to divest.

Further, given the buoyancy in tax collections, it is highly possible that Budget will surpass revenue assumptions which, to an extent, will help fiscal consolidation and also improve the tax-to-GDP ratio.

> Tax benefits to housing would have helped, given the multiplier effect the sector has on the economy

Continuing the focus on the Prime Minister's vision of 'Housing For All,' the Finance Minister announced 80 lakh homes to be built by 2023 under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). Additionally, the Budget made an allocation of ₹48,000 crore under the PMAY urban and rural schemes for building these homes.

Further, the government has rightly acknowledged the need to reduce time required for land- and construction-related approvals for promoting affordable housing for the middle class and the economically weaker sections in urban areas. This will be extremely helpful in scaling up the execution of PMAY across geographies.

India has seen a massive rise in start-ups in the last few The Budget has focussed more on the Made-in-India initiative to minimise the dependency. To encourage the start-up ecosystem, the government has introduced flexible policies to help start-ups.

Use of drones to push excellence

The use of drones for start-ups will push for excellence. The promotion of fintech and technology-based development will help the economy gain pace as well as create better job prospects for individuals.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) continue to be the backbone of economic growth. In a bid to boost local manufacturing and promote self-reliance, the FM announced extending the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) up to March 2023.

This will go a long way in supporting the MSME sector and revive industrial activities. The Budget also focusses on sustainable and equitable growth. There is a push for tech excellence. Infrastructure status given to data centres will provide a huge boost to the fast-evolving digital environment of the country.

Moving towards a digital economy, the Budget announced the introduction of CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency) in 2022-23. The introduction of digital rupee will give a big boost to the digital economy and bring in efficient currency management.

Importance of housing

The pandemic has made people recognise the importance of a roof over one's head. The government could have given further boost to the housing sector through tax benefits given the strong multiplier effect the sector has on the economy.

The CLSS schemes under the PMAY have been a great example of a successful public-private partnership and its extension, especially for the EWS and LIG category, would have helped immensely to achieve the goal of 'Housing for All.'

POCKET | RAVIKANTH

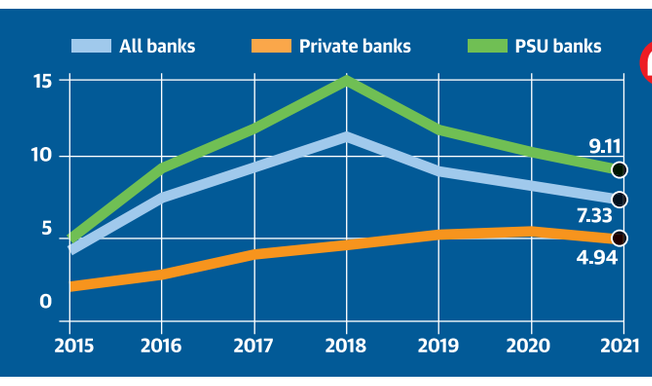
BUDGET 2022

BUDGET SPEECH

The Special Economic Zones Act will be replaced with a new legislation that will enable the States to become partners in development

Bad debt dips

The share of Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPAs) among total loans declined to 7.33% — a six-year low. While the overall NPAs came down after peaking in 2018, a significant chunk of this can be attributed to loan write-offs



SOURCE: DBIE-RBI

The substantial increase in capex will stimulate demand. And the sovereign green bonds should help accelerate energy sustainability
Srivats Ram, MD, Wheels India

VIEWPOINT

ASHOK HINDUJA
Chairman, Hinduja Group of Companies

Foundation for Digital India 2.0

We still do not know if the worst is over. Neither do we know which way the wheels of fortune will swing with the coronavirus and what will be the impact of the next mutation. The oil prices are threateningly high, and drums of war are heard in Ukraine and West Asia.

But with all these risks, the Finance Minister presents the Budget for a country that is a bright spot in an otherwise dark horizon. At 9.2%, India is the fastest-growing large economy with over $630 billion of foreign reserves equalling 13 months of imports; inflation is under control and stock markets, corporate results shining positively, and vaccination is a success with 93% of eligible population getting single dose and 70% fully vaccinated.

But the Finance Minister must know that there is a dark underbelly to the bright spot which is the unemployment rate. Officially, it is 7.2% but reality is far worse. It is possibly the single greatest challenge that she must address through her Budget. By allocating ₹7.5 lakh crore in FY 23, which is 35% higher than previous year, she has clearly set the right tone. Infrastructure has triple effect. First employment, then revival of core sector and lastly productivity of the economy.

> By allocating ₹7.5 lakh crore in FY 23, which is 35% higher than previous year, she has clearly set the right tone

Further, she has increased the financial assistance to States for capital Investments from ₹10,000 crore in FY22 to ₹1,00,000 crore in FY23. Clearly, States are getting the right signal that they are partners with the Centre for building modern India. A large part of this focus is on PM Gatishakti, the initiatives to focus on logistics through development of roads, railways, airports etc. to ensure efficient movement of goods and this is aided by 100 multi-modal cargo terminals.

Digital India is another theme that runs across the Budget. From recognising virtual assets as a taxable asset class, issuing digital currency, e-passports, Digital University, Council for AVGC (Gaming, Animation Sector), emphasis on digital banking, land record digitisation, facilitating payment platforms, auctioning 5G spectrum, building optical fibre network are efforts that will build up digital capacity of the country, improve efficiency and boost employment in the services sector. The Amrit Kal initiative presses the right button. Emphasis on urban planning and development, when 50% of India's population will live in urban areas, clearly is the right priority and will deeply improve quality of life.

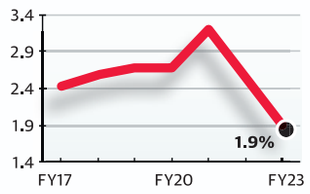
So, what did the Budget miss? Healthcare was expected to get a greater share of allocation. One would have expected a public-private initiative with PLI type of incentives to be thrown open to this sector. Privatisation, the big initiative in last Budget along with asset monetisation, has under delivered and reforms were expected to ensure that those get back on track. While there is mention of light touch regulation for AI, green energy and clean mobility, more was expected to accelerate growth in these sunrise sectors.

In closing, this Budget is foundational in its approach. It has its eyes set on 8.5% growth for FY23 and presses the right buttons to get the country there. But there is a lot to be done before we get there. The devil is in implementation and with State elections and the pandemic, Team India has its hands full of challenges.

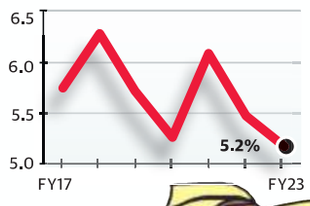
RURAL SPENDING SLACKENS

The chart depicts the allocation for various social sectors/schemes as a % of total expenditure in various years

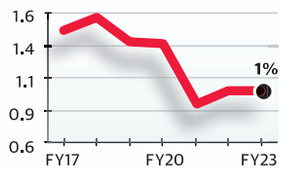
MGNREGS | The proportion of funds allocated has **gone down by 0.7% points**



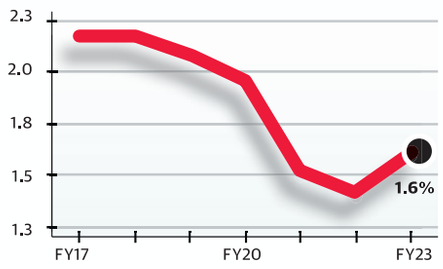
RURAL DEVELOPMENT | The proportion of funds allocated has **gone down by 0.3% points.** In FY23, ₹2,06,293 cr. was allocated for the sector



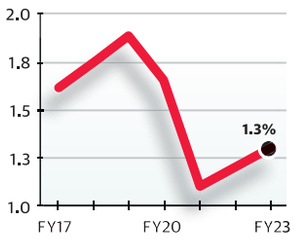
HIGHER EDUCATION | The proportion of funds allocated has **slightly increased by 0.1% points.** In FY23, ₹4,08,28 cr. was allocated



SCHOOL EDUCATION | The proportion of funds allocated has **marginally increased by 0.2% points.** In FY23, ₹63,449 cr. was allocated for the department



SOCIAL WELFARE | The proportion of funds allocated has **marginally increased by 0.1% points.** In FY23, ₹51,780 cr. was allocated



In FY23, all the social sectors/ schemes either recorded a significant fall in allocations compared to FY22RE or recorded a marginal increase

SOURCE: BUDGET DOCUMENTS

Govt. has not lost sight of inflation: Sitharaman

No increase in taxes is in itself a relief, Minister says

N. RAVI KUMAR
HYDERABAD

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday sought to underscore how the government has not lost sight of reining in inflation even amid a higher fiscal deficit projection.

"Every Budget does not speaks explicitly about inflation and its impact. Of course, if you are talking about numbers, credit, liquidity and also supply and demand of essential goods and others, you keep in mind inflation," she said at the customary post-Budget media briefing in Delhi.

On how middle class expectations of additional relief in income tax were shattered, the Finance Minister, switching to Hindi, said, "I did not increase tax last year and this year [too]. I did not make any attempt to earn even one paise additionally." Prime Minister Narendra Modi had repeated the instruction he gave last year that irrespective of fiscal deficit increasing, people should not be burdened with (additional taxes) during a pandemic, she added.

To another query, Ms. Sitharaman said she did not want to sound cynical by saying that no increase is in itself a *rahat* (relief). "I am not saying that. There are times when you can give [tax relief], there are times when it will have to wait a bit longer. I am sorry it didn't happen. Nevertheless, the middle class still stands to benefit from the number of schemes and support measures unveiled for other sectors," the Minister said. "Isn't there middle class among farmers, in MSMEs, [beneficiaries of] affordable homes, senior citizens, haven't they got relief," Ms. Sitharaman asked.

On the contentious issue of privatisation of two banks, which has faced massive opposition from employees and influenced the decision of the government to table the Bill, she said the Budget continued with a holistic policy approach unveiled in the previous edition.

"It is inclusive of privatisation that you are talking about. We are continuing that agenda. I said Air India [divestment], have done that," she asserted.

On the Budget proposal to levy tax on profit from digital asset transactions, the Finance Minister said it would not apply to the digital currency that the RBI will issue this year.

Without specifically referring to NFTs (non-fungible tokens), which are mentioned in the Finance Bill, Ms. Sitharaman said: "Everything [that] prevails outside of [digital currency] are digital assets, which are being created by individuals and in transacting that assets if profits are being made, we are taxing that profit at 30%. We are also tracking every trail of money in that by saying every transaction will (attract) 1% TDS in the crypto world."

On the need for regulation, the Finance Minister said, "We have circulated a [discussion] paper, inputs are coming in, public stakeholders are also talking about it. So regulation goes through that process. I can't wait till regulation comes into place for taxing people who are earning profits, can I?"

Regarding another proposal to impose an additional basic excise duty of ₹2 a litre on petrol and diesel, intended to be sold to retail consumers without blending, from October 1, 2022, the Minister and Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said the intent was to encourage blended fuel.

'Green bonds' target carbon neutrality

To help India achieve net zero by 2070

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced plans to issue sovereign 'green bonds', a concept catching up globally, to move towards carbon neutrality.

"As part of the government's overall market borrowings in 2022-23, sovereign 'green bonds' will be issued for mobilising resources for green infrastructure," she said.

"The proceeds will be deployed in public sector projects which help in reducing the carbon intensity of the economy," Ms. Sitharaman said. "The 'green bond' market is globally expanding at a fast pace, and this will help India access long-term funds at competitive rates. This will also improve the ESG climate in the country," said Suman Chowdhury, Chief Analytical Officer, Acuité Ratings & Research.

Industry reactions

Reacting to the provision in the Budget, Sumant Sinha, Chairman & CEO, ReNew Power Pvt. Ltd. said, with this India has laid the groundwork for its ambition to be a net zero country by 2070. "It is great to see that the government has very firmly put energy transition and clean energy at the heart of India's economic growth and looks to address some of the most challenging aspects of this transition," he said.

"Sovereign 'green bonds' are also very welcome, which can help mobilise financial resources for distribution companies as well as for clean energy investors," he added.

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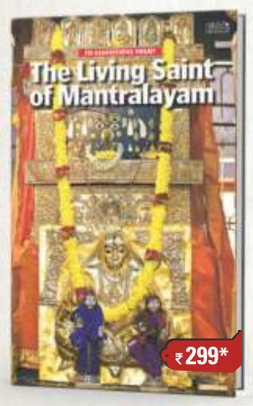

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KARAIKUDI – 630 003, TAMILNADU, INDIA

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHANCELLOR – ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY, KARAIKUDI

SEARCH COMMITTEE NOTIFICATION

The Government of Tamil Nadu vide G.O. (D) No.3 Higher Education (H1) Department dated 04th January 2022 has constituted the Search Committee to recommend a panel of three names to His Excellency Governor-Chancellor, Tamil Nadu for appointment of Vice-Chancellor, Alagappa University. The Committee consists of the following members :

1.	Dr. M. Jagadesh Kumar, Vice Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi – 110 067.	Chancellor's Nominee / Convener
2.	Thiru. K. Deenabandu, I.A.S., (Retired)	Government Nominee / Member
3.	Dr.M. Ponnavaikko, Former Vice Chancellor, Bharathidasan University.	Syndicate Nominee / Member
4.	Dr. V. Thangaraj, Former Director and Head, Ramanujan Institute for Advanced Study in Mathematics, University of Madras.	Syndicate Nominee / Member
5.	Dr. T. Padmanaban, Former Vice Chancellor, Tamilnadu Teacher's Education University.	Senate Nominee / Member

The Search Committee invites applications for the position of Vice-Chancellor, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, from distinguished academicians with high levels of competence, integrity, moral and institutional commitment, and, possessing the educational and work experience as notified by the Government of Tamil Nadu in their **Notification VI: G.O.(Ms).No.187, Higher Education (K2) Department, dated 14th July 2017, No. II(2)/HE/562(c-6)/2017-** copy of which is available in the Alagappa University Website – **www.alagappauniversity.ac.in**

The Vice-Chancellor shall hold the office for a period of three years (provided that a person appointed as Vice-Chancellor shall retire from office if, during the term of office he/she attains the age of 70 years).

Interested candidates possessing the qualifications and experience may download the prescribed application from the website of Alagappa University – **www.alagappauniversity.ac.in.** The filled in application may be sent (only in the prescribed form) to the Nodal Officer at the following e-mail address on or before **04th March 2022, 5.00 P.M.**

Email ID : nodalofficeralu2022@gmail.com

Applications from the candidates will be considered only after the publication of this Notification in the Newspapers / Alagappa University Website **(www.alagappauniversity.ac.in)**. Applications received after the closing date will not be entertained. Applications submitted other than to the email indicated will not be considered.

Nodal Officer,
Search Committee for the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor.

DIPR/ 61 /DISPLAY/2022
"சோதனை கடந்து சுதந்திரம் அடைந்தோம், சாதனை புரிந்து சரித்திரம் படைப்போம்"

Digital rupee to arrive in new fiscal, to use blockchain tech.

'It will lead to a cheaper currency management system'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

In a big 'no' to cryptocurrencies, the digital rupee will be introduced in India during the financial year 2022-23, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday while presenting the Union Budget.

"Introduction of Central Bank Digital Currency will give a big boost to the digital economy. Digital currency will also lead to a more efficient and cheaper currency management system," Ms. Sitharaman said.

"It is, therefore, proposed to introduce the digital rupee, using blockchain and other technologies, to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India starting 2022-23."

Digital currency will lead to a more efficient currency management system.

"Digital rupee is one of the most-awaited announcements. It is important to understand how other crypto assets will be taxed and whether there will be any specific benefit given to the digital rupee," said Pranay Bhatia, partner and leader, tax and regulatory services, BDO India.

"With no deduction for cost, tax rate at 30%, tax on mining/gifting and no offset of loss against income from other sources, the Finance Minister has given the much-needed clarity on crypto transactions. However, tracking such transactions in the absence of a central regulator may be challenging," he noted.

E-passports to be rolled out soon

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A digital passport project will be rolled out in 2022-23, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Tuesday.

This comes weeks after the Ministry of External Affairs sealed a deal with Tata Consultancy Services for the Passport Seva Programme V2.0.

"The issuance of e-Passports, using embedded chip and futuristic technology, will be rolled out in 2022-23 to enhance the convenience of citizens in their overseas travel," she said. The announcement was welcomed by Union External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

DELHI JAL BOARD
(Govt of N.C.T. of Delhi)
OFFICE OF Dy. SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (C) DR. III
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Phone: 011-27394876
Email: eecdr3@gmail.com
PRESS NIT NO-21 (2021-22)
'STOP CORONA; Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"

S. No	Name of work	Estimated Contract Value (ECV)/ Amount put to tender (Rs.)	Earnest Money (EMD) (Rs.)	Tender processing Fee Non Refundable (Rs.)	Date of Release of Tender/ Tender Id.	Last date/time of receipt of tender
1.	Providing & Laying 300 mm to 710 mm Nominal dia Internal and Peripheral sewer line for Singhu GOC falling under Narela WWTP catchment area in Delhi.	20,85,95,875/-	Rs. 41,72,000/-	1500/-	31.01.2022 / 2022_DJB_215731_1	21.2.2022 upto 3.00 P.M

Further details in this regard can be seen at https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in.
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 1068 (2021-22)
Dy. Superintending Engineer (C) DR-III

BUDGET 2022

BUDGET SPEECH

Our Government is committed to reducing imports and promoting Atma Nirbharta; reasonable tariffs are conducive to the growth of domestic industry

Signs of recovery

Gross value added rose across sectors in Q2FY22. Public administration and defence, which drove India's GDP growth in the past, increased the most, followed by mining. Agriculture, aided by ample rains recorded consistent growth while manufacturing posted marginal growth

Quarter	AGRICULTURE	MINING	MANUFACTURING	UTILITIES	CONSTRUCTION	TRADE, HOTELS, TRANSPORT	FINANCIAL & REAL ESTATE	PUBLIC ADMIN. & DEFENCE
FY18 Q2	6	11.2	7.8	11.8	1.5	8.1	2.9	8.5
FY19 Q2	2.5	-7	5.6	9.9	5.2	7.8	6.5	8.9
FY20 Q2	3.5	-1.1	-0.6	3.9	2.6	4.1	6	10.9
FY21 Q2	3.4	-9.1	0.6	4.4	-8.6	-15.6	-8.1	-12.2
FY22 Q2	4.5	15.4	5.5	8.9	7.5	8.2	7.8	17.4

Source: MoSPI

The substantive enhancement of public expenditure will create a multiplier impact on growth and competitiveness and enhance incomes

Sanjiv Puri, Chairman, ITC Ltd.

VIEWPOINT

RAMNATH KRISHNAN,
MD and Group CEO, ICRA Ltd.

Best spending mix in 18 years

The Union Budget has budgeted for a big push to capex, attempting only modest fiscal consolidation. The fiscal deficit to GDP ratio is projected to ease somewhat to 6.4% in FY2023 from 6.9% in FY2022, and is much higher than market expectations. Nevertheless, the absolute size of the deficit is projected to rise to ₹16.6 trillion from ₹15.9 trillion estimated in FY2022.

The increase in the size of the absolute deficit can largely be attributed to a sharp hike in capital spending, by as much as 24.5% to ₹7.5 trillion in FY2023 from the revised ₹6 trillion in FY2022. This increase is driven by four major factors: a large increase in allocation for the roads sector, a capital infusion into BSNL, and as much as ₹1 trillion as special assistance to the States for capital spending. The sharp increase in the allocation for capex has the potential to impart durability to the growth momentum and 'crowd in' investments by the private sector.

> The increase in allocation for capex has the potential to impart durability to the growth momentum

The Government of India (GoI) has offset the expansion in capex by remaining rather prudent on revenue expenditure, which is budgeted to rise by a mere 0.9% in FY2023. Consequently, total spending is projected to increase by a modest 4.6% in FY2023. More importantly, the relatively larger hike in capex vis-à-vis revex is expected to lead to an improvement in the GoI's spending quality, with capex accounting for 19% of total spending in FY2023, up from 16% projected in FY2022 and an average of 12.6% during FY2019-2021. This is the best spending mix in 18 years.

We believe that there are limited downside risks to the fiscal targets for FY2023. This is because the GoI has budgeted for a moderate growth in gross tax collections of 9.6%. Besides, the budgeted numbers for receipts on account of disinvestment are also quite realistic at ₹650 billion.

These assumptions lend a fair degree of credibility to the Budget math. With the increase in the size of the fiscal deficit, the GoI's gross and net market borrowings are estimated to witness a steep expansion to ₹15 trillion and ₹11.2 trillion, respectively, from ₹10.5 trillion and ₹7.8 trillion in FY2022. This has impacted the bond market sentiments, given the prevailing expectations of a decline in borrowings.

16% hike in healthcare sector allocation

However, the ₹83,000-crore outlay is almost equal to last year's actual spend; zero allocation for emergency response fund

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The government perceives the pandemic to be in retreat, going by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget speech as well as a perusal of the Budget documents.

In 2021-22, the Budget documents show, the Centre ended up spending ₹82,920 crore – nearly ₹11,000 crore more than the Budget estimate. This was largely in the form of 'grant in aid' to States.

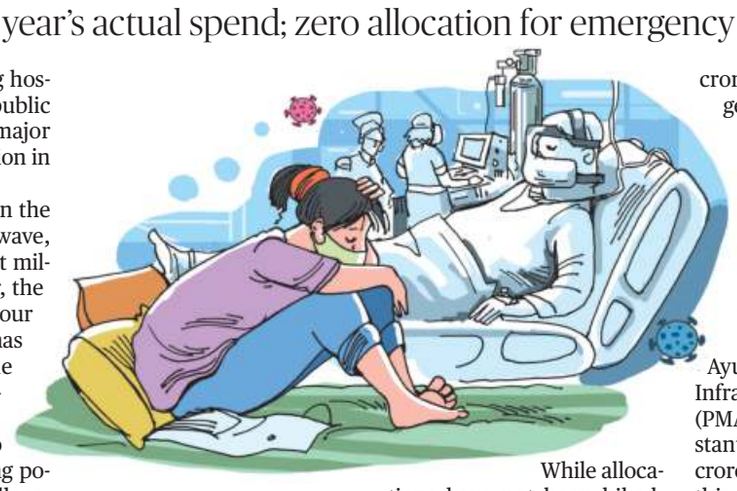
It proposes to spend around the same – ₹83,000 crore – over the coming financial year. The 2022 Budget estimate is nearly 16% more than the ₹71,000 crore budgeted last year.

Further evidence that COVID-19 is seen as a diminished threat this year comes from allocation to a budgetary head called "India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness" that saw an allotment of ₹12,359 crore last year but has seen zero allocation in the present year.

In her address, however, Ms. Sitharaman stressed the need for improving access to mental healthcare facilities via telemedicine and digital healthcare facilities.

Her speech did not mention vaccines, bettering hospitals, improving public health facilities – all major points that found mention in the previous two years.

"I recognise we are in the midst of an Omicron wave, with high incidence but milder symptoms. Further, the speed and coverage of our vaccination campaign has helped greatly. With the accelerated improvement of health infrastructure in the past two years, we are in a strong position to withstand challenges. I am confident that with *sabka prayas* (everybody's effort), we will continue our journey of strong growth," Ms. Sitharaman said in her opening remarks.



As of Monday, India has double vaccinated more than 75% of its eligible population, even as it posted close to 1,67,000 new cases in the past 24 hours.

While allocations have not been hiked, the Centre also expects to spend the same as it did last year on health research.

In 2021-22, the Centre allotted ₹2,663 crore for health research but spent ₹3,080 crore. This year, it has budgeted ₹3,200 crore.

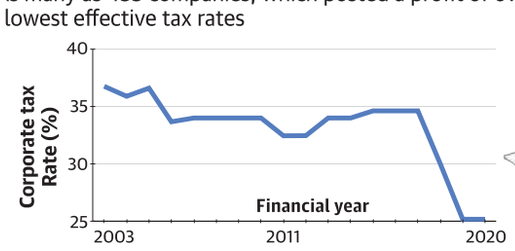
The capital expenditure that the Health Ministry expects to make in the coming year is ₹5,632 crore or about ₹1,000 crore less than what was spent last year.

The Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PMABHIM) has seen a substantial increase from ₹585 crore last year to ₹4,177 crore this year. A scheme to improve pandemic preparedness via research and development as well as strengthen "bio security" has also been hiked from ₹140 crore to ₹690 crore.

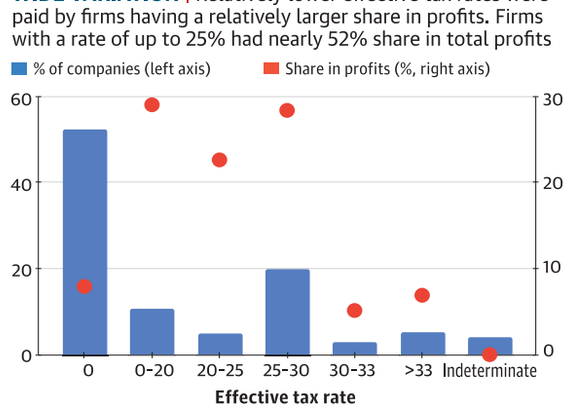
SKEWED DISTRIBUTION

In FY20, companies with relatively higher share in profits incurred lower effective tax rates. As many as 433 companies, which posted a profit of over ₹500 crore had the lowest effective tax rates

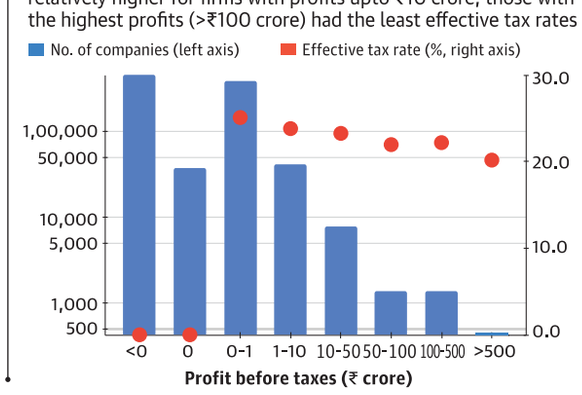
LOW RATES | India's corporate tax rate has fluctuated over the years, with FY18 and FY19 seeing steep drops. Post FY19 it remained unchanged at 25.7%



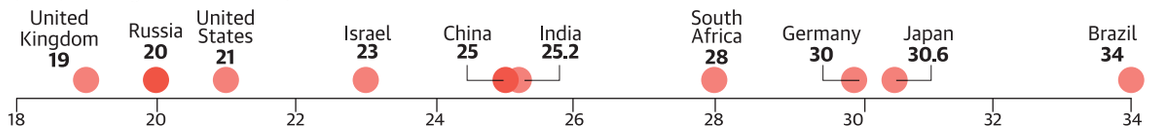
WIDE VARIATION | Relatively lower effective tax rates were paid by firms having a relatively larger share in profits. Firms with a rate of up to 25% had nearly 52% share in total profits



SKEWED TOWARDS THE RICHEST | While the tax rate was relatively higher for firms with profits upto ₹10 crore, those with the highest profits (>₹100 crore) had the least effective tax rates



GLOBAL SNAPSHOT | According to latest available data, among select countries Brazil levied the highest corporate tax rate (34%). Among BRICS countries, China and Russia had a lower tax rate than India



SOURCE: BUDGET DOCUMENTS, TRADING ECONOMICS

Experts welcome boost to mental health sector

'But other essential services ignored'

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Healthcare industry experts have expressed mixed reactions to the Union Budget, stating that while the boost to the mental health sector is welcome, the Budget does not hold much promise for other essential services in the healthcare sector, including the crucial medical device industry.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the pandemic had accentuated mental health problems in people of all ages and announced the plan to set up a National Tele-Mental Health programme. She added that 23 tele-mental health centres would be launched, with the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS) in Bengaluru as the nodal centre.

"The Indian Institute of Technology, Bangalore will provide tech support for the mental health programme," she said. The Minister also announced that an open platform for the national digital health ecosystem would be rolled out and it would consist of digital registries of health providers and health facilities, unique health identity and universal access to health facilities.

'Disappointing Budget'

Reacting to the Budget, K. Sujatha Rao, former Secretary, Health Ministry, tweeted: "A disappointing Budget for health and education. Need to remember that roads and ports don't make sense if people are illiterate and sick! And such disdain for these human capability sectors after the trauma we have faced due to a poor health system is simply being irresponsible."

> **Need to remember that roads and ports don't make sense if people are illiterate and sick!**

Rajiv Nath, forum coordinator, Association of Indian Medical Device Industry, said the Budget had given a cold shoulder to the Indian medical device industry. He added that there was nothing laudable for the healthcare industry in the Budget. Mr. Nath said the industry was expecting the government to move forward on promised reforms and anticipated conducive measures to boost domestic manufacturing of medical devices.

The mental health component of the Budget came in for praise, with Dr. Rana Mehta of PwC India stating that the pandemic had caused a silent global mental health epidemic. "Given the shortage of mental health professionals, especially in rural areas, telemedicine would greatly enhance accessibility for patients requiring psychiatric help," Dr. Mehta said.

Dr. Alok Roy, member, FICCI, Health Services Committee and Chairman Medica Group of Hospitals, said it was expected that the government would look at increasing the healthcare expenditure above 2.5% of the GDP but adequate attention was not paid to it.

Job creation gets fresh impetus

Outlay for Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana doubled to ₹6,400 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The expenditure on the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), aimed at encouraging job creation, and on the ongoing creation of a national database of unorganised workers, was proposed to be increased in the Union Budget for 2022-23 on Tuesday.

The Budget presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed increasing the Labour and Employment Ministry's expenditure from ₹13,306.5 crore in 2021-22 to ₹16,893.68 crore.

For the Rojgar Yojana, which was launched by the government post the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, the Budget proposed increasing spending from ₹3,130 crore in 2021-22 to ₹6,400 crore in 2022-23.

e-Shram portal

Under the scheme, the government pays the employees' share of Employees' Provident Fund for new members with a salary of under ₹15,000 a month.

In the Budget, the Ministry's ongoing project to register unorganised sector workers through the e-Shram portal was given an increased outlay from ₹150 crore in 2021-22 to ₹500 crore in 2022-23.

Ayush Ministry receives ₹3,050 crore in Budget

Fourfold increase in seven years: govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Cost-effective Ayush services under the National Ayush Mission (NAM) received a major boost in the Budget, the government said in a release.

"The total allocation to Ayush Ministry in the past 7 years increased over four times from ₹691 crore to ₹3,050 crore [in the current Budget]," it noted. The allocation of ₹800 crore for NAM will help to upgrade hospitals and dispensaries, support cultivation of medicinal plants and in other areas, including increase in export of value-added items of medicinal plants.

Push for promotion of drones through start-ups

Special purpose vehicle for Air India's debts gets ₹9,259 crore; allocation slashed for Civil Aviation Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Budget pushed for promotion of drones through start-ups and skilling at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).

"Start-ups will be promoted to facilitate 'Drone Shakti' through varied applications and for Drone-As-A-Service (DrAAS)," Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

Courses for skilling will also be started in selected ITIs across all States. Drones will also be promoted for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, spraying of insecticides and nutrients.

Barring the mention about drones, there were no new schemes or initiatives announced for the aviation sector. With Air India now privatised, the budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Civil Aviation was slashed to more than half of the current fiscal. It has been allocated ₹4,574 crore for the next fiscal.

Soaring high: Start-ups will be promoted to facilitate 'Drone Shakti' through varied applications. ▪ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

The special purpose vehicle (AI Assets Holding Ltd.), set up by the government in 2019 to clean up Air India's balance sheet to attract private investors, has been allocated ₹9,259 crore.

"The provision is made for repayment of past government guaranteed borrowings, sale and lease back rentals and past dues and liabilities of AI Ltd." The Minister said ₹51,971 crore for Air India debts was part of its revised estimate of capital expenditure of ₹6.03 lakh crore for last fiscal. This was for the purpose of "settlement of outstanding guaranteed liabilities of Air India and its other sundry commitments".

Expectations not met

Budget carrier IndiGo's CEO Ronojoy Dutta rued that expectations of "tax concession to aviation industry in the forms of cut in aviation turbine fuel excise duty and allocation of concessional finance to airlines to help us come of the pandemic" were not met.

The Ministry of Tourism received 18.42% higher allocation at ₹2,400 crore. A major portion of the outlay – ₹1,644 crore – has been earmarked for development of infrastructure for tourism development, while ₹421.5 crore has been set aside for promotion and publicity activities.

A new Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID-affected Tourism Service Sector has been started during the current financial year with an allocation of ₹62.5 crore for five years. It provides guarantee-free loan up to ₹10 lakh each for government-approved travel and tourism stakeholders such as tour operators and travel agents and up to ₹1 lakh to regional-level tourist guides approved by the government.

Task force to give direction to animation, gaming sectors

It will help improve exposure to global markets: Minister

MINI TEJASWI
BENGALURU

The animation, visual effects, gaming, and comic (AVGC) sector offered immense potential to employ youth, and to further unleash its scope, the Union Budget proposed an AVGC Promotion Task Force.

The task force would have participation from all stakeholders and it would also recommend ways to expand the growth of the AVGC sector in the country and improve its exposure to the global markets, said Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday.

Welcoming the proposal, Biren Ghose, chairman, CII National AVGC Committee 2022, said the entire industry was delighted that the government had accepted its request to set up an AVGC task force to provide strategic direction.

Great fillip

"This is a great fillip to the animation games VFX and comics sectors. We shall work to ensure that we partner the government to achieve exponential growth in revenues, jobs and global market share," Mr. Ghose, who is also country head of Technicolor India, said.

B.S. Srinivas, secretary, ABAI, an apex body of animation, vfx and games sector, said the AVGC sector has been steadily growing over the past two decades and is currently poised for exponential growth, with the country's AVGC contribution to the global markets on the rise.

"The Union government's move at this time to support this sector through setting up a task force to help the growth is a welcome move which will herald the dawn of a sunrise sector to reach greater heights," he said.

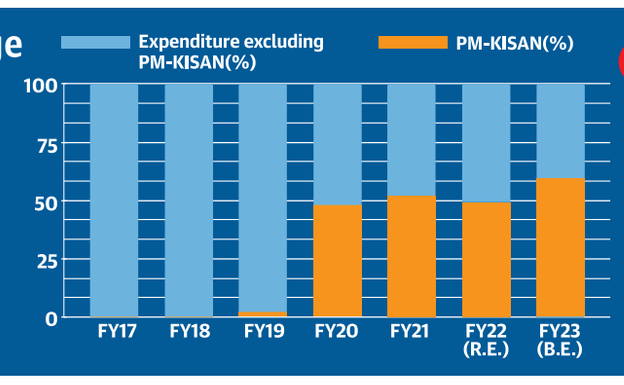
BUDGET 2022

BUDGET SPEECH

Use of 'Kisan Drones' will be promoted for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, and spraying of insecticides and nutrients

Higher weightage

After being introduced in February 2019, the PM-KISAN scheme has dominated the Budget of the Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare Ministry. In FY23, the share of the scheme in the Ministry's Budget stood at 54.84%. The scheme provides income support to farming families



Source: Budget documents

Fiscal prudence and 'ease of doing business' have been the main themes. Overall, a positive Budget without any negative surprises

Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Executive Chairperson, Biocon

VIEWPOINT

T.T. SRINIVASARAGHAVAN
Former MD, Sundaram Finance Ltd.

Painting a bold vision for India@100

Another Budget speech has come and gone! As the dust settles, experts will analyse the fine print, pro-government voices will shower praise on the Finance Minister for her 'visionary' Budget, and with equal vigour, critics will pour scorn on the 'unimaginative anti-poor' Budget! This is the lot of every FM.

Viewing it dispassionately, however, one must commend Nirmala Sitharaman for resisting the temptation of pandering to vote banks, especially in the context of the upcoming elections in key States. Equally, she has made bold to leave direct taxes almost untouched, notwithstanding the myriad demands for raising of exemption limits and increases in deductions under various sections of the Income Tax Act. Admittedly, there were some justifiable demands for reliefs, especially from the much-harried salaried class, especially in these COVID-19 pandemic-ridden times. The FM has, however, chosen to look beyond the here and now, and painted a bold vision for India@100!

While the Budget paints a wide and varied canvas, there are two areas that I specifically choose to focus on. The PM Gati Shakti master plan covering roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways and logistics infra, is indeed a laudable step, given the wide-ranging benefits it confers across various sectors such as cement, steel, commercial vehicles, and earthmoving and construction equipment, not to speak of its vast employment generating potential. India has already derived significant benefits from the Golden Quadrilateral, and as more of our roads become world-class, these benefits will only increase. The idea of a master plan to focus on the entire spectrum of goods and people movement has, therefore, not come a day too soon. The sharp increase in public capital expenditure by 35.4% to ₹7.50 lakh crore in 2022-23, is an equally welcome step, although the actual spending in the current fiscal appears to be tardy. It is one thing to allocate, and quite another to spend!

> The key concerns for the government in the coming fiscal would be international crude oil prices and the intensity and trajectory of the ongoing pandemic

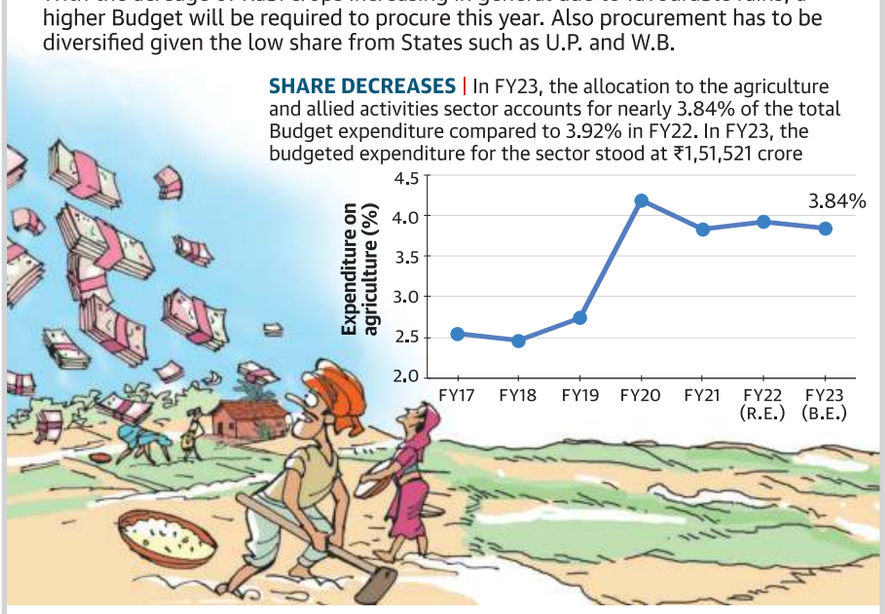
Considering the additional committed expenditure allocations of the government, in a pandemic year, there were concerns that the government would see a slippage on its fiscal deficit target. Happily, there appears to be only a marginal slippage at 6.9%, as against a Budget target of 6.8% of GDP in 2021-22, which is projected to come down to 6.4% next year.

The key concerns for the government in the coming fiscal would be international crude oil prices and the intensity and trajectory of the ongoing pandemic. If, as the Cassandras predict, prices hit $120 per barrel, there will be serious implications, both from the balance of payments and inflation perspectives, and could very well be disruptive of the ambitious plans outlined by the FM. Similarly, should the pandemic – God forbid – continue to wreak its debilitating consequences on lives and livelihoods, the engines of growth are likely to sputter. Hopefully, these dire situations will not come to pass.

I had written in this column some years ago, that the most difficult and thankless job of all in our country is that of the FM. It still is, and all credit to her for making a fist of it.

AGRI OUTLAY DECLINES SLIGHTLY

The government has slightly decreased the Budget for agriculture from FY22RE. With the acreage of Rabi crops increasing in general due to favourable rains, a higher Budget will be required to procure this year. Also procurement has to be diversified given the low share from States such as U.P. and W.B.



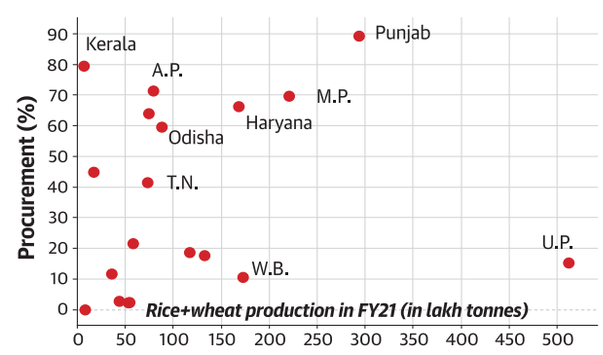
SHARE DECREASES | In FY23, the allocation to the agriculture and allied activities sector accounts for nearly 3.84% of the total Budget expenditure compared to 3.92% in FY22. In FY23, the budgeted expenditure for the sector stood at ₹1,51,521 crore

RABI ACREAGE | The table depicts the **% change in total area sown** for five major rabi crops compared with the average between 2016-17 to 2020-21. Mustard and maize have reported the highest increase in acreage this season. Sown area have also increased slightly for wheat and pulses while it has fallen in the case of jowar. **The rise in sown area of mustard can be attributed to the hike in MSP**

Crop	2021			2022
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Jowar	-92.6%	-24.7%	-19.5%	-19.3%
Maize	7.9%	-48.3%	8.67%	11.9%
Mustard	-1.9%	22.2%	24.4%	24.9%
Pulses	-118%	-4%	2.8%	3.5%
Wheat	-46.8%	-8.4%	7.2%	6.1%

PRODUCE PROCURED

The chart plots State-wise quantity of rice and wheat produced in FY21 against the share procured by the government. Among the major States that produce rice and wheat, Punjab ranked the highest in procurement (89.7% of the crop produced was procured) followed by Madhya Pradesh and Haryana. In Uttar Pradesh, which accounts for highest production of rice and wheat, only 15% of the produce was lifted by the government



SOURCE: AGRICOOP, DBIE-RBI, FCI, BUDGET DOCUMENTS

Farmers' unions allege an 'attitude of revenge'

No mention of steps to 'double farm incomes' in Budget

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Budget allocations for agriculture and allied activities, which still employ the largest bulk of the population, remained almost flat. The sector's share in the overall Budget allocations fell from 3.92% in 2021-22 to 3.84%.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced high levels of payment for procurement of rice and paddy at the minimum support price (MSP), and her speech's focus on agricultural technology and start-ups enthused the nascent industry. However, farmers' groups expressed unhappiness at the lack of support for procurement of produce other than rice and paddy and a reduction in fertilizer subsidies. The Centre's target of doubling farmers' income by 2022, a standard motto of recent Budget speeches, found no mention this time.

One of the few schemes that saw a clear increase in allocations is the Blue Revolution initiative to augment fisheries infrastructure, aquaculture and seafood processing. The Fisheries Department saw its Budget almost double from ₹1,220 crore in 2021-22 to ₹2,118 crore.

"The procurement of wheat in Rabi 2021-22 and the estimated procurement of paddy in Kharif 2021-22, will cover 1,208 lakh metric tonnes of wheat and paddy from 163 lakh farmers, and ₹2.37 lakh crore direct payment of MSP value to their accounts," the Finance Minister said.

"These figures are a serious reduction compared to 2020-21, when 1,286 lakh metric tonnes were procured from 197 lakh farmers, and ₹2.48 lakh crores were paid to the farmers. The number of benefited farmers in 2021-22 has fallen by 17% and the quantity procured has fallen by 7% from 2020-21," said an assessment by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM).

Farm unions were bitter about the failure to prioritise agricultural expenditure. "It is clear from this Budget that the government is working with an attitude of revenge against farmers. It has failed to deliver on its promise to double farm incomes by this year," said Rakesh Tikait, who heads a faction of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) in Uttar Pradesh. The failure to hike PM-KISAN payouts, the slashing of the PM-ASHA scheme Budget from ₹400 crore to ₹1 crore and the low levels of disbursement from the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund were identified as key issues.

The agriculture industry, on the other hand, largely welcomed the announcements.

Dhanuka Agritech Group chairman R.G. Agarwal welcomed the government's focus on infrastructure and promotion of drones for farm activities. "However, it would have been also apt had the Finance Minister reduced the GST and customs duty rates on some of the agro-chemical products, which would have reduced the overall cost for the farmers," he added. "The announcement in this year's Budget on strengthening the delivery of digital and hi-tech services to farmers through the public-private partnership model will go a long way in helping Indian farmers reap the benefits of technological advancements," Bayer's South Asia president D. Narain said.

Natural farming finds fertile ground

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The recent spotlight on zero budget natural farming found an echo in Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget speech on Tuesday, with the banks of the Ganga identified as the next focal point to promote agricultural practices that eschew chemical fertilizers.

"Chemical-free natural farming will be promoted throughout the country, with a focus on farmers' lands in 5-km wide corridors along the Ganga, at the first stage," Ms. Sitharaman said.

The government is also aiming at integrating the chemical-free approach into a long-term policy by including it in the agricultural education curriculum.

Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a zero budget national farming (ZBNF) method to be adopted as a mass movement across the country. The Centre has sanctioned support for converting four lakh additional hectares of farmland in eight States to use the method.

These schemes were sanctioned for financial support under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana scheme, meant to promote organic farming and soil health, Vedic farming, ZBNF and a host of other traditional methods.

However, documents showed that while the scheme had been allocated ₹450 crore under Budget estimates for 2021-22, it had been downgraded to ₹100 crore under the revised estimates.

In the 2022-23 Budget, the scheme has been submerged into an enlarged Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana scheme. So it is unclear exactly how much funds have been allocated to natural farming.

Agri-tech: drones, start-up fund in focus

A scheme through public-private partnership to be launched for farmers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The emerging agri-tech sector has been enthused by the abundance of digital farming references in the Union Budget speech on Tuesday.

"For delivery of digital and hi-tech services to farmers with the involvement of public sector research and extension institutions along with private agri-tech players and stakeholders of agri-value chain, a scheme through PPP [public-private partnership] mode will be launched," said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

She added that a fund with blended capital, raised under the co-investment model, would be facilitated through NABARD. "This is to finance start-ups for agriculture and rural enterprise, relevant for farm produce value chain. The activities for these start-ups will include, *inter alia*, support for FPOs, machinery for farmers on rental basis and technology, including IT-based support," said Ms. Sitharaman.

A digital fillip: The FM promised to promote the use of drones for spraying of insecticides on fields. • PTI

With a wider focus on drone technology, the Minister promised to promote the use of "kisan drones" for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, and spraying of insecticides and nutrients on fields. In fact, the Budget speech emphasised the efficient use of land resources via technology. "States will be encouraged to adopt Unique Land Parcel Identification Number to facilitate IT-based management of records. The facility for transliteration of land records across any of the Schedule VIII languages will also be rolled out," she said.

"The adoption or linkage with National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) with the 'One-Nation One-Registration Software', will be promoted as an option for uniform process for registration and 'anywhere registration' of deeds and documents," said Ms. Sitharaman.

"The expansion of technology focus from just tractors and agri-machinery to 'kisan drones' shows a rising interest in the application of IOT in the sector," said AgroStar CEO Shardul Sheth.

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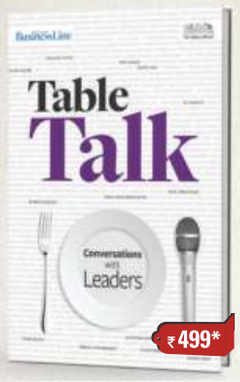

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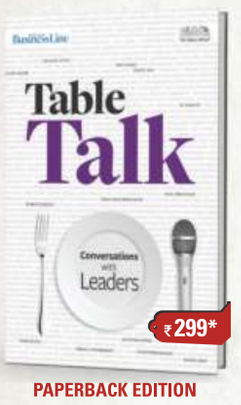

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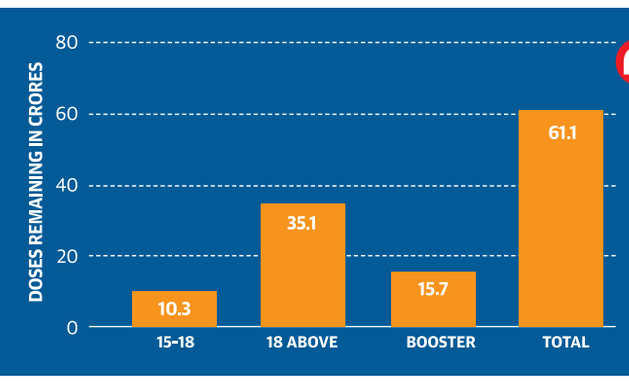
BUDGET SPEECH

With the accelerated improvement of health infrastructure in the past two years, we are in a strong position to withstand challenges

Doses left

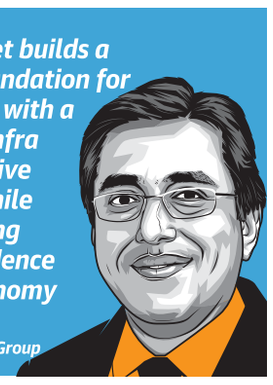
Over a year into the vaccination drive, India has administered 165.6 crore doses to eligible population (aged 15+). Close to 70% are fully vaccinated. Almost 61.1 crore more doses are required to fully vaccinate the eligible population and deliver booster shots to frontline workers and senior citizens



Source: CoWIN

The Budget builds a strong foundation for the future with a focus on infra and inclusive growth while maintaining fiscal prudence in the economy

Anish Shah
MD, Mahindra Group



VIEWPOINT

SUNEETA REDDY,
Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals

Making India future ready

Our journey to a $5 trillion economy by 2024-25, the vision of which was laid down in the pre-COVID Budget in 2019, was rudely interrupted by the pandemic. The two Budgets since then, in 2020 and 2021, endeavoured to address the health emergency, while minimising the impact on economy. Those efforts have borne results, with the nation dealing with the Omicron wave in a measured manner, while all GDP forecasts for 2021-22 and 2022-23 have indicated that India will be the fastest growing nation in the world. Macro-economic indicators are positive too – growth in revenue receipts and capex, merchandise imports and exports rebounding, and high foreign exchange reserves.

Against this backdrop, the Union Budget 2022 has signalled that mere recovery is not enough – India is aspirational, hungry for growth and ready for a quantum leap. To support that leap, the Budget has put in place a blueprint for the next two and a half decades. In that sense, this Budget is an articulation of ambition.

That ambition is quite formidable – the extent to which infrastructure and logistics aspects were addressed, water and agriculture were focused on, manufacturing was accelerated, MSMEs were supported, sunrise sectors were identified, clean energy was incentivised, urban spaces were reimagined and the digital dividend was harnessed, all this demonstrated that the future of India will be built on twin pillars – strengthening our traditional backbone and building the models of the future.

> The open platform digital backbone of the National Digital Health Mission will enable universal access and will revolutionise health delivery

The past two years have put a spotlight on healthcare sector, and it is truly to our credit as a nation, that all stakeholders have worked together to fight the pandemic. The fact that we have vaccinated over 1.5 billion people, is now our shield against any future risks.

However, we truly have a long way to go in building health resilience. The open platform digital backbone of the National Digital Health Mission, will enable universal access for all – and it will revolutionise health delivery. A healthy and productive workforce will be the life force of all our plans to build the India of the future. An outlay for health is an investment in our collective aspiration. The future of health is exciting, with the seamless integration of physical resources with digital platforms. It's going to be a decade of transformation, one that will have a multiplier effect on economy, and make India future-ready!

POCKET | RAVIKANTH

"If you were expecting some surprises in the budget, I have our monthly budget waiting for you."

Record allocation of ₹1.37 lakh cr. for Railways

Focus on capacity expansion, safety; 400 new-generation Vande Bharat trains to be manufactured in next three years

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

The Union Budget has proposed a record budgetary allocation of ₹1.37 lakh crore for the Indian Railways, with capital expenditure outlay of over ₹2.45 lakh crore for the upcoming financial year. With a 14% higher capital expenditure over last year, the national transporter plans to utilise the funds to complete key stalled projects and enhance passengers amenities and safety.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday also announced that 2,000 km network will be brought under Kavach – an indigenous technology developed for safety, in 2022-23, and 400 new-generation Vande Bharat trains with better energy efficiency and ride experience will be developed and manufactured during the next three years.

Terming the allocation as 'historic', Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters that with the increased allocation, the focus will be on capacity expansion and enhancement of security, along with 'supercritical' projects.

98% operating ratio

Mr. Vaishnaw said for the upcoming fiscal, the Railways is targeting a 98% operating ratio, but he is hopeful of bettering this on the back of improved freight performance. The operating ratio indicates how much the Railways spends to earn a rupee.

"We are targeting 98% operating ratio in the coming year. But I think we should be able to achieve more than this... We are already achieving over four million tonne loading everyday... which is unheard of... We are now targeting freight loading of 4.5 MT everyday consistently and then move on to 5 MT/day gradually," he said.

To a query on the Vande Bharat trains, he said, "The current Vande Bharat under operation is version 1. For version 2.0, the designing is complete and testing will begin in April. We plan to start serial production of these September onwards... Today's target will see even better versions of this train."

On the proposal to bring 2,000 km network under Kavach, the Minister pointed out that it is SIL4 (Safety integrity level) certified which means there is the probability of a single error in 10,000 years.

Ms. Sitharaman said the Railways will develop new products and efficient logistics services for small farmers and Small and Medium Enterprises, besides taking the lead in integration of postal and Railways networks to provide seamless solutions for movement of parcels.

One Station-One Product

She also announced the 'One Station-One Product' concept will be popularised to help local businesses & supply chains, and 100 PM GatiShakti Cargo Terminals for multimodal logistics facilities will be developed during the next three years.

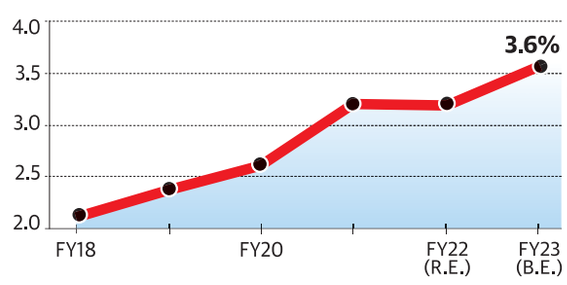
As per the Budget documents, the Railways expects receipts comprising revenues from passenger, goods, other coaching, sundry other heads etc, to be ₹2.40 lakh crore in BE 2022-23 as against RE 2021-22 of ₹2.02 lakh crore. It expects passenger revenue of ₹58,500 in 2022-23, and goods revenue to be about ₹1,65,000 crore.

Vishnu Sudarsan, Partner, J. Sagar Associates (JSA), added that the railways sector, which boasts a wide-reaching network and is a lynchpin of keeping crucial supply chains operational, can play a clinching role in India's logistics growth story and meeting the climate change and sustainability goals. "However, in order to ensure a starring role for the railways in the logistics segment, it is imperative that the Railways commence involving the private sector in a meaningful and phased manner that offers a win-win to all stakeholders."

BUDGET SUPPORT RISES, REVENUE DIPS

The internal revenue generated by the Railways has consistently fallen in the recent years, increasing its dependence on budget expenditure and extra-budgetary resources

UPWARD TREND
The Railways' share in overall budget has steadily increased since FY18. In FY23 it accounts for 3.6% of the overall expenses which is an increase from 3.2% in the previous two fiscals



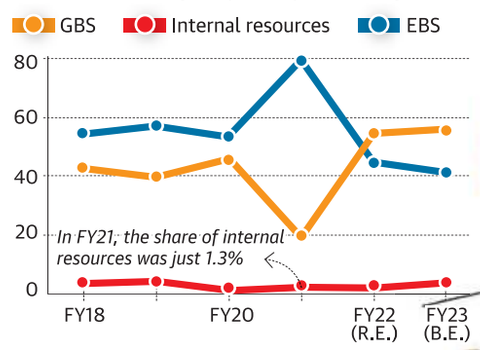
1,700 km existing single lines to be doubled in FY23

₹96.98 the amount the Railways is estimated to spend to earn ₹100 in FY23

6,500 km *of route to be electrified in FY23*

300 km new lines to be constructed in FY23

SEEKING ASSISTANCE | Having consistently failed to meet the expected internal revenue, the Railways' reliance on extra-budgetary resources such as LIC and market borrowings significantly increased in the last five years. The outlay from Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) is estimated to be **55% of the Railways' capital expenditure in FY23.** The chart shows the percentage share of the Railways' capital expenditure by source



DATA: VIGNESH RADHAKRISHNAN, SUMANT SEN, JASMIN J NIHALANI, SRINIVASAN RAMANI | **GRAPHICS & DESIGN:** KANNAN SUNDAR, B. SRINIVASAN, JOSEPH SATHEESH, A. GANESHAN, S.T. KARTHICK, J. ALBERT FRANCIS, L. BALAMURUGAN, B. KARTHIKEYAN | **ILLUSTRATIONS:** SATHEESH VELLINEZHI, J.A. PREM KUMAR, R. RAJESH

Centre to set up high-level panel on urban policies

Tier 2, 3 cities must cater to future needs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said in her Budget speech that as the "business as usual" approach towards urban planning would not work and a paradigm shift was needed, a high-level panel to give recommendations would be set up.

Half the population of the country would be living in urban areas by 2047, making orderly urban development critically important, she noted.

"This will help realise the country's economic potential, including livelihood opportunities for the demographic dividend. For this, on the one hand we need to nurture the megacities and their hinterlands to become current centres of economic growth. On the other hand, we need to facilitate tier 2 and 3 cities to take on the mantle in the future," she observed.

The panel would comprise urban planners, urban economists and institutions who will make recommendations on policies, capacity-building, planning, implementation and governance. She also proposed the modernisation of building bye-laws, town planning schemes and transit-oriented development.

"For developing India-specific knowledge in urban planning and design, and to deliver certified training in these areas, up to five existing academic institutions in different regions will be designated as centres of excellence. These centres will be provided endowment funds of ₹250 crore each. In addition, the AICTE will take the lead to improve syllabi, quality and access of urban planning courses in other institutions," she stated.

> **For developing India-specific knowledge in urban planning and design, up to five institutions will be designated as centres of excellence and provided endowment funds of ₹250 crore each**
>
> NIRMALA SITHARAMAN
> UNION FINANCE MINISTER

Ms. Sitharaman proposed a ₹76,549.46 crore Budget for the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, an increase from ₹54,581 crore in the Budget Estimate (BE) for 2021-2022 and the Revised Estimate (RE) for 2021-2022 of ₹73,850.26 crore.

Proposed funding for housing under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) increased from ₹8,000 crore in BE 2021-2022 to ₹27,000 RE 2021-2022 to ₹28,000 in RE 2022-2023. The Budget proposed to raise the grants-in-aid to the State governments from ₹18,139.55 crore in BE 2021-2022 to ₹37,824.35 crore in 2022-2023. On metro projects, the Budget proposed ₹19,130 crore expenditure, up from ₹18,998 crore in the BE for 2021-2022.

Big boost for expansion of highways

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The allocation for the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has seen a 68% increase with ₹1,99,107.71 crore set aside for it in the Union Budget 2023. This is in line with the massive target Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has set for expanding National Highways network by 25,000 km in 2022-2023.

The hike of ₹81,006 crore for the Ministry has been almost entirely earmarked for investments in NHAI, which has seen a 133% increase from ₹57,350 crore in last year's Budget to ₹1,34,015 crore this year.

The Minister also said the government will also finalise its plan for expressways in 2022-2023 under the PM Gati Shakti programme.

To finance road projects, the government will also mobilise ₹20,000 crore through innovative financing to complement public financing. Of the 35 multi-modal logistics parks the government plans across the country, four will be awarded in the next fiscal.

The Minister identified the PM Gati Shakti programme – which envisages coordinated planning across Ministries and States for development of infrastructure – as one of the four key pillars of the Budget.

"The focus will be on planning, financing including through innovative ways, use of technology, and speedier implementation. The touchstone of the Master Plan [under PM Gati Shakti] will be world-class modern infrastructure and logistics synergy among different modes of movement – both of people and goods – and location of projects. This will help raise productivity and accelerate economic growth and development," she said.

FM moots ₹19,500-cr. push for solar manufacturing

'This opens up huge job opportunities and will take the country on a sustainable development path'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre has said it is committed to "facilitate" domestic manufacturing for the solar energy sector by looking to add 2,80,000 MW of installed capacity by 2030. To this end, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government envisioned an "additional allocation" of ₹19,500 crore as a "production-linked incentive" for manufacturing solar modules.

Rooftop solar panels installed on buildings at the Cochin Port Trust. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

She referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statements in Glasgow at the COP 26 last November of India striving to achieve 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2070. As part of this, India would increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 5,00,000 MW by 2030 and meet 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.

"This strategy opens up huge employment opportunities and will take the country on a sustainable development path. This Budget proposes several near-term and long-term actions accordingly," she said.

The Central Electricity Authority in its latest assessment has said as of early November, solar accounted for 11.8% of the installed capacity and had increased from 11.3% from four months ago. In the run-up to COP-26, the U.S. and India agreed to collaborate towards installing 4,50,000 MW of renewable energy by 2030.

India's installed power capacity is projected to be 4,76,000 MW by 2021-22 and is expected to rise to at least 8,17,000 MW by 2030.

Observers lauded the references to "climate action". "By referring to climate action as a sunrise sector and employment generator, the Budget 2022 had sent an important signal to markets, financial institutions and the workforce. We now need the power of government incentives, aggregation and derisking for clean energy to be complemented by standards for low-carbon materials, skilling for battery recycling, and consultative processes for green infrastructure projects," said Ulka Kelkar, Director, Climate Programme, World Resources Institute, India.

Govt. proposes new SEZ law

Reform to help States become partners in development: Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday proposed to replace the existing law governing special economic zones (SEZs) with a new legislation to enable States to become partners in 'Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs'.

The existing SEZ Act was enacted in 2006 with an aim to create export hubs and boost manufacturing in the country. However, these zones started losing their sheen after imposition of minimum alternate tax and introduction of sunset clause for removal of tax incentives.

These zones are treated as foreign entities in terms of provisions related to customs. Industry has time and again demanded continuation of tax benefits provided under the law. Units in SEZs used to enjoy 100% income tax exemption on export income for the first five years, 50% for the next five years and 50% of the ploughed back export profit for another five years.

Presenting the Budget 2022-23, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said: "The Special Economic Zones Act will be replaced with a new legislation that will enable the states to become partners in Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs." This will cover all large existing and new industrial enclaves to optimally utilise available infrastructure and enhance competitiveness of exports, she noted.

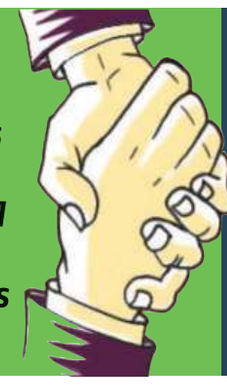
The government, she said, will also undertake reforms in customs administration of SEZs with a view to promote ease of doing business.

"We will also undertake reforms in Customs Administration of SEZs and it shall henceforth be fully IT driven and function on the Customs National Portal with a focus on higher facilitation and with only risk-based checks," the Minister said.

This reform will be implemented by September 30, 2022.

BUDGET SPEECH

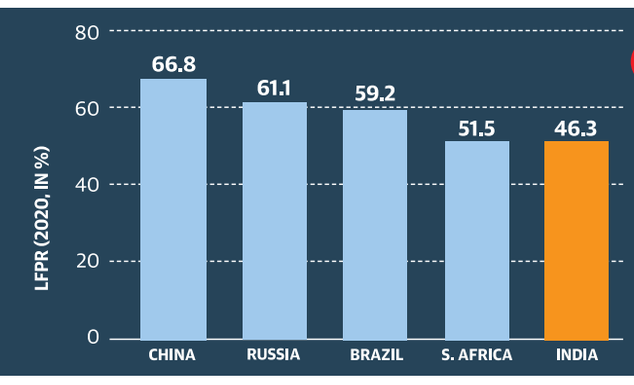
In 2022-23, 80 lakh houses will be completed for the eligible beneficiaries of PM Awas Yojana, both rural and urban; ₹48,000 crore is allocated for this purpose



Smaller pie

Labour force participation rate or the proportion of working population currently employed or seeking employment, is the lowest in India among BRICS countries. Two-thirds of India's population is in working age, but, only 46% are willing to participate in the economy

Source: World Bank



Union Budget 2022 sets the pace for the Indian economy's growth trajectory amidst the challenges brought forth by the pandemic

Venu Srinivasan, Chairman, TVS Motor

VIEWPOINT

T.V. NARENDRAN
President, CII

A growth-oriented, pragmatic Budget

The sustained focus of this year's Union Budget on supporting growth while also targeting all-inclusive welfare, through a variety of schemes, is welcome. It comes at a time when the pandemic has worsened inequality not only in the country but across the globe. In line with suggestions made by CII, the strategy laid out by the Budget is to spend on infrastructure projects to create jobs and enhance demand.

For enhancing productivity and investment, the government's continued focus on public capital expenditure, especially the PM Gati Shakti scheme, is notable. The substantial increase in CapEx outlay of 35% to ₹7.5 lakh crore during FY2022-23 would help pump-prime the economy and demand not only in the said year but also in the years ahead.

This Budget's reform-oriented approach of improving the business environment by introducing EODB 2.0 – which has its foundations in trust-based governance, and aims to digitalize manual processes while at the same time targeting integration of central and State-level compliances – will certainly help unlock the growth potential of the industry. Investments in the logistics infrastructure would lower the cost of doing business. Several measures have been announced to relieve the stress faced by the common man. The Budget has focused on inclusivity by targeting the bottom of the pyramid through welfare schemes. The increased allocation to the PM Awas Yojana to benefit the weaker section of the population and the launch of new schemes like PM-DevINE, Aspirational Blocks, and Vibrant Villages Programme are inspiring for achieving all-rounded, inclusive growth. The government's initiatives for the agriculture sector, especially the announcement of assured income amounting to ₹2.37 lakh crore on account of direct payments for MSP of wheat and paddy, will help alleviate stress among farmers. The Budget's priority areas – Gati Shakti, inclusive development, sunrise opportunities, energy and climate action, and financing of investment – set the vision for the country's future. With all sectors contributing to growth, the Economic Survey growth target of 8.0-8.5% seems achievable in 2022-23, making India the fastest-growing major economy for two consecutive years.

> The Budget has focused on inclusivity by targeting the bottom of the pyramid through welfare schemes

MGNREGS allocation cut by 25% to ₹73,000 cr.

Move comes even as high rural unemployment prevails; grassroots activists highlight huge pending payments

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

The Centre's ₹73,000-crore allocation for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in 2022-23 is 25% lower than the ₹98,000 crore Revised Estimate for the scheme in the current year, reverting to the same insufficient amount allocated in the last Budget. In fact, the MGNREGS did not find any mention during the Union Finance Minister's Budget speech on Tuesday.

Rural employment activists and non-BJP State governments reacted with outrage, accusing the government of crippling a key safety net during an employment crisis.

The MGNREGS is a demand-driven scheme, guaranteeing 100 days of unskilled work to any rural household that wants it. During the first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, when the scheme was ramped up and given its highest-ever budget of ₹1.11 lakh crore, it provided a lifeline for a record 11 crore workers. In the next financial year, 2021-22, the budget allocation dropped to ₹73,000 crore, resulting in the scheme running out of funds. Supplementary allocations then pushed up the Revised Estimates to ₹98,000 crore, but workers say they paid the cost in delayed wage payments and artificial suppression of demand, while some State governments were forced to dip into their own coffers to meet costs.

"The cut comes at a time when the country is going through its worst-ever employment crisis. With the current allocation, we will have a repeat of last year, when the funds ran out midway through the year, and many crucial works will have to be stalled," said Kerala Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal.

"It is a terrible thing to do. But this is the Modi model of development," added Amit Mitra, the Principal Chief Adviser to the West Bengal Chief Minister and a former Finance Minister of the State.

Grassroots activists said the reduction in funding would have a disastrous impact on workers.

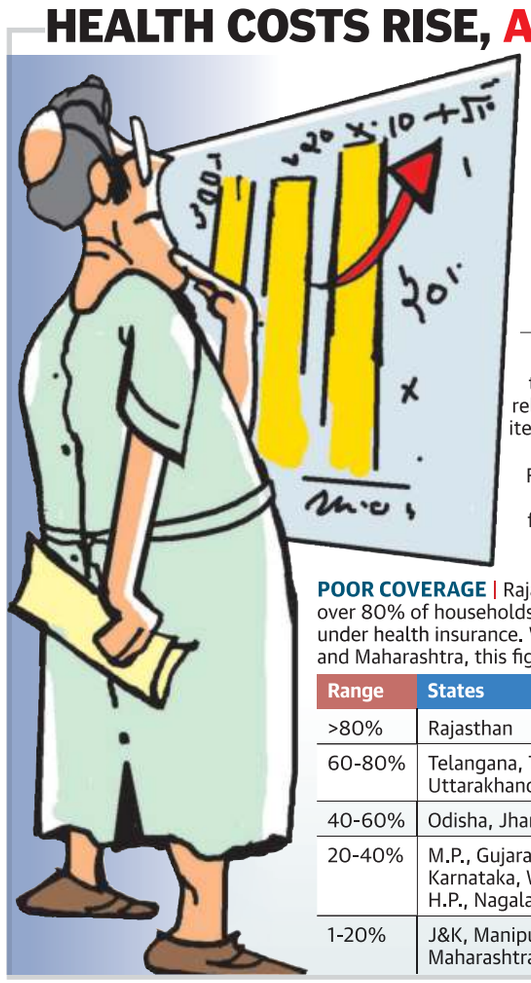
'Wages unpaid'

"Approximately ₹12,300 crore – ₹1,464 crore as wages and ₹10,900 crore as material – is yet to be paid, which is going to eat up the next year's Budget," said Debmalya Nandy of the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha.

"The government is using the Budget to kill the law," said Nikhil Dey, a founder of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan.

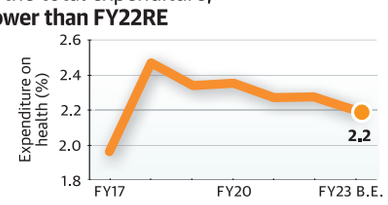
"This will hit the rural economy quite badly," said Himanshu, a rural economist at the Jawaharlal Nehru University. "MGNREGA had saved the economy during the lockdown. The hope now is that with the economy slowly limping back to normalcy, demand for MGNREGA work may not be as high," said D.K. Pant, chief economist at India Ratings. "However, rural wage growth is not keeping pace with inflation, and if the demand for work remains high, the government must be quick to provide supplementary funds," he added.

HEALTH COSTS RISE, ALLOCATION DIPS

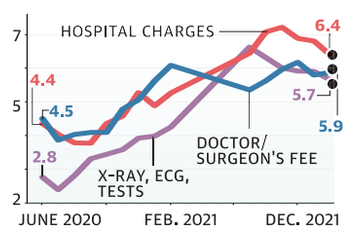


The budget outlay for health slightly decreased from the previous year. In FY23, allocation for health component stood at ₹86,606 crore or 2.2% of the total expenditure, **0.08 percentage points lower than FY22RE**

SHARE DROPS | The proportion of funds allocated for the health sector in the overall Budget has slightly declined in FY23 compared to FY22



RISING COSTS | The chart plots the **inflation rates** for select health related items. Prices of most medical items peaked in July 2021 on account of the second wave. For instance, inflation of X-ray, ECG and pathological tests accelerated from 2.8% in June 2020 to 5.7% in December 2021



POOR COVERAGE | Rajasthan was the only State where over 80% of households had at least one member covered under health insurance. While in major States such as U.P. and Maharashtra, this figure was less than 20%

Range	States
>80%	Rajasthan
60-80%	Telangana, T.N., A.P., Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Goa, Lakshadweep
40-60%	Odisha, Jharkhand, Kerala, Mizoram, Assam
20-40%	M.P., Gujarat, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Karnataka, W.B., Sikkim, Arunachal, Tripura, H.P., Nagaland and Puducherry
1-20%	J&K, Manipur, Bihar, Ladakh, U.P., Maharashtra, Andaman & Nicobar Islands

AVERAGE EXPENSES | The table lists the average expense incurred for **treatment of infections** in rural and urban hospitals. Expenses in public hospitals were higher in rural areas while for private hospitals, it was higher in urban areas. Due to poor insurance coverage, a high share of these expenses were paid out of patients' pockets

Sector	Public hospitals	Private hospitals
Rural	₹2,149	₹14,102
Urban	₹1,822	₹16,843

SOURCE: MOSPI, NFHS, NSSO, BUDGET DOCUMENTS

PM Awas Yojana gets an allocation of ₹48,000 cr.

It will be used to build 80 lakh houses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Union Budget 2022-23 has proposed an allocation of ₹48,000 crore for the government's Housing for All initiative.

"In 2022-23, 80 lakh houses will be completed for the identified eligible beneficiaries of PM Awas Yojana, both rural and urban. ₹48,000 crore is allocated for this purpose," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

She said the Central government will work with the State governments to reduce the time required for all land- and construction-related approvals, for promoting affordable housing for the middle class and economically weaker sections in urban areas.

"We shall also work with the financial sector regulators to expand access to capital along with the reduction in cost of intermediation," she said.

Commenting on the real estate and housing-related announcements, Anurag Mathur, CEO, Savills India, said, "Direct real estate measures were focused on providing infrastructure status to data centres and allocating ₹48,000 crore for 80 lakh houses under PMAY."

"However, there are long-term gains wherein the focus on creating a broad-based platform for manufacturing, research and development should create newer avenues for investment and development. In addition, there was significant focus on urban capacity building, digitisation of land records and a new proposed SEZ law that will enable States to partner in existing and new enclaves to enhance exports," he added.

POCKET | RAVIKANTH

"Buy me a computer and a goat, daddy. I will study at home, and the goat can go to school to graze on all the grass growing there!"

Digital varsity and e-content for schools planned

Experts, however, flag inequitable access to smart devices and two-year learning gap

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

The Centre proposes to set up a digital university, develop e-content for schools and expand its educational TV channel scheme from 12 to 200 channels, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said during her Budget speech on Tuesday.

However, education experts say this focus on digital learning is misplaced, given the inequitable access to digital devices and the fact that children now returning to classrooms are facing a two-year learning gap.

"Due to the pandemic-induced closure of schools, our children, particularly in rural areas, and those from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections, have lost almost two years of formal education. Mostly, these are children in government schools," the Finance Minister said.

"We recognise the need to impart supplementary teaching and to build a resilient mechanism for education delivery," she added.

She announced plans to expand the educational television programme to allow for supplementary education in regional languages; to set up 750 virtual labs for science and mathematics; to develop high-quality e-content in all spoken languages for delivery via internet, mobile phones, TV and radio through digital teachers; and to create a mechanism to equip teachers with digital tools. The digital university will be built on a networked hub and spoke model, and will have collaborations with the best institutions in the country.

"The immediate focus now, as children come back to physical classrooms, has to be on face-to-face teaching. Digital was essential during the lockdown, but we don't have enough evidence to say what benefits it adds in comparison to in-person teaching," said Rukmini Banerji, CEO of Pratham, an educational NGO that produces the Annual Status of Education Report.

Dr. Banerji suggested that the priority in the year ahead must be on foundational literacy and numeracy.

"One lesson the pandemic has taught us is that online teaching should not be confused with meaningful education. It may provide some engagement when schools are closed, but is pedagogically inferior to in-person learning, said Gurumurthy Kasinathan of the National Coalition on the Education Emergency.

Government subsidies to decline by 39%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The government's subsidies on food, fertilizers and petroleum are estimated to decline by 39% to ₹4,33,108 crore this fiscal and fall further by 27% to nearly ₹3.18 lakh crore in 2022-23.

In its Revised Budget estimate for the 2021-22 fiscal, the government has pegged total subsidies at ₹4,33,108 crore against the actual Budget Estimate of ₹7,07,707 crore in the previous financial year. Out of this, the food subsidy is estimated to decline to ₹2,86,469 crore in the current fiscal from ₹5,41,330 crore in 2020-21, while petroleum subsidy is estimated to fall to ₹6,517 crore from ₹38,455 crore in the said period.

However, fertilizer subsidy is estimated to increase to ₹1,40,122 crore during the ongoing fiscal from ₹1,27,922 crore in the previous fiscal.

During the current fiscal, the Centre has hiked the subsidy for non-urea fertilizers several times due to a sharp rise in global prices. The move was aimed at ensuring that farmers continue to get diammonium phosphate (DAP) and other nutrients under the nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) policy at a reasonable rate.

For the next fiscal, the government said total subsidies were estimated to decline further to ₹3,17,866 crore.

EARLY LEARNING

'New-generation anganwadis' on the cards

Better infrastructure and audio-visual aids promised for 2 lakh child care hubs

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Two lakh anganwadis across the country will be upgraded, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget speech on Tuesday.

In last year's Budget, the government had renamed a few schemes and categorised them under 'Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0'. Though the government is yet to share the details of the renamed scheme, the Finance Minister said it would include "new-generation anganwadis that have better infrastructure and audio-visual aids, powered by clean energy and providing improved environment for early child development".

Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 includes anganwadi services, Poshan Abhiyan, a scheme for adolescent girls, and a national crèche scheme.

The umbrella scheme has seen a negligible increase in Budgetary allocation of 0.7%. It has been allocated ₹20,263 crore for the next fiscal, compared to last year's allocation of ₹20,105 crore.

Marginally more: The scheme has been allocated ₹20,263 crore for the next fiscal, when compared to last year's allocation of ₹20,105 crore. ▪ FILE PHOTO

Govt. allocates ₹13,134.93 cr. to Social Justice Ministry

12% more in Budget Estimate for 2022-23 than 2021-22

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry was allocated 12% more in the Budget Estimate for 2022-2023 than 2021-2022, with a total of ₹13,134.93 crore having been allotted for its two departments.

Various schemes

The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, which handles welfare schemes for the Scheduled Castes, drug de-addiction programmes and schemes for senior citizens, among others, was allocated ₹11,922.51 crore, up from ₹10,517.62 crore in the 2021-2022 Budget Estimate and ₹10,180 crore in the Revised Estimate for 2021-2022.

The allocation for the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities saw a marginal increase from ₹1,171.77 crore in the 2021-2022 Budget Estimate to ₹1,212.42 crore in 2022-2023.

Cut in budget

Some Central schemes of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment saw a cut in their budget, including the Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for the Scheduled Castes, which had its allocation reduced from ₹450 crore in the Budget Estimate for 2021-2022 to ₹364 crore.

The allocation for SHREYAS for OBCs and Economically Backward Classes was also reduced from ₹130 crore in 2021-2022 to ₹80 crore.

In total, the allocation for Central sector schemes and projects saw a decrease from ₹1,395 crore in 2021-2022 to ₹969.50 crore in the 2022-2023 Budget Estimate.

Big on hopes, short on ideas

The Budget aims to focus on infrastructure and connectivity, but lacks growth-invigorating proposals

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's fourth successive budget, while commonsensical in its approach, is not exactly bubbling with new ideas. With the economy still in search of durable momentum that could help entrench the recovery from the last fiscal year's record contraction, Ms. Sitharaman has missed an opportunity to address the flagging consumer spending in the wake of erosion in real incomes and savings through a combination of tax breaks for the middle class and cash handouts for the poor. And even as the Minister acknowledges the role public capital expenditure could play in crowding-in private investment at a time when "private investments seem to require that support" and help to 'pump-prime' demand in the economy, the Budget outlay of ₹7.50 lakh-crore for the capital account marks just a 24.4% increase from the revised estimate of ₹6.03 lakh-crore for the current fiscal. To be sure, Ms. Sitharaman's speech highlights the PM GatiShakti, a "transformative approach for economic growth and sustainable development" that is to be powered by the 'seven engines' of roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways, and logistics infrastructure. While the broad sweep of the public infrastructure envisioned by the programme could potentially be truly transformative if it were to be executed as imagined, the Budget is largely short on details where it concerns the specifics and pencils in some figures only for the roads and railways components. The Budget lists a 'Master Plan for Expressways' that will be formulated in 2022-23 under the scheme and projects the addition of 25,000 kilometres of roads to the National Highways network. The talk of enabling seamless multimodal movement of goods and people and providing multimodal connectivity between mass urban transit systems and railway stations, however, all sound a familiar refrain from past speeches.

Spending outlays on several other key sectors including health care, rural development and the vital jobs and income providing national rural employment guarantee scheme have all shrunk as a percentage of overall expenditure in the Budget estimates for fiscal 2023 from the revised estimates for the current year, even if in some cases only marginally. That these sectors have been forced to bear the impact of the Government's keenness to broadly stick to a fiscal consolidation road map – with the Budget projecting a narrowing of the fiscal deficit to 6.4% of GDP in 2022-23, from a revised estimate for 6.9% – reflects on its priorities. Government spending on health care ought to have instead been significantly increased, with the lessons from the ongoing pandemic's first two waves serving to illuminate the need for a sizeable enlargement of the public health infrastructure. A source of some solace, though, is the announcement of a 'National Tele Mental Health Programme' to address mental health problems that have been exacerbated by the claustrophobic lockdowns and plethora of anxieties triggered by the pandemic.

In a nod to the ruling party's nationalist moorings and in line with the Government's push to increase self reliance or AtmaNirbharta, the Finance Minister has proposed a series of tariff and policy steps that could help bolster domestic manufacturing in the long run. A key policy element is a commitment to reduce import dependence in procurement for the country's defence forces. To that end the Minister has proposed earmarking 68% of the armed forces' capital procurement budget to domestic industry in 2022-23, a not insignificant increase from the current fiscal's 58% target. The tariff rationalisations, which cover a broad swathe of items ranging from electronics, gems and jewellery, chemicals, inputs used by MSME units and project and capital goods, could, however, have varying short-term impacts. Specifically, the move to phase out the concessional rates in capital goods and project imports gradually and apply a moderate tariff of 7.5% could in the short term hurt infrastructure projects and the setting up of new manufacturing capacity, some proposed exemptions for advanced machinery notwithstanding. The Minister has tried to address the raging debate over how to deal with virtual currencies by adopting a twin-track approach. On the one hand Ms. Sitharaman proposes to introduce in the coming fiscal year a Central Bank Digital Currency that she posits will impart a big boost to the digital economy and "lead to a more efficient and cheaper currency management system". The RBI-issued Digital Rupee would leverage blockchain and other related technologies. In parallel, she intends to tax income from the transfer of any virtual digital asset at the rate of 30%, with deduction allowed only for the cost of acquisition. It remains to be seen if the Government's efforts at bringing the mushrooming trade and investment in a multiplicity of virtual digital assets including cryptocurrencies under the tax net would have a salutary impact besides adding a revenue stream to the exchequer. The Minister's latest budget also skirts mention of the asset monetisation plan mentioned in the last Budget and shows a sharp decline in capital receipts from disinvestment. With just ₹65,000 crore budgeted from asset sale for fiscal 2023, as opposed to ₹78,000 crore as per the revised estimates for the current fiscal, the Minister has had to increase gross borrowings to ₹14.95 lakh-crore, a 24% increase from the current fiscal's budget estimate but a far sharper 43% jump from the revised estimate of ₹10.46 lakh-crore. The resource crunch manifest in the proposed higher debt issuance is ultimately bound to get more acute in the days ahead, given the Budget's lack of growth-invigorating proposals.

A takeaway is the good infrastructure push

On the other side, the programme of fiscal consolidation does need further strengthening

C. RANGARAJAN & D.K. SRIVASTAVA

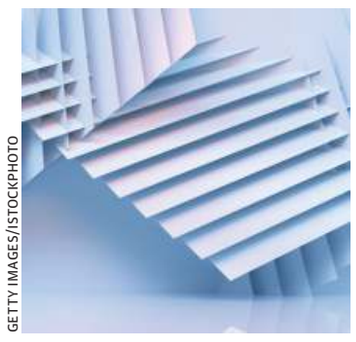
The clear emphasis in the Union Budget on expanding capital expenditure is a welcome directional change, particularly since 45.2% of fiscal deficit is being devoted to finance capital expenditure. This should help accelerate growth not only in the current year but also in the years to follow. However, the programme of fiscal consolidation needs further strengthening. As of now, it remains vague. A relook at the projected income growth for 2022-23 and its impact on revenue projections become necessary.

Perspectives on growth

The Centre's 2022-23 Budget provides a nominal GDP growth estimate of 11.1% for 2022-23. The Economic Survey, on the other hand, had provided a real GDP growth range of 8%-8.5% for this year. Taking the lower end of the real GDP growth estimate of 8%, an implicit price deflator (IPD)-based inflation of 2.9% will deliver nominal growth of 11.1%. The real GDP growth of 8% may, however, be considered somewhat optimistic since 2022-23 would be the first normal post-pandemic year where any significant base effects may not be available. In fact, at the end of 2021-22, real GDP in terms of magnitude at ₹147.5 lakh-crore is estimated to only marginally exceed the corresponding level at ₹145.1 lakh-crore in 2019-20 using the NSO data released on January 31, 2022. In fact, in the second half of 2021-22, when there were no base effects, real GDP growth was only 5.6% using the latest available quarterly data. A real GDP growth of 7%-7.5% in 2022-23 appears to be more realistic. However, this may not undo the Budget's nominal growth assumption of 11.1%. In fact, the IPD-based inflation may continue to be relatively high in 2022-23 since wholesale price index inflation rate is likely to remain high at least in the first half of 2022-23 as these are driven largely by the high prices of global crude and primary products. A more realistic assumption of IPD-based inflation of 5% and real GDP growth of 7.5% would have given a nominal GDP growth of nearly 13%.

Revenues and expenditures

According to 2021-22 (RE), the Centre's gross and net tax revenues are estimated to grow at 24.1% and 23.8%, respectively. This indicates achieving a buoyancy of 1.4 in each case. In 2022-23 (BE) however, the buoyancy has been brought down to 0.9. Again, given the expanded digitisation and formalisation of the economy and the tax assessees, the Centre's tax buoyancy may turn out to be higher than 0.9. If the under-assessment in both tax buoyancy and nominal GDP growth assumption are marginally corrected to



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say 1.1 and 13%, respectively, the Centre's gross tax revenues would have grown more realistically by 14.3%. This would have created fiscal space for either raising expenditure growth or accelerating the reduction in fiscal deficit. In fact, in 2022-23, total expenditure is budgeted to grow by only 4.6% in which revenue and capital expenditures are budgeted to grow by 0.9% and 24.5%, respectively. This spells a welcome structural change in government expenditure in favour of capital expenditures. To the extent that these capital expenditures pertain to non-defence expenditures particularly in expanding construction and other infrastructure sectors, these would be associated with relatively high output and employment multipliers.

While the structural shift towards infrastructure expansion is quite welcome, it would have provided greater transparency had a medium-term assessment of the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) been undertaken in the Budget indicating the sectors of deficient investment as compared to the original targets. The Budget provides for incentivising the States to expand their capital expenditures by permitting them a fiscal deficit limit of 4% of GDP; here, 0.5% points is marked for expanding power infrastructure. In addition, ₹1 lakh-crore has been allocated to States for capital expenditure in 2022-23 as 50-year interest-free loans, over and above the normal borrowings allowed to them.

On the side of revenue expenditures, there is a reduction in budgeted total subsidies to 1.2% of GDP in 2022-23 from 1.9% in 2021-22 (RE). This is also a welcome structural change provided the food, fertilizer and petroleum subsidy numbers are not revised upwards during the course of the year due to the pressure emanating from high global crude prices. The burden of interest payments as a percentage of GDP has gone up from 3.5% in 2021-22 to 3.6% in 2022-23. In fact, interest payments may also come under pressure because of the Government's increased gross and net borrowings from the market associated with high debt-GDP levels.

Debt and fiscal balance

According to estimates given in the Economic Survey for 2021-22, the general government debt relative to GDP is close to 90% at the end of 2021-22 and 2022-23. In the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy cum Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement attached to the Union Budget, the Centre's debt at the end of these two years is estimated to be 59.9% and 60.2%, respectively. Thus, in spite of the fiscal deficit to GDP ratio going down from 6.9% to 6.4%, the debt-GDP ratio is still slated to increase in 2022-23. This may be marginally adjusted downwards if the nominal GDP growth increases above what is assumed in the Budget. Such high debt-GDP levels pre-empt a substantive part of the Government's revenue budget. In fact, interest payments to revenue receipts ratio in 2021-22 and 2022-23 are 39.1% and 42.7%, respectively.

The reduction in fiscal deficit relative to GDP by a margin of 0.5% points between these two years is a welcome directional change. The Medium-Term Fiscal Policy Statement indicates reaching a level of 4.5% by 2025-26. This implies an average rate of reduction of 0.63% points per year in the next three years. It would have been best for the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy Statement to clearly spell out the fiscal deficit adjustment path over the course of the next three to five years. In fact, given the Government's high debt-GDP levels, the Centre's Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act requires it to be re-examined to recast the sustainable levels of debt and fiscal deficit and the adjustment path.

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A bold effort at public investment-led growth

But the Budget barely mentions the fall in share of private consumption in GDP and rising economic inequality

R. NAGARAJ

The Union Budget starts with a self-congratulatory announcement that India's domestic output (GDP) is likely to grow 9.2% this year (2021-22) over last year – the highest among the world's large economies. What is unsaid is that India's output contraction the previous year (2020-21) was among the worst in the world. Compared to the pre-pandemic year (2019-20), the current year's GDP will be marginally higher by 1.3%, as per the Economic Survey. If the adverse effect of the ongoing wave of the Omicron virus is factored in, the (estimated) modest rise in GDP may vanish. Thus, it is worth starting with the factually accurate picture that India lost two years of output expansion. In other words, per capita income today is lower than it was two years ago. Regarding sources of demand, the share of private consumption declined by three percentage points of GDP between FY2020 and FY2022. The Government stepped up its expenditure to mitigate the decline, but only modestly; hence, the marginal output expansion. In contrast, the United States boosted public spending by about 10% of GDP, and its output roared back!

This year's Budget seeks to boost public investment by 35.4% at current prices over last year to raise its share in GDP to 2.9% from 2.2% last year. With grant-in-aid for state investments, the Budget hopes to increase public investment share to over 4% of GDP. The Budget hopes to trigger a virtuous investment-led output and employment growth by arguing in favour of the "crowding-in" effect of public investment on private investment. The theory is sound and is a welcome change from the past policy stance. The crux will be to mobilise resources to finance the investment as the Budget seeks to reduce the fiscal deficit ratio, as per the schedule laid out in the last Budget. The critical question is whether additional tax and non-tax revenue (that is disinvestment proceeds) will be sufficient to finance the investment plan.

To refresh our memory, last year too, public investment was sought to be raised by about the same proportion (34.5%). I had written, "These figures certainly look impressive. The realisation of these investments would crucially depend on tax revenue realisations, disinvestment proceeds, sale of rail and road assets and the Government's ability to raise resources from the market, without raising interest rates for the private sector." (https://bit.ly/3AWzxKP) It is ditto and holds for this year as well. Indeed, public investment has picked up in the current fiscal, by barely 0.2% of GDP. With the threat of higher (imported) inflation (on account of rising international oil prices) and rising interest rates (on account of the US Federal Reserve's decision), meeting the ambitious investment target would be challenging, but it is worth attempting.

On the employment crisis

But the larger question is: how will it address the sharp decline (of

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three percentage points of GDP) in private consumption, which is likely to be caused by loss of employment? The derived demand for labour from an infrastructure boost may be limited, as the suggested projects are machinery intensive, not labour intensive. The Budget does not directly address the employment crisis caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown. The employment crisis would call for enhanced allocation for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and initiating a similar scheme for meeting urban unemployment. Instead, shockingly, the Government has slashed the allocation for MGNREGA by 25% over last year.

Industrial slowdown

The manufacturing sector's share in GDP has been stagnating at around 15% of GDP for quite a while. The annual industrial growth rate has sharply slowed down from 13.1% in 2015-16 to minus 7.2% in 2020-21. Perhaps a most telling example of the industrial slowdown is the fall in two-wheeler sales. As per news reports, it fell to 11.77 million units in 2021, below 11.90 million units sold in 2014. Expectedly, employment has contracted, most of which in the informal or unorganised sector. Lack of demand is the real problem, with low capacity utilisation. Indeed, the proposed public investment would create demand for capital and intermediate goods. But if a substantial share of such investment "leaks" out as imports, then the industrial output may not get the desired boost.

It is essential to appreciate that India has become an import-dependent economy, especially on China. Despite the clarion call for Atmanirbhar Bharat, India's imports have shot up. Research reports show that India's trade deficit with China has gone up from $57.4 billion in 2018 to $64.5 billion in 2021. The figure would be much higher by China's official trade account. And the deficit would be even higher if exports from China and Hong Kong to India are combined.

Premature on PLI scheme

India launched a production linked incentive scheme (PLI) for numerous technology-intensive products, starting with mobile phone assembly a few years ago to augment production and reduce imports. The Budget has mentioned the overwhelming response to the scheme. However, evidence on the number of such projects that have taken off, their investment and employment generation and rise in domestic content in such industrial units is too sparse. Hence, it is premature to claim the success of the PLI scheme.

India launched the "Make in India" initiative in 2014-15 to raise the manufacturing sector's share in GDP to 25% and create 100 million new jobs in the industry by 2022. However, the Government diagnosed the principal barrier to increasing manufacturing in India as excessive and dysfunctional regulation holding back the private initiative.

The solution, it was argued, was to improve India's rank in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EDB) index. India did splendidly to improve its rank – from 142 in 2014 to 63 by 2019-20. But the improved ranking failed the industrial sector miserably, with a steady slowdown, noted above. Last year, the World Bank scrapped the index as it was flawed globally and reportedly politically motivated (https://bit.ly/3HlaWSm).

Yet, the present Budget harps on improving the EDB index and reducing regulatory constraints on industry and infrastructure to boost growth. It appears shocking as the Government refuses to learn from past mistakes.

To sum up, the Budget for 2022-23 is a bold effort at public investment-led growth – quite similar to last year's. The widely discussed concerns of the unemployment crisis, fall in the share of private consumption in GDP, and rising economic inequality (caused by the pandemic and the lockdown) have been barely mentioned in the Budget. Instead, the Budget pins its hope on investment to boost employment, as derived demand for labour. Without fully committed funds for capital investment, the success of the ambitious effort remains questionable.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Hits and misses

Presented on the very threshold of major Assembly elections this month, Budget 2022-23 is significant in eschewing self-defeating populism that was *de jure*. It has also in a similar vein apparently put growth over fiscal deficit worries. But then of this, ₹1 lakh-crore that was to have been borrowed by the States is now a loan to them from the Centre's account – just a transfer of onus. The key must lie in the full and even utilisation of this kitty. Though funds available to MSMEs have gone up substantially in this Budget, the problem till now has been with the lower end of the sector that was unable to have access.
This underscores the need for the Government's administrative acumen to ensure the flow of funds more than its higher provisioning. The equity market is clearly very pleased with the Capex bonanza but the tax-payer has not been given relief. Given the palpable and extended inflation regime, the Government has chosen to shift much of its fiscal burden onto his shoulders.

R. NARAYANAN,
Navi Mumbai

■ The presentation is a mixed bag. In the backdrop of a discernible rise in tax revenues which have offered huge space for a hike in capital expenditure, the Finance Minister has announced a conspicuous jump of 35.4% in the outlay for capital expenditure to fund various infrastructure projects. It will augur well for our ailing economy that has been struggling to script a robust economic recovery following the havoc unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic. If the introduction of a tax regime for the taxation of digital assets can be considered a significant step in the mainstreaming of this asset class, the announcement of the launch of a digital currency by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is an indication that the Government will discourage private cryptocurrencies. The Budget's push for a transition toward a greener economy is laudable. While the Budget has underlined the need for government focus on long-term growth support, it lacks measures to boost employment generation on the ground.

M. JEYARAM,
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

■ The Budget has disappointed many. The salaried class continues to suffer without much relief or rebates. The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the salaried class in disarray, robbing them of their savings.

P.S.S. MURTHY,
Hyderabad

■ Apart from a digital rupee, there is hardly anything noteworthy for the middle class. I-T slabs remain unchanged. For many Indians, the cost of living remains high. The Finance Minister has only highlighted inessential plans. It is time Budgets brought a smile to the face of the middle class.

K.R. HARI KARTHIKEYAN,
Theni, Tamil Nadu

■ The budgetary allocation for the AYUSH Ministry has increased over four times in the last seven years. It was ₹691 crore in 2014-15; it is ₹3,050 crore in 2022-23. Yet, there has been no substantial research output from the institutes run by this Ministry. Ayurveda continues to be perceived in some influential quarters as pseudoscientific. This underscores the fact that knowledge-production first requires a robust intellectual resource. Where there is a dearth of this vital resource, increased funding would only result in the draining of public money.

DR. G..L KRISHNA,
Bengaluru

■ The Union Budget fails to address the basic issues that haunt the economy. All the support extended to start-ups, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the defence sector, and other sectors with an emphasis on 'Make in India' will have the least impact on the economy or employment in the absence of vibrant, market-driven growth. Reforms in e-education, communication and digitalisation of the economy will only aid corporates and the affluent.

A.G. RAJMOHAN,
Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

■ There does not seem to be much concern for the honest tax-paying citizen who files his returns on time. Instead, one has 'time' being given to taxpayers who submit incorrect returns.

KATURU DURGA PRASAD RAO,
Hyderabad

■ The criticism, especially from the Opposition, is on expected lines. Nobody appears to be bothered about the overall growth of the nation especially with the future in mind. The Budget does look ahead. And, the media needs to analyse the Budget in a positive way.

V.S. GANESHAN,
Bengaluru

Focus on accelerating growth with stability

The Budget is in the desired direction in the given circumstances, but its impact on the economy will depend on the efficiency of implementation

M. GOVINDA RAO, *former Director, NIPFP, and Member, Fourteenth Finance Commission, is now the Chief Economic Adviser, Brickwork Ratings. Views are personal*

With the country yet again grappling with another wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are concerns about faltering growth and increasing unemployment. With international commodity prices, particularly crude oil prices, continuing to rise and with advanced economies draining liquidity and increasing interest rates, there is limited scope for monetary policy and heavy lifting of the economy, for growth acceleration must come from fiscal policy. It is in this context that the focus fell on the Budget to address the task of accelerating growth and creating new employment opportunities and the task of fiscal consolidation became secondary.

Accelerate growth, create jobs

The Budget for 2022-23 presented by the Union Finance Minister does not disappoint on this count. At 2.9% of GDP, the budgeted capital expenditure for 2022-23 is higher than the revised estimate for the previous year by 24.5% even as the overall growth of expenditure is just 4.6%. An increase of almost ₹1 lakh crore is for assisting the States to catalyse the development of infrastructure by giving them interest-free loans over and above the regular loans to be given according to Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management limits. Most of this is for developing multi-modal transportation networks. In addition, about ₹60,000 crore has been budgeted for providing tap water for 3.8 crore households and another ₹48,000 crore for affordable housing. In addition to reviving the economy, many of these projects are employment-intensive and will help in reducing unemployment.

The increase in capital expenditure is to be accomplished even as the fiscal deficit is budgeted to be reduced from 6.9% in the current year to 6.4% in 2022-23. Of course, this is higher than the limit of 5.5% recommended by the 15th Finance Commission under a slow recovery scenario, but the Finance Minister in her Budget speech stated that the rate of consolidation will be faster in the coming years to reach a level below 4.5% by 2025-26. In fact, revenue deficit and primary deficit numbers are also budgeted to decline in the next year.

How realistic are these estimates? On the revenue side, the estimates look conservative. Total revenue receipts are estimated to increase by just 6% over the revised estimate and this is partly due to the high base figures as the revised estimate for 2021-22 is higher than the Budget estimate by 16.4%. On non-tax revenues, a sharp decline of 14% is budgeted mainly due to lower estimates of dividends from public sector enterprises and the Reserve Bank of India. On disinvestment proceeds, as against the budgeted ₹1.75 lakh crore in 2021-22, the revised estimate is placed at ₹78,000 crore and for the next year, it is budgeted at ₹65,000 crore. The critical question is whether the government will be able to contain the revenue expenditure growth next year at the budgeted level of less than 1%. In particular, the total subsidy bill for 2022-23 is budgeted lower by ₹1.15 lakh crore from the revised estimate of 2021-22 which includes a lower food subsidy of about ₹79,638 crore and fertilizer subsidy of ₹34,900 crore.

An important concern is the increasing protectionist trend and continued differentiation in import duties. Minute rate differences and taxing inputs at lower rates increase the effective rate of protection, adversely impact competitiveness and give rise to special interest groups lobbying for higher import duties.

Tax proposals

On tax proposals, the most notable measure is the decision to levy tax on transactions in virtual digital assets in the hands of the recipient with 1% deducted at the source. Equally important measures are extension of tax incentives for start-ups by one year and extension of the commencement date for concessional tax for new entities by one year up to March 31, 2024, due to the delay in completion of the projects caused by the pandemic. On the personal income tax front, although there was a clamour for increasing the exemption limit, deductible allowances and rate brackets, the Finance Minister decided to maintain the status quo. Perhaps, in the interest of simplification, she should have rationalised the tax system by getting rid of the options of rate structure with and without incentives introduced last year and keeping only the one without the incentives with a lower rate and reducing the number of rate brackets to four including the exemption limit. There is a proposal to levy surcharge on long-terms capital gains uniformly at 15% for all types of capital assets. The Budget has also introduced a number of measures to reduce compliance burden, encourage voluntary compliance, reduce litigation, and improve the ease of doing business.

However, an important concern is the increasing protectionist trend and continued differentiation in import duties. Minute rate differences and taxing inputs at lower rates increase the effective rate of protection, adversely impact competitiveness and give rise to special interest groups lobbying for higher import duties. While the Production-Linked Incentive seems to be helping some of the newer industries and is helpful in increasing exports, it is necessary to erect a competitive wall rather than relying on scaffolding through incentives.

On the expenditure side, besides a significant increase proposed on capital expenditures, the PIL schemes for 14 sectors are expected to improve the competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), help in increasing exports and create 60 lakh new jobs. Hopefully, the excessive protection and reservation given to MSMEs will not prevent them from becoming bigger and more competitive to take advantage of the scale economy. There are proposals to spend ₹2.37 lakh crore direct payment of MSP value to farmers' accounts as well as ₹1,400 crore in 2022-23 on the Ken-Betwa river-linking project, create 100 new cargo terminals in the next three years, and during the year, build 25,000 km of highways.

In the right direction

By and large, the Budget is in the desired direction in the given circumstances. However, it must be noted that despite the hype regarding the Union Budget, almost 60% of the actual spending is at the State level. Besides, the impact of the Budget on the economy will depend on the efficiency with which the various proposals are implemented. Let us hope we will break the jinx of poor implementation.

A betrayal of the social sector when it needs help

The government seems to have prioritised meeting its fiscal deficit targets rather than using this opportunity to signal a path of employment-centred and inclusive growth

DIPA SINHA *is faculty at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi*

India continues to rank poorly in various global indices that reflect the quality of life, human capital or human development in the country, such as the Human Development Index (rank 131 out of 189 countries) and the Global Hunger Index (rank 101 out of 116 countries). It is well documented that the pandemic over the last two years has had a severe impact on the health, education and food security of the poor and informal sector workers. A number of recent reports, including the Oxfam's 'Inequality Kills' report and the ICE360 survey, well establish that the recovery in economic growth in India is K-shaped, meaning that the incomes of the poorer sections of the society are decreasing, while those of the richer sections are increasing. As many have argued, while this trend has been exacerbated by the pandemic, the country has been experiencing increasing inequality over the last couple of decades. Further, the period after 2016 has also seen stagnant real wages and increasing unemployment.

A conservative view

In this context, it was expected that the current Budget would see an expansion in government spending on the social sector. Greater spending on the social sector can contribute to improvements in human development outcomes, provide a cushion to people during the current economic crisis and also contribute to boosting private consumption demand which in turn can have a positive multiplier effect on the economy. However, despite the current situation of a demand crisis, the Budget has taken a conservative view and seems to have prioritised meeting its fiscal deficit targets rather than using this opportunity to signal a path of employment-centred and inclusive growth.

A complete disconnect

While it acknowledged that learning among children has been affected because of prolonged periods of school closures, the government announced that it will expand its 'one class, one TV channel' scheme instead of announcing enhanced allocations for schools so that they can reopen with vigour. This reveals a complete disconnect with the situation on the ground where school infrastructure needs upgradation, teacher vacancies need to be filled and efforts need to be made to bring back children who have dropped out of school and also have huge learning losses to catch up on.

This is also reflected in the lower spending in the last two years as seen in the revised estimates (RE). The budget for school education at ₹63,449 crore is a slight improvement over last year's ₹54,873 crore (2021-22 budget estimates, BE) and a mere increase of 6% in nominal terms compared to 2020-21 BE of ₹59,845 crore. After a grand announcement rechristening the school mid-day meal scheme as Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman, simply called PM Poshan, the allocation for the scheme has reduced from ₹11,500 crore last year to ₹10,233 crore this year.

The resources allocated for crucial government schemes in the fields of health, education, nutrition, and social protection have remained stagnant or show negligent increase. In fact, the budgets for these schemes have been declining in real terms since 2015.

In the midst of a pandemic, and despite repeated statements about strengthening the public health system, the overall budget for the Department of Health and Family Welfare at ₹83,000 crore has gone up by only 16% over the BE for 2021-22 and by less than ₹1,000 crore compared to the RE for 2021-22, which is ₹82,921 crore. However, by including water and sanitation in the budget for health, there is an increase being shown in health spending as a proportion of GDP. While spending on the drinking water mission is also extremely important, for the sake of consistency it cannot be clubbed with the health budget. Also, even though the budget for the Jal Jeevan Mission has increased from ₹50,000 crore to ₹60,000 crore, only 44% of the allocated funds to the Department of Water and Sanitation for 2021-22 has been spent as on end December 2021.

Through the pandemic period, the Public Distribution System has been a lifeline for many, although only 60% of the population are covered by ration cards currently under the National Food Security Act. Those who were eligible benefited from the additional free foodgrains that they have been given under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY). However, the food subsidy (BE) for 2022-23 at ₹2.06 lakh crore is only enough to cover the regular NFSA entitlements. The indication is that there is no plan to extend the PMGKAY. The food subsidy RE for 2021-22 is ₹2.86 lakh crore.

Budgets for important schemes such as Saksham Anganwadi, maternity entitlements and social security pensions are around the same as the allocations for last year. The allocation for MGNREGA at ₹73,000 crore also does not reflect the increased demand for work or the the pending wages of ₹21,000 crore.

Continued negligence

On the whole, in the Budget for 2022-23, the social sector has once again been betrayed while this is perhaps a time when it needs the most support. As seen above, the resources allocated for crucial government schemes in the fields of health, education, nutrition, and social protection have remained stagnant or show negligent increase. In fact, the budgets for these schemes have been declining in real terms since 2015. India already starts off from a weak position of having very low spending in the critical areas of social protection, education and health. For instance, the World Social Protection Report 2020-22, brought out by the International Labour Organization, shows that the spending on social protection (excluding health) in India is 1.4% of the GDP, while the average for low-middle income countries is 2.5%. Budgets on health and education have also been low, much below the desirable levels of 3% and 6% of the GDP. This continued negligence does not bode well for inclusive development in India.

A Budget that sends mixed signals on health

While the Budget promotes social determinants of health, there is less than anticipated increase for health programmes

K. SRINATH REDDY *is President, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI)*

SAKTHIVEL SELVARAJ *is Director, Health Economics Unit, PHFI*

Though the Finance Minister referred to the Omicron variant of COVID-19 and the need to maintain caution, the clear signal that emerged from the Budget is that COVID-19 is no longer perceived to be a major threat and that the post-COVID-19 phase of development must focus on capital-intensive infrastructure projects. The commitment to primary healthcare that was strongly articulated in the Budget of 2021 was much more muted this year.

Definition of health

The Finance Minister expanded the conventional definition of health in her presentation of the Budget of 2021, when she included water, sanitation, nutrition and air pollution control. The Economic Survey, released a day before this year's Budget, reported that expenditure on health reached 2.1% of GDP with an annual increment of 0.4% in the last two years. This suggests that we are on track to reach the government's target of 2.5% by 2025. Recent increases represent both the redefined accounting categories and the COVID-19-related attention to augmented health services. Whether the health sector by itself will display a budgetary momentum of increased allocations was a feature of interest before the Finance Minister rose to present this year.

Supply of tap water to 38 million more homes will be welcome and so will the provision of housing under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and initiatives for pollution control which include expansion of zero emission public transport services, incentives to reduce crop stubble burning and battery-swapping policy. These along with expansion of digital classroom support to schools across the country will promote the social determinants of health.

Need for higher investment

For the health programmes themselves, there has been less than anticipated increase. The National Health Mission received a 7.4% increase over the money expended last year. With a large need to strengthen both rural and urban primary care, this is disappointing. There is a need to galvanise the Urban Health Mission which has moved slowly thus far. A number of rural and urban Health and Wellness Centres need to be established and activated with staff, equipment and supplies. While some of it will come from the infrastructure mission, the requirement of trained human resources calls for higher investment.

The allocation for the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) stays unchanged at ₹6,412 crore. The expenditure last year was ₹3,199 crore. This represents a 100% increase. The scheme fell short of utilising its allocated budget for the past two years because of reduction in non-COVID-19 care under its payments and also because of the limited number of accredited hospitals in Tier-2 and Tier-3 urban locations and rural areas. It does not also cover the cost of outpatient care and medicines outside a hospital setting. Unless these limitations are overcome, mainly private sector hospitals in well-developed urban locations will be able to utilise it.

Vaccines for COVID-19 received an allocation of ₹5,000 crore as against ₹39,000 crore the previous year. This suggests that the government believes that all the eligible persons who need to be vaccinated through public funding will receive the vaccines in the current financial year and that there would be no major threat which would call for large-scale investments in new vaccine procurement.

The Health Infrastructure Mission has got an allocation of ₹5,156 crore. Since its launch in October last year, it has spent ₹900 crore. Since the mission has projected an expenditure of ₹64,120 crore over six years, the allocation seems to fall short of ambition. Perhaps, next year's Budget will show catch-up growth. The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, which focuses on expansion of tertiary care facilities, has been allocated a 35.1% increase, keeping in with the promise of an AIIMS in every State and upgrading of several medical college hospitals.

AYUSH has been given a 14.5% increase, while the Department of Health Research sees an increase of only 3.9%. This is surprising, given the impetus given to continuing need for COVID-19 research and development of new vaccines. There is also a need for health systems and implementation research to support effective delivery of national health programmes that span communicable diseases, maternal and child health, nutrition, non-communicable diseases and mental health. Development and evaluation of appropriate and affordable health technologies too would be in keeping with the spirit of Atmanirbhar.

The Digital Health Mission has an allocation of ₹200 crore. Given the potential and promised services under that mission, the allocation appears sub-optimal. However, there is a welcome initiative to establish 23 Telehealth centres to provide support for mental health services across the country. The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) at Bengaluru will coordinate these services. The International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) in that city will provide technical support. While this is a much-needed initiative, mental health services must extend even to those who are not digitally enabled. That requires strengthened primary care services everywhere.

Vaccines for COVID-19 received an allocation of ₹5,000 crore as against ₹39,000 crore the previous year. This suggests that the government believes that all the eligible persons who need to be vaccinated through public funding will receive the vaccines in the current financial year and that there would be no major threat which would call for large-scale investments in new vaccine procurement. Since the government has granted market licensing to Covishield and Covaxin, the policy indicates that the private sector would be the principal source for providing additional vaccines to those who may seek it. If there is a resurgence of COVID-19 due to a new threatening variant, a special package may be needed. At present, that does not appear to be highly probable.

To end on an appreciative note, the Finance Minister deserves plaudits for providing tax relief to differently abled persons, whose parents or guardians have crossed the age of 60 years. This takes into account the fact that employment and the earning capacity of the person who provides such support usually diminishes at that age.

68% of defence capital procurement budget has been allocated towards local procurement. It is in line with the 'Vocal for Local' push and it will certainly boost the domestic defence industries
Rajnath Singh
Defence Minister

This is a Budget which fulfils the vision of AatmaNirbhar Bharat. It is holistic and progressive, and it pushes the economy on the path to be the biggest economy in the world
Yogi Adityanath
U.P. Chief Minister

Budget has zero for common people, who are getting crushed by unemployment & inflation. Government is lost in big words signifying nothing — a Pegusus spin budget
Mamata Banerjee
West Bengal Chief Minister

MSP was not even mentioned in the Finance Minister's speech. Budget 2022 turned out to be a bag of disasters & deceptions. That's how the Modi government intends to double farmers' income?
D. Raja
CPI general secretary

People had high expectations from the Budget during the corona period. There is nothing in the Budget for the general public. Nothing to reduce price rise
Arvind Kejriwal
Delhi Chief Minister

It is disappointing, says Kerala Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday is "disappointing" and ill-equipped to deal with the crisis engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic, Kerala Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal has said.

The expectation that the Budget would strengthen the public sector and help generate more employment in the country has not materialised, Mr. Balagopal said, responding to the Budget announcements.

On the whole, the Budget is disappointing for Kerala, he said. The State's demands, including sector-specific packages for overcoming the pandemic-induced crisis, the SilverLine semi-high-speed rail project and a medical institute modelled on AIIMS, have failed to find any mention, Mr. Balagopal said.

K.N. Balagopal

GST compensation

He expressed dismay that the compensation period of Goods and Services Tax (GST) has not been extended by five more years as demanded by the States. The compensation period ends on June 30, and Kerala alone stands to lose between ₹10,000 crore and ₹12,000 crore annually, Mr. Balagopal said.

The borrowing limit of the States has effectively been reduced to 3.5% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). While 4% is permitted in the 2022-23 financial year, of this 0.5% is tied to power sector reforms. Mr. Balagopal termed inadequate the Budget allocation of ₹1 lakh crore to assist the States in catalysing overall investments in the economy. A State like Kerala would get roughly ₹2,000 crore to ₹3,000 crore from it, he said, urging the Centre to spend more.

On the decision to reduce the 18.5% alternate minimum tax on cooperative societies to 15%, the same rate as companies, Mr. Balagopal pointed out that States with robust cooperative sectors, including Kerala, vehemently oppose taxation on the cooperative sector, given the nature of the public involvement in it.

The Budget has lesser allocations for MSP on paddy and wheat this year compared to previous years, he said, on the ₹2.37 lakh crore allocation. Last year, the actual spending was to the tune of ₹2.48 lakh crore, he said. Likewise, the allocation for vaccines in 2022-23 also is lower compared to the current year, he said. He also objected to the Budget announcement related to the 'One-Nation One-Registration Software' for 'anywhere registration' of deeds and documents, saying that it encroaches upon a State subject.

PM terms Budget 'people friendly, progressive'

Exercise addresses long term economic growth and relief for poor, says Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday termed the Union Budget as being a "people friendly and progressive Budget" and one that brings in new hopes and opportunities for the people. In a televised statement after the presentation in Parliament, he complimented Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and said the Budget addressed both long term economic growth goals and relief for the poor.

"It strengthens the economy; it's full of more infrastructure, more investment, more growth and more jobs. There is also a new provision of green jobs; Budget ensures a bright future for youth," Mr. Modi added.

The Prime Minister pointed out that allocations in the Budget for drinking water and for homes under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana were aimed at helping the poor. "Every poor person should have a *pucca* house, water available in taps, availability of toilets and gas facility, and all these have been given special attention," he said.

Showing support: Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the presentation of the Union Budget in the Lok Sabha. ▪PTI

Apart from welfare schemes for the poor, connectivity has also been given full importance, he said. For the first time in the country, he added, the Parvatmala scheme has been launched for areas such as Himachal, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Northeast to enhance connectivity.

Farmers' welfare

"This scheme will create a modern system of transportation on the mountains," he said.

Mr. Modi said an important step has been taken for the "welfare of the farmers along with the faith of the people of India – the cleaning of Ganga."

"In Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, along with the Ganges, natural farming, to bring down the use of harmful chemicals on the banks of the Ganga, will also be encouraged," he said.

The Budget, he said, has brought new confidence to usher in development in the midst of one the most terrible calamities in 100 years, a reference to the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Most capitalist speech ever read by an FM'

Rahul Gandhi calls it a 'zero sum Budget'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget speech was "the most capitalist speech ever read by a Finance Minister" and did "nothing" to deal with challenges like unemployment, loss of household incomes, per capita expenditure and inflation, said former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Tuesday.

Parliament may vote the Budget because of the ruling party's "brute majority" in the Lok Sabha but the "people will reject this capitalist Budget", said Mr. Chidambaram, while articulating the Congress party's stance at a press conference. Chief spokesperson of the Congress Randeep Singh Surjewala was also present at the press meet.

The former Finance Minister also claimed that the BJP is going to the Assembly elections to five States not on the basis of performance but on the calculation of "dividing the society into Hindus and non-Hindus and capture the bulk of the Hindu votes".

Hitting out: Congress leaders P. Chidambaram and Randeep Surjewala addressing the media. ▪SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Separately, in a tweet, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi described the Budget as a "zero sum Budget". "M0di G0vernment's Zer0 Sum Budget! Nothing for Salaried class, Middle class, The poor & deprived, Youth, Farmers, MSMEs (sic)," tweeted Mr. Gandhi. He placed zero in place of 'o' in the message to stress his point.

Offering a detailed response to the Budget speech, Mr. Chidambaram listed out the challenges that needed to be tackled: high rate of unemployment and job losses, closure of approximately 6 million MSMEs, loss of incomes for 84% households in the last two years, an estimated 4.6 crore people being pushed into abject poverty, loss of learning for students in rural India, malnutrition and India's slide in the Global Hunger Index.

He claimed the cumulative wealth of 142 people in the country has increased from ₹23 lakh crore to ₹53 lakh crore in the last two years.

"After the Budget was presented this morning, we asked ourselves what has the Budget done to address any of these grave challenges. The blunt answer is nothing," the former Finance Minister said.

"The Finance Minister has mastered the jargon of capitalist economics... The word poor occurs twice in paragraph 6, and we thank the Finance Minister for remembering that there are poor people in this country," he added.

The veteran Congress leader said he was astonished that Ms. Sitharaman planned for the next 25 years and referred to it as "Amrit Kaal", but didn't pay any attention to the present needs. He said there was not a word about any cash assistance for those who had been pushed to extreme poverty or lost their jobs, nothing about creating jobs for those whose education stopped at some stage at the school level, no revival plans for MSMEs.

A zero for common man, says Mamata

'No section of society will benefit'

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

No section of society has benefited from the Union Budget 2022, the Trinamool Congress leadership said on Tuesday, pointing out that no new social protection schemes, including for the families of those who died in the COVID-19 and salaried middle class, were announced.

Former West Bengal Finance Minister and Principal Chief Adviser to Chief Minister, Amit Mitra, said the Budget appeared to be a "misplaced dream of one or two people running the country".

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said there was nothing for common people in the Budget.

"Budget has zero for common people, who are getting crushed by unemployment & inflation. Govt is lost in big words signifying nothing – a Pegasus spin budget," Ms. Banerjee said on Twitter.

'No scope for jobs'

Speaking to journalists, Dr. Mitra said the Budget had no connection with the reality on the ground. It had nothing for employment generation for the 1.2 crore people who lost their jobs during the pandemic and for senior citizens.

"There is no direction of financial growth in this Budget. There is nothing for the poor and middle class. The income tax structure remains unchanged. The Centre's Budget is either a hoax or a lack of goodwill," Dr. Mitra said.

Dr. Mitra said the Budget should have worked on demand stimulation by putting more money in the hands of people.

No concern for the poor: Telangana CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Telangana Rashtra Samiti president and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government for speaking "blatant lies" in the presentation of the Budget for 2022-23 in Parliament on Tuesday. It was the misfortune of the country to have such a "short sighted" person as Prime Minister and the Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman was "atrocious" in that it had no concern for the poor and marginal sections.

Dalits and tribes constitute around 40 crore population in the country whereas the government had allocated ₹12,800 crore for these sections in the Budget. In comparison, the Telangana government had earmarked ₹33,611 crore for the welfare of these sections despite being a small State. "The allocation reflects the commitment of the BJP towards these sections. These are not cooked up figures. I am quoting hard facts from the Budget documents," he said.

K. Chandrasekhar Rao

He recalled how over 750 farmers died in the course of the year-long agitation they launched against the three farm laws and the Prime Minister himself tendered apologies in this regard. "But no specific allocation has been made for them in the Budget," he said. The government had in fact imposed significant cuts in the subsidies provided to urea and other inputs while failing to announce packages to revive the sector.

"People trusted Mr. Modi, but the failures of his eight-year rule stand exposed in the form of the Budget presented in Parliament today," he said.

There was no mention of strengthening the health infrastructure at a time when the country was hit by waves of COVID-19 pandemic and the government had in fact imposed cuts in the allocations to all the key sectors, he said.

IB sees highest allocation in 7 years

Funds provided for Census, NPR

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

In the Union Budget 2022-23, the Intelligence Bureau has received one of its highest allocation of ₹3,168 crore in the past seven years. This is an increase of 125% since 2016-17 when it was assigned ₹1,410 crore.

In 2021-22, IB was allocated ₹2,839.24 crore and in 2020-21, the amount stood at ₹2,575.25 crore.

Though Census 2021, a decennial exercise has been indefinitely delayed on the grounds of COVID-19 pandemic, the Registrar General of India (RGI) has been allocated ₹3,676 crore in the financial year 2022-23. During the last fiscal, the total Budget allocation for RGI to conduct the Census and update the National Population Register (NPR) stood at ₹3,768 crore. But the actual allocation was revised to ₹519.80 crore in 2021-22 as the first-ever digital Census was not conducted.

The National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), which is headed by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval has been allocated ₹232.71 crore, against ₹228.72 crore allocated last year.

All post offices to come under core banking

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

To ensure Anytime – Anywhere Post Office Savings, the government on Tuesday said that in 2022, 100% of 1.5 lakh post offices would come under the core banking system enabling financial inclusion and access to accounts through net banking, mobile banking, ATMs, and also provide online transfer of funds between post office accounts and bank accounts. "This will be helpful, especially for farmers and senior citizens," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

Big push to improve connectivity to villages along China border

Neighbouring country has set up 'model villages' near LAC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In a major push to develop and improve connectivity in border areas, villages along the northern border will see development under the new Vibrant Villages Programme, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Tuesday.

The move comes in the backdrop of China setting up "model villages" close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"Border villages with sparse population, limited connectivity and infrastructure often get left out from the development gains. Such villages on the northern border will be covered under the new Vibrant Villages Programme," Ms. Sitharaman said in her Budget speech. "The activities will include construction of village infrastructure, housing, tourist centres, road connectivity, provisioning of decentralised renewable energy, direct to home access for Doordarshan and educational channels, and support for livelihood generation."

Additional funding for these activities would be provided and existing schemes converged, she stated. "We will define their outcomes and monitor them on a constant basis," she stated.

The 2021 annual report of the U.S. Department of Defence to the U.S. Congress on military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China had noted: "Sometime in 2020, the PRC built a large 100-home civilian village inside disputed territory between the PRC's Tibet Autonomous Region and India's Arunachal Pradesh State in the eastern sector of the LAC."

An address that kept electoral references at bay

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's speech was without usual flourishes that elicit thumping from treasury benches

All smiles: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with the Budget papers in New Delhi on Tuesday. ▪R.V. MOORTHY

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As Budget speeches go, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's address on Tuesday had almost no reference to any poll-bound States and appeared to be a broad strokes oration on the government's economic interventions without populist announcements.

Delivered from a lectern in the second row of the treasury benches, unusual for Finance Ministers who are frontbenchers even on non-Budget days, the speech was without the usual flourishes that elicit thumping from the treasury benches, the special allocations, some references to particular States.

This perhaps prompted BJP chief whip in the Lok Sabha Rakesh Singh to make a quick-round of the treasury benches, especially the backbenchers to rouse the rank and file. Most took a cue from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who enthusiastically thumped the desk in appreciation over many of the announcements.

This was a speech where the word "tax" was mentioned 46 times, "Digital/Online" 28 times, "States" and "manufacturing" 20 times, "growth" 19 times, and "investment" 18 times. These words were the top mentions, a true mirror of the Budget speech.

High degree of decorum

While there were some comments made through the speech, especially by Trinamool Congress's Saugata Roy and DMK's Dayanidhi Maran, it was a speech that otherwise was heard out with a high degree of decorum in the Lok Sabha.

Perhaps to make up the political/electoral quotient that was lacking in the speech, the Prime Minister, unusually, took a round of the Opposition benches after the Lok Sabha adjourned, at the conclusion of the Budget speech. He greeted Opposition members (Congress MP Rahul Gandhi had left the House by then) and was especially warm towards Trinamool Congress's Sudeip Bandopadhyaya and Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) leader N.K. Premachandran. He also enquired about the health of National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah.

The meet and greet was the last act of Tuesday's Budget day in the Lower House, a rare day for parliamentary passion play, in the midst of hard-fought Assembly elections.

IN BRIEF

HC orders transfer of Dileep's mobile phones

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday ordered the High Court Registrar General to forthwith transfer the mobile phones produced by actor Dileep and other accused in the conspiracy case to the First Class Judicial Magistrate Court, Aluva. The order was passed when the anticipatory bail petitions filed by Dileep came up for hearing.

11th PRC: HC orders govt. not to recover allowances

VIJAYAWADA

A Division Bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court led by Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra directed the State government to file a counter affidavit with regard to the 11th Pay Revision Commission (PRC) recommendations within three weeks, and ordered that there be no recovery from the allowances of any employee during the course of the implementation of the G.O. Ms. No.1, through which the Revised Pay Scales 2022 (RPS) were notified on January 17.

Policeman shot at, injured in Shopian

SRINAGAR

Suspected militants shot at and injured a policeman in south Kashmir's Shopian on Tuesday. "Around 5:45 p.m., assistant sub-inspector Shabir Ahmad was shot at by terrorists as he was coming back from mosque after prayers in his native place Amishijipora area of Shopian," a J&K police spokesman said. The policeman received gunshot injuries in the attack and was immediately evacuated to nearby hospital. "The condition of the official is stable," the police said.

Pegasus row: govt. has drawn a line between denial, *sub judice*

Centre had rubbished the claims of snooping as 'sensationalism' in court

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Centre has walked a fine line in the Supreme Court on the Pegasus issue. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, in a six-page affidavit in August last year, makes do with a sweeping denial on the snooping allegations. But the lone affidavit in the case does not address the basic issue whether India had bought Pegasus in the first place.

"I hereby unequivocally deny any and all of the allegations made against the Respondents in the captioned petition and other connected petitions. A bare perusal makes it clear that the same are based on conjectures and surmises or on other unsubstantiated media reports or incomplete or uncorroborated material," the Ministry affidavit had swept aside the Pegasus allegations.

Prying eyes: Youth Congress activists during a protest over Pegasus issue in New Delhi. ▪ FILE PHOTO

Now, months later, the government has countered Opposition demands for a debate on the Pegasus issue during the Budget session by saying the case is *sub judice*. The Pegasus row has returned to the spotlight following a report in *The New York Times* that India bought the software as part of a $2 billion deal with Israel in 2017. In the court, the government had refused to file a "detailed affidavit". It had raised the spectre of national security. In fact, the government had wanted to form its own "committee of experts" to "go into all aspects of the issue".

In the court, the government had rubbished the claims of snooping as "sensationalism". It had referred to the Information Technology Minister's statement in the Parliament of how the NSO Group, which owns the technology, had said that "most of its clients are Western countries".

Hear Amazon-Future group case afresh, SC tells Delhi HC

Conflict revolves on question of enforceability of an award

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday remanded to the Delhi High Court the Amazon-Future group dispute, asking it to hear the case afresh on merits, uninfluenced by "any observations" made in orders passed in 2021.

The dispute revolves on question of enforceability of an award passed by a Singapore-based Emergency Arbitrator (EA) which had restrained Future from going ahead with the ₹24,731 crore merger deal with Reliance Retail.

A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana set aside three orders of the Delhi High Court passed last year, on February 2, March 18 and October 29, refusing to stay the EA's award.

A three-judge Bench set aside three orders of the Delhi HC passed last year.

Two appeals

The Bench, on January 11, while reserving the case for orders, had orally indicated that it intended to return the case to the High Court. Both FCPL (Future Coupons Private Ltd.) and FRL (Future Retail Ltd.) had moved the Supreme Court.

One set of appeals challenged the March 18 order of the Delhi High Court which, besides restraining FRL from going ahead with its deal with Reliance Retail, had imposed costs of ₹20 lakh on the Future group and ordered attachment of their properties. The Supreme Court's decision on Tuesday to set aside the High Court orders comes as a relief to the Future group.

The second set of appeals had been filed against a High Court order declining to stay an arbitration tribunal decision refusing to interfere with the EA award.

6 dead in abandoned coal mines in Dhanbad

Three women and a girl among the deceased; illegal quarrying was on when mines collapsed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

At least six persons died since Monday and several are feared trapped inside three abandoned coal mines in Dhanbad, Jharkhand. Rescue operations are under way. The three abandoned coal mines are the Gopinathpur Open Cast Project (OCP) of Eastern Coalfield Ltd. (ECL) in the Nirsa police station limits, Kapasara also of ECL and Chach Victoria of Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (BCCL). They collapsed as mining was being done illegally.

"Among those whose bodies have been found so far are three women and a girl, from Gopinathpur OCP of ECL. Rescue operations by local police and other coal companies are under way," said Prem Kumar Tiwari, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Dhanbad. "Only the coal companies can tell us the number of people trapped inside. We're verifying the details. Our teams have rushed to the sites," said Dhanbad Superintendent of Police (Rural), Reeeshma Ramesan. However, coal companies' officials said since the incidents happened at abandoned coal mines, it came under the purview of the local district administration.

Daunting endeavour: Villagers gathering at the site of the abandoned coal mines in Dhanbad, where rescue operations by the police are under way. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Illegal quarrying of coal from abandoned mines are said to be rampant in the coal belt of Dhanbad. "It has been going on for many years in complicity with coal mafias, police and politicians. Dhanbad mafias are infamous for illegal trade in coal which they call 'black diamond', a former employee of ECL who did not wish to be identified told *The Hindu* over phone.

"The death toll may go up in the days to come. Victims' families hesitate to claim the body for fear of administrative action", he added. Locals are said to have managed to rescue some of the miners before the rescue team and coal company officials arrived.

Lt. Gen. Manoj Pande is Vice Chief of Army Staff

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In a series of changes in the top hierarchy of the Army, Lt. Gen. Manoj Pande took over as the Vice Chief of Army Staff on Tuesday from Lt. Gen. C.P. Mohanty who superannuated on January 31.

Prior to this, Lt. Gen. Pande was serving as the Eastern Army Commander. He was commissioned in December 1982 into the Corps of Engineers (The Bombay Sappers). Lt. Gen. Pande will be the senior most officer in the Army when current chief Gen. Manoj Naravane completes his tenure in April.

In other key appointments, Lt. Gen. Upendra Dwivedi assumed the appointment of General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of Udhampur based Northern Command while Lt. Gen. R.P. Kalita assumed charge as GOC-in-Command, Eastern Command at Fort William in Kolkata.

Lt. Gen. G.A.V. Reddy took charge as the new head of the Defence Intelligence Agency following the retirement of the incumbent Lt. Gen. K.J.S. Dhillon. Lt. Gen. Dwivedi was Deputy Chief of the Army Staff prior to assuming the present appointment. He was commissioned into the Jammu And Kashmir Rifles Regiment.

ECI holds briefing for 15 special observers

Five States are to go to the polls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday held a briefing for 15 retired civil servants who have been appointed as special observers for the Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand elections before they left for the States.

"Fifteen former civil servants who hold impeccable and brilliant track record of domain expertise and have past experience with election processes, have been included in the team as special observers for the current poll going States. ...These officers will oversee the entire poll processes as eyes and ears of the commission on the ground to ensure free, fair and voter friendly elections," a statement from the poll body said. Addressing the special observers, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra said the officials needed to be vigilant and inform the Commission if any corrective steps were required.

A view of Election Commission of India building in New Delhi.

Probe into Minister's 'assault' on govt. staff on

Victim alleges a fracture in his arm

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

The probe into alleged assault by Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Bishweswar Tudu on two senior State government officers in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district picked up momentum after investigating officers started verifying footages of closed circuit television cameras.

Mr. Tudu was accused of attacking Mayurbhanj District Deputy Director (Planning) Aswini Mallick and Assistant Director Debasish Mohapatra with chair on January 21.

Mr. Mohapatra had alleged that he suffered fracture in his arms when he tried to block the chair with which the Minister had reportedly attacked him. The incident had taken place in local office room of the Minister at Baripada - the district headquarter town of Mayurbhanj.

According to district police, statement of victims have been recorded under 164 of CrPC and CCTV cameras have been analysed to find out the veracity in officer's statement.

Though more than 12 days have elapsed of the incident, the district police are yet to question Union Minister. The additional SP said the Minister had been intimated about initiation into investigation through his office.

In the high profile case, investigators are treading cautiously.

T.N. urges Kerala to increase outflow from Siruvani dam

The water shortage could affect areas around Coimbatore

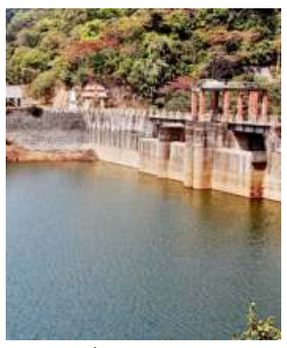
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

In the wake of Kerala restricting water from Siruvani dam, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday wrote to his Kerala counterpart requesting him to direct officials to maintain the storage of the Siruvani dam up to its full reservoir level (FRL) i.e. 878.50 m, so as to provide uninterrupted water supply to the Coimbatore Corporation and other beneficiaries of the project.

Increase water supply

In the letter, he also requested the Kerala Chief Minister to direct officials to increase the water supply from the Siruvani dam to enable supply of 101.40 MLD (megaliters per day).

"If storage of water to its full capacity is not maintained, the Coimbatore Corporation and adjoining areas, depending on Siruvani water, will be affected severely during the ensuing summer," a copy of the letter shared with the media read.



Siruvani dam

Since January 3, the Kerala Irrigation Department has controlled the intake tower, and it was informed it cannot regulate the flow until further orders from the Kerala Government, Mr. Stalin said. Siruvani dam is a prime source of water supply to Coimbatore city. Of the current total water requirement of 265 MLD for Coimbatore Corporation, 101.4 MLD was to be supplied from Siruvani dam.

In spite of adequate rainfall in the Siruvani catchment area, Kerala was maintaining the storage level in Siruvani dam at 877.0m only instead of the FRL of 878.50m for the past three years.

Regular meetings were being held by the officials of the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board with the Kerala Irrigation Department officials to store water up to the FRL, and the Tamil Nadu Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department had taken up this issue with Kerala's Water Resources Department.

Rajeshwar Singh to fight from Lucknow

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The BJP has fielded former joint director of the Enforcement Directorate Rajeshwar Singh from the Sarojini Nagar constituency in Lucknow a day after he took voluntary retirement from services to enter politics with the saffron party.

Mr. Singh's candidature came at the cost of Swati Singh, Minister of State for Women's Welfare, Child Development & Nutrition.

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY - e-Tender Notice

Tender No : 91/2021-22/KWA/PHC/D1/TVM. KIIFB-CWSS to Pulimath, Nagaroor and Karavaram panchayaths - Construction of 9m well cum pumphouse at Anakudy, supplying, laying, jointing, testing and commissioning of 500mm DI K9 Raw water pumping main, Design, construction, commissioning and maintenance of 18MLD WTP, Pumps, Motors, Electronic flow meter, substation building, water supply & electrical arrangements, landscaping, Anganwadi building, lightning conductor, Clear water pump sets, Indoor Transformer, Transformer Room and allied works. EMD : Rs. 5,00,000/-. Tender fee : Rs. 15,000/-. Last Date for submitting Tender : **22-02-2022 03:00:pm**. Phone: 0471-2322303. Website : **www.kwa.kerala.gov.in**, **www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**.
KWA-JB-GL-6-986-2021-22 Superintending Engineer, PH Circle, Thiruvananthapuram

DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010 (U.P.) India
Phones: 0522-6692000, 6692101, 6692120 Website: www.drrmlims.ac.in
Advertisement No.4388/Rect-F/ER/DrRMLIMS/2022 Dated: 01.02.2022
Amendment/Corrigendum
In reference to the Advertisement No. 3973/Rect-F/ER/DrRMLIMS/2022, dated 05.01.2022 for faculty positions (Contractual/Deputation basis), a Corrigendum is being issued with revision of number of posts and extension of last date of online application submission to 25.02.2022. Kindly visit Institute website: **www.drrmlims.ac.in** for further details.
Director

TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD
Notice inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)

Sl. No	Tender Inviting Authority	Specification No. and Description of work / Material	Due date & time for Submission of tender
1	CE / MECHANICAL/ COAL	COAL (Ship) - 96 /dt.31.01.2022 Contract of Affreightment for Movement of 5.00 Lakh Tonnes +/- 5 % of Domestic Coal from PARADIP Port to Coal Jetty 2 of VOC PORT, TUTICORIN by Supramax Geared Vessels or to North Coal Berth 1 of VOC Port, Tuticorin by Supramax Vessels in Gearless Condition for a Period of 6 Months +/-15 Days Choption.	09.02.2022 Upto 14.30 Hours

The Tender Specification can be downloaded from TANGEDCO website, **www.tangedco.gov.in, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, https://.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app** at free of cost.
Tender will be opened through the NIC portal
சாதனை படைத்த தமிழ்நாடு. சாதனை புரிந்து சரித்திரம் படைப்போம். DIPR/651/TENDER/2022

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
Superintending Engineer (Hydrology)
O/o Engineer-in-Chief (General) Irrigation & CAD Department
2nd Floor, Jalasoudha Building, Errumanzil, Hyderabad - 500082.
Tender No. NHP/TSSW/NCB/06/UAECC/2021-22, Dt.29/01/2022
ABRIDGED E-TENDER NOTICE
Online Tenders are invited through E-Procurement Mode for the following from reputed Firms in India: Description: "Updation of area elevation capacity curves for certain major & medium irrigation projects" for five projects under National Hydrology Project (NHP). Display and Sale of Tender Documents Period: **02/02/2022** to **05/03/2022**, Last Date and Time for Bid Submission : **05/03/2022** by **3.00P.M.** Detailed Invitation for Bid is available on **www.tender.telangana.gov.in**
RO No.2613-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22 Dt:31-01-2022
Sd/- Dt.29.01.2022, Superintending Engineer, Hydrology, O/o Engineer-in-Chief (General)

BHARATIYA RESERVE BANK NOTE MUDRAN (P) LIMITED
(WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF RESERVE BANK OF INDIA)
Note Mudran Nagar, Mysuru-570 003, Karnataka, India
Tel : +91 821 2582905/15/25, Fax : +91 821 2582099
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING / OPEN TENDER ENQUIRY
BRBNMPL invites bids from eligible bidders for following tenders:
1. **Tender No. 080/MYS/CIVIL/2021-22-** Comprehensive Architectural, Design & Engineering (A,D&E) Consultancy Services for Construction of Learning and Development Centre at BRBNMPL Mysuru.
2. **Tender No. 081/MYS/CIVIL/2021-22** - Annual Maintenance Contract of Existing Gardens, Trees and Horticultural Works at BRBNMPL Township, Note Mudran Nagar, Mysuru.
3. **Tender No. 082/MYS/MMD/2021-22-** Supply and Installation of Personal Computers at BRBNMPL, Mysuru.
4. **Tender No. 083/MYS/MMD/2021-22–** Annual Rate Contract for Supply of Coffee and Tea Vending Machine with Consumables at BRBNMPL, Mysuru.
5. **Tender No. 084/MYS/VARNIKA-34/2021-22-** Supply, Installation, Commissioning, Testing & AMC of Silent Diesel Generator of Capacity 750KVA for Varnika at BRBNMPL, Mysuru.

For downloading tender documents, last date of submission of above tenders and other details, kindly visit our website www.brbnmpl.co.in. Further corrigendum/ amendment to above tenders, if issued in future, will be notified on the Company website only.
General Manager

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (T) M-6
D-BLOCK: MOTI NAGAR: NEW DELHI-110015
PRESS NIT NO. 67 (2021-22)
"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"

Item No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Date of release of tender in E-procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e procurement
1.	Restoration of 600 mm dia damaged sewer line by pentode/ pipe brusting method from Wazirpur Industrial Area main Drain/ Nallh to CETP (WPIA) near Jailor Wala Bagh in Wazirpur Constituency under AEE (M)-17.	Rs. 98,70,390/-	Tender ID No. 2022_DJB_215692_4 on 31 .01.2022 at 05:02 P.M.	11.02.2022 Up to 3:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at **https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in.**
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) **(Trilok Chand)**
Advt. No. J.S.V. 1069 (2021-22) **Ex. Engineer (T) M-6**

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, (Project)
Rajarajeshwari Nagara, Bengaluru - 98.
No: EE(P)/RRN/TEND/16/2021-22 **Date: 01.02.2022**
INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER
(Through **GOK e-Procurement Portal** only)
The Executive Engineer, (Project) R.R. Nagara Division, BBMP, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Contractors registered in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES/ National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the construction of the works detailed in the table below.

Sl No	Name of the Work	Amount put to Tender (₹.In Lakhs)	EMD (In ₹.)
1.	Construction of Samudhaya Bhavana (Balance Works) in Gollarahalli in Ward No-72 Herohalli under Project Division in R.R. Nagara Zone.	168.00	2,52,000/-

Calendar of Events : (1) Documents can be downloaded from e-procurement website from **04.02.2022** onwards. (2) Last Date and Time for Tender Queries is **10.02.2022** at **4:00** pm. (3) Pre-Bid Meeting at the Office of the Chief Engineer, office RR Nagara Zone is on **11.02.2022** at **4:00** pm. (4) Last Date for Submission of Tender Document is **15.02.2022** up to **4:00** pm. (5) Opening of Technical Bid is on **16.02.2022** at **4:30** pm. (6) Opening of Financial Bid will be intimated to the **Technically Qualified Contractors.** In the Event of the Specified Date of Tender Opening being declared a Holiday for the Employer, the Tenders will be opened at the Appointed Time and Location on the Next Working Day.
(Only Through **GOK e-Procurement Portal** only) Single Cover System

Sl No	Name of the Works/Category	Approx. Value of Work (₹.In Lakhs)	EMD (In ₹.)
1.	Maintenance and Improvements to Community Hall at R.R. Nagara Constituency. (Others)	5.00	12500.00
2.	Maintenance and Improvements to Community Hall at Yashavanthapura Constituency. (SC)	5.00	6250.00
3.	Maintenance and Repairs of School and College Buildings at Yashavanthapura Constituency. (ST)	25.00	25000.00
4.	Maintenance and Repairs of Primary Health Centres at Yashavanthapura Constituency. (Others)	50.00	100000.00
5.	Providing Chain link Fencing of Vacant BBMP Land and Other Works at Yashavanthapura Constituency (Phase-II) (SC)	50.00	50000.00
6.	Providing Chain link Fencing and Other Works at Yashavanthapura Constituency (Phase-I) (Others)	50.00	100000.00

Calendar of Events : (1) Documents can be downloaded from e-procurement website from **07.02.2022** onwards. (2) Last Date and Time for Tender Queries is **09.02.2022** at **4:00** pm. (3) Last Date for Submission of Tender Document is **15.02.2022** upto **4:00** pm. (4) Opening of Technical Bid is on **16.02.2022** at **4:30** pm. (5) Opening of Financial Bid will be intimated to the **Technically Qualified Contractors.** Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website: **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**
Sd/- Executive Executive Engineer (Project)
RR Nagara Zone
STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

Employer kills worker over video leak threats

Shopkeeper, 2 accomplices arrested

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three persons have been arrested by the Delhi police for allegedly killing a 22-year-old man, after he threatened his employer with leaking videos showing them engaging in sexual acts, in south-west Delhi's Sarojini Nagar.

The deceased has been identified as Shamsher Singh. He worked at a shop in Sarojini Nagar and was allegedly in a sexual relationship with his employer, identified as one Prembir.

DCP (South-West) Gaurav Sharma said that the deceased was harassing Prembir by threatening to leak their intimate videos, after which Prembir hatched a plan to kill his employee. "Prembir roped in two of his accomplices, namely Pavinder and Rohit, who came from Uttar Pradesh on January 28 and stayed at a guest house in the city," the officer said.

While his accomplices were in their rooms, Prembir went to Sarojini Nagar market and brought the deceased to the guest house, where Pavinder and Rohit used a nylon rope from the guest house's balcony in order to strangulate Singh. "Rohit also used a muffler to strangulate him," the DCP said.

After committing the crime, the accused stuffed the deceased's body in a suitcase and dumped it near Sarojini Nagar metro station after covering it with a plastic sheet. While Pavinder has done an IT course from a college, Rohit is a contractual painter. None of the accused have criminal antecedents, the officer added.

An anti-farmer Budget: Sisodia

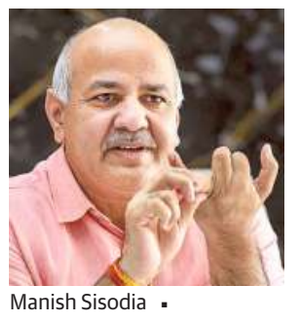
Delhi Congress also says no relief for pandemic-hit people of the Capital

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday termed the Union Budget as "anti-farmer" and claimed that the share of the agriculture sector in the Budget has been reduced to 3.84% from 4.25% last year. He also claimed that shares of other important sectors had also come down.

The Delhi Congress also attacked the Central government and said that there was nothing for the people of Delhi in the Budget, especially those running small businesses who have been devastated by the pandemic.

"The Central government is decreasing the number of farmers who will enjoy the benefit of MSP, Budget for MSP, and also the target of wheat and rice to be collected under MSP. Could any Budget be more anti-farmer? The government has cheated the farmers in this Budget," Mr. Sisodia said in a video statement.


Manish Sisodia ▪

He said that the BJP had failed in its promise of doubling the income of farmers by 2022.

'Health neglected'

The Minister said that the share of the health sector in the Budget had not increased. "The Central government has not taken any lesson from the whole pandemic. Last year, the share of the health sector was 2.14% and this year it is 2.19%. It's almost the same," he said.

Mr. Sisodia said that there was no vision for jobs, education, or health in the Budget and there was nothing for the middle class too. "They are saying that using a scheme, under which no jobs were created in the past two years, they will give 60 lakh jobs in the five years. This is just a *jumla,"* he said.

He also said that the share of central taxes of Delhi had remained unchanged at ₹325 crore each year for the past 21 years and this year also it had not been increased. "I had requested the Finance Minister to increase this, but nothing has been done," Mr. Sisodia said.

'Zero Budget'

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said that Delhiites had expected that the Union Budget would provide some relief to the unemployed youth, traders, shopkeepers, small business owners and people devastated by the pandemic, but they were totally disappointed by the Budget, as it was a "zero Budget" for them.

"Frequent hike in the prices of petroleum products has upset the household budget beyond recovery, and roll back of the excise duty would have given them some relief, but the Union Budget has only protected the interest of the rich friends of the Modi government," Mr. Kumar said.

He added that with elections to the Municipal Corporations of Delhi round the corner, the Budget should have allocated sufficient funds to the fund-starved BJP-ruled civic bodies, as the corporations have not been able to pay the salaries of sanitation workers, teachers, nurses, doctors and paramedical staff.

Budget allocation for police up by ₹1,700 cr.

Surveillance across city to be bolstered

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has been allocated a total of ₹10,355.29 crore in the budget estimates 2022-23, an increase of ₹1,701.03 crore compared to last year's allocation of ₹8,654.26 crore.

In a statement, the police said that ₹9,808.39 crore has been allotted for establishment-related expenditure and ₹287 crore for the 'capital' section, which includes the installation of security surveillance systems across Delhi and procurement of advanced equipment. This amount will also be spent on the "upgradation of communication system like cyber highway and digital trunking radio system, besides implementation of Intelligent Traffic Management System and induction of various vehicles for policing."

The Delhi Police headquarters. ▪ FILE PHOTO

According to the police, ₹259 crore shall be spent exclusively for police infrastructure – construction of office buildings, residential buildings and operation and maintenance of new police headquarters building. Last year, the police had allocated ₹8,100.20 crore for establishment-related expenses and ₹237.92 crore for upgradation and expansion.

COVID positivity rate falls to 5%

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The downward trend in COVID-19 in the Capital continued on Tuesday with the test positivity rate (TPR) falling to 5.09% from 6.20% a day earlier, according to a Delhi government bulletin.

The TPR had peaked on January 14 at 30.64%; it remained at the same level the next day and started decreasing since then.

The number of new COVID-19 cases over the past 24 hours also dropped to 2,683 from 2,779 on Tuesday, despite an increase in the number of tests. The number of tests increased to 52,736 from 44,847 a day earlier.

Twenty-seven new deaths were reported, taking the death toll to 25,892, as per the bulletin. Of the total 15,426 hospital beds for COVID-19 patients, 90.5% were vacant. On January 13, 28,867 cases were reported in the city, the highest since the beginning of the pandemic.

Police step up security outside Shahdara assault victim's house

We're being allowed to meet people only after scrutiny: kin

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Tuesday barricaded the street leading to the house of the Shahdara's sexual assault victim. This comes a day after scores of people from Punjab visited her maternal family on Monday.

Maintain order

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) R. Sathiyasundaram said the measure has been taken to maintain law and order in the area.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, the victim's 18-year-old sister said that police officers were standing alert outside their house. The family is being allowed to meet other people only after scrutiny, she said.

> **If I have to go out, I am being accompanied by a police officer**
> VICTIM'S SISTER

"The officers are asking for details from anyone who is visiting us. If I have to go out, I am being accompanied by an officer," she said. "It's my cousin's engagement in the evening. I don't know if I'll be allowed to go," she said.

The police on Monday had registered three cases for spreading misinformation about the victim on social media. "Some Twitter handles and a YouTube channel had disclosed her identity which is prohibited by the law," the DCP had said.

On January 26, the 20-year-old victim was sexually assaulted, tonsured, publicly shamed and paraded with a blackened face in a colony in Shahdara.

Citizens' forum launches campaign against hate politics

'India's tryst with hate on overdrive'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Gurgaon Nagrik Ekta Manch (GNEM), a citizens' platform known for its work on communal harmony during the COVID, has launched an online campaign on social media urging citizens to speak up against hate politics.

The Manch, as a first step, has asked people to use #HatePoliticsNotInMyName on their social media handles from Martyr's Day, January 30 onwards.

Several artists have contributed artworks against hate politics, which have been made available to be used as profile images and banners. The campaign will soon announce a series of on-ground and social media programmes.

Opposes hate crimes

The GNEM, in a press statement, stated that it was committed to creating a platform to challenge hate politics and not let it poison people's social lives.

"India's tryst with hate is on overdrive. Terrorising Muslims and Christians on a daily basis seems to be the new norm. Lynchings of Muslims in various parts of the country have been followed by namaz disruptions every Friday in Gurugram," the press note said.

"In several States, like Uttar Pradesh, interfaith marriages have been criminalised with Muslim men married to Hindu women being harassed by vigilante mobs and subsequently being arrested by the police. Online attempts at humiliating and terrorising Muslim women are part of the same ecosystem of hate. Christmas has become an occasion for vigilante mobs to further spread their ambit of hatred," the statement added.

The forum said the campaign had received enthusiastic support since its launch with hundreds of people on the net using #HatePoliticsNotInMyName and forwarding the artwork for peace and harmony.

3 injured in road rage incident

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three persons sustained gunshot injuries in a road rage incident in north Delhi's Angoori Bagh late on Monday, police said on Tuesday.

According to police, the incident occurred around 9.30 p.m. The complainant, Mohd. Shahid was returning with his wife when his two-wheeler collided with another bike. There was a verbal spat and in the melee, three persons sustained gunshot injuries.

JHARKHAND EDUCATION PROJECT COUNCIL
J.S.C.A Stadium Road, Jagannathpur, Sector -3, Dhurwa, Ranchi - 834004
Phone - 0651-2444502 Fax: 0651-2444506 E-mail: jepcranchi1@gmail.com

e-Procurement Notice(2nd call)

Jharkhand Education Project Council invites Request for Proposal (RFP) through GeM portal for Selection of agency for establishment of ICT Lab and Smart Class which includes Supply, Installation and maintenance of Hardware, Software & Connected accessories and for providing Computer Education Services (manpower etc.) in the selected 80 Government Schools (School of Excellence) and 325 Block Level Adarsh Vidyalaya. The detail tender document can be seen in website http://gem.gov.in only. The bid number is **GEM/2022/B/1903760**. The detail about pre-bid, last date of online bid submission, etc. can be seen in above Bid reference in website http://gem.gov.in.

(Kiran Kumari Pasi)
State Project Director

Letter Ref No JEPC/ICT/52/2020/11/181 dated 31.01.2022

PR.NO.262895 School Education and Literacy(21-22):D

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय,
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमण्डल, साहेबगंज।
CORRIGENDUM (द्वितीय शुद्धि पत्र)

इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा सूचना सं0–DWSD/SAHIBGANJ-23/2021-22, Dt.12-01-2022, P.R.No.261592 में प्रकाशित निविदा में निम्नलिखित संशोधन किया जाता है।

Sl. No	Section	Clause	Page No	Subject	Existing Clause	Modification Required
1	Section 3 Conditions of contract	26	67	Price Adjustment - Steel	So = The all India wholesale price index for steel Rods on 28 days preceding the date of opening of Bids as published by the Ministry of Industrial Development, Government of India, New Delhi Si = The all India average wholesale price index for steel Rods for the month under consideration as published by Ministry of Industrial Development, New Delhi	So = The all India wholesale price index for **Mild Steel Long Products for Reinforcement steel & HR Coils/MS Flats for MS Pipeline** on 28 days precedin g the date of opening of Bids as published by the Ministry of Industrial Development, Government of India, New Delhi Si = The all India average wholesale price index for **Mild Steel Long Products for Reinforcement steel & HR Coils/MS Flats for MS Pipeline** for the month under consideration as published by Ministry of Industrial Development, New Delhi
2	Section 3 Conditions of contract	26	67	Price Adjustment - Steel	Adjustment for steel component i/c MS Price adjustment for increase or decrease in the cost of steel rods procured by the Contractor shall be paid in accordance with the following formula	Adjustment for steel component **i/c Reinforcement Steel & MS Pipeline** Price adjustment for increase or decrease in the cost of **Mild Steel Long Products for Reinf orcement steel & HR Coils/MS Flats for MS Pipeline** procured by the Contractor shall be paid in accordance with the following formula

निविदा की अन्य शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।

कार्यपालक अभियंता,
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमण्डल, साहेबगंज।

PR 262925 Drinking Water and Sanitation(21-22)D

No. SMEJ/JMCH/2590/2020/378

Short Tender Notice
(Inviting e-tender)

Sealed bid (two bid systems) affixing court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25/- (rupees eight and paisa twenty five) only are invited from experienced Security Service Agencies to provide **Security Service** for Jorhat Medical College & Hospital Jorhat as per following schedule:

Date and Time of Publishing of e-Bid Document	Date and Time of Spot survey/ site verification	Date and Time of Pre-Bid Meeting	Date and Time of Start of Bid Submission	Date and Time of End of Bid Submission	Date and Time of Opening of E-Technical Bid	Tentative Date and Time of Opening of E-Price Bid
12:00 P.M. of 02/02/2022	9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. of 10/02/2022	1:00 P.M. of 10/02/2022	2:00 P.M. of 11/02/2022	12:00 P.M. of 25/02/2022	1:00 P.M. of 25/02/2022	12:00 P.M. of 03/03/2022

Instructions for e-tendering:

1. The participating bidders should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal **https://assamtenders.gov.in/**
2. The Tender shall be submitted online only through the website **https://assamtenders.gov.in/**. The bidders **MUST** submit a hardcopy of their tender document to the O/o. the Principal cum Chief Superintendent, JMC&H, Jorhat after successful submission of their tender through online on or before 25/02/2022 at 12.00 P.M.
3. The complete e-tender document may be obtained from the e-tender portal: **https://assamtenders.gov.in/** & our official website: **http://jorhatmedicalcollege.in** (reference only).
4. The institute reserves the right to reject any/all applications without assigning any reason what so ever.

Principal cum Chief Superintendent,
Jorhat Medical College & Hospital, Jorhat

Janasanyog No.C/11295/21

Himachal Pradesh
Jal Shakti Vibhag

CORRIGENDUM

The key dates of online tender for the work WSS to left out habitations in G.P. Longani in Tehsil Dharampur District Mandi (HP) under Jal Jeevan Mission under JJM invited vide this office NIT No. No. EE-JSV-DBR-TA-Tender/2021-22- 17734-84 dated 17/01/2022 is hereby extended to below mentioned dates:-

1. Bid submission end date 01.02.2022 at 02:30PM.
2. Physical submission of earnest money deposit and cost of tender documents upto 02:30 PM on 01.02.2022.
3. Bid opening date 01.02.2022 at 03:30 PM

Other terms and condition shall remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti Division Dharampur
Bharari

HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

HP / 6559/20-21

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
No. : PW/EDP/CB/TA/NIT/2021-22/8368-72 Dated: 28.01.2022
"E-Procurement Notice"
Invitation for Bids (IFB)

The Executive Engineer, Electrical Division, HPPWD Palampur, Distt. Kangra, HP on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the item rate bids in Two Covers system in Electronic Tendering System from approved and eligible contractors/firms registered with HPPWD (E) fulfilling the qualifying criteria along with the documents for the works as detailed below in the table:

Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Time Limit	Cost of bid document
1.	C/O Centre of Excellence in Mental Health for Dr. RPGMC Kangra at Tanda Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH: Providing LAN System therein).	2961210/-	52000/-	Six Months	1500/-
2.	C/O Indoor Auditorium Chamba in Tehsil and Distt. Chamba (HP) (SH: Providing Motorized Stage Curtains System).	2998200/-	52500/-	Two Months	1500/-
3.	C/O Sub Tehsil Office Building at Alampur in Tehsil Jaisinghpur Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH: Providing E.I. therein).	958316/-	19200/-	Two Years	350/-
4.	C/O Civil Hospital (Additional Block) at Palampur in Tehsil Palampur Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH: Providing 01 No. 20 Passengers Electric Traction Elevator (With Machine Room 6 stop 6 Opening therein).	3230000/-	56000/-	One Years	350/-
5.	Replacement of old & burnt E.I. and safety devices in Leprosy Hospital at Kandwari in Tehsil Baijnath Distt. Kangra (HP).	598557/-	12000/-	Six Months	350/-
6.	C/O Govt. Degree College at Dhaliara (Admin. Cum Academic Block-B) in Tehsil Dehra Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH: Providing E.I. therein).	979518/-	20000/-	One Year	350/-
7.	C/O Civil Hospital (Additional Block) at Palampur in Tehsil Palampur Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH: Providing & fixing Yard lighting therein).	711325/-	14500/-	Six Months	350/-

Key/ Critical Dates:			
	Publish Date/Time	10.02.2022	5.00 PM
2.	Document Download Start Date/Time	10.02.2022	5.00 PM
3.	Bid Submission Start Date/Time	10.02.2022	5.00 PM
4.	Bid Submission End Date/Time	21.02.2022	10.00 AM
5.	Bid Opening Date/Time	21.02.2022	11.30 AM

The bidders are advised to note other details and terms & conditions of tenders from the departmental website **www.hptenders.gov.in**.

-sd- Executive Engineer,
Electrical Division, HPPWD Palampur - PIN-176061.
e-mail: ee-elep-hp@nic.in
On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

HP / 6583/21-22

HIMACHAL PRADESH UNIVERSITY
NAAC ACCREDITED "A" GRADE UNIVERSITY
GYAN PATH, SUMMER HILL, SHIMLA-5
MAINTENANCE DIVISION NO.-II

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer (Maint.) Division No-II H.P. University, Shimla-5, invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in two covers system on behalf of Hon'ble vice-chancellor for the work **"Development of parking area in front of Science Block "B" in HP University, Shimla-5"** from the eligible and approved Contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD Department. For more details please may visit H.P. University website i.e. **www.hpuniv.ac.in** or **www.hptenders.gov.in.**

Executive Engineer (Maint.)

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL MIRAN SAHIB
PO- MIRAN SAHIB (JAMMU)
Affiliated with CBSE NEW DELHI (AFFILIATION NO: 780014)
Website: www.apsmiransahib.in

TENDER NOTIFICATION

1. APS MIRAN SAHIB invites sealed Tender from suitably qualified, eligible, experienced and reputed vendors/firms for supplying and installation of the items mentioned as under:
   a) **AI LAB SETUP**
   Details Regarding Specification, Terms and conditions and other information will be available on the website **www.apsmiransahib.in** from **02 Feb 2022**.
2. In case your firm is interested in supplying the above items, you are requested to forward your quotations. While forwarding quotations following points may please be adhered to: -
   a) The quotations will be given for the item/items exactly as per the nomenclature used by us mentioning Make, Model, Regd No etc.
   b) The price will be quoted by you on a printed letter head wherein your GST No will be included.
   c) The quotations will be forwarded in a sealed envelope to be opened by a board of officers only
   d) VAT/warranty should be mentioned in the quotation.
3. The quotations may be forwarded by **15 Feb 2022** as per the guidelines mentioned in the RFP available on school website. Any quotations received later than the date mentioned above is liable to be rejected.

Sd/- Principal

Government of Jharkhand
Department of Mines & Geology
Directorate of Geology
Engineers' Hostel No-2, 2nd floor, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004
Email: dir-geology@jharkhandmail.gov.in

CORRIGENDUM - I
Notification – 22/2021-22
"Invitation of Bid for grant of Mining Lease for Lodhapat Bauxite Block"

With reference to advertised under PR No. 262617 (Mines and Geology) 21-22(D) regarding invitation of Bid for grant of Mining lease **Date of Opening of Tender** shall be read as **16.03.2022** instead of 30.03.2022.

❖ Other Terms and Conditions remains same.

Sd/-
(Vijay Kumar Ojha)
Director Geology

PR 262921 Mines and Geology (21-22)_D

HEADQUARTERS 99 ARTILLERY BRIGADE

NOTICE INVITING APPLICATION FOR OPERATING FACILITIES AT STRIKE 1 SAINIK INSTITUTE MATHURA CANTONMENT FOR WAR WIDOWS/WIDOWS OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL KILLED WHILE ON DUTY/DISABLED SOLDIER/EX-SERVICEMEN AND SPOUSES/WIDOWS OF EX-SERVICEMEN ONLY

1. The Headquarters 99 Artillery Brigade invites applications in prescribed format from eligible applicants for running of **Cobbler shop** at Strike 1 Sainik Institute, Mathura Cantonment, on a monthly maintenance basis. The allotment will be on a bid cum auction basis with the minimum base rate fixed before the auction.
2. Application forms can be obtained from Headquarters 99 Artillery Brigade Signal Company on cash payment of Rs 100/- along with the terms and conditions.
3. A bank draft for Rs 500/- (Earnest Money) in favor of **Strike 1 Sainik Institute General** Fund to be encl with the Application, which is non-refundable.
4. Last date of receipt of the application is **05 Feb 2022**.
5. Date of the auction of shops will be held on **08 Feb 2022** at Strike 1 Sainik Institute Mathura Cantonment.

Strike 1 Sainik Institute

"Inviting Online Bids"

The Executive Engineer ,Jal Shakti Division No.IIKullu at Bhunter invites Online tenders on short time basis on behalf of Government or Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following works through e-tendering process:

Job. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	EMD Cost of Tender	Time of completion (months).	Cost of form
1.	Replacement of Pumping machinery to LIS Larji Dhaman in Distt Kullu HP(SH-C/O Sump well, C/O outlet Chamber, Providing and laying , jointing of rising main and installation of Pumping machinery with allied accessories)	1993375/-	37401/-	3 Months	400/-
2.	Providing the provision for tap to each house under JJM of various WSS of group of habitations to WSS Nagladi Gussaini, Shilli, Mashiyar, Bathad chippani in GP Mashiyar,Tung,Kandhidhar,Shilli inTehsil Banjar Distt kullu H.P (SH:- C/O 9 Nos Storage tank 10000 liters Capacity)Undar JJM	1070798/-	21416/-	3 Months	400/-

Last date submission of tender :- 04-02-2022 upto 5:00 PM and opened on 05-02-2022 up to 11:30 AM.

The tender forms/NIT and other detailed conditions can be downloaded from the website *www.hpiph.org* or from office of the Executive Engineer upto date specified above.

(Er. Ravinder Kumar Sharma)
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti Division No.II, Kullu at Bhunter

HP / 6536/21-22

Modi, Shah will campaign in Punjab, says Amarinder

'Cordial ties with PM for over 20 years'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Lok Congress (PLC) chief Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah will soon be coming to Punjab to campaign for the PLC-BJP-SAD Sanyukt coalition in the run-up to the Assembly poll.

Capt. Amarinder said the alliance had been crafted in the interest of Punjab and the country.

"The State, with its economy in total shambles, was at a crossroads and needed the Centre's support to go ahead," he said in Patiala, adding that Punjab was reeling under a debt of ₹70,000 crores, with Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi adding ₹33,000 crore in just 111 days of his governance.

"For Punjab's survival, it is necessary that the State and the Centre work together," he said. The Punjab Lok Congress chief said he personally has had cordial relations with Mr. Modi since the latter was the Chief Minister of Gujarat.

Sidhu flayed

Hitting out at Punjab Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu over his hugging the Pakistan army chief, during Sidhu's visit to Pakistan, Capt. Amarinder said the State's governance could not be handed over to people who were willing to compromise national security to further their personal and political ambitions.

"Who do you hate more? The soldiers who fire or the one who gives the order?," quipped the former Chief Minister, adding that Mr. Sidhu hugging General Bajwa and then his re-induction into the State cabinet being recommended by the Prime Minister of Pakistan clearly showed he could not be relied upon to keep Punjab and India safe from the enemy across the border.

Rahul Gandhi postpones Goa visit

He is scheduled to hold a rally in CM's constituency and release party manifesto

STAFF REPORTER
PUNE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's proposed visit on Wednesday to poll-bound Goa has now been postponed owing to his "parliamentary commitments".

Speaking to reporters in Panaji on Tuesday, All-India Congress Committee (AICC) spokesperson Alka Lamba said Mr. Gandhi who was scheduled to visit Goa on February 2 would now be visiting the State on February 4.

Mr. Gandhi would be putting forth the Congress party's reaction on the Union Budget in Parliament on Wednesday and would visit Chhattisgarh the following day to attend various programmed, said Ms. Lamba. His programme in Goa remained unchanged, she said.

He is scheduled to hold a public rally in Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's constituency Sakhali (Sanquelim) and will be releasing the party's manifesto after interacting with representatives from the tourism industry, anganwadi workers and others.

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in Parliament on Tuesday. • PTI

'Political jumla'

Meanwhile, hitting out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah's campaign address in Goa last week, State Congress chief Girish Chodankar accused the Home Minister of political *jumla* (hoodwinking).

Censuring Mr. Shah's verbal attacks on the Congress and the Gandhi family, Mr. Chodankar alleged that the BJP's pre-poll promises of resuming mining in the coastal State was "utterly hollow".

"Mr. Shah thinks the Congress was in power in the State when mining in Goa was stopped. It was during the tenure of the late Manohar Parrikar-led BJP government in Goa that mining was halted in 2012. The BJP has been making this promise of resuming mining at the time of every single Assembly, municipal and panchayat poll since the last decade... the current BJP Chief Minister Pramod Sawant should tell the people just how many more times this announcement is going to be made," said Mr. Chodankar.

'Jobs being sold'

He said jobs under the present BJP government were being 'sold' for ₹10-30 lakhs. Students, who have had an excellent academic record, had failed in government exams, while kin and acquaintances of Ministers could secure plum jobs.

"Parents and youth are frustrated under the BJP rule... three sitting MLAs in the BJP government have independently verified the Congress' allegations... Offer letters for jobs are handed out by Ministers illegally. The Congress will form a special commission for enquiry once it comes to power," Mr. Chodankar said.

Budget a disappointment for Tamil Nadu: Stalin

Undermines States, says Kerala CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI/THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday said the Union Budget 2022-23 presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was "hugely disappointing" as the State's needs for sanctioning of funds for schemes and relief for meeting losses incurred during the recent natural disasters remain unaddressed.

Opposing the 'One Nation, One Registration' proposal, Mr. Stalin said it revealed how the Union government was "keen on snatching the rights of the States" in whichever announcement it makes. "It would be apt to call this as a Budget that ignored the welfare of the people," Mr. Stalin said in a statement.

Though the proposed allocation of ₹1 lakh crore on the basis of "cooperative federalism" appeared to benefit the States, Mr. Stalin contended that the funds would be spent on Prime Minister's Gati Shakti Plan. Thus in the name of allocating funds for the States, the Union government would spend funds on its own schemes.

"If only the allocation of ₹1 lakh crore is made without any conditions, I would have been the first to welcome it," Mr. Stalin said.

Echoing Mr. Stalin's views, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan criticised the Budget for failing to meet the people's expectations.

Mr. Vijayan said the Union Budget sought to undermine the economy of individual States instead of bolstering their COVID-19 ravaged financial systems.

He said the States had joined the Centre's GST regime in 2015-16 to rationalise many regional taxes and evolve a coherent value-added surcharge system for a range of goods and services. The tax homogenisation had cost States their revenue autonomy.

'Karnataka to get more'

On the other hand, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai termed the Union Budget as "growth-oriented" and said the State is expected to get an additional capital outlay of about ₹3,000 crore from the Centre in 2022-23.

Mr. Bommai said the Centre's outlay for capital expenditure to the State would increase from ₹26,000 crore in 2021-22 to ₹29,000 crore in 2022-23.

"The State is likely to get ₹3,000 crore to ₹3,500 crore to its capital account from the Centre. The actual figures will be known tomorrow or day after," he said.

(With inputs from Special Correspondent in Bengaluru)

YouTuber sent to police custody

He was arrested for 'instigating' students to hit the streets

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

A local Mumbai court on Tuesday sent YouTuber Vikas Phatak aka Hindustani Bhau to police custody till February 4 along with one Ikrar Khan.

Phatak was arrested for airing a video which allegedly instigated students to take to the roads on Monday demanding cancellation of offline exams for classes 10 and 12.

An FIR was registered against Phatak and others under IPC sections 353 (obstructing public servant from discharging duty), 332 (causing hurt to public servant), 427 (mischief causing damage), 109 (abetment) and 114 (abettor present when offence committed), 143, 145, 146, 149 for unlawful assembly and rioting and 188, 269, 270 for violating COVID-19 guidelines.

They have also been booked under section 3 (mischief causing damage) of prevention of damage to public property act, 1984.

Phatak and Khan were arrested on Tuesday morning and were later produced in the magistrate court in Bandra. The Public Prosecutor Prasad Joshi on behalf of Police argued that Phatak is a habitual offender and it wasn't possible for hundreds of students to come out on street on their own.

He said that the police wanted to probe whether an organisation was behind the incident.

'Part of conspiracy'

Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil too had said, "This seem to be created deliberately as part of a conspiracy. We will thoroughly investigate this incident."

Hundreds of students hit the street in Mumbai and several other parts of Maharashtra demanding cancellation of offline exams of Classes 10 and 12 in the State.

Balanced Budget: Nitish

Disappointing, says his key aide

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday praised the Union Budget, while his party's parliamentary board chairman Upendra Kushwaha described it as "disappointing".

"For the last two years the country's development has been affected due to COVID-19 pandemic and to bring out the country from the adverse situation, the Centre through its Budget, has taken several steps to accelerate the speed of development, which is praiseworthy. I congratulate the Union government for presenting a balanced Budget", said the Chief Minister.

However, his key political aide and senior party leader, Upendra Kushwaha, said in a tweet: "The Union government's Budget might be historic for developed States but for Bihar it is disappointing. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman disappointed people of Bihar by not saying anything on their demand of granting special status to the State".

Mr. Kushwaha also added a hash tag at the bottom off his tweet saying, "*desh ka pradhan, Bihar per dein dhyan* (country's head, kindly focus on Bihar)".

DMK official hacked to death in T.N.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

A DMK functionary was hacked to death by a gang of four men on Tuesday night.

Police sources said the victim was identified as Selvam, 188 ward secretary of the DMK unit.

He was likely to be fielded as a contestant in the local body election, sources added.

While he was going on Rajaji Road, the four men waylaid him and hacked him to death.

The gang escaped from the spot.

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Clarify stand on marital rape, HC tells Centre

Govt. to make submissions next week

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the Centre to clarify whether it will stick to its earlier stand that marital rape cannot be made a criminal offence in India.

A Bench of Justice Rajiv Shakdher and Justice C. Hari Shankar posted the query after Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Chetan Sharma said that the government was "relooking" at its stand and needed time to come to a decision.

Mr. Sharma said the earlier stand given on affidavits date back to 2015 when the High Court started hearing the case.

The ASG requested the Bench to permit the Centre to make submissions on the issue next week.

"We want to hear what the government wants to say. If the government does not want to say anything, then we will go by the affidavits which are on record," the Bench said.

"We are going to come to a conclusion one way or another... There are only two ways of closing this issue. One is the legislative route, the second is a court decision. There is no third way of closing this issue," the Bench said.

"You [Centre] need to make up your mind whether you need to stick to the position that you have taken in the counter affidavit or you will change it. If you want to change it, you must let us know," the Bench said.

Not defined in law

In India, marital rape is not defined in any statute or law. The High Court was hearing a bunch of petitions seeking to strike down the exception granted to husbands under the Indian rape law.

The exception says sexual intercourse by a man with his wife aged 15 years or above is not rape even if it is without her consent. In October 2017, the Supreme Court increased the age of consent to 18 years.

Why is wearing mask inside car compulsory: HC

It is absurd actually, it tells Delhi govt.

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Why must a person sitting alone in a car wear a mask, a Bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh asked the Delhi government counsel, senior advocate Rahul Mehra.

"It is a Delhi government order, why don't you withdraw it? It is absurd actually," the two-judge Bench remarked.

The High Court's observation came after the Delhi government's counsel shared an incident of a man being challaned for not wearing a mask while sitting in his car along with his mother, and sipping coffee with the windows of his car rolled up.

"Why is this order prevailing? Take instructions," the Bench told the Delhi government counsel.

Mr. Mehra said that the High Court's April 7, 2021, order, which had refused to interfere with the Delhi government's decision to impose challans for not wearing a mask while driving a private car alone, was "very unfortunate".

"Somebody sitting in the car with rolled-up windows and being challaned for 2,000," Mr. Mehra said.

The High Court, in its April 2021 order, had ruled that wearing of a mask or a face cover in a vehicle, which may be occupied by either a single person or multiple persons, was compulsory in the view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"A mask is a 'Suraksha kavach' for preventing the spread of the corona virus," Justice Prathiba M. Singh had said while dismissing four different pleas challenging the challan issued to persons for not wearing of face masks while travelling alone in a private car.

"A vehicle which is moving across the city, even if occupied at a given point in time by one person, would be a public place owing to the immediate risk of exposure to other persons under varying circumstances," the High Court had said.

Sri Lankan Navy detains 21 Indian fishermen

They have been charged with poaching on the island nation's territorial waters

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NAGAPATTINAM

Twenty-one fishermen from Nagapattinam and Karaikal were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy during the intervening night of Monday-Tuesday under charges of poaching on the territorial waters of the island nation.

Information on the alleged breach of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) by the Indian fishermen, who had ventured into sea on two trawlers, was reportedly passed on to the Sri Lankan Navy by the local fishermen of Point Pedro, the northernmost point of the island in Jaffna district.

The Sri Lankan Navy also confiscated two trawlers of the fishermen. • FILE PHOTO

The Sri Lankan Navy detained the fishermen and confiscated the trawlers. They were subsequently taken into custody by the police at Kankesanthurai, official sources said. The arrest comes a week after a Sri Lankan court ordered the release of 56 Indian fishermen who were detained earlier.

Meanwhile, officials from the Consulate General of India, Jaffna, met the 21 fishermen and provided them consular assistance.

The detained fishermen were given relief supplies and facilitated to make phone calls to relatives back home.

Stalin writes to Minister

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday wrote to Union Minister for External Affairs S. Jaishankar, requesting him to secure the release of the fishermen. Mr. Stalin also reiterated the Tamil Nadu government's request to resolve the long-standing issue between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen.

ENTERPRISE CONNECT
A Business Initiative

PNB launches co-branded contactless credit cards with Patanjali in partnership with RuPay

Punjab National Bank (PNB), and Patanjali Ayurved Limited (PAL) have launched co-branded contactless credit cards in partnership with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).The co-branded credit cards are offered on NCPI's RuPay Platform and are available in two variants - PNB RuPay Platinum and PNB RuPay Select. Starting the new year on a positive note, both the co-branded cards come with a host of attractive benefits and spend-based waivers for the customers. They offer a hassle-free credit service to purchase day-to-day Patanjali products, along with cash backs, loyalty points, insurance cover, and more. The cardholders may enjoy suitable cashback @2% for transactions over and above ₹ 2500, subject to a ceiling of ₹ 50 per transaction at Patanjali Stores. PNB RuPay Platinum and PNB RuPay Select cardholders will receive a welcome bonus of 300 reward points on activation. Additionally, the customers will get complimentary domestic and international airport lounge access,PNB Genie Mobile Application for card management, add-on card facility, lucrative reward points on spends, along with cash advance/revolve, EMI, and auto-debit facilities. The Platinum version comes with a zero joining fee and an annual fee of ₹ 500, while the Select version offers a low joining fee of ₹ 500 and an annual fee of ₹ 750. The annual fees will be waived off in case of the card is used at least once in each quarter in the preceding year. Shri Acharya Balkrishna, Managing Director of Patanjali Ayurved Limited, said, "The synergies of this partnership will help accelerate the adoption of digital payments, especially amongst users in deeper tier-2 and tier-3 markets.Other than the attractive benefits, the most important feature is the interest-free purchases of Patanjali products for 20-50 days."Shri Atul Kumar Goel,MD and CEO of PNB(w.e.f 01.02.2022), said "It gives us immense pleasure to announce the launch of PNB Patanjali co brand credit card on RuPay platform.The collaboration is expected to extend optimized benefits for customers and the public at large.

GAIL starts India's maiden project of blending hydrogen into CGD network

GAIL (India) Limited has commenced India's first-of-it's-kind project of mixing hydrogen into natural gas system at Indore, Madhya Pradesh.The hydrogen blended natural gas will be supplied to Avantika Gas Limited, one of GAIL's Joint Venture (JV) company with HPCL, operating in Indore.In line with the National Hydrogen Mission, GAIL has started hydrogen blending as a pilot project to establish the techno-commercial feasibility of blending hydrogen in City Gas Distribution (CGD) network.This project marks the stepping stone of India's journey towards hydrogen based and carbon neutral future. It is expected that this pilot project would help in creation of a robust standard and regulatory framework in India to cover the aspects of injecting hydrogen into natural gas.This will pave the path for carrying out more similar projects in India.

SCOPE pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi's transformational leadership on Martyrs' Day

Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) organized a Symposium on 'Transformational Leadership in Governance – The Gandhian Way' to commemorate the 74th Martyrs' Day. The occasion was addressed by Shri Rohit Kumar Singh, Secretary,Consumer Affairs; Dr. Shobhana Radhakrishna,Veteran Gandhian; Shri Pradeep Kumar Agarwal, CMD, Cotton Corporation of India Ltd. and Shri Atul Sobti, Director General, SCOPE. Shri Rohit Kumar Singh, in his address, enunciated Gandhiji's vision of Governance being citizen centric,decentralisation of power to the grassroot levels and treating customer as supreme.He highlighted areas of conflict resolution, envisioning India 2047 and democratisation of information where Gandhian principles of transparency and ethics are most relevant to strengthen the country and prepare for the future.Shri Atul Sobti said that SCOPE through its dedicated forum has been exploring Gandhian principles while creating awareness among PSEs of its application in the modern times. Amidst rapid change, he added, there was a rising need for leaders to adopt Gandhian virtues today so as to instill positivity and self-belief in the people.

NTPC bestowed 'Great Place to Work' among India's Best Workplaces in Manufacturing 2022

India's largest integrated energy producer, NTPC Ltd. was bestowed with the 'India's Best Workplaces in Manufacturing 2022 – Top 30' recognition by the Great Place to Work Institute.This is fifth year in a row,NTPC has been bestowed with the recognition. In the 5th edition of India's Best Workplaces in Manufacturing, 132 organizations in the Manufacturing sector undertook the assessment.Based on a rigorous evaluation,Great Place to Work has identified the Top 30 organizations among India's Best Workplaces in Manufacturing 2022.These organizations excel both on people practices that they have designed for their employees and act on the feedback to create a High Trust Culture.This recognition from the Great Place to Work India mirrors NTPC's commitment towards creating and sustaining an ideal environment for its employees,associates and partners.It is also a testimony of the maturity of the HR Policies at NTPC and the commitment of the senior management of NTPC towards achieving the holistic development and well-being of its employees and stakeholders.To reaffirm its commitment towards diversity and inclusion,NTPC has recruited an all-Female Engineers batch recently, a pioneering move in the sector.GPTW commended NTPC for its practices and for creating a high trust culture amongst its employees.In 2021,NTPC was recognised as a Great Place to Work for the 15th year in a row by the Great Place to Work Institute and it was the only PSU to consistently feature in India's Top 50 Best Workplaces.

IRFC celebrates 73rd Republic Day

Indian Railway Finance Corporation Limited (IRFC), a Schedule 'A' Miniratna company under the Ministry of Railways, Government of India, celebrated the 73rd Republic Day at its office premises.Sh. Amitabh Banerjee, Chairman and Managing Director unfurled the national flag on the occasion, followed by the singing of the national anthem.Speaking on the occasion,Sh. Banerjee said this day is not only a national festival but it is a day of pride and respect for the nation.The parade at the Rajpath reminds us of the great sacrifices made by our brave hearts for maintaining the territorial integrity of the country, he added.

PNB celebrates Republic Day, focuses on government's Vidyanjali initiative

Punjab National Bank (PNB) celebrated the 73rd Republic Day with patriotism and enthusiasm. Shri CH. S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao, MD and CEO of the Bank, hoisted the National flag at headquarters in Dwarka, New Delhi. Shri Atul Goel - Officer on Special Duty (OSD) - who is slated to take over as MD & CEO next month, attended the ceremony along with EDs, CVO, CGMs and senior officials of PNB.Saluting the bravery of our freedom fighters, soldiers and the architects of our constitution , Shri CH. S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao said, " The entire country has fought back with a vengeance to withstand the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the economy is back on track. PNB Pariwaar has risen to the occasion and worked together to cater to the needs of the common man and the industry. We remember with gratitude the members of our pariwaar who lost their lives during this pandemic. The Bank has taken a fundamental shift in its approach by focusing on Customer, last mile connect , effective and efficient turn around time.

Directorate of Tourism, Jammu Celebrates National Tourism Day

The Directorate of Tourism,Jammu, organized Heritage walk on the eve National of Tourism Day from Ambaran (Buddhist Site) to Jio Pota Ghat, Akhnoor on 25th January, 2022. A group of 30 participants was flagged off jointly by Sh. Vivekanand Rai, IRS, Director Tourism, Jammu, Sh. Izhar Alam Hashmi Superintendent Archeologist, Srinagar Circle, Jammu and Sh. Naresh Kumar,JKAS, Deputy Director Tourism, Jammu from Ambaran, Akhnoor.The Joint Director Tourism, Jammu, informed that the motive of organising this Heritage Walk was to promote the historic sites in and around Jammu particularly Akhnoor which has many historical sites such as Ambaran (Budhist Site), Akhnoor Fort,Guru Dwara Sundar Singh Sahib, Pandav Guffa, Jio Pota and Kameshwar Temple.The participants in heritage walk comprised of Traveller Bloggers,Travel Agents,Travel Writers and other stake holders of Travel Trade.Sh. Chander Bushan,Travel Enthusiast and Vlogger said that he was excited to have been part of this Heritage Walk and appreciated the effort of the Tourism Department.Sh.Naresh Kumar JKAS, Dy Director Tourism,Publicity, Sh.Varinder Gupta JKAS, SDM, Akhnoor besides other senior officers/officials of the Tourism Department were present on the occasion.

Banasthali Vidyapith celebrates National Girl Child Day

Banasthali Vidyapith, the biggest and highest rank university for women in India celebrated the National Girl Child Day in online mode on January 24, 2022.Prof.Ina Shastri, Vice Chancellor of the university said that for Banasthali every day is a girl child day and this celebration goes on since 1935 when the institution was established in an era when the concept of girl child education virtually did not exist. She hailed the women achievers of Banasthali who have contributed significantly to their families, society and the nation and asked the students to follow on their footsteps and become the pride of the nation. Addressing the students,Prof. Anshuman Shastri said that Banasthali has given many "firsts" to the nation like first woman speaker of Lok Sabha,first woman speaker of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, first woman fighter pilot of India and it is now their turn to glorify the institution, state and the nation.

Government of Himachal Pradesh
Jal Shakti Department
"Notice Inviting e-tender"

The Executive Engineer **Jal Shakti Vibhag Division Nalagarh** invites online tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work (s) through e-tendering process:-

S/ No	Description of work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of tender forms	Stipulated Time period
1.	Augmentation of **LWSS BhogpurBhangla** in Tehsil Nalagarh District Solan (HP) (Sub Head:- Drilling lowering of assembly and development of Tubewell at Village Nasarli 140 mtrs. depth and Dolowal 125 mtrs. depth with reverse Rotary Rig.).	36,11,067/-	62000/-	400/-	Three Month
2.	Providing **LIS to Okhoo in GP Lug da Ghat** in Tehsil Ramshehar District Solan (HP) (Sub Head:- Providing Site development for construction of Pump House-cum-attendant quarter as per standard design, Construction of sumpwell 36000 litrs capacity, Providing laying jointing testing of Rising main 200 mm dia MSERW flanged pipe, supply and erection of pumping machinery with aliied accessories, Providing laying HDPE pipe in Distribution system, construction of main delivery tank, construction of out lets 15 Nos., construction of boundary wall around the pump house, provision of electricity in pump house).	1,43,96,723/-	176500/-	1500/-	One Year

1. Last date of filing / uploading the tender through e-tendering: **- 09-02-2022upto 11:00 AM.** The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website www.hpiph.org.

Executive Engineer,
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Date: 20.01.2022

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For further details/purchase of Tender document, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above works, please contact Office of the Sr. DEE/ TRD/SECR/Bilaspur or refer/ download Tender document which is available on our website **www.ireps.gov.in.**

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RISE	08:10	SET 19:17
THURSDAY, FEB. 03		
RISE	07:09	SET 18:02
RISE	08:49	SET 20:21
FRIDAY, FEB. 04		
RISE	07:08	SET 18:03
RISE	09:24	SET 21:23

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	21	07
Safdarjang	21	07
Palam	18	09

Delhi Palam Today
23ºC Moderate to dense fog likely during the cold morning. A pleasanr day with light winds. Clouding may increase towards night.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
20ºC The cold day conditions are likely. Wind speed will be strong. Few spells of rain and thundershower will occur over many places of the city.

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THE HINDU
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NDA allies field BJP leaders to counter SP caste coalition

Strategy aimed at leveraging Nishad, Kurmi support bases

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

New entrants from the Opposition parties as well as leaders associated with the BJP are being fielded by it on the symbol of its two OBC-based allies – the Nishad Party and Apna Dal (Sonelal) – as the party crafts a strategy to capitalise on their Nishad and Kurmi support bases to counter the Samajwadi Party-led alliance's caste mobilisation.

Of the four candidates declared so far by the Nishad Party, three are associated with the BJP while one had recently joined the party. The BJP had lost three out of these four seats in 2017.

In Katehari in Ambedkar Nagar, the Nishad Party has fielded Awadesh Dwivedi, who as a BJP candidate had stood second in the last election. Mr. Dwivedi is a former district vice-president of the BJP. In Tamkuhiraj in Kushinagar, the Nishad Party's candidate is Asim Kumar. Mr. Kumar, a doctor, said he has been the local convener of the BJP's Chiktisa Prakosth (medical cell) since 2014. "I am a BJP worker," he said.

In Azamgarh's Atrauliya seat, the Nishad Party has fielded Prashant Kumar Singh. An architect, Mr. Singh was not a formal member of the BJP but according to his family members he was active in the BJP with his uncle, a former BJP district president.

Former MLA Rashmi Arya, who shifted to the BJP earlier in January, has been fielded by the Apna Dal (S) from Mauranipur in Jhansi. She had stood second on an SP symbol in 2017.

In 2017, Katehari was won by Lalji Verma of the BSP, who is now contesting on a SP symbol. Congress state president Ajay Kumar Lallu is the sitting MLA from Tamkuhiraj in Kushinagar while Atrauliya is held by the SP's Sangram Yadav. Atrauliya has a substantial population of the riverine Nishad communities and contesting on the symbol of the Nishad Party helps the BJP-alliance mobilise voters of these communities.

The Apna Dal (S) has also fielded Haider Ali Khan, a member of the erstwhile Rampur royalty from Suar seat in Rohilkhand against Abdullah Azam, the son of senior SP leader Azam Khan.

The Apna Dal (S) has also declared candidates in Ghatampur in Kanpur and Kaimganj in Farukkhabad. In Ghatampur, the party has fielded Saroj Kureel who had secured a second spot in 2017. In Kaimganj, the Apna Dal has declared Surabhi as its candidate.

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Protesters defy junta order in Myanmar

Going up against military's will, they hold silent strike, clapping protests to mark coup anniversary

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
YANGON

Anti-coup protesters across Myanmar defied a junta order not to mark the first anniversary of the military's power-grab with a silent strike and clapping protests on Tuesday.

The military takeover that ended the Southeast Asian country's brief democratic interlude and toppled civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi has triggered mass protests and a crackdown on dissent.

Residents across commercial hub Yangon and in the second city of Mandalay clapped en masse at 4 p.m. (1500 IST), *AFP* correspondents and locals said, marking the end of a "silent strike" against the coup.

"We were clapping," one Mandalay resident said. "Other houses in my neighbourhood clapped as well."

Grim reminder: Activists and monks participating in an anti-military protest in Mandalay, Myanmar on Tuesday. ▪ AP

The junta had ordered shops to stay open on Tuesday but the streets of Yangon began emptying at 10 a.m., a scene that was repeated in Mandalay and the southern Tanintharyi region.

Ten persons were arrested for taking part in the clapping protest in Yangon.

Ahead of the anniversary, the junta had threatened to seize businesses that shutter and warned that noisy rallies or sharing anti-military "propaganda" could lead to treason or terrorism charges.

On Tuesday morning, local media showed isolated flashmobs in Yangon and Mandalay, where protesters unfurled pro-democracy banners and set off flares.

Photos released by the junta's information team on Tuesday painted a picture of normalcy in the country.

Two persons killed

Two persons were killed and 38 injured in a grenade attack on a pro-military rally in eastern Myanmar, a security official said. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack.

The United States, Britain and Canada unveiled coordinated sanctions on Myanmar officials on Monday, including those involved in the trial of ousted leader Suu Kyi.

Washington sanctioned Attorney General Thida Oo, Supreme Court Chief Justice Tun Tun Oo and Anti-Corruption Commission chairman Tin Oo, all of whom it said were closely involved in the "politically motivated" prosecution of Suu Kyi.

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Myanmar said the international community needed to do more.

Suu Kyi has been detained since the coup, and faces a raft of charges, and faces over 100 years in jail.

The day before the anniversary the junta announced the Nobel laureate will face a new trial for electoral fraud during 2020 polls in which her National League for Democracy party trounced a military-backed rival.

Russia's envoy thanks India, others, over Ukraine stand

UNSC discussion was 'nothing but a PR stunt': Polyanskiy

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

After India abstained from a procedural vote calling for a discussion on Ukraine – initiated by the U.S. – at the UN Security Council (UNSC) on Monday, First Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the UN Dmitry Polyanskiy thanked the country publicly. New Delhi finds itself attempting to balance the interests of both its partners – Washington and Moscow – in the unfolding situation along Ukraine's borders.

"As we expected, it [the discussion] was nothing but a PR stunt, classic example of 'megaphone diplomacy'. No facts, only allegations and unsubstantiated claims. U.S. diplomacy at its worst [thumbs down symbol]," Mr. Polyanskiy said on Twitter.

"Thanks to 4 of our colleagues," he said, posting symbols of the flags of China, India, Kenya and Gabon, "who were brave to withstand U.S. hand-twisting before the vote."

China voted against the motion to discuss the matter, while the other three countries abstained.

Mr. Polyanskiy's tweet also retweeted (i.e., responded to) tweets from his American counterpart, Linda-Thomas-Greenfield, who said the U.S. had brought the issue to the UNSC to "prevent a crisis before it is upon us".

Russia has amassed 1,00,000 troops along Ukraine's borders but denies allegations by the West, led by the U.S., that it is planning another invasion of Ukraine. It has sought guarantees from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), that it will not expand to include Ukraine , and that it will rollback its presence and operations in Eastern Europe.

Although it abstained on the vote on Monday, India, via its Permanent Representative to the U.N., T.S. Tirumurti, called for an "immediate de-escalation of tensions" taking into account the security concerns of all parties. It also called for " quiet and constructive diplomacy."

UN blames Taliban for two missing journalists

2 women activists disappeared earlier

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

The Taliban have arrested two Afghan journalists working for a local news channel, rights groups and the United Nations said on Tuesday, weeks after two women activists went missing.

The Afghan Media Association – a newly formed journalists' rights group – said *Ariana TV* reporters Waris Hasrat and Aslam Hijab were picked up by the Taliban on Monday "and taken to an unknown location".

Without naming the Taliban, an official at *Ariana* said the reporters were seized by masked gunmen in front of the channel's office as they went out for lunch.

But he said Taliban officials "have assured us of a comprehensive investigation".

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also expressed concern over their whereabouts.

"UN urges Taliban to make public why they detained these ArianaNews reporters and to respect Afghans' rights," it said on Twitter.

Amnesty International, meanwhile, demanded on Twitter that the Taliban "unconditionally and immediately" release the pair.

A Taliban spokesman told AFP he had no information on the missing journalists.

Missing women

A fortnight ago, two women activists went missing after taking part in a demonstration in Kabul calling for women's rights.

On Tuesday the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern for them and four of their relatives, who are also missing.

U.S. law school puts faculty on leave after 'lesser black woman' comment

Ilya Shapiro criticised Biden's move to name a black woman to Supreme Court

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

One of the U.S.'s most prestigious law schools, the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington DC, has put an incoming faculty member, Ilya Shapiro, on administrative leave, while his Twitter comments are investigated. Mr. Shapiro, who was due to start work on Tuesday as a senior lecturer and the executive director of the school's constitutional law centre, had said President Joe Biden's intention to appoint the first black woman to the Supreme Court would necessarily mean that a top-quality candidate was not being selected as a 'lesser black woman' would be chosen. "Objectively best pick for Biden is Sri Srinivasan, who is solid prog & v smart [solid, progressive and very smart]," Mr. Shapiro

Ilya Shapiro

had tweeted on last Wednesday. "Even has identity politics benefit of being first Asian (Indian) American. But alas doesn't fit into latest intersectionality hierarchy so we'll get lesser black woman. Thank heaven for small favors? " Mr. Shapiro wrote.

Chandigarh-born Mr. Srinivasan is currently the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. There was some media speculation during the first Obama administration that Mr. Srinivasan was in the running for a Supreme Court seat.

Objecting to Mr. Shapiro's tweet last week, the law school's Black Law Students Association wrote on Friday, on behalf of students at the school, asking that Mr. Shapiro's appointment be rescinded. They said Mr. Shapiro's comments were racist and misogynistic and that he had a history of publicly "discounting and degrading" non-white women. Their letter cited the case of Justice Sonia Sotomayor of the U.S. Supreme Court. Mr. Shapiro had written in 2009 that former President Obama had shown that identity politics mattered more to him than merit in picking Ms. Sotomayor. The association also said Mr. Shapiro's comments put Black and South Asian communities against each other "in furtherance of white supremacy."

"I apologize. I meant no offense, but it was an inartful tweet. I have taken it down," Mr. Shapiro said on Thursday about his tweet. "I regret my poor choice of words," he said in another post, saying this had undermined his underlying message, which was that someone should not be discriminated against on the basis of immutable characteristics. "Ilya Shapiro's tweets are antithetical to the work that we do here every day to build inclusion, belonging, and respect for diversity," dean Bill Treanor said, as he announced that Mr. Shapiro would be placed on administrative leave pending an investigation into whether he violated university policy.

Japan adopts resolution on China rights situation

Hong Kong, Uighur issues part of list

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Japan's parliament on Tuesday passed a rare resolution expressing concern about rights issues in China, including the treatment of its Uighur Muslim population and the city of Hong Kong, days before the Beijing Olympics open.

The wording of the resolution proposed by a bipartisan group was reportedly watered down after lengthy discussions, avoiding directly accusing Beijing of rights abuses.

Toeing carefully

But it comes at a time of increased focus on China's rights record as the country prepares to host the Beijing Winter Olympics this month.

Tokyo has sought to walk a careful line in its approach to China, balancing the pressure put on Beijing by close ally Washington.

Lawmakers supporting the resolution in Japan's parliament on Tuesday.

A majority vote in the lower house approved the resolution, which expresses "serious concerns over the human rights situations" in China's Xinjiang region, Tibet, Hong Kong and Inner Mongolia.

The resolution also calls on Japan's government to engage constructively on rights issues in China. In response, Beijing slammed the resolution as a "serious political provocation".

ELSEWHERE

Norway court denies mass murderer parole

OSLO

A Norway court rejected a request for parole from neo-Nazi Anders Behring Breivik 10 years after he was convicted of killing 77 people in the country's deadliest peacetime attack. "There is a clear risk that (Breivik) will resume the behaviour that led to the July 22nd 2011 attacks," the court said. AFP

Amnesty labels Israel an 'apartheid state'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JERUSALEM

Amnesty International on Tuesday labelled Israel an "apartheid" state that treats Palestinians as "an inferior racial group," joining the assessment of other rights groups which the Jewish state vehemently rejects.

"Israel's cruel policies of segregation, dispossession and exclusion across all territories under its control clearly amount to apartheid," Amnesty's secretary general Agnes Callamard said.

"Whether they live in Gaza, east Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, or Israel itself, Palestinians are treated as an inferior racial group and systematically deprived of their rights."

Israeli policies met the criteria for apartheid under international law.

Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid strongly rejected the claims as "divorced from reality".

New York-based Human Rights Watch in April last year became the first major international rights group to publicly level the controversial allegation.

Amnesty stressed it was not comparing Israel's treatment of Palestinians with conditions in apartheid-era South Africa but said Israeli policies met the criteria for the crime of apartheid under international law.

Israel's Foreign Ministry has called on Amnesty to "withdraw" the report.

Mr. Lapid charged that Amnesty had an anti-Semitic agenda.

Ms. Callamard countered that "a critique of the practice of the State of Israel is absolutely not a form of anti-Semitism.

Briefing reporters on Tuesday, Ms. Callamard also dismissed charges that Amnesty "was singling out" Israel, highlighting the group's work on Israel's arch foe Iran and on China, among other places.

Chinese, French firms ink Uganda oil deal

$10 billion project invites wrath of environmental groups

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KAMPALA

Chinese and French oil giants sealed a landmark $10 billion deal on Tuesday to develop Uganda's energy resources and build a vast regional oil pipeline, a mega-project that has incensed environmental groups.

The so-called Final Investment Decision was announced at a ceremony in Kampala by the heads of France's TotalEnergies and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC).

"Today is the day we commit to invest $10 billion in the Tilenga and Kingfisher projects and the 1,443-km long pipeline," TotalEnergies chairman and CEO Patrick Pouyanne said.

The project aims to exploit the huge crude oil reserves at Lake Albert, a 160-kilometre (100-mile) natural border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Lake Albert lies atop an estimated 6.5 billion barrels of crude, of which about 1.4 billion barrels are currently considered recoverable. In Uganda, the drilling is located in several natural reserves, one of which extends to Murchison Falls.

The pipeline project would be "displacing thousands of households, endangering water resources for millions of Ugandans and Tanzanians, devastating vulnerable ecosystems," campaign group *350Africa.org*'s regional director Landry Ninteretse said in a statement.

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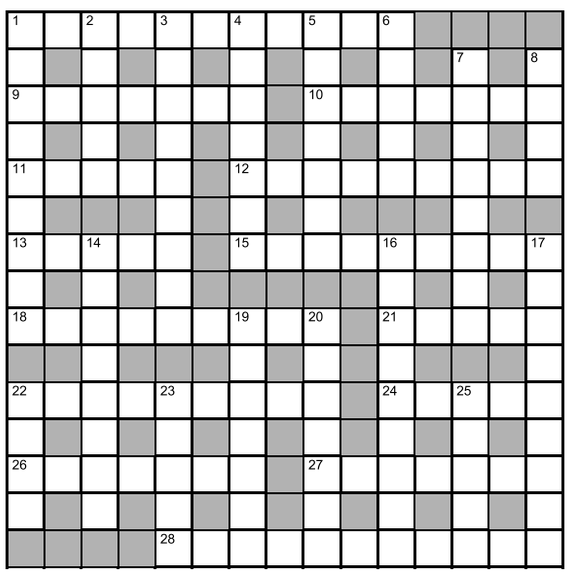


ACROSS

1 Issue with one bar, fighting in a capital (6,5)
9 Irritable about pub counter and floor (7)
10 Married felon, criminal first kidnaps male members (7)
11 Missus hibernating inside with a dish (5)
12 Manage purse, essentially money distributed to second place holders (7-2)
13 Cover the contents, it's open (5)
15 Watching almost diligently perhaps, a temporary camp (9)
18 Isolate oracle without purpose (9)
21 Indifferent gesture to a piece of clothing? (5)
22 One featuring in Tom's new programme is disregardable (9)
24 Everywhere veteran's blocked by a wall, say (5)
26 Preadolescent or teen? Internally weak, that is to say (7)
27 God! No one is retreating – destruction (7)
28 Catch match (11)

DOWN

1 Watches baseball catchers (9)
2 British archaeologist on electric vehicle with son (5)
3 Dungeon? Yes in Paris, lawyer is trapped with setter essentially (9)
4 Country artists behind gates (7)
5 Dynasty – perhaps Italian, very old – in ascendance (7)
6 As son's home, hundred engagements primarily (5)
7 Do without wafers or bananas... (8)
8 ... avoid sugar first and sleep (4)
14 Starting late, nobleman is detained by English knight, king and interrogator (8)
16 River rose alarmingly at bank (9)
17 Joined tense knight, one at battles essentially (5-4)
19 Propose a high-class representation (7)
20 To choose again, roll dice (half of it) spin, half of it (2-5)
22 Promise a way to give up power for nothing (4)
23 Boost? Hear it's tea on item catalogue to begin with (5)
25 Instrument to flip moon inside? Wow (5)

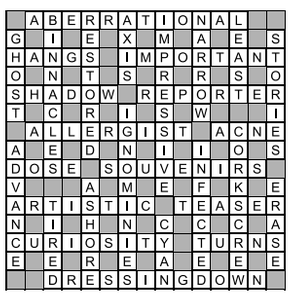
SUDOKU

		8					3	1
	9		1	8	3		2	
					5			7
	1		8	5	6	4		
8								5
		2	9	3	4		1	
2			3					
	3		7	4	8		6	
4	6					1		

No.SS5336 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 13468



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	6	4	7	2	5	3	8	9
3	7	9	1	8	6	5	4	2
2	5	8	4	9	3	1	7	6
7	2	6	3	4	1	9	5	8
8	1	3	2	5	9	7	6	4
9	4	5	8	6	7	2	1	3
5	8	1	9	3	4	6	2	7
4	9	7	6	1	2	8	3	5
6	3	2	5	7	8	4	9	1

FAITH

The tranquil soul

The Bhagavata Purana highlights the hallmarks of many devout souls who have strived to attain realisation through intense prayer, yoga and bhakti. Dhruva got instruction from Narada and attained the grace of the Lord even within a short period. In the line of Dhruva's progeny, one of his sons Utkala is by nature a realised soul who is not deluded by the attractions of the world and is not keen on taking the mantle of kingship.

Utkala, like great sages in meditation, exemplifies the truth that there is no greater wealth than atma swaroopa meditation, pointed out Sri Kesava Dikshitar in a discourse. From time immemorial man has been engaged in seeking his identity. Among all types of births, human birth alone provides the fortunate experience to each one to strive to seek one's true identity. Who is the 'I' in our form as a human entity? Is the 'I' the body, prana, mind, indriyas, buddhi or atma? Intuitively one knows that the atma within is not as tangible as the mind, intellect, prana, etc, about which we are aware to a certain extent. But the atma swaroopa jnana is gained only through the Vedas and the sastras.

Atma swaroopa awareness is very precious as it is powerful to destroy all other delusions. It is the source of jnana and confers the state of 'Sama darsana,' a harmonised vision, where all differences get dissolved. To such a person there is no question of high or low. There is no difference in his perception between a learned or a foolish person, a cow or an elephant or a dog, etc. He sees only the underlying reality of oneness in the entire creation that is the result of his insight into the reality of things. Knowing the value of atma swaroopa awareness and meditation, Utkala rejected kingship and wished to engage in this quest.

THE HINDU

OPPORTUNITIES

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT • JOBS • TECHNOLOGY

A pandemic effect: 'Chore dynamics in dual income Indian households changing'

A new study reveals that a growing number of women professionals now benefit noticeably from division of chores at home, but notes that the percentage is still on the lower side

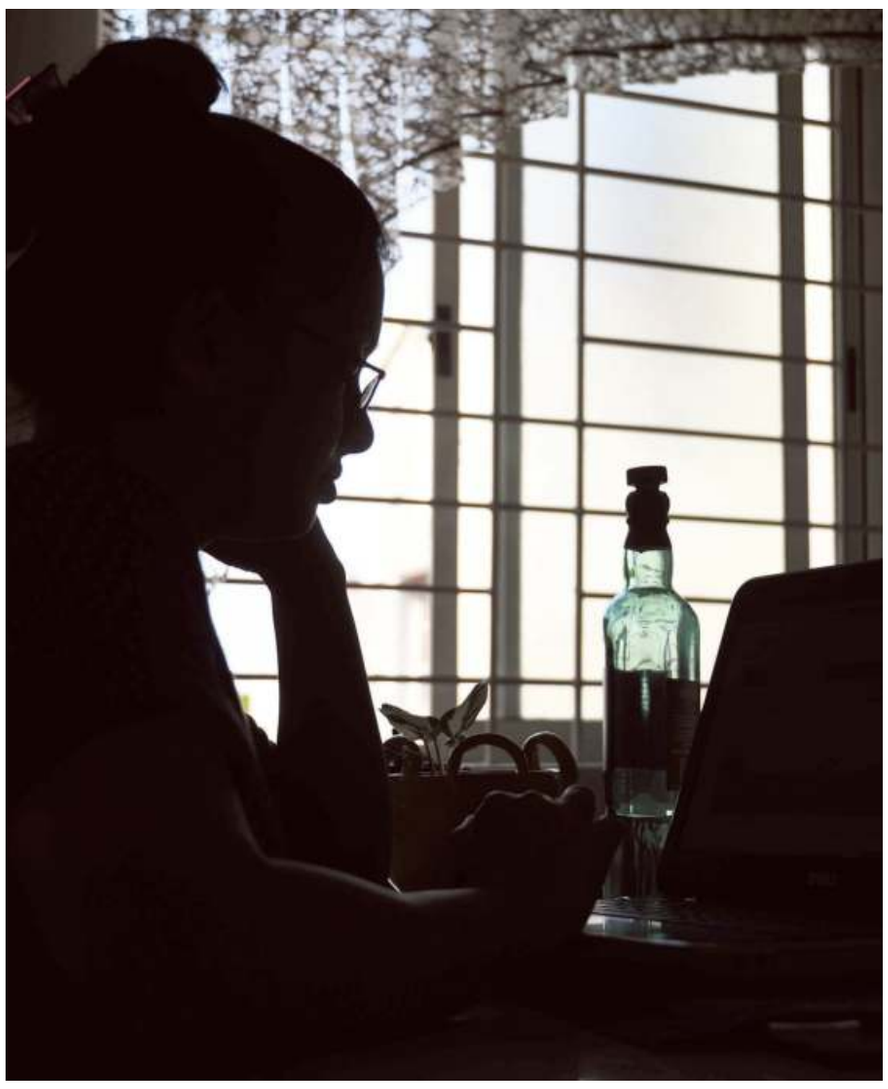
PRINCE FREDERICK

Remote work has the flexibility of a pop tube, twisty and lending itself to be manipulated into many shapes. Free of the leaden weight of the daily commute and other work-related frills, remote work can arm-twist time into serving the employee better, professionally and personally. Now, a pop tube can get elongated, when attached to other pop tubes, two directly and many others indirectly. This facet of a pop tube illustrates the bane of remote work. It is a bane particularly felt by women, as they are labelled the primary care giver in most households. With interruptions from the hearth, the office work when done at home can wind on like an elongated pop tube – excruciatingly so – for women professionals.

So, as the findings of a predictive analytics study by Avtar – Status of Women's Workforce Participation in India in 2022 – argue that the formalisation of remote work would positively impact women's participation in the workforce, this question clamours to be asked.

What happens when the family offloads a truckload of chores on the woman professional? Did the study grapple with this question?

"In 2020, when Avtar looked into the gender differentials of the remote work experience amongst professionals – as part of its annual research report VIEWPORT 2020 – equal percentages of men and women (68%) reported feeling overwhelmed with the new ways of working. Basis data emerging from VIEWPORT 2021, Avtar's annual research on Chore dynamics in Indian households, we observed that 22% women in dual income households shared an equal division of household chores with their spouses/partners (2-5 hours on an average per day). So, the pandemic and associated disruptions have led to a change in narrative, which – if our society (and families) are to honour the learnings – can help increase women's workforce participation in India," notes Saundarya Rajesh, founder and president of Avtar.



Representational image. PHOTO: SAMPATH KUMAR G P

The predictive analytics study by Avtar has crunched numbers from Working Mothers and Avtar Best Companies for Women in India studies conducted from 2016 to 2021, along with projections for 2022.

Six positive trends

From data about industry-wise women's workforce participation in the said period, new work policies in Indian companies and their recent diversity track record, the study has thrown up women's workforce participation (WWP) scenarios in 2022 and beyond.

The predictive picture presents a landscape of hope with its contours largely defined by six positive trends. One, an increasing number of companies are formalising remote work. Two, a greater focus on POSH by organisations will hugely reduce attrition among women employees due to safety concerns. Three, an increase in organisations offering paternity leave will make the field less uneven in terms of care-giving responsibilities. Four, women will benefit hugely from care-giver policies framed by their companies.

Five, greater emphasis on formalising second-career tracks for women in corporate India. Six, male allyship programmes to promote careers of women professionals are gaining greater mind-space now in Indian companies.

Top three sectors

A key finding is that "Close to 3.8 lakh companies are expected to offer remote work in 2022 (this is almost double the number of companies offering the same in 2016)"

Another significant observation: "Consulting, IT/ITES and BFSI will be the top three industries to engage with some talent in 2022".

While talking percentages, consulting seems to have trumped the IT/ITES sector in terms of gender inclusion intent.

Saundarya explains: "The trends are indicative of the gender ratios in these sectors – so it is an expression of gender inclusion intent in the industries, which is growing at a faster pace in Consulting as against IT/ITES. However, in terms of the total number of women hired, IT/ITES is the biggest sectorial employer of women with women being hired last year versus women in management consulting."

New geographies

There is a trend now of companies, particularly those in the IT sector, looking for talent in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, largely because of the greater currency gained by remote and hybrid work models.

> The predictive analytics study lists six trends that are going to increase women's participation in the workforce in 2022 and beyond

In this arrangement, the candidates are spared the inconvenience of relocating to a new geography as they can either work from home, or report to the nearest feeder office, a few days in a month.

This arrangement would do much for women balancing personal and professional commitments. Is there a pronounced trend of companies reserving a percentage of such jobs for women candidates to promote diversity?

Says Saundarya: "We have observed as much as 35% of the positions that came to us were from companies seeking women candidates in roles such as IT: Testing, Developer, Consultant, PM, BA, Engineer and Infra roles.

Also, Tier 2 and 3 cities have indeed become geographies of focus with the possibilities of a remote, distributed workforce.

Over the last two years, close to half of Working Mother & Avtar Best Companies for Women in India have extended their focus to talent in these cities' locations."

A new portal for project management professionals

Project Management Institute launches Career Connect 'to bridge the talent gap'

LIFFY THOMAS

Project Management Institute (PMI), a not-for-profit global organisation that offers courses and certifications for project managers, has launched a portal to connect professionals with organisations looking for project management talent.

Launched recently, 'Career Connect' – https://www.pmi.org.in/career-connect/ – has listings across sectors.

Srini Srinivasan, regional managing director - South Asia, PMI, said the portal would seek to bridge the talent gap in project management.

"As per PMI's Talent Gap research, the global economy needs 25 million new project management professionals by 2030. In India and South Asia, this number is 2.3 million," said Srinivasan.

If not filled by 2030, this talent gap could result in a loss of US$ 345.5 billion in global GDP, with $28.1 billion in South Asia alone, said the report.

Srinivasan noted that in India, PMI had 6,55,000 certified professionals. He pointed out that to create awareness about project management and also to impart basic skills to students, PMI with its various chapters had been reaching out to schools and colleges.

"For instance, our Chennai chapter has created content in Tamil to take to school students in rural Tamil Nadu. Our Kerala chapter has programmes for high school students," said Srinivasan.

"The sooner we can get young people to appreciate the value of effective project management skills, the better."

PMI has courses that fit into various time windows: from a four-hour crash course to a three-year degree programme.

What are the crucial post-pandemic skills for project managers?

"Business acumen, technical project management skills and the ability to collaborate remotely are essential in a post-COVID world. These skills have always been there but never more critical than now," he said. "Today organisations want their project management professionals to understand the business aspect of why a project is being taken up and not just the mechanics of running it.

They want the project managers to be able to speak the language of the customer and make things happen in a more flexible and creative way."

Applications invited for start-up programme

E-commerce marketplace Flipkart has opened applications for the second cohort of its flagship start-up programme.

While Flipkart Leap Ahead (FLA) will provide equity-based investments to startups across sectors in the country, Flipkart Leap Innovation Network (FLIN) will enable companies in various stages of growth to enter into commercial partnerships with Flipkart's technology teams.

Both FLA and FLIN would support the startups through insights, mentorship and funding while helping them scale and build disruptive innovations, said a release.

The release added that the startups in FLIN would get to participate in workshops with Flipkart and industry experts.

The applications are open until February 28, 2022.

For more details, visit https://www.flipkartleap.com/

'60% of MNC leaders have LGBTQ+ inclusion goals'

Randstad India, which operates in the HR services industry, has partnered with Randstad RiseSmart, a talent mobility solutions provider and Women's Web, a website for women, to launch an exclusive study on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I).

Titled 'Inclusion without Exception', the study revealed that 60% of MNC leaders were LGBTQ+ immersive in terms of inclusion goals in their leadership, says a press release about the study.

The study found only 9.5% of the surveyed organisations to have made extremely significant efforts to be LGBTQ+ inclusive (of which majority were MNCs), while 21.4% took only average efforts and a vast majority – 69.2% –took very limited efforts to be truly inclusive in their organisational approach. Reflecting similar sentiments, close to 70% of the study respondents felt there had been no significant efforts in the direction of LGBTQ+ inclusion in their respective organisations. Among those respondents who believe changes have been significant, 70% work with MNCs, says the release.

When it comes to consciously hiring people from LGBTQ+ community, the survey shows that a very small fraction (23%) are actually putting in such efforts, mostly from the MNCs (62%). Moreover, most of these hirings take place at the junior (33%) and middle level (31%). The study also reveals the top 4 levers of motivation for MNCs towards their D&I targets - commitment at global level, higher budgets for inclusion, role models in leadership and attracting better talent. Additionally, 36% of the surveyed organisations mentioned that they turned to external communities for inclusion support while 40% indicated that they already provided training for reducing hiring biases towards LGBTQ+ workgroups. While this is a welcome change in the right direction, on the flip side, 53% of the surveyed organisations stated that they did not have career development opportunities for people from the LGBTQ+ community.

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NOTIFICATION
GA5/278/2022 Dt: 01.02.2022
Applications are invited for various teaching posts in the Faculties of **Fisheries Engineering and Fisheries Science**. Details of the posts, qualifications and other eligibility criteria are available in the University website (**www.kufos.ac.in**).
Last date for the receipt of applications is on **04.03.2022**.
(By order of Hon'ble Vice Chancellor)
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GENERAL

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- CONSULTANT PAEDIATRIC OPHTHALMOLOGY - Sankara Eye Hospital, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.
- CONSULTANT / REGISTRAR PAEDIATRIC OPHTHALMOLOGY - Sankara Eye Hospital, Anand, Gujarat.
- CONSULTANT VITREO RETINA & PAEDIATRIC OPHTHALMOLOGY - Sankara Eye Hospital, Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- CONSULTANT CATARACT - Sankara Eye Hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab.

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Location : South Delhi Corporate Office (in future, likely to be relocated to Gurugram)

Managing Partners

Age below 38 years.
Ideal candidates will be B.Tech from an IIT and MBA from a premier college in India / Abroad. Prior demonstrated experience of independently handling a venture or a profit centre is a pre-requisite. **This is a C level entrepreneurial position.**

Traits & Personality :
You are a perfect Hipster, a Hacker and a Hustler. You understand education intuitively and have the ability to enthral large audience. You lead from the front.

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Locations : Positions exist at FIITJEE Centres* pan India & Abroad

Territory Business Head (Strategy, Branding & Sales)

Age 28 to 35 years.
Ideal candidates will be B.Tech from an IIT and MBA from a premier college in India / Abroad. 2 to 4 years of experience in a similar profile is a pre-requisite. **This is an entrepreneurial position.**

Traits & Personality :
You are a relentless Hustler and have demonstrated success in a role entailing Strategy, Branding & Sales. You have deep understanding of competitive & scholastic exams like Jr. Science Olympiad, NTSE, KVPY, JEE Main, JEE Advanced & Olympiads. You have the ability to lead seminars in front of a large audience & mesmerise them.

Locations : Positions exist at FIITJEE Centres* pan India & Abroad

Chief of Strategy & New Initiatives

Age below 45 years.
You should have demonstrated capabilities in handling new projects requiring total strategy development. You are basically a Hipster & a Hacker who Hustles to see the projects to success. You should have worked with companies such as Bain & Company, BCG, McKinsey, Big 4 firms or a high growth company in a similar capacity. **This is a C level entrepreneurial position.**

Location : South Delhi Corporate Office (in future, likely to be relocated to Gurugram)

National Head – Academic Delivery & Strategic Result Assurance

Age below 45 years.
The candidate must be MBA from a reputed college in India / Abroad. You must have demonstrated capability in Strategic Planning & its relentless execution. You understand Education intuitively and have thorough understanding of preparing for Jr. Science Olympiad, NTSE, KVPY, JEE Main, JEE Advanced & Olympiads, along with school studies in a synergistic manner. **This is a C level entrepreneurial position.**

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Location : Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi (in future, likely to be relocated to Gurugram)

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ND-NDE

Ashwin, Dhawan, Shreyas opt for highest base price

Authorities announce final list of 590 cricketers who will hope to go under the hammer

IPL AUCTION

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Forty-eight players, including nine former Indian Premier League (IPL) captains, have opted for the highest base price of ₹2 crore for the Player Auction, scheduled to be held in Bengaluru on February 12 and 13. The IPL authorities on Tuesday announced the final list of 590 cricketers who will hope to go under the hammer for a maximum of 217 slots available in the auction.

Money matters: While the likes of Ashwin, Dhawan, and Shreyas have aimed for the maximum, Morgan has played it safe. Among uncapped players Padikkal has chosen to cash in on his performances. ▪FILE PHOTOS

Former captains

The nine former captains include India's R. Ashwin, Shikhar Dhawan, Suresh Raina, Dinesh Karthik, Shreyas Iyer and Bhuvneshwar Kumar along with the Australian duo of David Warner and Steve Smith and Caribbean all-rounder Dwayne Bravo.

While some of the stand-in IPL captains, including Bravo and Bhuvneshwar, have opted for the highest bracket, some of the more regular and successful IPL captains like Eoin Morgan (₹1.5 crore) and Ajinkya Rahane (₹1 crore) have preferred to enter with a lesser assured price tag.

With two new teams – Lucknow Super Giants and the yet to be named Ahmedabad franchise – having been added to the IPL fold, the auction is likely to see fierce bidding for some of the rising stars in Indian cricket besides the seasoned pros.

No surprise

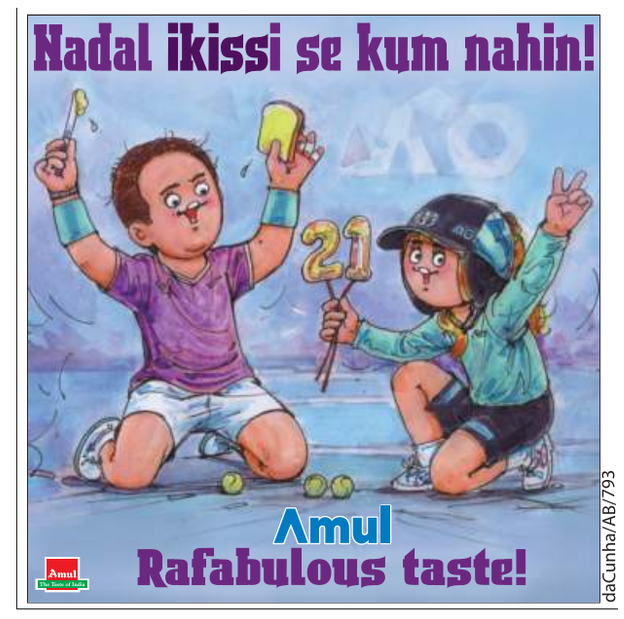
As a result, it is not surprising to see the likes of Shardul Thakur and Ishan Kishan having entered the auction with ₹2 crore base price. Among the domestic uncapped cricketers, Karnataka's Devdutt Padikkal has chosen the highest price bracket.

Of the 590 shortlisted for the auction, 370 are Indians while the remaining 220 cricketers hail from 14 different countries.

Slots available: 217
Number of players in the fray: 590
- India 370, Australia 47, West Indies 34, South Africa 33, England 24, New Zealand 24, Sri Lanka 23, Afghanistan 17, Bangladesh 5, Ireland 5, Namibia 3, Scotland 2, Zimbabwe 1, Nepal 1, USA 1)

Pruned list

The list was pruned from 1217 players who had registered themselves for the preliminary list based on the franchises' preferences.



Pragg faces world's elite

CHESS

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Fresh from his debut in the elite Tata Steel tournament, R. Praggnanandhaa will return to face the world's elite, including World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen, in the $150,000 Airthings Masters online rapid chess tournament from February 19.

The event kicks off the $1.6 million Meltwaters Champions Chess Tour with a revised format and points system. It features several top-10 players like Ding Liren, Ian Nepomniatchi, Levon Aronian, Anish Giri and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov.

The players: Magnus Carlsen (Nor), Ding Liren (Chn), Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus), Levon Aronian (USA), Anish Giri (Ned), Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (Azr), Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol).

Andrey Esipenko (Rus), Liem Quang Le (Vtn), Vladislav Artemiev (Rus), Vincent Keymer (Ger), Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb), Hans Niemann (USA), R. Praggnanandhaa (Ind), Eric Hansen (Can) and Alexandra Kosteniuk (Rus).

TV PICKS

Tata Open Maharashtra: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 1 p.m.
U-19 World Cup: second semifinal, India vs Australia, SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.
ISL: Star Sports 3, 7.30 p.m.
Pro Kabaddi: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. onwards

IN BRIEF

76ers post win

LOS ANGELES

Philadelphia 76ers won its fifth straight game with a 122-119 overtime victory over the Memphis Grizzlies in the NBA on Monday. AFP

Mihika in quarterfinals

JHAJJAR:

Top seed Mihika Yadav sailed past Ira Shah 6-1, 6-3 in the pre-quarterfinals of the ₹100,000 AITA ranking women's tennis tournament at the Joygaon Academy on Tuesday.

The results (pre-quarterfinals): Mihika Yadav bt Ira Shah 6-1, 6-3; Gayathri Angam bt Nancy Malik 6-4, 6-3; Ishwari Matere bt Riya Uboveja 6-1, 6-4; Anahat Pannu bt Jostna Madane 6-0, 6-3; Samriti Punyani bt Pragati Solankar 6-1, 7-6(6); Sudipta Senthilkumar bt Gauri Mangaonkar 6-1, 7-5; Shanu Agarwal bt Khushi Gulati 6-1, 6-0.

Hardik non-committal about bowling workload

Insists that he sees himself as an all-rounder and not just a batter

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

On the cusp of starting a new chapter in his career, Hardik Pandya, the captain of the newly-inducted Ahmedabad franchise in the Indian Premier League (IPL), continued to keep his cards close to his chest about resuming to bowl at full tilt.

"It's a surprise for everyone," Hardik said on Tuesday, when asked about the status on his bowling workload, during his first official interaction as the Ahmedabad franchise captain. Despite having had to compromise his bowling ever since suffering a chronic back injury during the 2018 Asia Cup, Hardik insisted that he sees himself as an allrounder and not just a batter.

"I have realised, me as an all-rounder gives a lot of options to the team and I have tried to remain an all-rounder. If something does not work out (with the ball), my batting is always there," Hardik said.

"For me, as an individual, Hardik Pandya who can bat and bowl sounds a lot better than just a batter."

Will he, won't he? Hardik Pandya is keeping his cards close to his chest about resuming bowling at full tilt. ▪FILE PHOTO

Hardik said that working with Ashish Nehra, who will take up his maiden assignment as the head coach of a franchise, was one of the main reasons for him to agree to join the Ahmedabad franchise.

Asked about his takeaways from Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma – the three captains under whose captaincy he has played at the highest level – Hardik didn't shy away from spelling out his wish list.

"From Virat I would pick his aggression, passion, energy which is tremendous to be honest. With Mahi bhai, I'll pick his composure, calmness, to be the same guy in every situation, trying to think what more he can add," Hardik said.

"And with Rohit, I would pick that he lets players decide what to do. I'll take these three qualities from them and I think it will be a very good combination."

Vikram Solanki, the former England batter who has joined as the director of cricket, stressed that the decision to rope in Hardik as captain was not just limited to his Gujarati roots.

"First and foremost, the reason we were very keen to get Hardik involved in a leadership capacity is because he is a phenomenal cricketer. His track record speaks for itself. His leadership qualities also speak for themselves in that he has been a proven winner with Mumbai," he said.

"He has won championships, he has conducted himself in exemplary fashion. We certainly look forward to having him lead our franchise. The local boy connection is a bit of cherry on top scenario. It's just worked out perfectly."

Ramkumar goes down fighting

Kadhe also exits after a tough three-setter

TATA OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE

Ramkumar Ramanathan and Arjun Kadhe were ousted in the opening round of Tata Open Maharashtra tennis tournament here on Tuesday, after hard-fought three-setters against their respective opponents.

While Ramkumar suffered a 6-7(7), 6-4, 3-6 defeat against eight seed Stefano Travaglia, local boy Kadhe was beaten 6-7(5), 7-6(4), 6-2 by Joao Sousa.

Getting through: Sousa overcame Kadhe's challenge. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Aggressive

Both Ramkumar and Travaglia looked in good touch as they played aggressively in an intense first set.

At 4-4, the Chennai-born player responded well and hit back hard to make it 6-5 before the set went into tiebreaker. Travaglia sealed the set with his big serves.

The top-ranked Indian took control of the second set with a 4-2 lead. He then snatched it quite comfortably in the end with a brilliant serve to level the scores at 1-1.

However, the World No. 93 Travaglia made a strong comeback in the decider to take 5-3 lead. Serving for the match, the Italian didn't let the momentum slip to pocket the set and the match.

Tough fight

Earlier, the 28-year-old Kadhe made former World No. 28 Sousa work hard for each point in nail-biting first two sets which went into tiebreak. However, the Indian's challenge came to an end after the Portuguese took the charge of the game in the final set and completed a convincing win.

The results (round of 32): Stefano Travaglia (Ita) bt Ramkumar Ramanathan 7-6(7), 4-6, 6-3; Joao Sousa (Por) bt Arjun Kadhe 6-7(5), 7-6(4), 6-2; Emil Ruusuvuori (Fin) bt Egor Gerasimov (Blr) 6-0, 7-6(11).

Bernabe Zapata Miralles (Esp) bt Denis Novak (Aut) 6-4, 6-1; Aleksandar Vukic (Aus) bt Hugo Grenier (Fra) 2-6, 6-2, 7-6(4); Vit Kopriva (Cze) bt Cem Ilkel (Tur) 6-4, 6-2; Kamil Majchrzak (Pol) bt Jay Clarke (GBr) 6-3, 7-5; Elias Ymer (Swe) bt Gian Marco Moroni (Ita) 7-5, 3-6, 6-4.

England makes 231 for six

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NORTH SOUND

Afghanistan dished out an impressive bowling display to restrict fancied England to 231 for six in the first semifinal match of the ICC U-19 World Cup here on Tuesday.

Seeking to script history by making their maiden U-19 World Cup final, Afghanistan continued its strong form with the bowlers producing yet another fine performance in the rain-interrupted match. As per DLS calculation, the adjusted target for Afghanistan remained 231 in 47 overs.

Noor Ahmad and Naveed Zadran led the attack with two wickets each while Nangeyalia Kharote and Izharulhaq Naveed chipped in with a wicket apiece after England chose to bat first.

Late fireworks from George Bell (56 n.o., 67b) and wicketkeepr Alex Horton (53 n.o., 36b) took England to a reasonable total as the duo smashed 95 runs for the unbroken seventh wicket stand from just 11.5 overs.

The scores: England 231/6 in 47 overs (George Thomas 50, George Bell 56 n.o., Alex Horton 53 n.o., Naveed Zadran 2/67, Noor Ahmad 2/32) vs Afghanistan.

It's India vs Australia in blockbuster match

Key player: India will look to Rajvardhan Hangargekar to continue his good show in the semifinal. ▪ICC-CRICKET.COM

U-19 WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COOLIDGE (ANTIGUA)

Heavyweights India and Australia will face off in a blockbuster Super League semifinal of the U-19 World Cup here on Wednesday, having beaten their opponents on the field and COVID-19 off it, on way to the last-four stage.

India's preparations for the age-group showpiece were impacted heavily by the virus, with hardly any national camps or tournaments in the last two years except the recent Asia Cup.

India is now back to full strength and in another good news, Nishant Sindhu has recovered from COVID-19 and will be available for selection for the all-important semifinal.

India has a strong batting presence with the likes of Harnoor Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Raj Bawa, who broke Shikhar Dhawan's record for the highest individual score by an Indian batter at the U-19 World Cup with his 162 not out against Uganda, shouldering the responsibility, besides skipper Dhull and Rasheed. In fact, it was Dhull who set the tone for the team with his soild 82 against South Africa in their tournament opener.

The bowling department is taken care of by left-arm pacer Ravi Kumar who wreaked havoc to leave Bangladesh struggling at 14/3, right-arm seamer Rajvardhan Hangargekar, spinners Vicky Ostwal and Kaushal Tambe, besides medium-pacer Bawa.

Australia will be on a high after its convincing win over Pakistan in the quarters.

Match starts at 6.30 p.m. IST.

Team's morale is good: Dhull

S. DIPAK RAGAV

Indian skipper Yash Dhull sounded confident ahead of the team's semifinal clash against Australia in the ICC Under-19 World Cup in Coolidge on Wednesday.

Despite the outbreak of Covid inside the squad after the first match against South Africa, the team managed to stay unbeaten in the tournament so far.

Dhull said, "The morale was good despite the Covid outbreak. We came back and felt like we were not away at all and we will play with a positive mindset." He also revealed that the team will have a full squad for selection.

Similarly, Australia has also been in good form with a thumping 119-run win over Pakistan in the quarterfinals. Australia's only loss came against Sri Lanka in which it struggled against left-arm spinner Dunith Wellalage who took five wickets.

It is an area that India will hope to exploit and the skipper said the spinners will play a key role in the match with the pitch expected to provide assistance as well.

"The spinners' role is important as they create pressure for us. (Vicky) Ostwal (left-arm spinner) gets good turn and bounce and will be effective on this pitch," said Dhull.

Sports budget allocation raised

Big gain for Khelo India; reduction in funds for SAI

GENERAL

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

In view of aiding India's preparations for the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games this year, the allocation for the Union Sports budget received an increase of ₹305.58 crore.

In the last budget, the allocation was ₹2596.14 which was later revised to ₹2757.02 crore. At present, it stands at a new high of ₹3062.60 crore. It is likely to be revised during the course of the financial year, depending on the requirements of sportspersons and suggestions from the National Sports Federations.

It is significant to note that there was no announcement of any increased allocation for training and preparation of the sportspersons.

The budget of Khelo India has been raised from last year's ₹657.71 crore to ₹974 crore – around 30 % of the entire sports budget.

Although the allocation for the National Sports Federations remains at ₹280 crore, the budget for National Sports Development is reduced to ₹16 crore, from ₹25 crore last year. The Sports Authority of India, which gained ₹160.41 crore to reach ₹660.41 last year, will now get ₹653 crore, a marginal reduction of ₹7.41 crore.

On the brighter side, the fund allocated for awards to sportspersons has seen a significant hike from ₹245 crore to ₹357 crore. There has been a small hike in incentives for sportspersons, with the budget fixed at ₹55 crore.

- There was no announcement of any increased allocation for training and preparation of the sportspersons

Surprisingly, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget speech mentioned Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC) for its huge potential to provide employment to the youth. She further announced that the AVGC promotion task force would be set up to recommend ways to realise this potential, build domestic capacity for serving out markets and the global demands.

DELHI ROUND-UP

Maulana Azad Club enters the final

Zehan Rawal picked up three wickets and Yuvansh and Sayam Sharma claimed two wickets each to help Maulana Azad Club (MAC) defeat Irfan Yusuf Pathan Academy (IYPA) by six wickets and enter the final of the first Dr. S.S. Sareen memorial trophy here.

The scores: IYPA 73 in 25 over (Zehan Rawal 3/10) lost to MAC 74/4 in 22 overs (Sunny Kumar 3/29).

Shivam, Atul shine

Man-of-the-match Shivam Tiwari claimed three wickets and Atul Gupta scored an unbeaten 70 as Dinesh Raj Academy beat Amar Singh Academy by six wickets in the first Pushpa under-17 cricket tournament.

The scores: Amar Singh Academy 155/9 in 40 overs (Karan Garg 31, Shivam Tiwari 3/28) lost to Dinesh Raj Academy 156/4 in 25.4 overs (Atul Gupta 70 n.o.).

Sabharwal excels

Gaurav Sabharwal top-scored with 72 as Uday Gupte Cricket Academy (UGCA) downed Ravi Kant Bhat Cricket Academy (RKBCA) by 13 runs in a league match of the Kragbuzz u-19 tournament.

The scores: UGCA 202/9 in 36 overs (Gaurav Sabharwal 72, Snehashish Saha 44, Aryan Dahiya 3/32) bt RKBCA 189 in 35 overs (Trinav Kumar 32, Eshaan 31, Siddhant Bansal 3/42).

SNAPSHOTS

India bests China again

MUSCAT

The Indian women's team continued to make waves in the FIH Pro League as it dished out yet another masterclass to beat China 2-1 and move to the top of the standings here on Tuesday.

The result: India 2 (Gurjit Kaur 3, 49) bt China 1 (Wang Shumin 39).

Giants and Bulls post wins

BENGALURU

Gujarat Giants beat defending champions Bengal Warriors 34-25 in a Pro Kabaddi League match on Tuesday. Ajay Kumar picked nine points and was supported by Pardeep Kumar with seven. In the second match, Bengaluru Bulls got the better of U.P. Yoddha 31-26.

Jesuraj is FC Goa's saviour

BAMBOLIM

Alexander Romario Jesuraj scored an equaliser a couple of seconds before the final whistle to help FC Goa share points with Odisha FC in ISL match here on Tuesday. Odisha had taken the lead through a penalty shortly after the hour mark through Jonathas Cristian.

The 1-1 draw helped Odisha climb above Chennaiyin FC and move up a rung, from eighth to seventh with 18 points after 14 games, in the 11-team table while Goa stayed on ninth with 15 from as many games.

The result: Odisha (Jonathas Cristian 61-pen) drew with FC Goa (Alexander Romario Jesuraj 90+4).

THE HINDU

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2022

Text & Context

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NEWS IN NUMBERS

Defence spending

5.25 In ₹ lakh crore was the defence allocation for FY2022-23 in the Union Budget. The defence budget had a major push on procurement of weapons and military platforms from domestic players as well as to involve them in defence research and development. The Finance Minister said 68% of the outlay for defence procurement will be set aside for buying from the domestic industry and that 25% of the allocation for R&D will be kept for collaboration with the private sector. PTI

Central vista

2,600 In ₹ crore was the amount allocated to the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry in Budget 2022-23 for the construction of non-residential office buildings of the Central Vista project, including the Parliament and Supreme Court. Six infrastructure firms, including Tata Projects Limited, L&T Limited and Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Limited, are in the race to win the contract to construct the Executive Enclave, which will house the new PMO and other offices. PTI

Coal budget

39 In percentage, the decrease in the share of the budget allocated to the coal ministry for FY23. According to Budget documents, the expenditure for financial year 2021-22 was at ₹534.88 crore. The expenditure budget of ₹393.24 crore in the 2022-23, includes ₹314.54 crore on central sector schemes/ projects and ₹12.96 crore on Coal Mines Pension Scheme. The actual expenditure budget for financial year 2020-2021 stood at ₹571.6 crore. The investment in public enterprises increased to ₹21,420.00 crore in budget 2022-23 PTI

Slight increase

3 In percentage, the increase in the budget allocation to the Women and Child Development Ministry. It stood at ₹25,172.28 crore in 2022-23, a slight increase of 3% from ₹24,435 crore that was given in 2021-22. The budget allocated for Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0 (Umbrella ICDS - Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan, Scheme for Adolescent Girls) was ₹20,263 crore, a small increase from ₹20,105 crore in 2021-22. The budget allocated for Mission Shakti was ₹3,184 crore in 2022-23, increased from ₹3,109 crore in 2021-22. PTI

Home Affairs

1.85 In ₹ lakh crore was the allocation to the Ministry of Home Affairs, with the majority of spending on central police organisations like the CRPF, BSF and for improving the infrastructure along the international borders. The 2022-23 budget allocation to the MHA, is ₹1,85,776.55 crore, about 11.5% more than the current fiscal when it was allocated ₹1,66,546.94 crore. Modernisation of police forces, intelligence gathering apparatus, women safety, cyber security also got priority in budget. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

The strategy behind North Korea's missile tests

What message do the recent IRBM tests in North Korea send to the larger international order?

THE GIST

- North Korea, on Sunday, test fired their IRBM Hwasong-12. Its immediate neighbour, South Korea, has decried the tests. South Korea has long followed the Sunshine Policy to improve relations with its northern neighbour. However, the American president, Joe Biden, in the face of North Korea's increased aggressiveness, worked with South Korea to scrap its missile guidelines which limited the types of missiles it could work on.
- The COVID-19 pandemic, multiple natural disasters, and the sanctions by the U.S. have ravaged North Korea's economy. Kim Jong-un is therefore, looking to work towards increasing the agricultural output, and with his recent visit to a new agricultural facility, also trying to send a message on the domestic front in order to safeguard his political position.
- North Korea, like any other state, is looking to safeguard its interests and is doing it in the best way it knows. Kim doesn't want to give up power and considering the U.S.'s ambitions for the Korean peninsula, from his perspective, strengthening North Korea with a robust ballistic missile and a nuclear weapons programme is the only way to keep more conventionally powerful forces at bay.

RISHABH KACHROO

The story so far: North Korea, on Sunday, test fired their IRBM (Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile) Hwasong-12. This can be seen as a multipronged strategy to not only signal its adversary far west and work as an effective way to refine their weapon systems but also serve as a propaganda tool for its people who are currently going through a severe food crisis. The Korean Central News Agency, North Korea's state news agency, reported that the test "confirmed the accuracy, security and operational effectiveness of the "Hwasong-12"-type weapon system under production".

What has been South Korea's response?
Its immediate neighbour, South Korea, has decried the tests with its president, Moon Jae-in, calling it a "challenge toward the international community's efforts to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula, stabilise peace and find a diplomatic solution". It has long followed the Sunshine Policy to improve relations with its northern neighbour. Under this policy, South Korea seeks to work towards improving relations with North Korea through actions that signal its commitment to non-interference in North Korean matters and improving economic cooperation with them. It has also continued to work on the development of its ballistic missile programme. Within a few months of coming to power, the American president, Joe Biden, in the face of North Korea's increased aggressiveness, worked with Moon Jae-in to scrap South Korea's missile guidelines which limited the types of missiles (in terms of their range) South Korea could work on (first introduced in 1979). This also served as a strategic tactic in the region for the Americans to allow South Korean missiles to potentially reach China. As of now, South Korea's biggest weapons in its arsenal are the Hyunmoo series of missiles and the Haeseong missile. As Moon Jae-in's term comes to a close, he is looking to continue to make efforts for peace talks.

What is the domestic situation in North Korea?
Recent evidence coming out of North Korea tells us that Kim isn't even remotely close to considering clamping down on testing; if anything, he wants more. It is also important to note here that this recent test was a confirmational one. With this, he just further proved North Korea's ability to hit the U.S.'s island territory of Guam. The continued American sanctions are unlikely to make an impact of the kind the U.S. is hoping for as China would be more than happy to help its ally. One sign of hope for the West to come out of North Korea, even if a bleak one at that, is Kim Jong-un's recent push for agricultural growth and economic development. He is looking to work towards increasing the agricultural output, and with his recent visit to a new agricultural facility, also trying to send a message on the domestic front in order to safeguard his political position. The message he is sending out to this people is simple—I see the challenges we are facing, and I am actively working to resolve them. The COVID-19 pandemic, multiple natural disasters hitting North Korea, and the sanctions by the U.S. and the western community at large have ravaged North Korea's economy. It would be in the interest of the U.S. to not let this opportunity pass and offer something concrete to North Korea to help improve their situation as North Korea would seek to further strengthen ties with China.

Why is North Korea adamant on pumping huge resources into its weapon programme even as it suffers on the economic front?
Kim doesn't want to give up power and considering the U.S.'s ambitions for the Korean peninsula, from his perspective, strengthening North Korea with a robust ballistic missile and a nuclear weapons programme is the only way to keep more conventionally powerful forces at bay. Experts worry about North Korea reneging on its self-imposed moratorium to not test Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and nuclear weapons. Kim had first hinted about not being bound to this moratorium back in 2019. It would be an unwise reading of the situation to imagine North Korea giving up its nuclear capabilities. A more realistic goal ought to be to get it to dial down on the tests. In addition to serving as a bargaining tool to bring North Korea to the negotiating table, its economic situation should also be seen as a potential recipe for disaster as weapons and weapons technology can find their way out to other state and non-state actors. It has already long been suspected of being involved with Syria, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, and reportedly, much recently in an indirect manner, with Taiwan. With the recent tests, Kim has only shown his resolve to continue such acts of belligerence.

How advanced is the country's weapons programme?
Its ballistic missile programme situation seems more robust than ever, only exacerbated by the 'confirmatory' tests it seems so adamant on doing. Their arsenal boasts of short range, medium range, intermediate range, and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), in addition to a wide array of cruise missiles and potentially at least two submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). Additionally, at the very least, they also possess the capability to weaponise chemical and biological agents. Its actual possession of chemical and biological weapons is debated. It has also conducted 6 nuclear tests since 2006 with the last one being in 2017 (reportedly a hydrogen bomb). It continues to produce enriched Uranium and weapons-grade Plutonium. It went on a self-administered moratorium in 2018 on the testing of long-range ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons which it later clarified (multiple times) to not being bound to. It is reported to possess enough fissile material for at least 45 nuclear weapons.

What next?
Maybe, merely looking at the strategic external perspective won't tell us the whole story. Perhaps the domestic front can further help us in understanding North Korea's actions. 2022 is the year that will see the 80th birth anniversary of Kim's father, Kim Jong-il, and the 110th birth anniversary of the country's founder, Kim Il-sung. With such 'momentous' occasions, North Korea may be looking to portray a show of power to its people. As mentioned before, this act serves as a multipronged strategy.

The geopolitical rationale of the missile test is simple—it gives Kim Jong-un leverage. Kim has seen the fate of the likes of Ukraine, and South Africa. He has seen Libya's fate. He understands the kind of leverage ballistic missiles and nuclear capabilities give him. What remains to be seen is exactly how far out can he play this act of brinkmanship.

Deadly tests: This picture from the Korean Central News Agency released on August 30, 2017 shows North Korea's intermediate-range strategic ballistic rocket Hwasong-12 lifting off from the launching pad at an undisclosed location near Pyongyang. AFP

North Korea, like any other state, is looking to safeguard its interests and is doing it in the best way it knows. This is neither a strategic anomaly nor does it run counter to its philosophy of *juche* (self-reliance) and *songun* (military-first). Whether or not it runs counter to certain nations' interests and how it impacts the larger weapons proliferation processes at play is an entirely different area of discussion. It says more about the hegemonic interests of larger powers which lead to the emergence of conflicts that continue to brew for years and potentially threaten the stability of the international order than it says about North Korea's way of responding.

Rishabh Kachroo is a Ph.D. scholar at the Department of International Relations and Governance Studies at Shiv Nadar University

EXPLAINER

The FTA talks between India and the United Kingdom

How will a free trade agreement help both countries and in which sectors?

K.S. VIJAY ELANGOVA

The story so far: Last month, India and Britain launched trade talks in Delhi, with an aim to finalise a free trade agreement (FTA) as soon as possible. The proposed pact with Britain could help double bilateral trade by 2030, a Government statement said, after talks between Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and U.K. Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan.

What is an FTA?
An FTA is an agreement between two countries wherein it allows free flow of goods and services to and from both sides, removing all tariff barriers to boost trade with one another.The U.K.'s somewhat fettered wings to the European Union's horizons have been fully undone, after Brexit happened, and Britain can now fly the world with full-flown wings, especially its trade. The first such flight was seen when the U.K. signed an FTA with Australia on December 17, 2021, eliminating almost 99% of tariff on both sides, allowing free flow of goods between the two countries. This will save nearly $10 billion for Australia in its exports of agricultural products to Britain and the U.K. will save several hundred million dollars in automobile, liquor and

GETTY IMAGES

cosmetics exports. The pact further helps Britain access the Pacific Rim, an 11-nation trade conglomerate including Australia called the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership.

What does it mean for India?
Likewise, Brexit also paved the way for Britain to freely and comprehensively negotiate a new free mega trade deal with India, talks for which are underway. The £1 billion investment and commercial trade deal India signed with Britain on May 4 last year creating 6,500 jobs in the U.K. was a kick-starter to this, opening a new chapter in commerce between them. As Lord Karan Bilimoria, President of the Confederation of British Industry, put it: "The free trade deal between India and the U.K. will usher in a new era in the annals of India-British trade cooperation. The renewed partnership will bring in enormous changes not only in trade, but enhanced cooperation in agriculture, education and health sectors." He also said, "India's traditional stakes are high in Britain as British Indian companies cumulatively turned over more than £85 billion just last year even amid the pandemic. And India's trade would see a quantum jump when the free trade pact is signed, from £23.3 billion when they inked an Enhanced Trade Deal last year to £50 billion post-FTA. The British inward investment into the subcontinent was nearly £21 billion in the last two decades making Britain as the largest western investor in India, and this will also see a substantial increase." With India set to becoming the world's third largest economy by 2050, India not only becomes the U.K.'s most preferred partner, its 1.5 million diaspora in the isles would get a shot in the arm when the FTA is signed.

What is India seeking from the U.K.?
While the talks between Ms. Trevelyan and Mr. Goyal, under the aegis of the 15th U.K.-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee, centred around removing all trade bottlenecks, and green trade, India is also seeking cooperation from Britain to reduce its carbon footprint by 45% while steadfastly promoting green energy. Ms. Trevelyan sounded pretty optimistic, "This is just the start of a five-star year of U.K. trade, forging closer economic partnerships around the globe and negotiating deals that work for businesses, families and consumers in every part of the U.K."

"FTA negotiations with India and the already-signed FTA with Australia," as Lord Bilimoria detailed, "mark Britain's deft Indo-Pacific tilt, beyond the absolute EU-bind."

What are the sectors that will benefit?
With trade between India and the U.K. set to soar, there are substantial activities simultaneously taking place in other sectors, especially agriculture and education. The second Green Revolution, aimed at increasing food production in India to 400 million tonnes in the next 15 years, is led by plant ecology scientist and co-chair of the Global Food Security Strategic Research Initiative Prof. Howard Griffiths of Cambridge University under Transforming India's Green Revolution by Research and Empowerment for Sustainable food Supplies (TIGR2ESS). The TIGR2ESS, led by the chief investigator, Prof Griffiths, would strengthen alliance between Indian and British experts in social policy and science, hydrology and crop science based on the thesis of making modern agricultural practices reflect the needs of society acceptable to India today. The research programme, funded by Cambridge University to the tune of £9 million, will have diverse partners such as the University of Cambridge (leader), Rothamsted Research, John Innes Centre, Centre for Global Equality, Universities of Essex and East Anglia, The British Dietetic Association and 19 higher education and research institutes in India including the National Institute of Agricultural Botany, Hyderabad and seven NGOs. There are also animated parleys between these countries for more cooperation in education, and possibly, India would allow more U.K. universities to open their branches in the subcontinent after the FTA. Lord Bilimoria, who also is Chancellor of Birmingham University, said, "The cooperation in education between India and the U.K. is already on for years as many exchange and collaborative programmes have taken place and some U.K. institutes have already set up their Indian campuses, but will reach its peak when the Indian government allows more U.K. universities to open their direct branches in India."

Vijay Elangova is a senior journalist based in the U.K.

THE GIST

- An FTA is an agreement between two countries which allows free flow of goods and services to and from both sides, removing all tariff barriers to boost trade with one another. The U.K. had earlier signed an FTA with Australia in 2021.
- The £1 billion investment and commercial trade deal India signed with Britain last year creating 6,500 jobs in the U.K. was a kick-starter to talks for an FTA, opening a new chapter in commerce between them.
- The TIGR2ESS, an initiative by both countries, is aimed at increasing food production in India to 400 million tonnes in the next 15 years, There are also animated parleys between these countries for more cooperation in education.

Funds slashed: Women renovate the children's park as part of the MGNREGA at Paraniputhur in Kancheepuram district. ▪ FILE PHOTO

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The long road to timely MGNREGA payments

There remain delays in the stage where the Central government transfers wages to the workers' accounts

THE GIST

■ Eight crore MGNREGA wage transactions were pending on Diwali. The PAEG recently released important metrics on MGNREGA implementation which showed that funds allocation this financial year is 34% lower than the revised budget allocation of last year.

■ There are two stages in the wage payment process. In Stage 1, States must electronically send invoices to the Central government within eight days of completion of work. These invoices contain essential worker details. The Central government then processes the invoices and transfers wages directly to the workers' accounts. This is Stage 2 and must be completed within seven days after Stage 1. If Stage 1 plus Stage 2 exceeds 15 days, then workers are entitled to a delay compensation for each day's delay. However, none of these compensations have been allocated by the centre and the delay in payments continue.

■ The Central government issued a circular to segregate invoices based on caste of workers. While 46% of payments to SC workers and 37% for ST workers were completed in the mandated seven-day period, it was a dismal 26% for non-SC/ST workers. After critical media reportage, the Central government revoked the caste-based segregation of wage payments. However, the Government has not assumed any accountability by paying compensation for delays.

RAJENDRAN NARAYANAN
ANURADHA DE

In light of the Union Budget reducing allocations for the MGNREGA, this article dated November 8, 2021, by Rajendra Narayanan and Anuradha De outlines how technical tinkering and the lack of funds to the MGNREGA is delaying the payment of workers.

There is a famous parable of the 13th century mystic Mullah Nasruddin. He was once spotted under a street light searching frantically for a key that he had lost. A passer-by noticed the frazzled Nasruddin and stopped to help him. After both of them spent a long time searching for the key, the exasperated passer-by asked Nasruddin if he was sure that he had dropped his key there. Pointing to his house far away, Nasruddin said that he had, in fact, lost the key near his house. Agitated, the passer-by shouted at Nasruddin: "If you lost the key near your house, why are you wasting time searching for your key here?" To which Nasruddin, with no sense of irony, responded, "There is no light near my house but there is light here, so I am searching for the lost key here."

Delays in payments

This parable captures the essence of wage payment delays under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Eight crore MGNREGA wage transactions were pending on Diwali. The People's Action for Employment Guarantee (PAEG) recently released a tracker with important metrics on MGNREGA implementation. It showed that funds allocation this financial year (FY) is 34% lower than the revised budget allocation of last year. And this year's funds have been exhausted. The Ministry of Rural Development issued a press release in response to these stating, "Currently Rs.8921 crore funds are available which can meet the wage liability..." This statement is misleading as the Ministry has not accounted for pending arrears of ₹17,543 crore from previous years. In a welcome move since the media reports, the Chief Ministers of Odisha and Tamil Nadu wrote to the Prime Minister seeking additional funds for MGNREGA.

There is ample evidence by now, including an admission by the Ministry of Finance, that delays in wage payments are a consequence of insufficient funds. There are two stages in the wage payment process. In Stage 1, States must electronically send invoices, also called FTOs, to the Central government within eight days of completion of work at a worksite. These invoices contain essential worker details like their names and bank account numbers. The Central government then processes the invoices and transfers wages directly to the workers' accounts. This is called Stage 2 and is the Central government's responsibility that must be completed within seven days after Stage 1. Since Supreme Court orders in 2018, Stage 1 delays have reduced while Stage 2 delays continue. As per the Act, if Stage 1 plus Stage 2 exceeds 15 days, then workers are entitled to a delay compensation for each day's delay. However, in violation of the Act and the Supreme Court's orders, no delay compensation for Stage 2 is even being calculated. Instead of ensuring sufficient funds for timely payments, the Central government has repeatedly tinkered with the payment architecture as if payment delays are an artefact of technological hurdles. The Nasruddin parable appeared in a new avatar this year. Earlier, the invoices were not segregated by caste. On March 2, the Central government issued a circular to segregate invoices based on the caste of workers (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and 'Others').

In order to investigate Stage 2 delays and the impact of caste-based invoices, as part of LibTech India, we released a report called 'Heavy Wait'.

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We analysed 18 lakh invoices across 10 States from April to September. In our sample, Stage 2 was completed only for 29% of the invoices within the mandated seven-day period. In fact, for nearly two-thirds of the transactions in Jharkhand and more than half the transactions in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, Stage 2 exceeded 15 days. There was also a steady increase in Stage 2 delays from July to September indicating depletion of funds. If the Central government's recent claims of allocations being adequate are true, then what is the explanation for such massive delays in wage payments?

Caste-based segregation

There were significant variations in delays by caste. While 46% of payments to SC workers and 37% for ST workers were completed in the mandated seven-day period, it was a dismal 26% for non-SC/ST workers. The negative impact of caste-based segregation was felt acutely in poorer States such as Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. For instance, Stage 2 was completed in seven days for only half the transactions for SC/ST workers in Madhya Pradesh. This was much worse for non-SC/ST workers in Madhya Pradesh for whom only 7% of transactions were completed in that period. In addition to such stark differences, in West Bengal, the Central government kept pending nearly 45% of the wages beyond 15 days as on October 13.

As this newspaper reported earlier, caste-based segregation has also resulted in tensions at worksites. It had also resulted in a threefold increase of workload for computer operators at blocks. Our Right to Information request to access the circular met with a hazy response. When questioned by the media earlier about this move, the Central government said that "For better accounting purposes, it has been decided, in consultation with the Department of Expenditure, to have a category-wise (SC, ST and others) wage payment system." No doubt, knowing the earnings of SC/ST households is useful. But it could have been done after the wages were paid. Toying with the Act using the veil of better accounting is illegal. After critical media reportage, the Central government, in a welcome move, has revoked the caste-based segregation of wage payments. However, the Central government has not assumed any accountability by paying compensation for delays despite the evident damage caused by caste-based segregation of payments.

Additionally, in our large sample analysis, we found no difference in the time taken for payments through the Aadhaar Payment Bridge Systems (APBS) and traditional account-based payments. In fact, APBS has given rise to a litany of complicated problems like misdirected payments and payment failures due to erroneous Aadhaar mapping with the payment software. Misdirected payments happen when one person's Aadhaar gets linked to somebody else's bank account. These problems are difficult to resolve even for bank and block officials resulting in increased hardships for workers. These minimally warrant an impartial, independent assessment and audit of the payment systems. Lost keys cannot be found where they were not lost in the first place. In the same vein, technical fixes cannot be substitutes for political will. Official data show that the work demand this year is similar to that of last year. As such, at least ₹50,000 crore needs to be allocated urgently and the Central government, in compliance with Supreme Court orders, must automatically calculate and pay the workers their entitled delay compensation.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Censorship and its impact on reading

By banning books for their difficult content, we remove the possibility for conversation

SUDIPTA DATTA

When Delhi University announced last August that it was dropping Mahasweta Devi's short story, 'Draupadi', from the undergraduate English syllabus, students around the country began to share it online. Set around the Naxalite movement, 'Draupadi' is a retelling of the powerful eponymous character from the *Mahabharata*. Mahasweta Devi's Draupadi or Dopdi as she is called, is a rebel who is cornered by the police trying to put down forces she represents, and some of the reasons given for the story being dropped were that it was explicit, mentioned rape and showed the armed forces in poor light. In the U.S., school boards of various States have voted to keep out notable works of literature including John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and most recently Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize winning graphic novel, *Maus*, on the holocaust.

Often, a ban is likely to put a book in the hands of more readers. As soon as a Tennessee school board announced that it was dropping *Maus*, just before the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, sales began to soar on Amazon even as bookstores in the U.S. handed out free copies. The book tells the story of Spiegelman's ties with his father, Vladek, who survived a concentration camp, and moved to New York. Jews are presented as mice ('maus' is German for mouse) and the Germans as cats. Vladek and Art have an uneasy relationship but soon his father narrates to him how the noose began to tighten for Jews in Poland and the inevitable journey to a concentration camp. Vladek ends up in Auschwitz, and shows his son the number that was etched on his hand, 175113. The school board was apparently upset with the use of curse words and some nude imagery; the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum criticised the ban, pointing out that *Maus* plays a critical role in teaching students about the Holocaust when millions of Jews were killed. One of the most famous books to have been banned is of course James Joyce's *Ulysses*, first serialised in an American journal, then published in its entirety by Sylvia Beach, owner of the Paris bookshop, Shakespeare and Company, on February 2, 1922. To mark 100 years of its publication, Shakespeare and Company has created an ensemble recording of the text read by writers including Margaret Atwood, Ben Okri and Jeanette Winterson, and other artists, musicians and comedians from across the world. The stream-of-consciousness novel, which profiles a day in the life of Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom and his wife Molly Bloom, has survived controversy, bans and legal action to be hailed as a "monument to the human condition." India and other countries banned Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, and Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, issued a fatwa against the writer in 1989 for the book, considered blasphemous of Islam. Rushdie was provided police protection in the U.K. where he lived then, and he chose an alias– Joseph Anton (later the title of his memoir) –and went into hiding before emerging years later to live in the U.S. George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was banned in Russia till 1990. Deborah Caldwell-Stone, director of the American Library Association's office for intellectual freedom, told *The New York Times*, that aggressively policing books for inappropriate content and banning titles could limit students' exposure to great literature, including towering canonical works. Among the most frequent targets are books about race, gender and sexuality, *NYT* reported. Writer Laurie Halse Anderson, whose young adult books have frequently been challenged, said "pulling titles that deal with difficult subjects can make it harder for students to discuss issues like racism and sexual assault. By attacking these books, by attacking the authors, by attacking the subject matter, what they are doing is removing the possibility for conversation." In his 2021 book, *Dangerous Ideas*, Eric Berkowitz chronicles the cultural history of censorship and thought suppression through the ages, raising a pertinent question: Will the compulsion to silence the other ever be resolved?

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THE DAILY QUIZ

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget yesterday. In the light of the momentous event, here is a quiz on previous Finance Ministers and Union Budget presentations of India.

1 The Union Budget was presented at 5 pm on the last working day of February as per British-era practice. Who was the finance minister who moved the practice of presenting Union Budgets in the evening (5:00 PM) and instead tabled it around noon?

2 Who is the first woman to have presented the Union Budget of India?

3 After being presented separately for 92 years, in which year and under which Finance Minister was the railway budget merged into the Union Budget and presented together?

4 Who holds the record for presenting the maximium number of Union Budgets? This person also had the honour of delivering 'Leap Year Budgets' twice.

5 What does the French word 'Bougette' mean and why is this significant in the last couple of years in the context of the Union Budget?

◀ What is happening in this image?

Please send in your answers to the **dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in**

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. 'From Me to You' (U.K., April 1963) and 'I Want to Hold Your Hand' (USA, February 1964), 2. 'Please Please Me', 3. 'Love Me Do' and Andy White, 4. 'Ticket to Ride', 5. 'Yesterday', 6. 'Hey Jude', 7. 'The Long and Winding Road', 8. '1', 9. 'Eleanor Rigby'

Early Birds: Pooja Khyalia| Nirav Mehta

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