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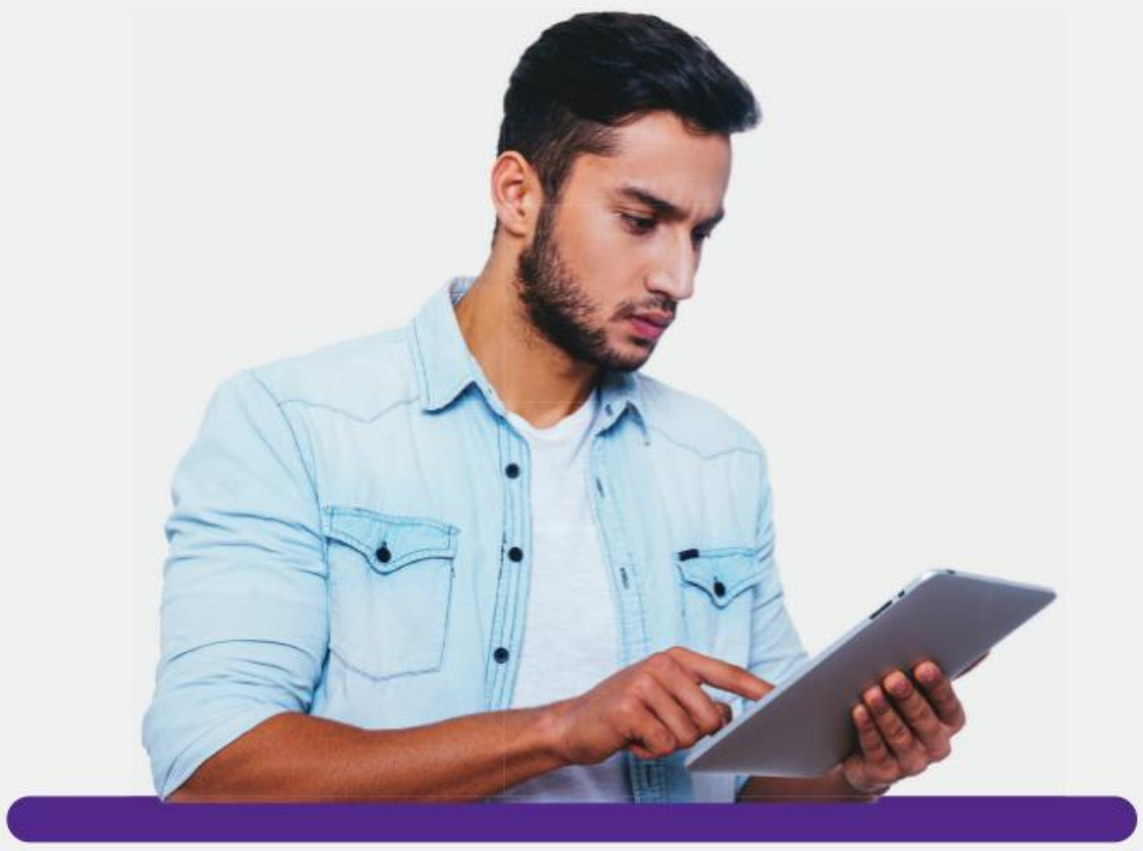

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TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD

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

DIPR/651/TENDER/2022

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED

1st & Ground Floor, I.T. Bhawan, Mehli, Shimla-171013, H.P.
Tel. No. 0177-2623259, 2623513, 2626320, 2623043
FAX: 0177-2626320 Website: www.hpsedc.in

Tender No.: HPSEDC/DGSET-INVERTER/2022-8822 Date: 01.02.2022

e-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tenders are invited from eligible bidders for Rate Contract for supply and installation of Testing & Commissioning (SITC) of various rating Diesel Generating sets water cooled and Inverters in various Govt. Deptts./Boards/Corporations in the State of Himachal Pradesh during the year 2021-22 & 2022-23. Pre-Bid meeting will be held on 09.02.2022 (11.30 A.M.) through Video Conferencing.

Last date for online e-bid submission is 21.02.2022 (upto 02.30 P.M.) and shall be opened on 22.02.2022 at 2.30 P.M. Detailed Tender Document containing Technical Specifications and Terms & Conditions are available on HPSEDC website www.hpsedc.in and https://hptenders.gov.in.

GENERAL MANAGER (TECHNICAL)

0685/HP

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-tender Notice Number: CV/CS/CP/KRJ/2021 Dated: 27.01.2022

Following E-tender on prescribed tender forms are invited by the **Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Divisional Railway Manager's Office, North Central Railway, Prayagraj** on behalf of President of India.

1	E-tender No.	23/2022
2	Name of work and Station	Cycle/Scooter/Motorcycle/E-Rickshaw/Auto Rickshaw cum Car Parking Stand Contract at Khurja Railway station.
3	Period of Contract	Three Years
4	Minimum Reserved L/Fee of Contract for 01 years	₹ 329615.00
5	Minimum Reserved L/Fee of Contract for 03 years	₹ 988845.00
6	Earnest Money	₹ 10000.00
7	Cost of Tender Form	₹ 2360.00
8	Date & Time for the Opening of Tender	25.02.2022 at 15.00 hrs.
9	Website & Notice where the full detail of tender can be seen	E-tender forms shall be available on www.ireps.gov.in upto 13.00 Hrs on 25.02.2022 from the date of opening of the e-tender. The e-tender Notice can also be viewed on Railway's website www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in. 109/22 FA

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in North Central Railway@CPRONCR

SHRI AMARNATHJI SHRINE BOARD

Chaitanya Ashram, Talab Tillo, Jammu (Nov-Apr)
Tele: 0191-2555662, Telefax: 0191-2503399

ABRIDGED NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR PROVIDING HELICOPTER SERVICES DURING YATRA 2022 AND 2023

1. Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) invites sealed tenders, in two-bids format, from reputed and registered Aviation Companies, having a minimum fleet of three airworthy light helicopters (for the Sector for which the Company is interested in bidding), endorsed on its NSOP, for flight operations in the air space of J&K, in the following two sectors:
   a. **Neelgrath – Lower Holy Cave – Neelgrath;**
   b. **Pahalgam – Panjtarni – Pahalgam;**

(Note: Purely on leave and license basis, for an initial period of the Yatra periods in two consecutive years i.e. Yatra 2022 and Yatra 2023).

2. Detailed NIT (DNIT) can be obtained from the office of Director Finance, Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, Chaitanya Ashram Talab Tillo, Jammu, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM on any working day (Monday-Friday) from 02.02.2022 to 10.02.2022 on payment of the cost of document in cash i.e. Rs. 5,900/- (Rupees five thousand nine hundred only i.e. Rs. 5,000 + 18% GST) or in the shape of Demand Draft drawn in favour of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, payable at Jammu. Alternatively, the DNIT can be downloaded from our website www.shriamarnathjishrine.com, in which case the cost of DNIT i.e. Rs. 5,900/- shall be deposited in the shape of a Demand Draft drawn in favour of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, payable at Jammu, in addition to the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) at the time of submission of Tender (in the Technical Bid).
3. The Tender, duly completed, along with EMD in the form of a Demand Draft drawn in favour of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, payable at Jammu, must reach latest by 1400 hours on 25.02. 2022.
4. A pre-bid conference will be held on 07.02.2022 at 11:00 AM. The prospective bidders may contact the office of Additional Chief Executive Officer (on 0191-2555662) for registering themselves for the same.
5. For further details about the Tender, please refer our DNIT, or contact on the numbers given above.

No: SASB/DNIT/2022/01 **--Sd--**
Dated: 01.02. 2022 SASB-31 **Addl. Chief Executive Officer**

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Procurement Tender Notice No.: 25/P-69/2021-22/TMC/HQ/NCR/Prayagraj
Dated: 25.01.2022

OPEN TENDER NOTICE

On behalf of the President of India, **Principal Chief Engineer, North Central Railway, Subedarganj, Prayagraj-211015** invites the following E-Procurement Tenders:
(The complete information along with tender document of this E-Procurement Tender are available in website on http://ireps.gov.in. upto 15:00 hrs. of the due date of tender opening).

SN	Tender No.	Brief Description	Tender Value	Earnest Money
1	TMC 1202122	Testing Equipment. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. **[Acceptable Make: Mitutoyo, MGW Precision, Groz, Ocean, Equivalent to Mitutoyo Series 500, Shinwa, Kristeel, Equivalent to Mitutoyo Series 186, Precise, Krost, Equivalent to Mitutoyo Series 511 , Equivalent to Mitutoyo Series 192]**	₹ 184660/-	₹ 3700/-
2	TMC 1212122	Portable Surface Roughness Tester. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. **[Acceptable Make: Mitutoyo, Precision, Sunshine Equivalent to Mitutoyo Model No. SJ-210]**	₹ 158600/-	₹ 3200/-
3	TMC 1222122	Various type of Equipment. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. **[Acceptable Make: Mitutoyo, Yuzuki DRHTA, Valli Aqua Equivalent to Mitutoyo Series 811, LT Taiwan, HTC Instruments, Meterk Equivalent to LT Taiwan, Honex, SSU, Amber Equivalent to Honex, Olympus, Sunshine, Ametek, Insize, Kroeplin, MGW Equivalent to Insize Blue Star, Rockwell Equivalent to Mitutoyo Model No. HH-411]**	₹ 390503/-	₹ 7900/-
4	TMC 1232122	Hose Fitting. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. **[Acceptable Make: Parker, Markwell or Superseal only]**	₹ 769185/-	₹ 15400/-
5	TMC 1242122	Lifting Unit Assembly Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. **[Acceptable Make: Plasser or Equivalent]**	₹ 1416000/-	₹ 28400/-
6	TMC 1252122	Pin Bolt, P.B. Bush. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. **[Acceptable Make: Plasser or Equivalent]**	₹ 2711414/-	₹ 54300/-
7	TMC 1262122	Hydraulic Pump. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. **[Acceptable Make: Plasser or Rexroth only]**	₹ 8859748/-	₹ 177200/-

Quantity: For all tenders "As per section IV of tender document."
Date of Opening: For all tenders **"25.02.2022".**

Note: (1) The complete information along with Tender document of above E-Procurement Tender is available on website **https://ireps.gov.in.** Up to **15:00 hrs.** On the due date of tender opening. **(2)** Following condition has been included in Tender Document vide **Railway Board Letter No. 2001/RS(g)/779/7 Pt 1 Dated: 29.06.2017** "Whenever tender is floated with purchase restriction from sources approved by nominated authorities and there exists a suspected cartel situation by approved sources or the rates available from approved/sources are adjudged unreasonably high, despite fair efforts as permissible, the purchaser reserves the right to place order on firms outside the approved vendors list, without any restrictions". **(3)** Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, venders are required to get themselves registered with **IREPS** website along with **class III Digital** signature certificates issued by **CCA** under IT Act-2000. **(4)** This tender notice has also been uploaded on **www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in.** **(5)** Allocation for Security deposit and Earnest money is "Deposit Misc stores 00844523. **(6)** In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of **IREPS** may be approached. **100/22 (A)**

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRO NCR

TELANGANA STATE INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE CORPORATION LIMITED (TSIIC)

6TH FLOOR, PARISRAMA BHAVAN, FATEH MAIDAN ROAD. BASHEERBAGH, HYDERABAD, TELANGANA 500004 PHONE No- 040-23237625, WWW.TSIIC.TELANGANA.GOV.IN

Notice No. 002/TSIIC/HPC/2021-22 **Dated: 01.02.2022**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation Limited invites proposals from reputed firms to undertake development, operation and maintenance of District Cooling System (DCS) through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) basis within Hyderabad Pharma City being developed in Ranga Reddy District, Telangana. Interested firms may download the **Request for Proposal (RFP)** document from the website of **TSIIC @ www.tsiic.telangana.gov.in.** The last date for submission of proposals is **on or before 16:00 hours IST on 16.03.2022.**

R.O. No. : 2623-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22 Date: 01-02-2022 Sd/- Vice Chairman and Managing Director

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL DELHI CANTT

SADAR BAZAR ROAD, DELHI CANTT-110010
www.apsdelhicantt.com, 25693777, 25692720

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders are invited from manufacturers/dealers with professional expertise in:-

(a) **AMC of IT Equipments**
(b) **Procurement of Computer Peripherals and network devices.**
(c) **Procurement of advance IT equipments for Inclusive Education.**

RFPs with specification can be downloaded from school website **www.apsdelhicantt.com**. Tender Form duly completed in all respect be submitted to APS Delhi Cantt by **09 Feb 2022 till 1030 hrs for (a) and for (b), (c) 23 Feb 2022 till 1030 hrs** along with DD (Tender Form Fee & EMD) as per RFP in favour of **Army Public School Delhi Cantt.** For any queries contact APS Delhi Cantt on 25693777, 8700817317.

Presiding Officer

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Unknown **S/o** Unknown, **R/o** Unknown **Age:** about 28 years, **Height:** 5'10", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Thin & weak, **Face:** Oval, **Hair:** Black, **ID:** Black mole near nose & Shivam tattoo on right hand, **Wearing:** Grey coloured Sweat shirt, blue coloured jeans and red coloured slipper, was found dead on 26.01.2022 beside Tent School D-Block, New Seemapuri Road, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for 72 hours at the Mortuary of GTB Hospital. In this regard a **DD No.64-A, dated 26.01.2022 u/s 174 Cr.PC** has been lodged at P.S. Seema Puri, Delhi.

If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.

SHO
P.S. Seema Puri, Delhi
Ph.: 011-22599394/97
DP/719/SHD/2022 Mob.: 7065036030, 9818618717

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

The Chief Electrical Engineer/Const./Northern Railway, Tilak Bridge, New Delhi-110002 invites EPC -Tender under Single Stage **Two Packet System** for the under noted work:-

1.	**Name of work and location**	Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of Traction Sub Stations with associated Switching Posts for 2 x 25 KV AT feeding system in New Delhi-Palwal and Kanpur-Lucknow sections of Northern Railway for raising of speed to 160 Kmph.
2.	**Completion period of the work**	360 Days
3.	**Approx. Cost of work**	Rs. 96.85 Cr (approx.)
4.	**Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online)**	48.50 Lacs (Forty Eight Lakhs & fifty thousand only)
5.	**Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender**	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on date **31.01.2022** on IREPS website i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in.** The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs on **24.03.2022.**
6.	**Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document**	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway web site i.e. **www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in** and tender document is available on **www.ireps.gov.in.** Above tender document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in** from **31.01.2022 to 24.03.2022.** All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

No. 328-Dy.CEE/C/NDLS/2021-2022/EPC Dated: 31.01.2022 **223/2022**

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Rajasthan Tourism Development Corpn.Ltd.

(A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking)

HOTEL GANGAUR
Near All India Radio, Station Road, M. I. Road, JAIPUR
Ph. 0141-2371641, 42, 44, 46, Fax: 0141-2371647
E-mail: gangaur@rtdc.in. Web.: www.rtdc.in

S.No. Hotel Gangaur/2021-22/290 Date:31-01-2022

E-BID NOTICE

E-bids are invited from the leading Hoteliers/Caterers for arrangement of Catering i.e. Lunch, Dinner & Hi-Tea etc. for the financial year 2021-22. Details of the same may be seen on and downloaded from our web site www.rtdc.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in, www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in & www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in or contract the office of undersigned. UBN No. TDC2122SLRC00057

Raj.Samwad/C/21/11212 **General Manager**

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI

4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

OA/810/2018
SYNDICATE BANK **Applicant**
VERSUS
Sh. Pawan Kumar & Anr. **Defendants**

To,

1. **Sh. Pawan Kumar** S/o Sh. Dhananjay Prasad R/o H. No. 39 Block H-3, Ground Floor, Vikas Puri, New Delhi-110018 **Defendant 1.**
2. **Sh. Satish Kumar** S/o sh. Dai Chand R/o 445-466, Poverty-4, Sector-22, Rohini, Delhi-110085 **Defendant 2.**

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of **Rs. 12,79,172.21/- (Rupees Twelve Lakhs Seventy Nine thousand One Hundred Seventy Two and Paise Twenty One Only)** against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Ld. Registrar on **21.03.2022 at 10:30 A.M.** (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.etribunal.gov.in Phone Number: 011-23748473).

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matters will be taken up through video Conferencing and for that purpose:-

(i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the **"Cisco Webex"** application/software:
(ii) **"Meeting ID"** and **"Password"** for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar/ Recovery Officer-1/and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. "drt.gov.in" under the Public Notice Head.
(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocate/Litigants can contact the concerned official at **Ph. No. 011-23748473.**

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this **19 January of 2022**

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL
FOR REGISTRAR

respondent may Contact under mentioned Phone Number for further enquiry Mr. Amit K. Dar,
Ld. Registrar, DRT-1, New Delhi
Phone No. 011-23748473, email: drt1delhi-dfs@nic.in

OFFICE OF THE NAGAR PANCHAYAT MANJHIAON

Email : nagarpanchayatmanzhiaon@gmail.com

Reference No. 58 Date-31-01-2022
Tender Notice (1st Call)
e-tender reference No-MNP/19/2021-22
IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1	Name of Work	Construction & Commissioning of Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant of Capacity 6m3/day at Majhiaon town (Jharkhand) followed by Operation and Maintenance including desludging operations for 5 years.
2	Estimated cost (INR)	Construction Cost:₹ 1,60,72,101/- Operation & Maintenance Cost:₹ 86,88,855/- Total:₹ 2,47,60,956/-
3	Bid Security (INR)	₹ 2,48,000/-(Rupees Two Lacs forty Eight thousand only)
4	Cost of Bid Document (INR)	₹ 10,000/-(RupeesTenThousandOnly);non-refundable
5	Time of Completion	1year of construction which comprises 9 months of construction and 3 months of defect liability period including one month of trial run and 5 years of O & M post DLP
6	Date of e-publication of tender	07.02.2022, 17:00 Hrs
7	Document downloading start Date	07.02.2022, 17:00 Hrs
8	Start date for seeking clarification	07.02.2022, 17:00 Hrs
9	End date for seeking clarification	26.02.2022, 17:00 Hrs
10	Pre Bid meeting date, Time & Venue	21.02.2022, 13:00 Hrs at Chamber of Office of Executive Officer, Nagar Panchayat, Majhiaon Jharkhand–822134.
11	Bid Submission end date	28.02.2022, 17:00 Hrs
12	Last day for the submission of Bid security, Cost of Bid Document	02.03.2022, 17:00 Hrs
13	Bid opening date (online)	04.03.2022, 10:30 Hrs

Complete bid document is available on website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in Other details can be seen the bidding documents.
* Bid security 1% of Bid amount.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NAGAR PANCHAYAT MANJHIAON

PR 262896 Urban Development(21-22).D

IRCON INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
CIN-L45203DL1976GOI008171, Website: www.ircon.org

e-Procurement Notice (National Competitive Bidding)

e-Tender No. IRCON/2053/TN/SHM/ESS & Biodigester/2022/83 Dated: 02/02/2022

e-Tender for and on behalf of South Eastern Railway is invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirements for the work of **"Construction of Two numbers Electric Sub-Station for WTP and Pit Line and Nine numbers Biodigester at different locations along with one UV tank at Shalimar Station in Howrah District for South Eastern Railway in West Bengal".**

Estimated cost of the work	: ₹ 5,51,27,606/-
Last Date & Time of e-Bid Submission	: 16.02.2022 upto 18.30 Hrs. (IST)

For further details, visit website **https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app.** Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website. **General Manager/East**
378 Prantik Pally, Kasba, Kolkata-700107

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU PORT TRUST

(MARINE DEPARTMENT)

TENDER NO. : JNP/DC/PUSHPAK/2022

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Online E-tenders in two bid system (Technical and Price bids) are invited by Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, Navi Mumbai from experienced and eligible tenderers for Manning, Operation, Maintenance and complete technical management of JNPT owned launch.

Tender document can be downloaded from 02.02.2022 to 22.02.2022 from Central Public Procurement Portal's e-procurement module **(https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app)** or JNPT Website **www.jnport.gov.in** then click on **"Tenders → JNPT Tenders"** LINK for accessing the site. The completed tenders will be accepted up to 1500 Hrs on 22.02.2022 through e-procurement process only. For detailed tender notice, please visit **https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app** or JNPT Website **www.jnport.gov.in** then click on **"Tenders →JNPT Tenders"** LINK for accessing the site.

DEPUTY CONSERVATOR

NMDC Limited

(A Government of India Enterprise)
'Khanij Bhavan', 10-3-311/A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500 028
Corporate Identity Number (CIN) - L13100TG1958GOI001674

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender no. CGM (ENV)/ENV/GWS/2022 **02/02/2022**

Tenders are invited for the work of "Ground Water Levels and Quality Monitoring in and around the project area of Bailadila Iron Ore Mines for the prescribed 44 locations at Deposit-5,10&11A Project at Bacheli and 30 locations at Deposit-14,11C &11B project at Kirandul for the period of two years (2022-23 and 2023-24) from reputed / recognised hydrogeological consultants.

For viewing / downloading the schedule of e-bidding, detailed NIT along with pre-qualification requirements etc, bidders may visit MSTC website link: https://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/ and register on-line as 'New Vendor'. The tenderers shall submit their online bids through MSTC portal from 2/02/2022 to 22/02/2022. Any corrigendum to the tender will be uploaded only in the above mentioned website. Bidders should visit the above website from time to time to take note of corrigendum, if any.

The bidders may be viewed NIT and tender document from NMDC web site http://www.nmdc.co.in and www.eprocurement.gov.in.

For further clarification, CGM(RP) / DGM(Envt), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad can be contacted on 7382291342, email: jayapal@nmdc.co.in / nsssekhar@nmdc.co.in

Chief General Manager (Resource Planning)

भारतीय कंटेनर निगम लिमिटेड CONTAINER CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.

एक नवरत्न कम्पनी (भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)
A Navratna Company (A Govt. of India Undertaking)
CONCOR Annex, NSIC MDBP Building, 2nd Floor, Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi – 110020

PUBLIC AUCTION/TENDER NOTICE DISPOSAL OF UNCLEARED/UNCLAIMED IMPORTED CARGO THROUGH E- AUCTION

Container Corporation of India Ltd. shall be auctioning scrap items, empty damage containers and unclaimed/uncleared imported cargo landed at the terminals of Area 1 and Area 4 those containers arrived on or before **31.03.2021** through e-auction on **17.02.2022 & 28.02.2022** on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS".** All details along with Terms & Conditions of auction sale & cargo details will be available on **www.concorindia.co.in & www. mstcecommerce.com** w.e.f. **03.02.2022 & 20.02.2022.** All importers including Government Undertakings/ Departments whose containers/goods are lying unclaimed/uncleared and falling in the said list uploaded in website at respective terminals, because of any dispute, stay by Court/ Tribunal/others or any such reason may accordingly inform the concerned Executive Director at Area 1 and Area 4 CONCOR as well as Commissioner of Customs of the concerned Commissionaires, and file their objections/ claims regarding disposal of such goods within 7 (Seven Days) of this notice failing which the goods will be auctioned on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"** without any further notice. For full details please log on to **www.concorindia.co.in & www.mstcecommerce.com.**

Executive Director, Area 1

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रान्समिशन कॉरपोरेशन लि0

ई–निविदा सूचना संख्या–12/वि0जा0पा0ख0/आगरा/2021–22 के समय विस्तार हेतु कोरिजेण्डम का प्रकाशन

E-Tender Notice No.12/ECTD/Agra/2021-22 पर अंकित ई–निविदायें जिनकी ई–निविदा विशिष्टीकरण सं0–14/वि0जा0पा0ख0/आ/2021–22, 19/वि0जा0पा0ख0/आ/2021–22 एवं 21/वि0जा0पा0ख0/आ/2021–22 है, जो कि दिनांक 01.02.2022 समय 12:00 बजे प्राप्त कर दिनांक 02.02.2022 समय 12:00 बजे खोली जानी थी। अपरिहार्य कारणों से उक्त निविदाओं की तिथि व समय को विस्तारित किया जाता है जिसमें निविदाओं को प्राप्त करने की तिथि 08.02.2022 समय 12:00 बजे एवं निविदा को खोलने की तिथि 08.02.2022 समय 15:00 बजे (03:00 बजे अपरान्ह) निर्धारित किया जाता है। अन्य सभी शर्ते यथावत रहेगी। निविदा सम्बन्धित विवरण विभागीय वेबसाइट http://etender.up.nic.in से भी प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। **''राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाए'' अधिशासी अभियन्ता (जानपद) विद्युत जानपद पारेषण खण्ड, ककरेटा रोड (निकट अमर उजाला प्रेस,) 220 के0वी0 उपकेन्द्र सिकन्दरा आगरा।**

पत्रांकः 363 वि0 जा0पा0ख0/आगरा/दिनांकः01.02.2022

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR

Telefax: 0194-2496089, E-mail ID: xenmhchdk@yahoo.in
(Short Term)
GIST of E -NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/306/e-tendering Dated:-31-01-2022

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-

Name of Work	Est. Cost. (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (in Rupees)	Time of Completion (in Days)	AA Accorded Vide No:	TS No.	Earnest Money (in Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Shifting of 1000 LPM Oxygen Plant from 500 Bedded Paediatric Hospital, Bemina to GB Pant Children Hospital, Srinagar.	3.43	200	05	GBP/CH/3 683-87, Dt:17-012022	SEMK/TS-14/17, Dt:24-01-2022	6900

1. The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from31-01-2022 (18.00 hrs).
2. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 01-02-2022(10.00 hrs) to 07-02-2022(14:00 hrs) in two (02) cover.
3. The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 07-02-2022(16.00 hrs) or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

No: MHCHD/ TS/10226-31
Dated:31-01-2022
DIPK-17416

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

Government of Jammu & Kashmir (UT)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE DIVISION BIJBEHARA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Fresh E-NIT No. 48 of 2021-22 ISSUED UNDER NO;PHB/: 9761-86 Dated. 29.01.2022

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT of J&K e-tenders (Two cover System) are invited on item rate basis with maintenance period of from reputed and resourceful contractors /Firms/ companies/joint venture of repute in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments for the following works, which should be uploaded on the Procurement web portal http://jktenders.gov.infor the subjected work(s) referred below to be received by the **Superintending Engineer, Hydl. Circle, Anantnag** and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed e-NIT /Tender Documents/ PWD Form No:- 25 double are accepted. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement portal http://jktenders.gov.in. The cost of tender documents (Non- refundable/Non-Transferable) should be the shape of e-Challan or Treasury Challan/Receipt in favour **Executive Engineer PHE Division Bijbehara. However the earnest money in the shape of CDR/FDR pledged in favour of Superintending Engineer, Hydl. Circle, Anantnag.**

S. No	Name of work	Amount	Earnest money	Cost of TD	Class of contract	Head of Account	Tender receiving authority
1	Providing design Constt. and successful testing and commissioning of 0.70 MGD RSFP comprising of Clarifloculator, flash mixer, filter house , separate back wash tank of required capacity along- with all electrical/mechanical components incld. trial run for 06 months and DLP 9 months , I/f of pipe 250 mm dia RWM line, construction of Resettling tank, Construction of intake chamber/Channel, Construction of Chain link fencing around structures and construction of Sluice chamber, Air valves for WSS Chittergul under NABARD.	456.08	912160	4000	AAY	NRDWP	Superintending Engineer Hyd. Circle Anantnag
2	Providing design Constt. and successful testing and commissioning of 0.46 MGD RSFP comprising of Clarifloculator, flash mixer,filter house , separate back wash tank of required capacity along with all electrical/mechanical components incld. trial run and mantaintance for a period of 9 months after completion of work, L/F of pipe network, Construction of cement conc.. Blocks over RWM , Construction of Steel Truss bridge , Construction of 2.30 lac gallons capacity SR for WSS Siligam Tantraypora	529.73	1059460	5000	AAY	NRDWP	Superintending Engineer Hyd. Circle Anantnag

Position of Funds:- Available, Major Head of Account: NABARD/NRDWP, Position of AAA Accorded

The Bidding documents consisting of eligibility criteria, specification, drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the e-procurement Portal "http://jktenders.gov.in"**as per schedule of dates given below:-**

S. No.	Description	Date DD	MM	YYYY	Time
1	**Publishing date of NIT**	30	01	2022	9.00 AM
2	**Download start date**	30	01	2022	9.00AM
3	**Bid submission start date**	30	01	2022	9.00 AM
4	**Pre-bid meeting**	14	02	2022	11.00 AM in the office of Executive Engineer
5	**Bid submission end date**	21	02	2022	4.00 PM.
6	**Bid opening date (Technical Cover)**	22	02	2022	10.00 AM

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of Jammu & Kashmir.
Executive Engineer,
JSD (PHE) Div, Bijbehara

DIPK-17373

HIMACHAL PRADESH, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

e-procurement Notice
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer,HP.PWD. Division Sarkaghat H.P. on behalf of Governor of HP.invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system, for construction of each of this following works from the eligible Class of contractors registered with HP.PWD for the works as detailed below.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	EMD	Cost of tender	Time limit	Eligible class of contractor.
1.	Construction of Combined office building at Baldwara Distt Mandi (SH: Construction of Building portion, Water Supply & Sanitary Installation, RHW System and site development)	11,68,48,142/-	23,37,000/-	5000	Two Years	Class - A

1. Date of release of invitation for Bids through e-procurement: **14.02.2022**
2. **Starting and Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-tendering w.e.f. 14.02.2022 at 11:00 A.M. to 28.02.2022 up to 11.30 A.M.**
3. The bidder are advised to note other details of tenders form the department website www.hptender.gov.in
4. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept /reject any tender/application or all tender without assigning any reason.

Executive Engineer,
Sarkaghat Division, HP.PWD.Sarkaghat.
6567/HP **For behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh**

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

e-Procurement Notice
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer, Shimla, Division No. I, HPPWD, Shimla-3, H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost.	Starting date for downloading Bid	Earnest Money	Deadline for submission of Bid	Time Allowed
1	Annual Periodical Maintenance of MDR 67 (Sh:- Providing Renewal coat of 30 mm thick bituminous concrete surface on MRR Via Lakkar Bazar Km. 147/825 to 152/460) (Under AMP-2022-23)	2,16,67,805	15-02-2022	433400/-	28-02-2022	90 days
2	Annual Periodical Maintenance of MDR 66 (Sh:- Providing Renewal coat of 30 mm thick bituminous concrete surface on MRR Via Chotta Shimla Km. 145/00 to 152/00) (Under AMP-2022-23)	2,92,62,177	15-02-2022	585250/-	28-02-2022	90 days
3	Annual Periodical Maintenance of MDR 66 (Sh:- Providing Renewal coat of 30 mm thick bituminous concrete surface on Dhalli Bye Pass road Km 0/00 to 3/770) (Under AMP-2022-23)	1,31,37,692	15-02-2022	262760/-	28-02-2022	90 days

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptender.gov.in
The executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all tenders without assigning any reason.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

"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 Year	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. Deg

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FOCUS ON ECONOMIC RECOVERY
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The Hope: Spend & Grow

Budget's big push: Govt capital expenditure up 27% over last year

ANIL SASI & P VAIDYANATHAN IYER
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

AS INDIA emerges from the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic with an ebbing third wave, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's economic recovery strategy hinges on a sharp step-up in government spending which, in due course, is expected to spur private investment that has so far remained stalled.

This exclusive focus on capital spending is, in effect, a continuation of the previous year's Budget but devoid of its high decibel reform push — asset monetisation and privatisation of state-owned banks and insurance companies — which the government projected to position India in the post-pandemic world.

In a way, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has continued with the NDA government's economic philosophy of fiscal rectitude, without any mention of privatisation, disinvestment and asset monetisation in her 90-minute speech. Despite an unprecedented economic distress which many surveys showed hurt

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

BUSINESS AS USUAL
BY UNNY

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on her way to present the Budget, in New Delhi on Tuesday. *Tashi Tobgyal*

THE EDITORIAL PAGE & THE IDEAS PAGE

THE STRUGGLE TO SPEND
■ NEELKANTH MISHRA

STAGE FOR GROWTH
■ AKHILESH MISHRA

VOICES UNHEARD
■ PALANIVEL THIAGA RAJAN

THE MISSING FOCUS ON HEALTH
■ K SUJATHA RAO

LETTING DOWN THE BOTTOM HALF
■ AMIT BASOLE

PAGES 14,15

LIC IPO KEY

Divestment numbers missed, Budget dials down target

SUNNY VERMA & SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE GOVERNMENT'S ambitious disinvestment agenda, flagged in the Budget announcement last year, has been scaled down.

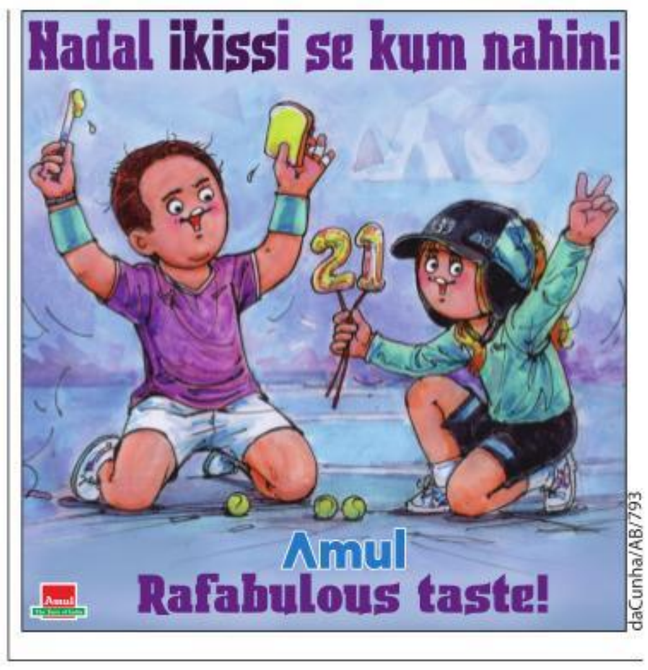
While Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had set a target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore through disinvestment in the Budget estimates in 2021-22, the target has now been revised to Rs 78,000 crore. And for the year 2022-23, she has set a softer target of Rs 65,000 crore.

Incidentally, Sitharaman did not use the word 'privatisation' in her speech this year, the hallmark of her Budget presentation last year — the Opposition has been targeting the government for selling what it says are established companies and businesses to the private sector.

Although a revised target of Rs 78,000 crore has been set for this financial year, a lot will depend on the proposed public issue of the Life Insurance Corporation, expected to hit the market by March.

In financial year 2020-21, the government had raised

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



BEFORE KEY STATE ELECTIONS

Politics at arm's length, Govt banks on Covid ebb and income trickle-down

ANIL SASI, RAVISH TIWARI & LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

EXPLAINED

ELECTIONS TO five states which account for a fifth of the nation's population are barely 10 days away but they seemed quite a distance from Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget speech.

No desk-thumping references to the usual housing, electricity, cooking gas, toilets numbers; no mention of names of places when projects were listed, be it logistics or ropeways.

Devoid of political feelers, the 90-minute speech showcased a Budget strategy driven more by economic assumptions than any overt political imperatives, except when it came to reforms..

Still smarting from the repeal of farm laws, the government's big showpiece of farm reform during the pandemic in the face of protests, Sitharaman did not refer to the big-ticket announcements on privatization, asset monetization and disinvestment in the previous Budget. Instead, she chose to focus exclusively on high spending to bolster economic recovery.

This is not the first time she did so.

In the Budget for 2021-22, too, she had liberated herself from fiscal restraints to push through a massive expenditure plan to aid a recovery still trying to strike roots then.

In an economy where

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

WELCOMING CAPEX

Opp chorus: In hard times, no help for aam aadmi; Cong says 'capitalist'

MANOJ C G
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

RELIEVED THAT the Budget in the midst of key state polls lacked big-bang vote-catching announcements, the main Opposition Congress Tuesday took a leaf out of socialist and communist parties to accuse the Government of delivering a "capitalist Budget", disregarding the poor, and without a roadmap for job creation or a plan to address widening inequality and falling income.

Most of the Opposition leaders, including Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, Aam Aadmi Party's Arvind Kejriwal and Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav, maintained that the Budget has nothing for the common man — in sync with comments from the Left parties.

Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram welcomed the increase in capital expenditure but pointed out that the Government has slashed "every key subsidy". "Today's Budget speech was the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

TDS WILL HELP TRACK TRAIL

Out of the shadow: 30% tax on crypto, RBI to issue its digital currency

PRANAV MUKUL, GEORGE MATHEW & AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 1

UNION FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday proposed to tax "any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset" at a rate of 30 per cent and impose a 1 per cent tax deduction at source (TDS) of transactions above a monetary threshold.

While the upside is limited from a revenue mobilisation perspective, the step is important as it is the first formal recognition by the Government of increasingly popular financial instruments, such as cryptocurrencies, and applications, such as non-fungible tokens.

The imposition of a tax on these instruments is also an indication from the Government

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

CREDIT SUPPORT TO INFRA FUNDING, EMPLOYEE PARITY

Amid deep standoff between Centre and states, Budget bid to bridge divide

AANCHAL MAGAZINE & LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

FOLLOWING THE presentation of the Budget, Opposition leaders were taken by surprise when PM Narendra Modi, after congratulating Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, walked across the aisle and greeted them, enquired about the health of some senior TMC leaders, struck a conversation with an MP about being digital-friendly.

Given the bitter political divide, this casual chit-chat stood out.

More so, when the Centre, in a set of initiatives in the Budget, reached out to states on capital expenditure, asset creation and infrastructure development.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

UNION BUDGET

■ THE FISC
■ THE MACRO
■ MARKETS
■ CAPEX PUSH
■ NEW ECONOMY
■ THE RURAL
■ INFRASTRUCTURE
■ SOCIAL INFRA
■ INTERVIEW
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Option F	1,46,250	2,93,250	5,87,500	29,37,500	Option F: Annuity for Life with Return of Purchase Price
Option J	1,45,500	2,91,750	5,84,500	29,22,500	Option J: Joint Life Annuity with a provision for 100% of the annuity payable as long as one of the Annuitant survives and Return of Purchase Price on death of last survivor

*Plus applicable tax as per rules Figures in Rupees

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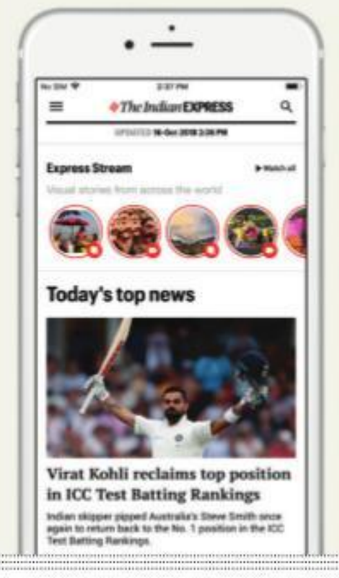

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SONY HT-A9 +SW5 REVIEW: BLOWN AWAY IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT

The Sony HT-A9 is the sort of home theatre system you get when you are passionate about your cinema and your music

BUDGET 2022

CRYPTO TAX BRINGS CLARITY

30% slab to increase cryptocurrency investors' tax burden

ENTERTAINMENT

GEHRAIYAAN TITLE TRACK

Sung by Lothika Jha, the track is a musical ode to love and longing

EXPRESS AUDIO

Unpacking Budget 2022

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Today on the 3 Things podcast, we talk about the highlights (and disappointments) of the Budget, and discuss what it means for the Indian economy

FROM PAGE ONE

Expenditure up

the poor the hardest, the Budget persisted with government interventions on the supply side.

For ordinary income tax payers, there were no real takeaways other than some easing of compliances and a new I-T return system. And for the bottom of the pyramid that suffered income and job losses during the pandemic, the Budget did not offer any major support despite five states including Uttar Pradesh and Punjab going to polls.

For 2022-23, Sitharaman has sharply hiked the capital expenditure budget by 24.47 per cent to Rs 7.5 lakh crore (compared with the Revised Estimate for 2021-22 at Rs 6,02,711 crore), which is almost 2.9 per cent of the GDP. Together with grants in aid for creation of capital assets (including MNREGA works), the effective capital expenditure for the next year is budgeted at Rs 10.67 lakh crore, 27 per cent more than the RE of 2021-22 at Rs 8.40 lakh crore.

This expenditure boost comes along with an increase in the state borrowing limit to 4 per cent of the GSDP. Sitharaman also allowed states to borrow up to Rs 1 lakh crore through 50-year interest-free loans to make capital investments. In 2021-22, the Centre had allowed states an additional Rs 15,000 crore for capital investment under a similar window.

This is classical Keynesian economics at play – at a time when the private sector is reluctant or averse to invest given poor demand conditions, the government is weighing in, and borrowing more to spend more.

Over the course of the next 12 months, such government spending is expected to crowd in private sector investment and help create jobs.

Despite providing a fillip to the economy through higher capital spending, Sitharaman has kept the fisc under control, a key metric that foreign investors and markets assess the Budget on. Not only did she ensure that the fiscal deficit target for the current year was more or less met (6.9 per cent of GDP against 6.8 per cent assumed in Budget 2021-22), she stayed on course, bringing it down by 0.5 percentage points in the next financial year.

While buoyant revenues during the current year helped the government retain its fiscal deficit target, it has come at a cost – Sitharaman had to trim subsidies and cut the allocation on the job guarantee scheme.

The Budget also provided clarity on key new economy sectors – for cryptocurrencies, it said income from transfer of digital assets would be taxed at 30 per cent and further proposed a 1 per cent TDS on transfer of payment; it announced a battery swapping policy that would enthuse the EV (electric vehicles) segment; and provided a roadmap for 5G rollout that would boost the technology and start-up ecosystem.

Sitharaman also extended the ECLGS (Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme), a facility to provide collateral-free loans to small and medium enterprises, by another year and enhanced the credit line by Rs 50,000 crore to Rs 5 lakh crore. Unlike big companies which could borrow easily, MSMEs banked on this scheme during the pandemic, when the national lockdown and subsequent demand collapse, almost wiped them out of business.

Further, she also let companies start production by March 31, 2024 (the deadline was March 2023) to avail of the concessional 15 per cent corporate tax regime. This, she said, was an effort to establish a globally competitive business environment for certain companies.

Tax on crypto

on implementing its stated plan of recognising them as assets and not currencies ahead of greater policy clarity that is expected by way of the proposed cryptocurrency Bill.

The imposition of TDS suggests a policy resolve to track the monetary trail in a sector that has so far been outside the purview of regulatory supervision or tax administration.

"Virtual digital assets have gained tremendous popularity in recent times and the volumes of trading in such digital assets has increased substantially. Further, a market is emerging where payment for the transfer of a virtual digital asset can be made through another such asset. Accordingly, a new scheme to provide for taxation of such virtual digital assets has been proposed in the Bill," the explanatory memorandum of the Finance Bill notes.

It also specifically defines "virtual digital asset", and includes non-fungible token in its ambit.

Sitharaman, however, said the move should not be seen as the Government legalising or recognising virtual and cryptocurrencies. "There is a process of consultation, which is going on, about crypto. That is the first thing. Before the consultation is completed, I won't be able to do anything on regulating them or formalising a framework for regulation for them," Sitharaman told "Doordarshan" in an interview.

Further, all forms of crypto or virtual assets cannot be placed under the umbrella term of currency as any form of fiat can only be issued by the authorities concerned, she said. "If they issue something, even if it is digital, only then can it be currency. What happens in the world of crypto otherwise is that they are creating very many types of assets using the digital and distributed ledger technology. All of them are not necessarily currencies," she said.

The Government has therefore proposed that the Reserve Bank of India would issue a digital currency in the upcoming financial year, she said, adding that it would be "riveted in or based on" certain value of gold, money, government assets or "something similar".

"So it will be asset backed. It will be sovereign backed in a way. So that is what is currency. The rest of them, we do not yet know how we are going to regulate them because the consultation is going on. However, because there is a lot of buying, selling, and transacting, resulting in some kind of a profit, and it is a sovereign right to tax such transactions and profit making, I have come up with the proposal," she said.

Apart from the flat 30 per cent tax rate on any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset, Sitharaman has in the Budget also proposed a 1 per cent TDS of such consideration above a monetary threshold. Further, recipients of virtual digital assets as gifts will also have to pay a tax.

"No deduction in respect of any expenditure or allowance shall be allowed while computing such income except cost of acquisition. Further, loss from transfer of virtual digital assets cannot be set off against any other income," Budget documents show.

Indian investors have put around Rs 45,000 crore in private cryptocurrencies. The RBI has been against private cryptocurrencies, saying they are a serious concern from a macroeconomic and financial stability standpoint.

The Government has proposed that the RBI's digital rupee, also called the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), will be issued using blockchain technology starting from the next financial year.

The Central Board of the RBI had recently discussed various aspects, including the status of CBDC. RBI officials informed the board that a pilot project for the introduction of CBDC will be launched soon.

The RBI is now working on two areas: wholesale account-based and retail. While a lot of work has already been done on wholesale accounts, the retail issue is slightly complicated and the central bank is taking some time on it. CBDCs are the virtual or electronic form of fiat currencies (like the Indian rupee or US dollar). Other central banks such as the US Fed and the People's Bank of China are also planning their own digital currencies. A CBDC is the legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form. It is the same as a fiat currency and is exchangeable one-to-one with the fiat currency.

Opp chorus

most capitalist speech ever read by a Finance Minister," the Congress leader said.

The Congress was expecting the Budget to have an eye on elections in five states, including UP and Punjab. But the absence of any such populist measure prompted the party, whose economic outlook is generally similar to that of the BJP, frame the Budget in the rich-versus-poor theme.

Party leader Rahul Gandhi called it a "Zero Sum Budget", which has nothing for the "salaried class, middle class, the poor and deprived, youth, farmers and MSMEs". On Wednesday, Gandhi will lead the Congress's charge in Lok Sabha during the discussion on the Motion of Thanks, opening the debate on behalf of the Opposition.

TMC chief Banerjee shared Gandhi's view. The "Budget has zero for common people, who are getting crushed by unemployment and inflation. Government is lost in big words signifying nothing — a Pegasus spin Budget," she said.

"In the time of Corona, people had big expectations from the Budget. But it has disappointed people. There is nothing in the Budget for common people. There is nothing to bring down the prices either," Kejriwal said.

"Work and businesses are in ruin. There is a historic economic slowdown, lakhs have lost their jobs...the incomes of the common people have come down…Unemployment and disease have dried up people's savings…And to pick the pockets have come yet another Budget of the BJP," SP's Akhilesh Yadav said.

While Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said the Budget was for the rich and mentioned the cut in corporate taxes, Chidambaram pointed out that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman mentioned the word "poor" only twice in her speech.

Chidambaram said the Government is not banking on its performance but on the hope "that they can divide the Indian society into Hindus and non-Hindus and capture the bulk of the Hindu vote. It is simply a cold, clever calculation that religion and Hindutva will propel us back to power."

Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma said the sharp reduction in NREGA allocation -- by Rs 25,000 crore -- and cut in allocation to FCI is "insensitive", considering the loss of livelihoods.

"The Budget is insipid and a denial of the real challenges confronting the Indian economy: rising unemployment, falling incomes, collapsing demand and consumption, and frightening rise in inequality," Sharma said.

Referring to the slowdown, job losses, rise in unemployment, closing down of MSMEs, loss of income for 84 per cent of households and dip in per capita income and expenditure in the two pandemic years, Chidambaram said that "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 Government behaves and acts as though it is on the right path and has delivered on the issues that matter to the common people. This is false. This is also bull-headed obduracy. This also reflects the Government's contemptuous disregard of the burdens and sufferings of the people," he said.

"There was not a word in the speech about any cash assistance to the very poor who have been pushed into extreme poverty and suffered immensely in the last two years; not a word for those who lost their jobs; not a word about creating jobs for those whose education stopped at some stage at the school level; not a word about reviving MSMEs that shut down; not a word about distributing more food to combat malnutrition and hunger; not a word about cutting indirect taxes, especially GST, to contain inflation and bring down the prices of goods; and not a word about giving tax relief to the tax-paying middle class or the tax-bearing head of a household," he said.

"By any standard, today's Budget speech was the most capitalist speech ever read by a Finance Minister. The FM has mastered the jargon of capitalist economics. Read her speech again: count the number of times she used the words digital, portal, IT-based, paperless, database, ecosystem, global, Atmanirbhar. The word 'poor' occurs twice in paragraph 6, and we thank the FM for remembering that there are poor people in this country," Chidambaram said.

The total subsidy bill, he said, has been cut by 27 per cent. "This is the "most-unkindest cut" in this Budget. The FM may have forgotten the poor but the poor have long memories," he said.

Chidambaram said it was also "worrying" that the Finance Minister is betting on heavy market borrowing and increase in corporate tax, personal income tax and GST for raising resources. "There is not a word about raising more resources from the rich, especially the very, very rich 142 persons whose wealth in the last two years has increased from Rs 23,14,000 crore to Rs 53,16,000 crore," he said.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said the Government, instead of giving relief to those who have been suffering from economic recession and impact of the pandemic, is continuing with policies that will mount more misery on people.

Yechury's CPI counterpart D Raja said the Budget will further widen the gap between the "haves and have-nots" and that it lacked any concrete proposal to help economic revival. "The priority should have been to generate more and more jobs. But there is no plan in the Budget to generate more employment," he said.

Asked about Sitharaman criticising Rahul Gandhi's "zero sum" remark, Chidambaram said there is "zero cash assistance, zero for those who lost their jobs, zero for those who are looking for jobs, zero for MSMEs, zero for those, who are suffering from malnutrition and hunger, zero for those who have suffered from inflation, so zero plus zero, plus zero, plus zero, plus zero, plus zero, can only be a zero sum."

Centre-state

This, amid a deep Centre-state standoff over a range of issues, from the use of investigative agencies to the proposed changes in cadre rules.

The government raised the outlay for 'Scheme for Financial Assistance to States for Capital Investment', made a commitment to work with state governments to cut time needed for approvals to push affordable housing; and moved to include infrastructure developed by state government under the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan.

"Reflecting the true spirit of cooperative federalism, the Central Government is committed to bolstering the hands of the states in enhancing their capital investment towards creating productive assets and generating remunerative employment...in deference to the requests received during my meeting with Chief Ministers and state Finance Ministers, the outlay for this scheme is being enhanced from Rs 10,000 crore in the Budget Estimates to Rs 15,000 crore in the Revised Estimates for the current year," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

The government also launched a new scheme, Prime Minister's Development Initiative for NorthEast (PM-DevINE), which will be implemented through the North-Eastern Council for funding infrastructure with an initial allocation of Rs 1,500 crore. "It will not be a substitute for existing Central or state schemes. While the central ministries may also pose their candidate projects, priority will be given to those posed by the states," Sitharaman said.

For 2022-23, Rs 1 lakh crore has been allocated for states for catalysing overall investments in the economy in the form of 50-year interest-free loans, over and above the normal borrowing limit of 4 per cent of GSDP to the states.

"The outlay on Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is up by 27 per cent. In addition, it has been provided that if certain priority projects by some states have been identified, we will even take 40 per cent of state government's (share in funding) so that states have no burden in carrying out these works. These are extremely labour intensive projects," Finance Secretary TV Somanathan said.

For urban capacity building, support will also be provided to the states, the Finance Minister said. "Modernization of building byelaws, Town Planning Schemes (TPS), and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) will be implemented. This will facilitate reforms for people to live and work closer to mass transit systems," she said.

Active involvement of states has also been sought for the next phase of 'Ease of Doing Business 2.0' and 'Ease of Living'. The PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, the plan for infrastructure development, will also include infrastructure developed by the state governments.

For the aspirational districts programme, "95 per cent of those 112 districts have made significant progress in key sectors such as health, nutrition, financial inclusion and basic infrastructure", Sitharaman said, adding that in 2022-23, the programme will focus on such blocks in those districts. The government also brought in parity for state government and Central government employees by increasing the tax deduction limit to 14 per cent from 10 per cent on employer's contribution to the National Pension System.

Divestment

Rs 37,896 crore from disinvestment. In the current financial year, it has raised Rs 12,030 crore so far, according to official data.

The highest that the government has raised through disinvestment till date has been Rs 100,045 crore in 2017-18.

Privatisation and asset monetisation were the hallmark of last year's Budget. While the government was able to sell Air India and Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited to the Tata Group and bring out a National Monetisation Pipeline, privatisation of state-owned banks is yet to gain momentum.

"Towards implementation of the new Public Sector Enterprise policy, the strategic transfer of ownership of Air India has been completed. The strategic partner for NINL has been selected. The public issue of the LIC is expected shortly. Others too are in the process for 2022-23," Sitharaman said. In the previous Budget, she had announced that the government would go for privatisation of two public sector banks. But till date, the "Draft Cabinet Note for amendments to relevant Acts are under inter-ministerial consultation," Budget documents said.

The government said that improvement in the pace of economic recovery would provide new avenues for enhancing disinvestment receipts in the financial year.

The privatisation of two state-owned banks and downstream oil major BPCL is now expected to stretch into next year even as the Centre is racing against time to bring the LIC IPO before the end of this quarter.

While the enabling framework for privatisation of one of the four general insurance companies — a key Budget announcement — has been done with amendments to the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act being cleared during the monsoon session of Parliament last year, the insurer targeted for the stake sale is yet to be finalised.

Markets participants expect the pending IDBI Bank stake sale also to spill over to next year.

The Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021, "regarding privatisation of two Public Sector Banks" was listed for introduction in the winter session of Parliament last year. But it was not taken up by the Cabinet, despite a draft being ready, a government official said. Opposition to privatisation by bank unions, pullback on the farm laws and the upcoming Assembly elections seem to have had a bearing on the timing of the privatisation of banks.

"…we propose to take up the privatization of two Public Sector Banks and one General Insurance company in the year 2021-22. This would require legislative amendments and I propose to introduce the amendments in this Session itself," Sitharaman had said in her Budget speech last year.

Other companies in line for privatisation include Shipping Corporation of India, BEML, Container Corporation of India and Pawan Hans. The government has received financial bids for Pawan Hans and Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited, and the privatisation process has moved to the concluding stage.

The government had also put out a four-year National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) worth an estimated Rs 6 lakh crore. Roads, railways and power sector assets will comprise over 66% of the total estimated value of the assets to be monetised, with the rest in sectors including telecom, mining, aviation, ports, natural gas and petroleum product pipelines, warehouses and stadiums.

Covid ebb

consumption demand accounts for almost 55 per cent of output, what could be the government's assumptions to bank on an investment-led strategy to deliver optimum growth?

For one, Sitharaman has estimated only a modest growth rate of 8-8.5 per cent for the next year. It is lower than even the IMF projection of 9 per cent for 2022-23, and also lower than the 9.2 per cent growth estimate by the NSO for the current financial year.

Such a growth rate, officials said, is realistic also because there is a belief -- guarded thought it may be -- that the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic is over and the third wave could taper off by the end of March. This also reflects in the lower Rs 73,000-crore MNREGA allocation for 2022-23 compared to the Rs 98,000 crore in the revised estimate for 2021-22 and a sharp cut in vaccine allocation.

The job guarantee scheme is a demand-led programme; a lower outlay suggests the pandemic-induced distress is gradually waning.

The NDA government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also reckons that wide-ranging sops to compensate for income loss is fraught with problems of identification of beneficiaries, quantum of support, and leakage in distribution or corruption. Moreover, it would have probably worked during the first wave of the pandemic when workers migrated in large numbers to their home states.

"We didn't do it then for the reasons stated; now it makes little sense," said a top government official who did not wish to be named. Further, the political leadership firmly believes that broad-based growth will come from a massive expenditure push in productive sectors, and the resultant trickle-down.

NK Singh, Chairman of Fifteenth Finance Commission, said, there is no point in segmenting the middle-class population. "Incomes will flow across all segments when jobs are created due to higher spending," he told The Indian Express. "The biggest political signal in the Budget is that it has stayed away from the distraction of elections and avoided the populist trap of tax concessions and an across-the-board income support." The Centre also recognizes its own limitations on efficient spending. Hence, it has roped in the states to deliver – it has hiked the borrowing limit of states to 4 per cent of GSDP and also provided for 50-year interest-free loans up to Rs 1 lakh crore in 2022-23.

It realizes that states are better placed to spend, which in turn, will touch more lives. Higher spending on infrastructure will lift capacities of primary products such as steel and cement; and as this picks up, the assumption is that the private sector will get back to the drawing board to plan for additional capacities – kick-starting private sector crowding-in that Sitharaman said in her speech.

While that seems to be the broad strategy, what the government may have to grapple with in the meantime is higher inflation and a gradual hardening of monetary policy. This, together, with a reliance on more market borrowings with firming up of interest rates may actually end up risking crowding out – a phenomenon where the private sector finds it difficult to borrow from banks, with the government itself becoming a competitor.

SBI
IT Contact Centre, State Bank of India, Global IT Centre,
Kapas Bhawan, 2nd floor, Sector 11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400614
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
RFP NO: SBI/GITC/IT-CONTACT CENTRE/2021/2022/826 Dated: 02.02.2022
Bids are invited by State Bank of India from the eligible bidders for "Procurement of Outbound Contact Centre Technology Stack". For details, please visit 'Procurement news' at https://www.sbi.co.in.
Commencement of download of RFP: From 02.02.2022.
Last date and time for submission of bids: 28.02.2022 up to 16:00hrs.
Place: Navi Mumbai
Date: 02.02.2022
Deputy General Manager
IT CONTACT CENTRE

CANTONMENT BOARD, DEHUROAD
(Government of India, Ministry of Defence)
Dehuroad, Pune - 412 101,
Ph. No.020 27671222, Fax: 020 27672610
e-mail: ceodehu-stats@nic.in, website: https: //dehuroad.canttgov.in
No. CBDR/ADMIN/Permanent Recruitment/2022
Date: 31/01/2022
EMPLOYMENT NOTICE
1. Applications in the prescribed format are invited from eligible candidates for direct recruitment to the post of AMO (Assistant Medical Officer), Junior Clerk, Staff Nurse, Sanitary Inspector, in the office of the Cantonment Board Dehuroad, Distt:- Pune, State- Maharashtra.
2. Detailed Advertisement, Format of the Application form and other information is available on https://dehuroad.cantt.gov.in
3. Candidates are requested to download the application form from the above mentioned website. The duly filled application form along with self-attested copy of Education Qualification/certificate should be sent by Registered Post/Speed post only to the "Chief Executive Officer, Office of the Cantonment Board Dehuroad, near Dehuroad railway Station, Dehuroad, Pune — 412101"
4. Requirement of Posts:-

S.N.	Name of the Post	Pay Scale (as per 7th Pay Commission)	Reservation Status						Age Limit (as per CBESR, 2021)
			UR	SC	ST	OBC	EWS	Total	
1	Assistant Medical Officer	Rs. 56100-177500 (S-20)	1	-	-	1	-	2	23-32 Yrs.
2	Junior Clerk	Rs. 19900-63200 (S-6)	1	1	2	1	-	5	21-30 Yrs.
3	Staff Nurse	Rs. 35400-112400 (S-13)	2	-	-	1	-	3	21-30 Yrs.
4	Sanitary Inspector	Rs. 25500-81100 (S-8)	-	-	-	1	-	1	21-30 Yrs.

UR= Unreserved, OBC= Other Backward Class, SC= Scheduled Caste, ST= Scheduled Tribe, EWS= Economy Weaker Section, PH= Physically Handicapped.
Critical Dates:- a. Last date of receipt of application:- 04/03/2022.
Note:- The cut-off date for determining the age limits shall be 04/03/2022. There is no age relaxation for UR Categories.
» For detailed advertisement, please visit https://dehuroad.cantt.gov.in/recruitment/.
Sd/-
Ramswroop Haritwal
Chief Executive Officer
Cantonment Board Dehuroad

DTU	SIRIFORT	SHADIPUR	ITO
Poor	Poor	Poor	Severe
376 AQI PM 10 (0–500)	362 AQI PM 10 (0–500)	298 AQI PM 10 (0–500)	410 AQI PM 10 (0–500)

0-50 Good | 51-100 Satisfactory | 101-200 Moderate | 201-300 Poor | 301-400 Very Poor | 401-500 Severe

SKYWATCH

FORECAST: Feb 2
Partly cloudy sky. Moderate to dense fog in the morning

MAX: 21 (1.1 ºC below normal) | MIN: 8 (0.5º C below normal)

NO CHANGE IN DELHI GOVT'S SHARE IN CENTRAL TAXES

Budget has nothing for the common public, no fix for inflation: Kejriwal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

CALLING THE union budget "ill-thought" and "disappointing", Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said it did not offer any relief to the common man even during the pandemic.

Targeting the Centre over the reduction in allocation for Minimum Support Price to farmers, Sisodia said, "We are all well aware that 60% of the employment in our country depends solely on our agricultural sector. For the past one year, our farmers left their fields and sat on the roads braving all kinds of harsh weather demanding MSP rights and the repealing of the three black farm laws… the Centre has committed a huge fraud with our farmers while presenting this budget. MSP allocation has been reduced from Rs 2.48 lakh crore to Rs 2.37 lakh crore. They did not just reduce their targeted procurement but also the budget allocation essential for the agriculture sector by 4.5%. This is a complete fraud. The Centre itself is admitting that it is reducing the scope of the scheme and the beneficiaries will reduce from 1.97 crore farmers to 1.68 crore. There couldn't have possibly been a more anti-farmer budget in our history," he said.

CM hit out at the Centre

Kejriwal, meanwhile, hit out at the Centre for not making any announcements that would help tackle inflation. "The public had huge aspirations from the budget due to the pandemic's woes. The people have been left bereft. There's nothing in this budget for the common man, nothing that will reduce the backbreaking inflation," he said.

Delhi civic bodies, which are funded mostly by the Centre but through the state government, have not got any extra funds in the election year. Municipal corporations will go to polls in April this year and the AAP and the ruling BJP have been locked in a bitter battle over fund allocation and utilisation in civic bodies.

"The central government remains indifferent to Delhi. On one hand, while the rest of the states get a 42% share in central taxes, on the other hand, only Rs 325 crore is being given to the Delhi government for the last 21 years. The central government allocated Rs 69,421 crore in this budget to municipal corporations in various states across India, but the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, where the BJP always bemoans a lack of funds, received nothing. The BJP-led corporation has claimed that it will receive funds directly from the Centre but their promises fell flat," Sisodia said.

The share of the Delhi government in central taxes remained Rs 325 crore, with the Centre ignoring the state's demand for an increase for 21 years now.

Cleanest January air since 2015 in capital

New Delhi: Record rainfall, frequent western disturbances and strong winds made this January the cleanest in Delhi since 2015, when the records on air quality were first put in the public domain.

According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, Delhi's average air quality index (AQI) this January was 279, much lower than the 324 in 2021. On two days, the air quality was 'satisfactory', which is unusual for this time of the year. Only one 'severe' day was recorded. On most days, the AQI was in the 'poor' range. Delhi's geographic location and weather conditions add to its alarming air quality every winter. **ENS**

Toddler shot at as relatives fiddle with new pistol, 2 held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

A THREE-YEAR-OLD boy was shot at, allegedly by his aunt and grandaunt, while they were fiddling with a newly purchased pistol at their home in North Delhi's Anand Parbat. The duo have been arrested and the child's condition is stable, police said.

Police alleged that the grandaunt initially lied to them to save her daughter-in-law. Two other members of the family, who allegedly bought the pistol and are involved, are absconding.

The incident took place around 1 am Saturday. The grandaunt (47) initially said she was walking home with her sister's grandson from Shastri Nagar to Than Singh Nagar when two people came on a bike and shot at her near the Sarai Rohilla flyover. She alleged that the bullet hit the boy in the shoulder.

The toddler was rushed to a hospital and underwent surgery following severe blood loss. "We took the grandaunt's statement and tried verifying the allegations, but there seemed to be some discrepancies. The team suspected the woman's involvement. We checked more than two dozen CCTVs and found nothing," said a senior police officer.

The team then visited the child's grandmother and parents and made enquiries, and found that their statements differed from that of the complainant.

Sagar Singh Kalsi, DCP (North), said, "The woman was questioned again and she blamed a local behind the incident. We found that she was lying, after which she confessed. The woman said her daughter-in-law, aged 20, accidentally fired at the baby boy while they were trying a new weapon at their home. We have recovered a blood-stained bedsheet from their home and the weapon used during the offence."

Police said a search is on to nab the woman's absconding sons. The aunt and grandaunt have been arrested and booked under sections of criminal conspiracy and giving false information to a public servant.

Allocation for police increased in Budget

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

Part of the money will be spent on installing CCTV systems

THE DELHI Police has been allocated Rs 10,355 crore in the Union Budget for 2022-23, an increase of Rs 1,701 crore from the last fiscal. The Delhi Police was allocated Rs 8,654 crore in 2021-22.

According to the police, Rs 9,808 crore has been allocated for establishment-related expenditure while Rs 287 crore will be incurred under the capital section for installation of CCTV security surveillance system across Delhi and procurement of various advanced equipment for law and order modernisation.

"It will further utilise upgradation of communication systems like cyber highway and digital trunking radio system besides implementation of Intelligence Traffic Management System (ITMS) and induction of various type of vehicles for policing," the police said.

The Delhi Police further stated, "Rs 259 crore will be spent exclusively for police infrastructure for the construction of office buildings, residential buildings for improving housing satisfaction level and operation and maintenance of New Police Headquarters building PPP mode."

Compromise in rape cases: HC orders vigilance inquiry

SOFI AHSAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

OBSERVING THAT it has been time and again held that rape cases cannot be settled based on a compromise, the High Court Tuesday ordered a vigilance inquiry into a matter in which the police, instead of registering an FIR on a complaint alleging sexual assault, chose to "put to rest" the case on the basis of a compromise arrived between the parties.

"This court notes that non-registration of an FIR in the event that the commission of a cognizable offence is disclosed goes against the law laid down by the Supreme Court," said Justice Subramonium Prasad, while referring to the sexual assault complaint made at Kapashera police station in July 2020 by a woman.

In a related matter, the court also questioned the delay in registration of an FIR at Moti Nagar police station last year and asked whether the same was also because of negotiation.

"A perusal of the record indicates that the medical examination of the prosecutrix/complainant in relation to FIR was conducted before the registration of the FIR but the MLC was conducted on the basis of DD Entry… This raises the suspicion that the instant FIR had not been registered at the time it was alleged…," it said.

The court directed the DCP, Vigilance, Delhi Police to submit a report on its queries in two months. It passed the order while hearing an accused's anticipatory bail plea in the Moti Nagar FIR. The complainant in both matters – in respect of the FIR filed last year and the 'compromised matter' before Kapashera police station in July 2020 – is the same. However, the allegations in both cases were levelled against two different men. The counsel representing the accused in the Moti Nagar FIR submitted that it was a "classic case of honey trap" as the complainant and her husband have been previously involved in a similar case.

IDBI BANK

IDBI Bank Ltd., Goel Premises, Near Bharat Jalpan Hotel, Saraeyaganj, Muzaffarpur-842001, Bihar

Appendix IV [(Rule 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Immovable property)

CIN: L65190MH2004GOI148838

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the **IDBI Bank Ltd., Goel Premises, Near Bharat Jalpan Hotel, Saraeyaganj, Muzaffarpur-842001, Bihar** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice on the date mentioned against the accounts calling upon the borrower/guarantor/mortgagor to repay the amount as mentioned against the account within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/guarantor/mortgagor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby issued to the borrower/guarantor/mortgagor and in the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the dates mentioned against the accounts. The borrower/guarantor/mortgagor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of **IDBI Bank Ltd., Goel Premises, Near Bharat Jalpan Hotel, Saraeyaganj, Muzaffarpur-842001, Bihar,** for the amounts mentioned below plus applicable interest and costs/charge thereon.The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section(8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No.	A)Name of the borrower B)Name of the mortgagor/ guarantor	1) Date of Demand Notice 2) Date of Possession 3) Claim amount as per Demand Notice	Description of the Property
1.	**A) M/s Maa Janki Alankar, Proprietor: Shri Shambhu Nath Gupta** (Mortgagor cum Guarantor) **B) 1. Shri Piyush Kumar 2. Shri Vijay Kumar Patel**	1) 26.11.2021 2) 27.01.2022 3) **₹15,22,913/-** (Rupees Fifteen lac twenty two thousand nine hundred thirteen only) and interest thereon.	All that part and parcel of the property admeasuring 436 Sq.ft. Khata No.29, Kheshra No.139(P), Ward No.22, Thana No.-407, Located at Kalyani, Puran Bazar, Mushahari, Dist.-Muzaffarpur in the State of Bihar. Which is bounded as follows: North-Anpurna Khanna & Gali, South-Krishna Kumar, East-Road, West-Anpurna Khanna. Together with all buildings and structures thereon and all plant and machinery attahced to the carth or permanently fastended to anything attached to the earth.
2.	**A) M/s Shiv Kriti Infracon Private Limited, Directors/ guarantor:** (1) Shri Sanjay Kumar S/o Late Binod Kumar Thakur (2) Shri Amit Ranjan S/o Shri Sharda Nand Singh (3) Shri Vinay Kumar S/o Late Phuldeo Prasad Singh (4) Smt. Mridula Thakur (Mortgagor) W/o Shri Sanjay Kumar	1) 26.11.2021 2) 27.01.2022 3) **₹22,92,887/-** (Rupees Twenty two lac ninety two thousand eight hundred eighty seven only) and interest thereon.	All that part and parcel of the property admeasuring 15 Dec. Khata No.26, Kheshra No.294, Mauza-Dumri alias Damodarpur, Shajahan, PS-Sadar Block-Mushari, Thana No.-332, Dist.-Muzaffarpur in the State of Bihar. Which is bounded as follows: North-By Road, South-Khesra No.-293, East-Sweta Kumari, West-Khesra No.306 & 308. Together with all buildings and structures thereon and all plant and machinery attahced to the carth or permanently fastended to anything attached to the earth.

Place : Muzaffarpur
Date : 27.01.2022

Sd/- Authorized Officer
IDBI Bank Ltd.

IDBI BANK

IDBI Bank Ltd., Ward No.-4, Mahnar Bazar, Vaishali Pin-844506 Bihar

Appendix IV [(Rule 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Immovable property)

CIN: L65190MH2004GOI148838

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the **IDBI Bank Ltd., Mahnar Bazar, Bihar** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice on the date mentioned against the accounts calling upon the borrower/guarantor/mortgagor to repay the amount as mentioned against the account within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/guarantor/mortgagor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby issued to the borrower/guarantor/mortgagor and in the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the dates mentioned against the accounts. The borrower/guarantor/mortgagor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of **IDBI Bank Ltd., Mahnar Bazar, Bihar,** for the amounts mentioned below plus applicable interest and costs/charge thereon.The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section(8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No.	A) Name of the borrower/mortgagor B) Name of the co-borrower	1) Date of Demand Notice 2) Date of Possession 3) Claim amount as per Demand Notice	Description of the Property
1.	**A) M/s Sangita Sales (Prop. Baijnath Choudhary)** Jurawanpur, Bidupur, Maniyarpur, Dist.-Vaishali, Bihar- 844503 **B) 1. Shri Raushan Kumar** (Guarantor Cum Mortgagor), S/o Shri Baijnath Kumar, Pankaj Market, Saraiyaganj, Near Durga Mandir, Dist.-Muzaffarpur, Bihar-842001 & **2. Vicky Kumar** (Guarantor Cum Mortgagor) S/o Shri Baijnath Kumar, Pankaj Market, Saraiyaganj, Near Durga Mandir, Dist.-Muzaffarpur Bihar-842001	1) 27.09.2021 2) 27.01.2022 3) **₹21,38,390/-** (Rupees Twenty One Lac Thirty Eight Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Only) and interest thereon.	All that part and parcel of the immovable property under Gift Deed 5305 dated 23.11.1992 admeasuring 8.58 Dec. Situated at Mouza-Jurawanpur, Gopalpur, Sub Registry-Mahnar, Dist.-Vaishali, Khata No. Old 807 New 309, Khesra No.116 and 117, Bihar. Bounded:- On the North by: Nij Land, On the South by: Main Road, On the East by: Savita Devi & Satya Narayan Sah, On the West by: Siwan Govindpur. Together with all buildings and structures thereon and all plant and machinery attached to the earth or permanently fastened to anything attached to the earth.

Place : Mahnar Bazar
Date : 27.01.2022

Sd/- Authorized Officer
IDBI Bank Ltd.

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DELHI: 1 फरवरी, 1 PM | 15 दिसंबर, 9 AM
लाइव / ऑनलाइन एवं ऑफलाइन कक्षाएँ

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Scientist	10 posts (6-UR, 2-OBC, 1-SC, 1-OBC (Backlog)	Level – 11 (Rs. 67,700 – 2,08,700)	Rs.1,16,398/-	32 years
Sr. Scientist	04 posts (UR)	Level – 12 (Rs. 78,800 – 2,09,200)	Rs.1,33,936/-	37 years
Principal Scientist	06 posts (UR)	Level 13 (Rs. 1,23,100 – 2,15,900)	Rs.2,03,930/-	45 years

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Date of commencement of online applications	:	31.01.2022
Last date for receipt of online applications	:	10.03.2022
Last date for receipt of hard copy applications	:	21.03.2022

Sd/-
(Controller of Administration)

CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

VACCINATIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS	OMICRON CASES
77,132	549

PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: 1,455

OXYGEN SUPPORT	412
VENTILATOR SUPPORT	108

DELHI: TOTAL CASES 18,32,951

	Total	Vacant
HOSPITAL BEDS	15,426	14,026
ICU BEDS	4,462	3,915

	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Jan 31	2,779	5,502	38	44,847
Feb 1	2,683	4,837	27	52,736
Total	16,548*	17,90,511	25,892	3,49,55,296

*Total active cases in Delhi

NOIDA	Jan 31	Feb 1
Cases	620	287
Deaths	3	2
GURGAON		
Cases	1,155	909
Deaths	2	2

It is absurd, says Delhi HC on govt order mandating masks inside car

SOFI AHSAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

TERMING AS "absurd" the Delhi government order making it mandatory for those travelling in cars to wear face masks, the Delhi High Court Tuesday questioned why the said order was still prevailing and asked the state why it was not being withdrawn.

The court said that it expects the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) to have a relook at its various orders in wake of the change in the Covid situation.

"Please take instructions. Why is this order still prevailing? It is absurd actually. You're sitting in your own car and you must wear a mask?" the division bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh told a government counsel.

The observation came after senior advocate Rahul Mehra, who represents the government in a matter in which the court has been monitoring the Covid situation in Delhi, mentioned the DDMA guideline before the court and said that the same needs to be revisited. He referred to a tweet posted by a woman on January 29 in which she stated that she was drinking coffee with her mother in the car when she was fined Rs 2,000.

"Pandemic is almost over. All those days when this was probably the right thing to do is not the right thing to do now. This relaxation must come in," submitted Mehra.

Mehra was reminded by the court that it was a government order and that a single bench had only upheld it last year. The court said that for it to be struck down, the matter should be before it.

"It's a Delhi government order. Then why don't you withdraw it?" said the court, after Mehra submitted that it was a wrong order even if passed by the government.

"Mr Mehra has submitted that in the light of the change in situation, the DDMA should also look at several orders issued by it in relation to Covid restrictions. We hope and expect the DDMA to look into all aspects, and premised on medical opinion, issue fresh orders with regard to Covid restrictions," the division bench said.

Four petitions were filed in 2020 before the court challenging the imposition of a fine of Rs 500 – the same stands now increased to Rs 2,000 – on the petitioners for not wearing a mask while travelling alone in a private car. In her judgment passed last year in April, a single-bench upheld the government decision and said that a person travelling in a vehicle or car even if alone could be exposed to the virus in various ways.

In April 2020, the DDMA issued various measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus, including compulsory wearing of masks in a moving vehicle.

"The person may have visited a market, or workplace, or hospital or a busy street, prior to entering the car or vehicle. Such a person may be required to keep windows open for the purposes of ventilation. The vehicle may also be required to be stopped at a traffic signal and the person could purchase any product by rolling down the window. The person may thus be exposed to a street-side vendor. If a person is travelling in the car alone, the said status is not a permanent one," Justice Prathiba M Singh had said.

A vehicle, even if occupied by only one person, would constitute a 'public place' and wearing a mask inside would be compulsory, the court had ruled in that verdict. The word 'public place' has to be interpreted in this case in the context of the Covid pandemic and to determine it, the manner in which the coronavirus spreads is the crucial part, it said.

Meanwhile, the division bench Tuesday said the government can consider developing a mobile app where the users can access information with regard to availability of nearby hospitals, the specialities they are offering and the bed availability position. "Other medical related services such as booking an ambulance or hearse should also be possible through the same system," it said.

In April 2020, the DDMA had made wearing of masks in a moving vehicle mandatory. *Praveen Khanna*

Jan sees highest monthly Covid case tally in Gurgaon

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, FEBRUARY 1

JANUARY RECORDED the highest number of Covid cases in Gurgaon since the pandemic began. According to data from district health bulletin, in January 2022, a total of 64,991 Covid cases were reported, higher than the case load during the second wave in April 2021, when 59,540 cases were recorded.

Since then, cases had steadily declined till December 2021, when the omicron variant reared its head.

However, the number of people hospitalised remains low, with 117 admissions in the district in January 2022. The number is significantly lower than the peak during the second wave when 2,296 people were hospitalised in April.

Dr Virender Yadav, chief medical officer, Gurgaon, said, "It was expected that the number of cases in the month of January would be higher due to the third wave and omicron variant, which is known to spread faster. However, the wave now seems to have subsided with active cases close to 6,000 in the district. The recovery rate is 97 per cent."

Meanwhile, the district health department held a meeting on Tuesday to review the status of vaccination in the district. Health department officials said private hospitals were directed to organise camps for the second dose and submit a list of people whose second shot is pending.

"We have also given directions to representatives of government health centres and private hospitals to ensure that all frontline workers get booster doses at the earliest. The focus of the meeting was to ramp up vaccination of booster doses and target people whose second dose is due," said Dr Yadav.

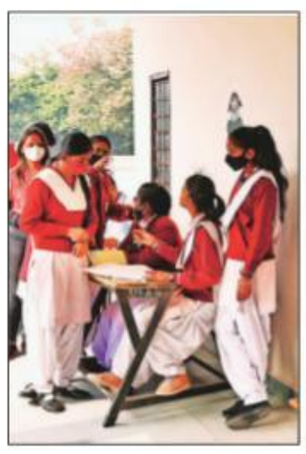
The CMO said the departments concerned have also been directed to prepare a list of children in the 12-14 age group to prepare for the next phase of vaccination, whenever that begins.

On January 15, Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij had announced that unvaccinated children will not be allowed to attend physical classes in schools.

The district administration Tuesday said Gurgaon district ranks first in the state in inoculation of 15-17 age group in government schools. Since January 10, when vaccination in the 15-17 age group started, over 41,148 children out of 43,172 children in government schools have been vaccinated.

Gurgaon on Tuesday reported 909 fresh cases of Covid and two deaths.

According to district health bulletin, the active cases in the district are 5,948 with positivity rate at 13.88 per cent. Of the 5,948 active cases, 5,826 are in home isolation and 122 are hospitalised. In the last 24 hours, 5,360 tests were conducted in the district.



As many as 41,148 children out of 43,172 children in govt schools have been vaccinated in Gurgaon district. *Praveen Khanna*

BRIEFLY

Criminal injured after exchange of fire with cops

New Delhi: Police arrested two wanted criminals after exchange of fire in Manesar in the early hours of Tuesday. One of the criminals suffered a bullet wound in leg, said police, adding that he has been rushed to Safdarjung hospital for treatment. Police said the arrested persons, Amit alias Gaanth and his associate Deepak, were both accused in the November 4 attack on the family of a former sarpanch in Kasan village Manesar, in which four people had died and two had suffered injuries. The assailants had fired at least 40 gunshots.

NDMC rolls out module for property tax payers

New Delhi: The New Delhi Municipal Council has launched a user-friendly, state-of-art Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) module to collect information on property licenced by it and improve revenue collection in a transparent and citizen-friendly manner, officials said. The module is designed to collect information on properties, calculate licence fee as per the prescribed rates, maintenance, GST, etc and to serve people in a simple, rapid, responsive and efficient manner. According to officials, people can view the demand against their property and remit dues at any time.**ENS**

Shahdara rape-assault: CM announces compensation; police up security in area

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal ordered compensation of Rs 10 lakh for the woman who was abducted, allegedly gang-raped and paraded by her neighbours in Shahdara last week.

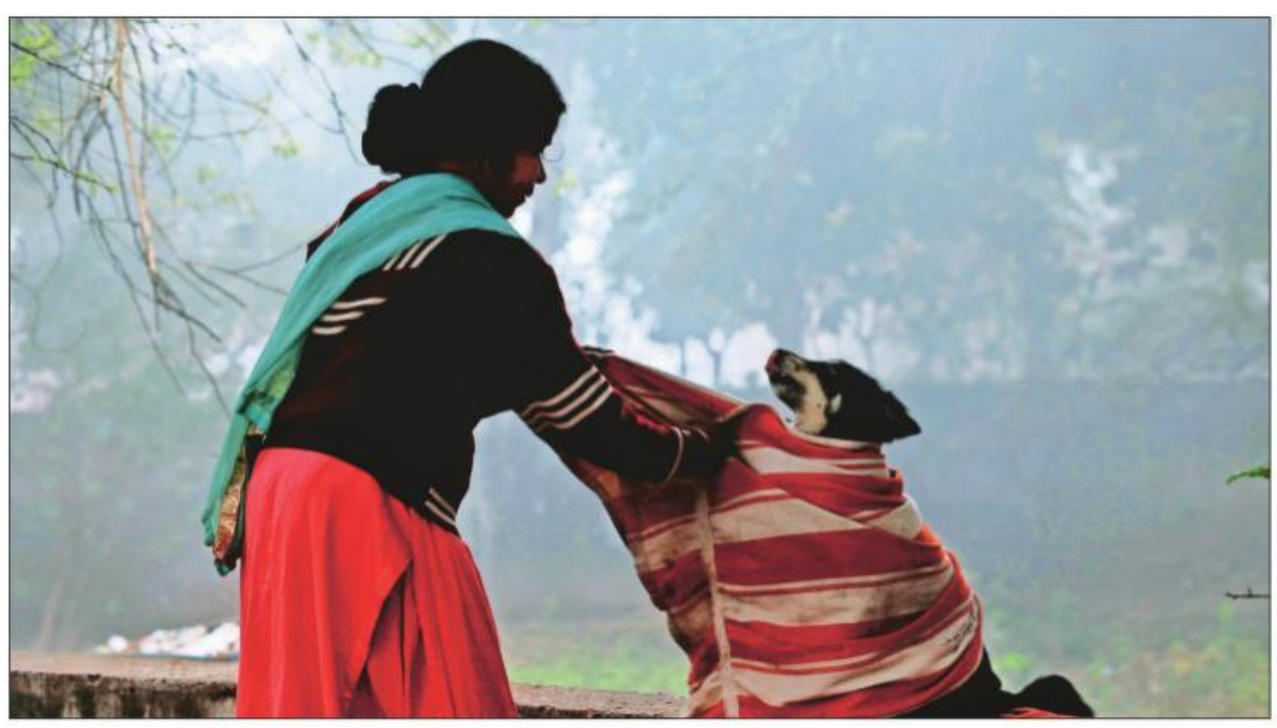
Kejriwal said the matter will be fast-tracked in court. He took to Twitter and wrote, "I have ordered compensation of Rs 10 lakh for this daughter. Delhi government will make all efforts to get her justice. We are appointing a good lawyer for her case. We will also fast-track the matter so she gets justice as soon as possible."

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police have increased security by barricading the area and restricting entry of 'outsiders'. This was done soon after a group of Nihang Sikhs staged a protest and met the family Tuesday morning. They allegedly defaced a wall in the locality promising to "avenge" the crime.

Taking cognizance, senior police officers said an FIR has been registered against the group under IPC sections 153 (wantonly giving provocation to cause riot), 153A (promoting enmity between different groups), 120B (criminal intimidation) and 506 (statements conducing to public mischief).

DCP Shahdara R Sathiyasundaram said, "Several people are trying to spread misinformation and give the incident a communal angle. The accused and the woman are from the same community."

Police had earlier booked two people for falsely claiming that the woman had committed suicide.



TUCKING IN

A woman wraps a dog in a blanket on a cold morning in Gurgaon. The maximum temperature recorded Tuesday was 19.5 degrees Celsius and the minimum temperature was 8.5. *Praveen Khanna*

Woman's death in riots: 2 men granted bail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE DELHI High Court Tuesday granted bail to two accused in the murder case of Northeast Delhi riots victim Akbari and denied relief to another accused, saying that he was an active member of the mob who set her house on fire.

85-year-old Akbari died of asphyxia after inhaling smoke when her house at Bhajanpura was set ablaze by the mob who had gathered in support of the CAA.

While other members of the family were able to reach the rooftop, she could not due to old age. After the fire was extinguished, her body was found lying on a folding bed from the second floor.

"The clinching evidence that tilts this Court to prolong the incarceration of the petitioner is his presence in the clipping wherein he is clearly identified at the scene of crime, pelting stones and dragging a scooty near the scene of crime and pelting stones towards the residence of the complainant. The petitioner was not a mere curious onlooker and the mob, in which the petitioner was participating, set fire to the house of the complainant resulting in the death of an old lady," said Justice Subramonium Prasad, while declining the bail to Vishal Singh alias Pawan.

However, the court granted bail to accused Arun Kumar Malik and Ravi Kumar alias Amit.

While granting bail to Malik, the court said even though he was spotted with a lathi, he has not been seen attacking any person with the lathi. With regard to Amit, the court said he is not seen actively participating with the mob and only seems to be a curious onlooker.

Danish Siddiqui's family says authors of anti-CAA protest book had no authorisation to use his name

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE FAMILY of Reuters photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, who was killed last year while covering a clash between Afghan security forces and Taliban forces, has issued a statement alleging that the authors of a photo book called 'Hum Dekhenge' had not sought any authorisation from the family to associate Siddiqui's name with their project.

The book has been curated by Aasif Mujtaba and Mohd Meharban and published by White Dot Publishers. It is "a visual compilation of the unwavering resilience, courage and perseverance of the Muslim community who not only stood strongly but fought bravely when its citizenship was being challenged by the state".

It comprises 223 photos, captured and documented by 28 photographers.

In a press release, the publishers had said, "It starts with recounting the anecdotes of the blood baths that took place in the minority educational institutions, Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia and will take you to the horrendous pogrom that was carried out in North East Delhi."

Danish's father Akhtar Siddiqui said, "The book's authors have dedicated this book to Danish... Further, during media interviews, the book's authors have also claimed that Danish was involved with the book and would give suggestions on making it better. On behalf of Danish's family, we would like to categorically state that no authorisation was given to anyone to associate Danish's name with this project."

Died while on assignment in Afghanistan

"We would like to categorically state that Danish Siddiqui maintained the highest standards of press freedom and integrity during his life and career as a journalist. He covered the Shaheen Bagh protests with objectivity and neutrality like any other professional assignment. Showing him falsely in this way raises wrong questions on his professional ethics and credibility and seriously hurt his professional standing, besides causing deep hurt to his already bereaved family," he said.

Akhtar said he "hoped" the authors "take note of this and withdraw their statements given to the press".

In separate statements, Mujtaba and Meherban both said there was "no involvement" of Danish in curating the book.

"Danish was my official mentor during Water Aid Fellowship (2019 – 20)... I developed an informal personal acquaintance with him... It was in the aftermath of 'Delhi pogrom', I planned to curate a photobook... I sought suggestions and guidance from various photojournalists for this project including him," said Meherban. However, he said there was "no formal association" and he "deeply regretted the unintended harm" it may have caused his family.

Mujtaba in his statement said, "While informal suggestions were sought from the various photojournalists including Mr Siddiqui... there was no breach of journalistic ethics in curation of this project. Out of 223 images and the artworks used in the book, only one photograph of Mr Siddiqui was taken, purchased from Reuters News Agency..."

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Mujtaba said the book was only dedicated to Danish. "Anyone is free to dedicate a book to anybody. A name cannot belong to anyone. If I want to dedicate a book to Gandhi ji tomorrow, whom will I ask? Rajmohan Gandhi or Tushar Gandhi or whom? But despite this, when we received his (Danish's father) objections on January 17, we wrote back saying we will not mention his name in media interviews because we didn't want controversy. And we have not."

WITH HELP FROM IIT-DELHI

Transport dept to identify 10 most accident-prone stretches, fix them

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE TRANSPORT department has identified as many as 16 high-risk accident-prone corridors where at least 10 persons were killed per kilometre. It has also found 22 junctions as high risk for all road users and about 40 intersections and junctions as unsafe for pedestrians and motorcyclists.

Of the 40 junctions, 20 are unsafe for pedestrians and 20 for two-wheeler users.

About 89% of road accident victims are pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists, according to a report shared by the transport department.

The department will release the Delhi road crash fatalities report Wednesday. A senior transport official said the department will pick the 10 worst stretches and redevelop its road engineering and make it safer for pedestrians and commuters. IIT-Delhi will be roped in to conduct a survey and study the corridors and for further redesigning.

The report has revealed that road accidents have increased by 13.7 % and fatal accidents have seen an uptick by 3.55% in 2021 as opposed to 2020. A total of 4,178 accidents occurred in 2020. A total of 1,196 cases were fatal and 3,662 caused serious injuries. Over the last year, 4,720 accidents took place, and 1,239 fatal ones and 4,273 with injuries were recorded.

Among the 16 high-risk corridors, a total of ten corridors — NH-8-Delhi-Haryana Southwest border to Pratap Chowk, Delhi Cantonment, GTK Road, Wazirabad road, MB Road, Najafgarh Road, Outer Ring Road, Dr K B Hedgewar road, Rohtak Road, Mathura Road and Ring road — are the worst stretch for hit and run cases, and have recorded more than 10 fatalities per km. Seven of these stretches have also become the most dangerous for motorcyclists. Outer Ring Road, Ring Road, NH-8, GTK and Wazirabad Road recorded the highest number of persons killed per km and deaths due to hit and run cases. According to the report, in 2020, 82 fatal accidents happened on Outer Ring Road per km, of which 45 were hit and run cases, Ring Road recorded 75 deaths (28 hits and run) and 47 in GTK Road (26 hits and run).

The report has further shown that Mathura Road, Rohtak Road and Ring Road are dangerous for cyclists. Five corridors — GTK Road, Wazirabad, Rohtak, Outer Ring Road and Ring Road— have been identified as the worst stretches for pedestrians. A total of 201 pedestrians were killed on this stretch in 2020. The highest cases of deaths per km were recorded on GTK road.

Besides, 20 junctions, intersections and locations like Kashmere Gate, Azadpur fruit market, Delhi Gate Junction, Akshardham Metro stations have been identified as high-risk areas for pedestrians.

Around 20 junctions including Nirankari Chowk, Mukarba Chowk across the city are at high risk for motorists. There are 22 stretches considered highly risky for all users. According to the report, there is a 43% decline in deaths reported since 2011 and a drop of 25% since 2016. The decline of 18% in road accident deaths since 2019 is likely to be due to the pandemic-induced lockdown.As many as 605 fatal hit and run cases were recorded in 2020 and of all the deaths, 48% were that of pedestrians and 43% of motorcyclists.

IN NUMBERS

	No. of Accidents	Fatal Accidents	Injuries
2021	4,720	1,239	4,273
2020	4,178	1,196	3,662

TOTAL HIGH-RISK CORRIDORS-16

No. of high-risk junctions

For all road users	22
For pedestrians	20
For motorcyclists	20

DAY AFTER REUNITING WITH FAMILY

Arunachal teen was tortured in Chinese custody, says father

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, FEBRUARY 1

Miram Taron

A DAY after Arunachal teen Miram Taron (17), who was purportedly abducted by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), was reunited with his family at Zido village, his kin have alleged that he was tortured in captivity.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* on Tuesday afternoon, Miram's father Opang Taron said, "My son was kicked several times by Chinese soldiers. They also gave electric shock to him twice."

Miram, who was part of a hunting party that ventured near Lungta Jor area close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), was allegedly abducted by the PLA within Indian territory on January 18.

After over a week of high-level diplomatic talks between the two nations, Miram was handed over to the Indian Army at the Wacha-Damai interaction point in the Kibithu sector of Anjaw district on January 27.

He was, thereafter, put in quarantine so that his health condition could be evaluated. Some legal formalities also had to be completed. His friend, Jonny, was taken to Kibithu to identify him. After nearly two weeks, Miram was finally reunited with his family on Monday evening.

Miram was accorded a warm welcome by the local administration and his village leaders upon his return.

While overjoyed to finally have his son back home, Miram's father Opang said he was anguished at the treatment meted out to his son by the Chinese soldiers. He said, "My son was trying to flee from the spot and scratched a few soldiers who were trying to grab him. One of those soldiers kicked my son several times.

"If that was not all, Chinese soldiers took him to a PLA camp and questioned him in Tibetan, which he failed to understand. My son tried to communicate in Hindi and Adi, which is our mother tongue. The Chinese didn't understand what he was saying and continued to question him in Tibetan. Since he failed to understand them, they got upset. Later, they gave him electric shocks."

The 49-year-old farmer said his son was still in much pain. "We got in touch with Army officials. They have assured us of supporting his treatment. As of now, we are observing his condition," Opang said.

Opang added that his son has told him that he was given sufficient food when he was held captive. However, he was blindfolded most of the time. The torture stopped once his abduction hit the headlines, Opang said.

BJP drops Speaker, fields ED officer who got VRS a day ago

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 1

THE BJP has denied ticket to Speaker of the outgoing Assembly Hriday Narayan Dikshit, minister Swati Singh and two sitting MLAs in the upcoming Assembly polls in UP. Instead, the party has fielded Rajeswar Singh, a day after the ED joint director announced that his application for voluntary retirement has been accepted.

Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav's daughter-in-law Aparna Yadav, who joined BJP a few weeks ago, is also not in the list of 17 candidates released by the party on Tuesday. She was reportedly in contention for a ticket from Lucknow Cantonment. Sources in the BJP said that Aparna will likely be "compensated" with a post in the organisation. BJP MP Rita Bahuguna Joshi, who was seeking ticket for his son from Lucknow Cantonment, also seems to have been snubbed. The party has instead fielded minister Brijesh Pathak from Lucknow Cantt and dropped its sitting MLA Suresh Chandra Tiwari.

In Lucknow Central, from where Pathak was elected in 2017, the BJP has given ticket to municipal corporator and local businessman Rajneesh Gupta. The BJP has also replaced Bakshi Ka Talab MLA Avinash Trivedi with Yogesh Shukla.

In Lucknow West, where its sitting MLA Suresh Kumar Srivastava died of Covid-19 last year, the party has fielded Anjani Srivastava. Lucknow East sitting MLA Ashutosh Tandon "Gopal" has, however, been retained.

Other seats where sitting BJP MLAs have been retained include Malihabad, Maholi, and Chitrakoot. In Unchahar, the party has fielded state general secretary Amarpal Maurya. In Sitapur where its sitting MLA Rakesh Rathore joined the SP, the party has fielded a new candidate with same name — Rakesh Rathore 'Guru'.

15 ex-officers named special poll observers

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Tuesday appointed 15 former bureaucrats as special observers for the assembly polls in UP, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa.

In a statement, the EC said the special observers will be its "eyes and ears" and will supervise work by the electoral machinery in states assigned to them. The observers are also tasked with ensuring stringent and effective action is taken based on intelligence inputs and complaints. It said CEC Sushil Chandra has asked the special observers to be vigilant and to stay in touch with the EC "on real-time basis" throughout the election process. **ENS**

Election symbol nowhere, SSM leaders to fight as Independents

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 1

THE SANYUKT Samaj Manch (SSM) failed to get itself registered as party and procure an election symbol even as nomination filing ended in Punjab on Tuesday.

SSM nominees have now filed their nomination papers as Independent candidates.

The SSM was formed on December 25 last year. Prem Singh Bhangu, screening committee member of the SSM, said candidates were getting good response from masses and they were ready to contest as Independent candidates.

Bhangu, SSM chief Balbir Singh Rajewal and other office-bearers of the outfit had met with Punjab CEO twice over the past few weeks over registration of a party.

The party's first preference was to seek tractor as a symbol.On Tuesday, however, even Rajewal filed his papers as an Independent candidate from Samrala constituency of Ludhiana district.

Allotment of symbols to SSM candidates will now be done on February 3 after withdrawal of nomination papers, revealed EC officials.

Sources said SSM still prefers to get a common symbol for all the candidates, however a decision on the same is pending before the EC.

No Congress candidates against Akhilesh, uncle Shivpal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 1

CITING "POLITICAL courtesy", the Congress has decided not to field candidates against Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, who is contesting from Karhal in Mainpuri district, and his uncle Shivpal Yadav in Jaswant Nagar in Etawah in the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

Before Akhilesh had announced his candidature from Karhal, the Congress had given ticket to Gyanvati Yadav. However, on Tuesday – the last day of filing nomination for Karhal, which will vote in the third phase on February 20 – the Congress nominee did not file his nomination papers. For Jaswant Nagar seat, which will also vote in the third phase, the Congress had not named its candidate.

"We received instructions from the high command that we should not file nomination from here (Karhal), and we did so. It is part of political courtesy. It is an extension of our respect and it works mutually. This has happened in the past too," Manish Shah, AICC coordinator for Mainpuri district, said.

In 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the SP did not field candidates against Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi in Amethi and Rae Bareli, respectively.

"Both the Congress and SP are anti-BJP and secular parties. Hence, not fielding candidates is part of political courtesy. This has happened in the past too," SP national spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary said.

When asked if the Samajwadi Party would leave any seat for anyone from the Gandhi family in the upcoming polls, Chaudhary said, "No one from the (Gandhi) family is contesting. If they do, the party will take a call."

शिक्षुता प्रशिक्षण बोर्ड (दक्षिण क्षेत्र)
BOARD OF APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING (SOUTHERN REGION)
(शिक्षा मंत्रालय का स्वायत्त निकाय, उच्चतर शिक्षा विभाग, भारत सरकार)
(An Autonomous Body under Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education, Government of India)
चौथी गली, सी.आई.टी. अहाता, तरमणि, चेन्नई-600 113
4th Cross Street, C.I.T. Campus, Taramani, Chennai-600113.
दूरभाषा / Ph: 044-2254 1292 / 2254 2236 / 22542703

APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF JUNIOR HINDI TRANSLATOR

Applications are invited from the interested eligible candidates, for the post of Junior Hindi Translator at BOAT(SR), Chennai.

For further details and downloading of applications, please refer our website www.boat-srp.com. Dully filled applications satisfying all terms and conditions shall be sent on or before 21.02.2022, 3.30 pm.

DIRECTOR OF TRAINING
Board of Apprenticeship Training (SR),
Chennai - 600 113.

GUJARAT

30-yr-old man's murder: ATS to move court to book accused under UAPA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 1

FIVE ACCUSED, including two clerics, who were arrested for allegedly murdering 30-year-old Kishan Boliya alias Kishan Bharwad in Dhandhuka of Ahmedabad district, over a Facebook post, will be booked under sections of the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime (GUJCTOC) act, said the Gujarat Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) on Tuesday.

According to ATS officials, they will move an application for this at the magisterial court in Dhandhuka of Ahmedabad as "acts of terrorism" was found in the murder of Kishan Bharwad.

They said the sections of the UAPA to be added against the five accused will be section 13 1 (a) and (b) for whoever takes part or commits or advocates, abets, advises or incites the commission of, any unlawful activity, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term that may extend to seven years, section 16 1(a) for whoever commits a terrorist act shall, if such act has resulted in the death of any person, be punishable with death or imprisonment for life, section 17 for Punishment for raising funds for terrorist act, section 18 for conspiracy and section 20 for punishment for being member of terrorist gang or organisation.

The sections of the GUJCTOC Act that will be added are sections 3 1(1) and 3 (2), which are punishments for committing an offence of terrorist act or organised crime which results in death of a person, conspired to commit, abet, advocate or facilitate terrorist act offences.

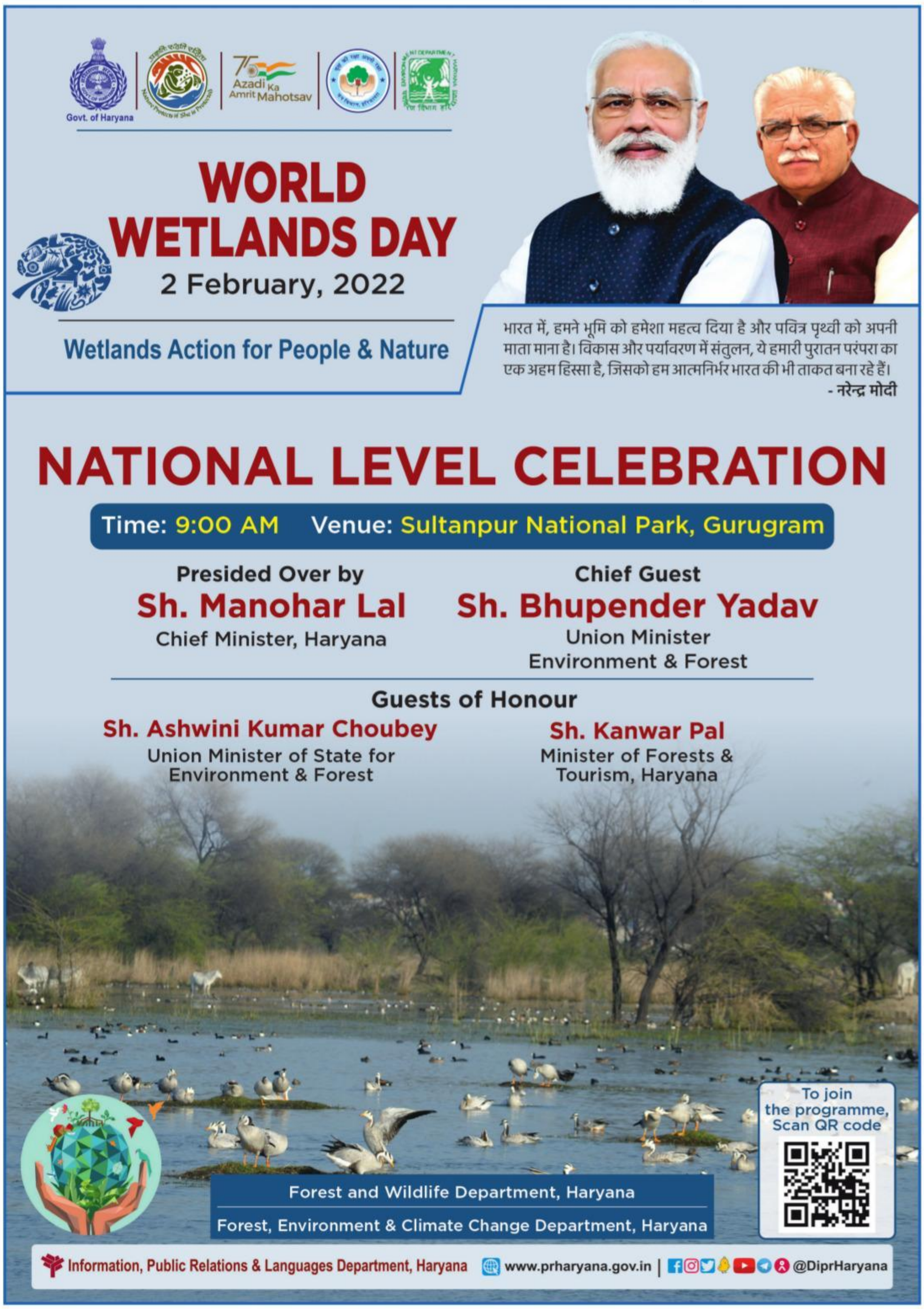
Bharwad, 30, was shot dead allegedly by two bike-borne men on January 25. Later, police said the murder followed allegedly after an objectionable social media video post by Bharwad.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Corrigendum 01
of Tender Notice No. CE/2021/15, Dated: 14.01.2022
Open tender No.: 02216478SP, scheduled to open on 07.02.2022, vide Tender Notice No. CE/2021/15 dt. 14.01.2022, has been cancelled on Administrative ground.
Principal Chief Engineer
PR/01601/HQ/ENGG/C/21-22/12

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Open Tender Notice No. S&T/SEE/E-OT-21-22/28 Dated : 31.01.2022, The DRM (Sig. & Telecom)/SEE for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-Terders for the following works. The last date of online E-tendering is 23.02.2022 up to 12:00 Hrs. All Information and tender documents related to E-Tender is available on website - www.ireps.gov.in
E-Tender No. : S&T/SEE/E-OT/21-22/28 Name of Work : Provision of Passenger amenities (CGDB, Digital Clock) at P.F. 4 & 5 at MFP in Sonpur division. Approx. Cost (in ₹) : ₹41,94,500/-, Earnest Money (In ₹) : ₹83,900/-, Cost of Tender Document (in ₹) (Non-refundable) : ₹0.00, Completion period : 03 (Three) Month from date of issue of LOA.
The above tender notice is available on Website-www.ireps.gov.in Uploading date 31.01.2022. RIGHT OF RAILWAY TO DEAL WITH TENDER: Railway Administration reserves the right to postpone/modify or to cancel any one or all the tenders without assigning any reasons.
Divisional Railway Manager/
Sig.&Telecom/ECR/Sonpur
PR/01596/SEE/S&T/T/21-22/36

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tender Notice No. 66 of 2021-22 (Open) - Engg / DDU
Online (through e-tendering) for the following work is invited by DRM/Engg/DDU for and on behalf of the President of India from experienced and financially as well as technically sound contractors including those enlisted with the Railway, CPWD, BSNL, MES, PWD and other public sector undertakings:-
1. Tender No. 55 – DDU – SRDEN-II-21-22
(i) Name of work with its location: Provision of changing room water supply etc for RGM machine siding at RFJ under ADEN/Gaya. (ii) Advertised Value: Rs.31,56,794.08 (iii) Earnest Money: Rs. 63,100.00
2. Tender No. 56 – DDU –SRDEN-II-21-22
(i) Name of work with its location: MPO-MGS:- Provision of UP and DN loop at Deo Road Station. (ii) Advertised Value: Rs. 63,94,544.23 (iii) Earnest Money: Rs. 1,27,900.00
3. Tender No. 57 – DDU-SRDEN-II-21-22
(i) Name of work with its location: Complete Track Renewal (S/P) and Deep Screening for P.Way works of FCI Pvt. Railway Line No.3 & 4 at FCI/Gaya under SSE (PWI)/Gaya & under ADEN/Gaya (ii) Advertised Value: Rs. 26,96,436.54 (iii) Earnest Money: Rs. 53,900.00
Closing Date & Time for submission of e-tender: 18.02.2022, Up-to 12:00 Hrs.
Website Particulars of e-tendering: www.ireps.gov.in
For Divisional Railway Manager
East Central Railway,
Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhaya Division
PR/01599/DDU/ENGG/T/21-22/48

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PUNE
(An Autonomous Institution of Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pune-411008 Website: www.iiserpune.ac.in
GLOBAL TENDER NOTICE
IISER Pune invites bids from Original Equipment Manufacturers, Foreign Principals and Indian Agents of Foreign Principals, Authorized Distributors of Original Equipment Manufacturer for procurement and installation for the following.
1) Environmental Chamber
2) Cryogen free 7 Tesla Super Conducting Magnet System with Variable Temperature Insert
3) GPU Server
4) Electrochemical Test System
Tender documents are published on-
https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app and
http://www.iiserpune.ac.in/links/tender-notices-and-eoi.
Advt. No: IISER/S&P/14/21-22 Dated 01/02/2022 DIRECTOR



Classifieds

PERSONAL

I hitherto known as Sunil kumar pandita S/O Sh.Triloki Nath , residing at Plot no 43/44 A Shyam enclave Gopal nagar ext. Z Block Dhasa Road Najafgarh ,New Delhi -110043 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Sunil kumar Bhat for all purposes 0040601067-1

I Sonu alias Jai S/o Sh.Hari Singh R/o Plot No.135 F/F, Chand Vihar, Vikas Nagar, D.K.Mohan Garden,Delhi-110059 have changed my name to Sonu for all purposes. 0040601063-6

I Rajesh Kumar S/o Sh. Ram Sharesth Gupta R/o G-26/151, F.F.,Sector-3, Rohini, North West Delhi, Delhi-110085 have changed my name to Rajesh Gupta for all purposes. 0040601063-5

I Nigar D/o Laeek W/o Shanur Rab R/o R-41, 1st Floor, Street No.1, Near Qadri Masjid, Jogabai Extn., Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Fatima for all purposes. 0040601063-3

I Damina Bajaj W/o Hardeep Singh Bajaj R/o N-205, Greater Kailash-1, New Delhi-110048 have changed my name to Daminna Bajaj for all purposes. 0070770813-1

I Ayesha Habib D/o Sh. Habib Ahmed W/o Syed Waqar Ali R/o 1518,Gali Hazrat Akhunji, Farash Khana, Delhi-110006, earlier my name was "Ayesha" but now I have changed my name to "Ayesha Habib" for all purposes. 0040601063-7

I Ashu Rani Mittal alias Ashu Mittal D/o Sh. Chhabil Dass W/o Sh. Pardeep Mittal R/o I-6/64, Second Floor, Sector-16, Rohini, North West Delhi, Delhi-110089 have changed my name to Ashu Pardeep Mittal for all purposes. 0040601063-4

It is for general information that I,Usha Sharma,W/o Amit Sharma,R/o Flat.No.-1703, Tower-14,Nirala-Estate,GH-04, Tech Zone-IV,Greater-Noida West,U P.-203207, declare that name of my minor son Satvik Sharma has been wrongly-written as Nipun Sharma in his school records.The actual-name of my son is Satvik Sharma, which may be amended accordingly. 0040601141-10

It is for general information that I,MS. GULFISHAN,D/o MOHD. KAMRUL ISLAM,residing at, H.No.C-25, GALI.No.-2, JYOTI COLONY,SHAHDARA,DELHI, declare that name of my father has been wrongly-written as KAMRUL ISLAM KHAN in my Passport.The actual-name of my father is MOHD.KAMRUL ISLAM respectively which may be amended accordingly. 0040601141-9

I,YOGESH S/O-ANIL KUMAR VERMA, H.NO-2,GALI.NO-13. GOPALPUR VILLAGE, MUKHERJEE-NAGAR CITY, DELHI-110009,have changed my name to YOGESH KUMAR VERMA, permanently. 0040601159-6

I,Vivek Gupta,S/o Chunni Lal Gupta,R/o H.No.47A/2, Gautam-Nagar,New Delhi-110049,have changed my minor Son's name,from Yakshit Gupta Alias Yuvraj Gupta to Yuvraj Gupta,for all purposes. 0040601130-3

I,Vijay Kumar Miglani Alias Vijay Miglani,S/o Late.Balwant Rai Miglani,R/o L-49,Gali.No-22, New Mahavir-Nagar,Delhi-110018,have changed my name to Vijay Kumar Miglani, for all,future purposes. 0040601167-3

I,Samsad S/o-Kamaluddin R/o-H.No.-B-49A,Block-B,Ekta Vihar,Jaitpur Extn,Part-1, Badarpur,New Delhi-110044, inform that in my,Driving License.No.DL-0320120308504 my,father's name Foujdar wrongly written.My father correct name Kamaluddin,for all,future purpose. 40601130-9

I,MOHAMMAD ABDUL HAI,S/O MANZOORUL HASAN KHAN, R/O.F-159, SHAHEEN-BAGH, ABUL-FAZL-ENCLAVE PART-II,JAMIA-NAGAR,OKHLA,NEW DELHI-110025,do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am also known by my childhood name ABDUL HAI KHAN.This is to declare that both names MOHAMMAD ABDUL HAI and ABDUL HAI KHAN are of one and the same person that is myself. 0040601154-10

I,Deepak Kumar,R/o-village-jungle Chhatradhari,tola Mahuachafi,post-Jungle Dhushan district-Gorakhpur. state uttarpradesh,tehsil-Gorakhpur sadar.inform that in my,service records my,fathers name is Haridwar nishad and mothers,name is Gyantri devi wrongly written.My father correct,name is Haridwar and mother,name is Gyanti devi.pls changed accordingly. 0040601136-9

I,MANOJ KUMARI D/O SHRI LEKHRAJ SINGH residing,B-4, 2ND FLOOR, PANDAV NAGAR, DELHI-110092,have changed my name to MAANVI SINGH. 0040601136-8

I, PARUL BATHAM, R/o F-100, Sector-22, Noida, UP, confirm that I am also known as MAHI SINGH for all purposes. Both identities are of the same person. 0070770811-1

I,VIJAY JAIN,S/O JAGANNAND, ADD-F-51,GALI.NO-4, SUBHASH-VIHAR NORTH GHONDA,NORTH EAST DELHI-110053,Changed my name to VINAY KUMAR, Permanently. 0040601159-2

I, Kusum Behl, W/o Roshan Lal Behl, R/o A-25/2, Yadav Nagar, Samaypur Badli Delhi-110042, have changed my name to Kusum Lata. 0070770758-1

I,VISHABAR SINGH, S/O KHAJAN SINGH R/O. HEERPURA, ALIGARH, PREMPUR, UTTAR-PRADESH-202137. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO VISHAMBAR SINGH. 0040601154-9

I,VIKAS CHOUHAN S/O KALU RAM CHAUHAN HNO.259, GURUHARKRISHAN NAGAR, PASCHIM-VIHAR,DELHI-110087.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO VIKAS CHAUHAN. 0040601141-4

I,Trilok Singh Tomer S/o Vinod R/o-H.No.64, Kh.No.69/20, Gurudayal-Vihar, Chanchal-Park, Nangloi, Delhi-110041, inform that Trilok Singh Tomer and Ajay both are one and the same person. 0040601136-7

I,Thakur Lal Singh S/o Sukhbir Singh R/o,Flat-No.301, DPS-Apartments, Sector-4, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075,have changed my name to Lal Singh Thakur. 0040601136-5

I,Rashmi Karir,D/O-Raj Kumar R/O-A-34,Jhilmil-Colony,Delhi-110095,Declare That Name Of My-Father Has been-Written As R.K.Karir In My 10th.Class Markssheet CBSE,Delhi.As Per Aadhar-Name Of My-Father Is Raj Kumar.,R.K.Karir And Raj Kumar Is One And The Same Person. 0040601154-6

I,Army No.14685008P NK Munna Singh,505,Army Base Workshop,Delhi Cantt-110010,do hereby,declare that, my wife's Date,of birth, mentioned as 25-04-1988, instead of.01-07-1990,in my service-records and my wife's true and correct,date birth, is. 01-07-1990. 0040601141-2

I, Sudhir Tiwari, S/o Ram Kumar Tiwari, H/No-G-163, Flat-01, West Facing G Block , Phase-6, Ayanagar, South Delhi, Delhi-110047, have changed my name to Sudhir Kumar Tiwari for all future purposes. 0070770761-1

I, Santosh Kumar Jakhmola S/o Shambhu Prasad Jakhmola R/o C-17A/2, Rashid Market, Gali No.8, New Gobind Pura, Delhi-110051, have changed my minor daughter's name from Partiksha to Pratiksha Jakhmola, permanently. 0040601099-2

I, Santosh Kumar Jakhmola S/o Shambhu Prasad Jakhmola R/o C-17A/2, Rashid Market, Gali No.8, New Gobind Pura, Delhi-110051, have changed my minor daughter's name from Gargi to Gargi Jakhmola, permanently. 0040601099-1

I, RENU, W/o BHARAT SACHDEVA, R/o C-37A, C-BLK, GT KARNAL ROAD, MAHENDRU ENCLAVE, DELHI-110033, have changed my name and will be know by my new name RENU SACHDEVA for all the purpose vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2022 sworn before notary Raj Kumar, Delhi. 0070770756-1

I, Perminder Kumar Sharma, S/o Kanhaya Lal Sharma, R/o 1044-A/69, Deva Ram Park, Tri Nagar, Delhi-110035, have changed my name to PARMINDER KUMAR SHARMA for all future purposes. 0070770812-1

I, Menka d/o Tejpal Singh r/o 14/A, Gali No.-1, Sainik Enclave Part-2, Delhi-110072 have changed my name to MENKA PAWAR. 0040601069-1

I, Mohd. Mukhtar Alam s/o Mahboob Alam r/o RZC-164, Madhu Vihar, Uttam Nagar, Delhi-110059 have changed my name to Mukhtar Alam. 0040601069-2

I,Peddarajula Sahithi W/o Late Sh.Peddarajula Suresh D/o late Kanhaiya Lal R/o H.No.13-99, Nagavaram Mahbubnagar, Andhra Pradesh-509103 have changed my name from Pinky to Peddarajula Sahithi for all future purposes. 40601066-1

I,PRADEEP KUMAR BHATIA,S/o-MADAN LAL BHATIA,R/o-WZ-1963,C/4,VIRENDER NAGAR, GALI.NO.2,NEW Delhi-110058, Have Changed my Name from PRADEEP BHATIA TO PRADEEP KUMAR BHATIA.both are same person. 0040601130-8

I,MOHAMAD YUNUS GOURI,S/O MOHAMAD SAJAUDDIN, ADD: X/4744, STREET.NO.5, NEAR-KALI MANDIR OLD SEELAMPUR GANDHI-NAGAR,DELHI-110031, Changed my name to MOHD YUNUSH GOURI. 0040601167-2

I,Nikhil Kumar S/O Narinder Kumar Nagpal,R/O 52,Shakti Vihar,Pitampura, Delhi, Changed Name To Nikhil Kumar Nagpal. 0040601141-8

I,MOHAMAD SAJAUDDIN,S/O MOHAMAD HUSSAIN GOURI, ADD:X/4744 STREET.NO.5, NEAR-KALI MANDIR OLD SEELAMPUR GANDHI-NAGAR, DELHI-110031,changed my name to MOHD SAJAUDDIN GOURI. 0040601167-1

I,Lokesh Kumar,S/o Vinod Kumar,R/o 7897,Nai Basti Ram-Nagar PaharGanj,New Delhi - 110055,have changed my name to Lokesh Kumar Mehra,for all Purposes. 0040601141-3

I,Deepak Kumar Sharma S/O.Baldev Rai R/O.5C,B-1A,Janakpuri,New Delhi-110058,have changed my name to Deepak Sharma for all purposes. 0040601159-4

I,Tejeshvi Narain S/o Jagat Narayan R/O 172,Ward.No-2, Jain Sati Marg,Indira Colony, Rohtak,Haryana-124001, Changed Name To Tejsawi Narayan. 0040601141-7

I,Sushma,W/o RajaRam Shamrao Bhosale,R/o Krishna-Apartment C1,30/31, flat.no. 14,Rama park uttam-nagar, new Delhi-110059,Have changed my Name to Sushma RajRam Bhosale,permanently. 0040601154-3

I,Surya Bhan S/O-Sh.Ram Anjor Add.Juggi No.1,Near 12/178, Lodhi colony,Lodhi Road,South Delhi 110003,Have Change May Name Sury Bhan To Surya Bhan To All,future purpose. 0040601136-10

I,Sunita Sachdeva W/o Ashwani Sachdev R/o-342, Great India-Apartments, Sector-6, Plot-No. 15,Dwarka, Delhi-110075,have changed my name to Sunita Sachdev for all-purposes. 0040601136-6

I,Snajeev Kumar S/o Satya Pal Singh,R/o H.no-B-45A,Uday-Vihar, Chander-Vihar, Nangloi extn.,Nilothi,Delhi-110041,have changed my name to Sanjeev Singh. 0040601159-10

I,Shreya D/o Vinay Sugla R/o E-54, Sector-40, Noida, G.B.Nagar (U.P.) have changed my name from Shreya to Shreya Sugla for all future purposes. 0040601068-1

I,Satyajit Khurana,W/o Kawaldeep Singh R/o A-3/21, Kothi,Janakpuri Delhi-110058, Have Changed My Name To Satyajit Singh,For Future. 0040601159-3

I,Sakil Mallick,S/O Sattar Malik,R/O, E-2293, J.J.Colony Bawana Delhi-110039,have changed my name to Shakil Malik. 0040601154-5

I,SARLA CHOUHAN W/O KALU RAM CHAUHAN R/O HNO.259, GURUHARKRISHAN-NAGAR, PASCHIM VIHAR,DELHI-110087. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SARLA CHAUHAN. 0040601130-2

I,S. KARTHIKEYAN Slo KC.SUBERAMANI R/o-H/No-14, Ist STREET,RAFI NAGAR, VANNAIVADU.WALAJA,VELLOR E(DIST), TAMILNADU-632513, inform THAT S.KARTHIKHEYAN AND S.KARTHIKEYAN BOTH NAME ARE SAME PERSON. 0040601130-10

I,Rukhsar Faisal,W/o Faisal Anwar,R/o-1048 Kishan Ganj Teliwara,Azad Market Delhi-110006,have changed my name to Rukhsar Begum,for future. 0040601136-2

I,Ritesh S/o RajaRam Shamrao Bhosale,R/o Krishna Apartment C1,30/31 flat.no.14, Rama Park Uttam-nagar,New Delhi-110059,Have changed my name to Ritesh RajaRam Bhosale, permanently. 0040601154-1

I,RajaRam,S/o Shamrao/ Shamrao Bhosale,R/o krishana Apartment C1,30/31, flat.no.14, Rama park uttam-nagar,New Delhi-110059,Have changed my Name to RajaRam Shamrao Bhosale. 0040601154-2

I,RAMESH KUMAR,S/O INDER DEV MANDAL,R/O-H-28 ALANE-W-10 WESTERN AVENUE SAINIK-FARM DELHI-110062, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RAMESH MANDAL. 0040601154-7

I,Praveen Parkash Roy,S/o Prem Prakash Roy R/o.A-1001,Jai Bhavani-CGHS, Garden-Estate, Plot 5-B,Sector 22, Dwarka, New Delhi-110077,changed my name to Praveen Roy. 0040601154-8

I,Pankaj Kumar,S/o Sh.Krishna Dev,R/o H.No.B-2/182,Sultan Puri,Delhi-110086,have changed my minoner Son's Name from Dev Kumar Gupta to Rahul,for all Purposes. 0040601141-1

I,Pallavi D/O Pradeep Kumar, R/O 11876/10 Sat Nagar KarolBagh New Delhi-110005, have changed my Name Pallavi to Priya,for all,future purposes. 0040601167-9

I,PUNIT KUMAR,S/O: PAWAN KUMAR R/O:FLAT.NO-1547, TOWER BLUEBELL,GAUR SAUNDRAYAM,TECHZONE-4,GREATER NOIDA WEST, NOIDA,GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR-201301-U.P,Changed my name to PUNIT DIXIT. 0040601130-1

I,NISHA KAPOOR/NISHA BHEL W/O ASHOK BHEL R/o.M-3/B-1, DILSHAD GARDEN,SHAHDARA, DELHI-110095,have changed my name to NISHA RANI, permanently. 0040601159-9

I,Mohd Faisal Anwar,S/o Anwar Ahmed,R/o-1048 Kishan Ganj Teliwara,Azad Market Delhi-110006,have changed my name to Faisal Anwar,for future. 0040601136-1

I,Mohak Thandani,S/O Anil Kumar Thadani,R/O,Block-8, Flat No-1C,Pocket-B,Ashok Vihar-III,Delhi-110052,have changed my name to Mohak Thadani. 0040601154-4

I,Kalyan Kumar S/o-Mahesh Dubey,R/o-A-64,Ground-Floor Ramdutt-Enclave Uttam-nagar,New Delhi-110059,have changed my name to Kalyan Dubey. 0040601159-1

I,K R CHOUHAN/KALU RAM CHOUHAN,S/O PAT RAM CHAUHAN,R/O HNO.259, GURUHARKRISHAN-NAGAR,PASCHIM-VIHAR, DELHI-110087.CHANGED MY NAME TO KALU RAM CHAUHAN. 0040601141-5

I,Manish Malhotra,R/o-A1/293 Top-floor Paschim-Vihar,New Delhi-63,have changed my minor son's name,from Divyansh Malhotra to Divvyansh Malhotra. 0040601141-6

I,KM.Tabbusum Shamim,W/o Faqrey Shabber Naqvi,R/o 37-b, RM-Block, Rajendra-Nagar, Sector-2,Sahibabad Ghaziabad -201005,Have Changed My Name To Tabassum Shamim. 0040601130-4

I,Iram Hilmi Ansari,D/o Rashid Hilmi,R/o Flat.No-402,Tower-B,Ajanta-Daffodils Apartment, Sector-137,Noida-201304,Have Changed My Name To Iram Hilmi. 0040601130-5

I,Deepak Bansal S/o-Vinod Kumar Chaudhary,R/o-B-3/167,Paschim-Vihar Delhi-110063,have changed my name to Deepak Kumar Chaudhary. 0040601130-6

I,DIMPAL W/O ANIL KUMAR VERMA residing H.NO-2, GALI.NO-13.GOPALPUR VILLAGE,MUKHERJEE NAGAR CITY, DELHI-110009 have changed my name to DIMPAL VERMA,permanently. 0040601159-8

I,Anamik,D/O-LATE MANISH GUPTA,R/O-ETAWAH ROAD, SIRSAGANJ,MADANPUR,FIROZ ABAD HAS CHANGED MY NAME TO ANAMIKA GUPTA,FOR ALL PURPOSES. 0040601130-7

I,Archana Aggarwal W/o Neeraj Garg R/o H.No.B-19, Brijvihar, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201011 have changed my name to Archana Garg permanently. 0040601136-4

I,ANIL KUMAR S/O-ROSHAN LAL VERMA H.NO-2, GALI.NO-13. GOPALPUR VILLAGE, MUKHERJEE NAGAR CITY, DELHI-110009,have changed my name to ANIL KUMAR VERMA,permanently. 0040601159-7

I,ALKA SAXNA W/O Shri SAMIR SAXENA R/o-S-378, THIRD-FLOOR,GREATER KAILASH PART-2,DELHI-110048,have changed my name to ALKA SAXENA, permanently. 0040601159-5

I, Niranjan Prasad S/o Babu Lal R/o-PB/111/G.F, B.P.T.P-Parkland Pride, Sector-77 Ballabgarh, faridabad,have changed my name to Niranjan Prasad mittal 0040601104-1

I, Neeraj Aggarwal S/o Late Ramesh Chand R/o H.No.B-19, Brijvihar, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201011 have changed my name to Neeraj Garg permanently. 0040601136-3

LOST & FOUND

I Puja Kumari have irretrievably lost 10th and 12th marksheets, Pass Certificates and graduation marksheets(originals) Graduation - Maitreyi College, University of Delhi, Batch - 2005-2008, Department - B.Sc. Zoology(H) 0050191219-1

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform you that Unit bearing No. OCPK/UPPER GROUND/25K in project namely "Omaxe Connaught Place", situated at Sector Beta-II, Greater Noida, Dist. Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh was allotted in favour of Sh. Vijay Kumar (Now deceased). Upon un-time demise of Sh. Vijay Kumar, his daughter Ms. Priya Garg has applied to the Company for transfer/ transmission of allotment rights of the deceased in her favour. If anybody has any objection in the above request for transfer /transmission, he/she can submit his/her objection alongwith conclusive proof within 15 days of this notice to the Company by e-mail at shubhamsharma@omaxe.com and by registered post, failing which it will be treated Ms. Priya Garg as sole allottee/beneficiary of the deceased to the exclusion of any third party.

Sd/-
Sameer Aggarwal
Advocate
E.No. D/2970/2018
A-21, LAJPAT NAGAR-III,
NEW DELHI - 110024

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is hereby given to general public that Mr. Jagdish, Mr. Rajveer and Mr. Rahul who claimed to be owners and in possession of Plot No. 6, Block-A-1, Situated at Sector / Village Sakipur/Rasilpur Rai, Sector-Zeta-1, Greater Noida Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) by virtue of Lease Deed dated 28.12.2021, now Mr. Jagdish, Mr. Rajveer and Mr. Rahul sell said property to Mr. Anshuman Singhal and Mr. Siddharth Singhal and now Mr. Anshuman Singhal and Mr. Siddharth Singhal has approached IDFC First Bank Limited for financial assistance and therefore shall be mortgaged with the said Bank. We give this public notice that if any person having any claim/objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property or any part of the said property in favour of IDFC First Bank Ltd is/are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to undersigned with supporting documentary evidence at the address mention below within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which any claim, if any, of such persons will be consider to have been waived and/or, abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of Mortgage in respect thereof.

For Juris NextGen Law Offices
E-56,LGF, Greater Kailash Enclave Part-1
New Delhi-110048

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is hereby given to general public that Mrs. Nirmala Jain who claimed to be owners and in possession of First & Second floor with roof rights (said floor), part of Property bearing no. B-170 (Old Plot no. 170-B), area measuring 100 sq. yds., out of Khasra no. 637, situated in the area of Village Saboli, in the abadi of gali no. 6, Block-B, Ashok Nagar, Illaqa Shahdara, Delhi. by virtue of Sale Deed dated 21.10.2021, now Mrs. Nirmala Jain is selling said property to Mr. Vikram Singh and now Mr. Vikram Singh has approached IDFC First Bank Limited for financial assistance and therefore shall be mortgaged with the said Bank. We give this public notice that if any person having any claim/objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property or any part of the said property in favour of IDFC First Bank Ltd is/are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to undersigned with supporting documentary evidence at the address mention below within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which any claim, if any, of such persons will be consider to have been waived and/or, abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of Mortgage in respect thereof.

For Juris NextGen Law Offices
E-56,LGF, Greater Kailash Enclave Part-1
New Delhi-110048

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be, it known to the public at large that my clients, Sh. Suresh Chand S/o Sh. Pritam Singh and Smt.Suman W/o Sh. Sh.Suresh Chand R/o- C-651, F/F, Gali no.10/11, Phase-2, Shiv Vihar Karawal nagar, Delhi-110094 have severed all their relation from their Son namely Deepak and his wife namely Smt. Neha Jaiswal and her legal heirs & representatives, and disowned and debarred to them from all their moveable and immoveable properties, due to their Misconduct, maltreatment and misbehaviour. Anybody dealing with them shall be responsible himself for their acts.

Sd/-
ESHU CHAUDHARY (Advocate)
Chamber No. F-421 Karkardooma Courts, Delhi-32 Mob.9711275697

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public at large that my client Smt. Anita Malik w/o Late Sh. Rajesh Malik, R/o:- B- 57 Z D.D.A Flats, A Block Jahangir Puri, North West Delhi-110033; in her full conscious, disowns her daughter namely Vandana Sharma, aged about 34 years, from all of her movable and immovable properties and also severed all relations from her forever, hence Smt. Anita Malik will not be responsible for any act and deed done by Ms. Vandana Sharma, if anybody deals with her in future, he/she will do so at his/her own costs /risks and consequences. Smt. Anita Malik declares the above said to be considered her willful declaration since today i.e. 01.02.2022 itself.

RAKESH KUMAR-ADVOCATE
Ch.No.K-144, K .L .SHARMA BLOCK, TIS HAZARI, NEW DELHI -54

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that my clients **Anand Kumar Nagpal** S/o Shri Siri Chand & **Smt. Rekha Nagpal** W/o Shri Anand Kumar Nagpal both R/o WZ-76/4, Gali No.1A, Guru Nanak Nagar, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018, do hereby disown and debar their son **Sandeep Nagpal** from all their movable and immovable properties because he is out of control of my clients & due to his atrocities, cruelty, misbehavior done by him towards my clients. Anybody dealing with him shall be doing so at his/her/their own risk, cost & responsibility. My clients will not be held responsible for any act, deed & things done by him. **Bhupinder Kumar Arya** (Advocoate) UG-20A, Suneja Tower-I, Distt. Centre, Janakpuri, Delhi-110058.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Mr Ashwani Vasisht lost (previous title deed) i.e. original transfer deed executed in favour of Nain Tara Vasisht by Warayam Singh dt 30/9/2002 document no 5623 page 305 registered in sub-registrar office Ghaziabad property no E 156 Brij Vihar, Ghaziabad. If anyone finds the lost original deed return it to PNB Housing Finance Ltd. Sec-3, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad. If anybody has any claim, right in the said property shall inform within 7 days from the date of publication to S.C. VARSHNEY (Advocate) CONTACT NO 9811834005

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify publically that my client namely Birvati, W/o Late Mr. Rajesh Besoya, R/o 130, Leela Mohalla, Main Road Garhi, Sriniwas Puri, Delhi-110065, have disowned & debarred her son Nishant Besoya, from all her moveable and immoveable properties with immediate effect. Nishant Besoya is not in the control of my client therefore she has severed all legal/ social relations with him. My client will not be responsible for any act, done by him in future.

Salim Alvi (Advocate)
Ch. No.529, Saket Courts, New Delhi-17

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I **SONIA** wife of Shri **RAKESH KUMAR** residing at H.NO.26 Street No.28, Block-D, Mahendra Park, Adarsh Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110033, declare that name of mine and my husband has been wrongly written as **SONIA BINDAL** and **RAKESH BINDAL** in my minor son's namely **ANSH BINDAL** aged 14 years in his school record & birth certificate. The actual name of mine and my husband is **SONIA & RAKESH KUMAR** respectively, which may be amended accordingly.
It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

SONIA [Signature]

PUBLIC NOTICE

"It is to inform to the public at large that Mohammad Ayub Mansoori acquired Entire Third Floor without roof rights of Property No. RZ-254, measuring 75 Sq. Yds, Gali No. 19, Khasra No. 529 at Tughlakabad Extension, New Delhi vide GPA dt. 27.11.2021 along with ATS executed by Mr. Junaid Ahmed and now Mohammad Ayub Mansoori is the undisputed owner of the above said property. ORAny person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance howsoever or otherwise is hereby required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents at below mentioned address. After expiration of notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and not binding on our client.

Ajay Kumar Giri (Advocate)
H.No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi 110024

PUBLIC NOTICE

"It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Ashish Jain acquired property Half Undivided share Shop no-5805, measuring 42.36 sq. Mtrs., Sadar Bazar, Delhi, vide Sale Deed dt. 17.04.1913 executed by Mr. Jeewan Kumar Jain and original Sale Deed dt. 16.03.1961 executed by Mr. C.L. Jain and Others in favour of Mr. Madan Lal Jain & Mr. Waiati Ram Jain of the said property has been lost and Mr. Ashish Jain is the undisputed owner of said property till date. OR Any person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance howsoever or otherwise is hereby required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents at below mentioned address. After expiration of notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and not binding on our client.

Ajay Kumar Giri (Advocate)
H.No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi 110024

PUBLIC NOTICE

"It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Harish Chand Gupta acquired Land measuring 9700 Sq. meters, Khasra No. 402 and 424, situated at Village Kandula, Pargana Dasna Tehsil Dhaulana, District Hapur vide Certificate of Sale dated 11.01.2021 executed by Corporation Bank and now Mr. Harish Chand Gupta is the undisputed owner of the above said property. OR Any person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance howsoever or otherwise is hereby required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents at below mentioned address. After expiration of notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and not binding on our client.

Ajay Kumar Giri (Advocate)
H.No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi 110024

"IMPORTANT"

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

E- TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender Notice N umber: CV/CS/CP/DER/2021 **Dated: 27.01.2022**

Following e-tender on prescribed tender forms are invited by the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, North Central Railway, Prayagraj on behalf of President of India.

1	e-tender No.	:	21/2022
2	Name of work and Station	:	Cycle/Scooter/Motorcycle/E-Rickshaw/ Auto Rickshaw cum Car Parking Stand Contract at Dadri Railway station.
3	Period of Contract	:	Three Years
4	Minimum Reserved L/Fee of Contract for 01 years	:	Rs. 345428.00
5	Minimum Reserved L/Fee of Contract for 03 years	:	Rs. 1036284.00
6	Earnest Money	:	Rs. 10000.00
7	Cost of Tender Form	:	Rs. 2360.00
8	Date & Time for the opening of tender	:	25.02.2022 at 15.00 hrs.
9	Website & Notice where the full detail of tender can be seen	:	E-tender forms shall be available on **www.ireps.gov.in** upto 13.00 hrs. on 25.02.2022 from the date of opening of the e - tender. The e - tender Notice can also be viewed on Railway's website **www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in.**

110/22(AN)

North central railways | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @ CPRONCR

LEASING OF PARCEL VAN

NIT No. C-LMG-34 to 38 & 40 to 41 of 2022. Train Wise Details of leasing of 23/24 tonne Parcel Van on round trip basis for a period of 05 years as under: **SN.1.** NIT No: C-LMG-34-2022; Train No.: 20503/04 Guwahati - New Delhi - Guwahati Rajdhani Express (05 days in a week); Reserve Price: ₹3,14,830/-. **SN.2.** NIT No: C-LMG-35-2022; Train No.: 15632/31 Guwahati - Barmer - Guwahati Express (Weekly); Reserve Price: ₹2,97,656/-. **SN.3.** NIT No: C-LMG-36-2022; Train No.: 15634/33 Guwahati - Bikaner - Guwahati Express (Weekly); Reserve Price: ₹2,72,898/-. **SN.4.** NIT No: C-LMG-37-2022; Train No.: 15770/69 Lumding - Alipurduar Jn. - Guwahati Express (Daily); Reserve Price: ₹78,236/-. **SN.5.** NIT No: C-LMG-38-2022; Train No.: 15663/64 Silchar - Agartala - Silchar Express (Daily); Reserve Price: ₹78,236/-. **SN.6.** NIT No: C-LMG-40-2022; Train No.: 15615/16 Guwahati - Silchar - Guwahati Express (Daily); Reserve Price: ₹52,157/-. **SN.7.** NIT No: C-LMG-41-2022; Train No.: 15603/04 Guwahati - Ledo - Guwahati Express (Daily); Reserve Price: ₹58,084/-.

Earnest Money: ₹4,00,000/- (for each parcel van). E-Tenders from Sl. No. 1 to 3 will be closed at 15:00 hrs. and Opened at 16:00 hrs. on 16-02-2022 and from Sl. No. 4 to 7 will be closed at 15:00 hrs. and Opened at 16:00 hrs. on 18-02-2022. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in.

Sr. DCM/Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER (P) 4
DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF N.C.T. OF DELHI
ROOM NO. 29, B-BUILDING, JHANDEWALAN, NEW DELHI-110005.
Phone: 09650094325 E-mail Id:-djbwaterbody@gmail.com

PRESS NIT No. 23/WB-I/2021-22 se

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Contract Value (ECV)/ Amount put to tender	Earnest Money (EMD)	Tender Fee	Date of Release of tender in E-Procurement Solution & Tender ID No.	Last Date / Time of receipt of tender E-Procurement Solution
01.	Boring and Installation of 150 Nos. bore wells at Nilothi and Najafgarh area etc. for the augmentation of water supply under ACE P 4 (Reinvited)	₹ 34,16,74,645/-	44.20 Lakh	₹ 1500/-	01.2.2022 2021_DJB_215760_1	21.2.2022 At 03:00 PM

Further details in this regard can he seen at **http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in**.

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) **Sd/-**
Advt. No. J.S.V. 1071 (2021-22) **A.C.E.(P)-4**

"STOP CORONA, WEAR FACE MASK, FOLLOW PHYSICAL DISTANCING, MAINTAIN HAND HYGIENE"

DELHI JAL BOARD
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER (M) -2
2142, JANTA FLATS, GTB ENCLAVE, NAND NAGARI, DELHI-93

PRESS NIT No. 40 (2021-22)

S. No	Name of work	Amount put to tender to Tender	EMD Amount	Tender Fees	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1	Removing water contamination by replacement of old/deep and damaged 100mm dia water line at Gali No. 4 and 5, C-Block, Dayalpur under Karawal Nagar, AC-70 Tender ID No. 2022_DJb_215562_1	37,67,509.00	75,500.00	500.00	29.01.2022	15.02.2022 upto 02.30 P.M.

All the terms and condition including technical specification and special conditions is availabe on Delhi Govt. Website **https://delhi.govtprocurement..com**

Sd/- **(Sukhpal Chauhan)**
EX. ENGINEER (T)-2

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 1070(2021-22)

"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, इन्दौर

102-103 पालिका प्लाज़ा (द्वितीय चरण), एम.टी.एच.कम्पाउण्ड, इन्दौर, ई-मेल: rddc_imc@yahoo.co.in

योजना शाखा

निविदा विज्ञप्ति

निविदा वि. क्र.: 07/ योजना /2021-22 दिनांक : 01.02.2022

ई-टेण्डरिंग के माध्यम से केन्द्रीकृत पंजीयन व्यवस्था के अंतर्गत पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से म.प्र. नगरीय प्रशासन एवं विकास विभाग द्वारा जारी इंटीग्रेटेड स्टेण्डर्ड शेड्यूल ऑफ रेट्स दिनांक 02.08.2021 पर प्रतिशत दर पर निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु निविदा आमंत्रित है।

अ. क्र.	कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित राशि (₹)	अर्नेस्टमनी (₹)	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य	समयावधि
1	RW-1 बाणगंगा रेलवे क्रांसिंग से आई.एस.बी.टी.तक सड़क का विकास करना।	₹ 22,11,02,788/-	₹11,05,600/-	50,000/-	11 माह

1. निविदा प्रपत्र क्रय एवं प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम दिनांक : 05.03.2022 (सायं 5.

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

Tashi Tobgyal

POWER FLUID

AFTER FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman concluded her Budget speech, a group of MPs from the southern states got hold of her in Parliament lobby. During their short conversation, the MPs asked Sitharaman what was in the glasses she kept by her side, and kept sipping during the speech. Sitharaman told them that she had coconut water in one glass and Electral (ORS powder) in the other. During her 90-minute Budget speech, Sitharaman finished both drinks..

CRYPTIC QUIP

THE BUDGET speech may have avoided political statements, or announcements that were political, but some Opposition MPs were heard making cryptic comments in between. While TMC's Saugata Roy said there was nothing in the Budget, DMK's Dayanidhi Maran felt it was a "Gujarat Budget." He was heard saying, "Why are you calling it a Union Budget? It's a Gujarat Budget." When Sitharaman announced that GST collection in January was Rs 1.40 lakh crore — the highest since the inception of GST — Maran said the credit should go to the states, and Shiv Sena leader Vinayak Raut said it should be given back to states. When Sitharaman lauded the taxpayers, Maran asked whether they had a "choice" despite the difficult times.

BIG LEAP

FORMER ED joint director Rajeshwar Singh, who has been given a BJP ticket from Sarojini Nagar constituency in Lucknow in the UP polls, was all over the internet on Tuesday. As congratulations poured in from all quarters, his sister, IAS officer-turned-lawyer Abha Singh, posted a video of Singh, where he is seen praying to Lord Shiva, walking in the park in slow-motion, reading newspapers or engaged in the discussion — all the while the soundtrack of 'Bahubali' playing in the background. The video has been made by a TV channel and was retweeted by Abha Singh with the comment, "Here comes Rajeshwar Singh, ex #ED."

MHA budget hiked by 11%, lion's share of allocation for police

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE MINISTRY of Home Affairs (MHA) has been allocated in excess of Rs 1.85 lakh crore in the Union Budget for 2022-23 which is over 11% higher than the allocation of Rs 1.66 lakh crore in the last budget for the current fiscal. In 2019-20, the Budget had allocated Rs 1.67 lakh crore to the MHA.

However, capital expenditure in the 2022-23 Budget for MHA has increased by only 5% from Rs 15,924 crore in the last Budget to Rs 16,753 crore this Budget.

The lion's share of the Budget allocation for MHA has gone to police which has been earmarked in excess of Rs 1.17 lakh crore for the coming fiscal. The allocation for Delhi Police has increased from Rs 8,338 crore to Rs 10,096 crore between the last and this Budget.

Of the 1.17 lakh crore, Rs 10,500 crore has been allocated for capital expenditure, just marginally higher than last Budget. In 2021-22, allocation for police stood at Rs 1.03 lakh crore with Rs 9,715 crore being capital expenditure. Both the figures were marginally lower compared to the 2020-21 Budget.

Jammu and Kashmir, which is in a re-shaping phase after having been newly carved out as a Union Territory, has been given an extra Rs 4,800 crore this Budget. While the 2021-22 Budget had granted Rs 30,757 crore to the UT, this Budget has allocated Rs 35,581 crore to UT. Ladakh has been allocated Rs 5,958 crore, same as last one and the one before that. Almost 60% of the allocation for Ladakh is capital expenditure.

In the last Budget, the Census had been allocated Rs 3,768 crore. As the Census has remained suspended due to the pandemic, this Budget has kept the allocation at Rs 3,676. According to the Budget, it "includes provisions for the office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India and various schemes of RGI including National Population Register (NPR) and expenditure on Census, 2021."

In the Cabinet, highest increase in allocation has been recorded by the Office of Principal Scientific Advisor. The allocation for this office is up from Rs 68 crore in the last budget to Rs 300 crore in this Budget. According to the budget, "The provision is for meeting the administrative expenses of Office of Principal Scientific Advisor and National Research Foundation."

The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) have been allocated Rs 87,444 crore, up from Rs 77,838 crore in the last Budget, recording an increase of 12 per cent. Border infrastructure management has been allocated about Rs 600 crore more this Budget with total allocation at Rs 2,744 crore. According to the budget, "The provision is for erection of barbed wire fencing, construction of roads, construction of Observation Post Tower (O.P. Tower), installation of flood lighting, induction of hi-tech surveillance on Indo-Bangladesh and Indo-Pak borders, for various such construction activities at India's i27nternational borders with its neighbouring countries..."

The government is also focusing on improving infrastructure in border areas, as emphasised by FInance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech. "Border villages with limited connectivity often get left out from the development gains. Such villages on the northern border will be covered under a new Vibrant Villages Programme. The activities will include construction of villages infrastructure, housing, tourist centres, road connectivity, provisioning of decentralized renewable energy..." she said.

Focus on climate, energy transition across sectors

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocated Rs 19,500 crore for a PLI scheme on solar PV modules. *Express File*

ENERGY TRANSITION and climate action formed one of the main themes of the Union Budget announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday. Sitharaman's speech was peppered with proposals and pathways to climate action, across sectors, including raising climate finance and pushing for greener public transportation.

Calling climate change one of the highest "external negativities" facing the country, the Finance Minister cited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at COP26 in Glasgow, saying "what is needed is mindful and deliberate utlisation", and that the government was committed to a strategy of low carbon development.

With regard to the government's plan for creating 280 GW of installed solar capacity by 2030, Sitharaman said Rs 19,500 crores would be allocated for "Production Linked Incentive for manufacture of high efficiency modules, with priority to fully integrated manufacturing units from polysilicon to solar PV modules".

Calling the green economy a "sunrise economy", Sitharaman said "circular economy transition will help in productivity enhancement" and has great potential for job creation.

The Finance Minister emphasised that upcoming sectors such as e-mobility and the geo-spatial industry will be part of the sunrise economy, and said that the government will promote a shift in urban public transportation, emphasising on electric vehicles (EVs) as well as the creation of transportation zones which will be "fossil-fuel free".

Sitharaman also announced that 5-7% biomass pellets will be used in thermal power plants which will lead to CO2 savings of 38 MMT annually, and will simultaneously help in tackling the issue of stubble burning.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Heritage kitty gets a 13% increase; ASI gets a third of total outlay

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE OUTLAY for the Ministry of Culture remains more or less the same as the last financial year, seeing a marginal increase of 13 per cent to Rs 3009.05 crore, against the revised outlay of Rs 2,665 crore for 2021-2022.

Calling it Atmanirbhar Bharat ka Budget, Union Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy said, "As India celebrates 75 years of independence, we are entering Amrit Kaal and this budget presents a blueprint for India at 100. Vikas (development) and Virasat (heritage) go hand-in-hand and this is evident from the fact that this year's budgetary allocations for Tourism and Culture Ministries have been significantly higher."

A third of the total outlay, at Rs 1080.34 crore, has been allocated to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), which protects and conserves more than 3,600 monuments across the country. This remains almost the same as last year, at Rs 1042 crore. The Ministry's flagship schemes, which include Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana, Development of Museums, International Cooperation, Centenary and Anniversary Celebration scheme and Development of Libraries and Archives, has recorded an outlay of Rs 532.55 crore, while the funds allocated for the promotion of Indian languages have seen a significant drop this year, from above Rs 400 crore till last year, to Rs 250 crore for 2022-2023.

With the Ministry of Culture being the nodal agency for Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) celebrations, commemorating 75 years of India's independence, a provision of Rs 110 crore has been made under its Centenary and Anniversary Celebration scheme.

The government has allocated Rs 1023.33 crore to autonomous bodies such as Lalit Kala Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi, various national museums, libraries and other cultural institutions across India, as compared to Rs 901.21 crore in the last financial year. Interestingly, a provision of Rs 106 crore has been made under the Ministry's International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) to establish a Buddhist Monastery in Lumbini, Nepal.

Govt raises credit line for hospitality, industry says expected more

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE HOSPITALITY sector on Tuesday received a special mention in a Union Budget speech for the first time as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the expansion of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) — which provides additional credit to over 1.3 crore Micro, Medium, and Small Enterprises (MSMEs) — by Rs 50,000 crore to a total cover of Rs 5 lakh crore, and extended it till March 2023. The additional amount will be exclusively earmarked for hospitality and related segments to help them get back to pre-pandemic levels, Sitharaman said.

The move received mixed reactions. Nakul Anand, chairperson of FAITH, which is the policy federation of national associations representing the tourism, travel and hospitality industry, said the government could have extended more direct support. Indian Association of Tour Operators' president Rajiv Mehra also expressed despair over the government's announcements.

Sitharaman increased the outlay for the Ministry of Tourism by 18.42 per cent over the previous year, earmarking Rs 2,400 crore.

E-passports to be rolled out in coming fiscal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman, presenting the Union Budget 2022-23, on Tuesday announced that e-passports would be rolled out from the next fiscal year.

Indian travellers will get microchip-based e-passports that would have important security data stored in them. Officials said that the e-passport would be in accordance with the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

India, currently, issues only printed passports to users.

The e-passport would contain secure biometric data and it would ensure smooth passage through immigration posts globally, officials said. These are expected to be manufactured at India Security Press, Nashik.

In 2008, on the request of Ministry of External Affairs, the National Informatics Centre (NIC) had conducted a pilot project on e-passports. About 20,000 e-passports for diplomats and officials were issued.

Budget for WCD hiked, but no increase in funds for its flagship scheme

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

UNION FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced an increase in the budgetary allocation of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) from Rs 23,700 crore in the 2021-'22 Budget Revised Estimates (RE) to Rs 25,672.2 crore.

However, an expert pointed out that not only had the ministry's flagship Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 programme not seen an increase in its budgetary allocation but the funds earmarked also failed to meet the pre-pandemic levels.

Sitharaman told Parliament that two-lakh anganwadis across India would be upgraded under the scheme. "There is a lack of clarity in the finance minister's announcement that anganwadis will be upgraded. What does this entail, and where is this money coming from, considering there have been no increases in the Budget?" asked Centre for Policy Research Fellow Avani Kapur who has authored a report according to which the Rs 20,105 crore earmarked for Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 in 2021-22 was lower than the Budget Estimates (BEs) the year before for the erstwhile Integrated Child Development Services. In this Budget, the government allocated Rs 20,261.07 crore, compared to the 20,105 crore earmarked in 2021-22. "This was lower than the sum of its components in the 2020-21 BEs, which stood at Rs 24,557 crore," said Kapur.

Setback to Amazon: SC sets aside HC orders on Future-Reliance deal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE SUPREME Court on Tuesday set aside the Delhi High Court's 2021 order, refusing to stay the ruling of an international tribunal that had halted the Future Group's deal with Reliance Group on an appeal by retail giant Amazon, and ordered fresh adjudication over the issue.

The top court bench headed by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana also quashed two other orders of the High Court over the dispute. It found "procedural errors" with the HC's orders and said the Future Group was not provided "insufficient" opportunity while dealing with the pleas of US online retail giant Amazon.

The issue dates back to 2020, when Amazon approached the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) arguing that the Future Group's deal with Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Retail was a violation of their contract. The SIAC subsequently put the Future-Reliance deal on hold.

The Delhi High Court -- in its October 29 verdict last year -- said it will not interfere with SIAC's order on the Rs 24,713 crore merger deal. Before that, the HC on February 2 had directed status quo to be maintained concerning the merger deal, and on March 18, it attached the properties of Future Group promoter Kishore Biyani and other officials linked to the company.

SC remitted the ruling on the stay back to HC "for adjudication on its own merits" and said it raises "certain important questions of law concerning the effect of the award of an Emergency Arbitrator and the jurisdiction of an Arbitral Tribunal qua such awards arise in the present matter".

Relooking at affidavit on marital rape exception, Centre tells HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE UNION government Tuesday told the Delhi High Court that it was taking a relook at its 2017 stand against striking down the exception to marital rape.

"The learned Solicitor (General) had said that we will be re-looking at the affidavit. These are affidavits quite back in point in time in 2015-2017," Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma submitted before the division bench of Justice Rajiv Shakdher and Justice C. Hari Shankar. The Centre had filed its 2017 affidavit in response to the petitions challenging Exception 2 in IPC Section 375 that protects men, who have forced, non-consensual intercourse with their wives, from criminal prosecution.

UDUPI COLLEGE AGAIN DENIES ENTRY TO THOSE WEARING HIJAB, STUDENT MOVES HC

Bengaluru: A student of Karnataka's Udupi college, which again on Tuesday denied entry in classes to students wearing hijab, has moved the Karnataka high court seeking the right to wear headscarves inside the classroom. The writ petition, filed on behalf of the student Resham Farooq, said the students' right to wear a hijab is a fundamental right. On Tuesday, the Government Women's Pre-University College did not allow 6 students wearing a hijab into their classes. **ENS**

PROVISION OF PA SYSTEM

Tender Notice No. : N_6_HQ-2021-22, Dated : 27-01-2022 ; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; Tender No. : N_6_HQ_E-TENDER-2021-22; **Name of work :** Provision of PA system at 78 stations and GPS clock at 160 stations over NFR as Minimum Essential Amenities at stations; Advertised Value: ₹2,20,17,470.82; Earnest Money: ₹2,60,100/-; Closing of tender at 12:00 hrs. on 21-02-2022. For details please visit website **www.ireps.gov.in**

General Manager (S&T), Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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TRACK MAINTENANCE WORK & PROVISION OF MANPOWER

E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/14 of 2022 (Item No. 1 & 2) Dated: 24-01-2022. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **SN.1. Brief Description of Item:** Track maintenance work including casual renewal of short rails, defective welds, cup joint, ERC greasing, PSC sleeper changing, Reversing/Interchanging rail & other ancillary work etc. from km 2/1 to 68/0 in between Lumding-Wadrengdisa (LMG-WDA) under the jurisdiction of SSE/P.Way/Hill/Lumding in connection with maintenance of BG Track. **Tender Value:** ₹1,47,96,934.20/-, **Earnest Money:** ₹2,24,000/-, **SN.2. Brief Description of Item:** Provision of manpower for assistance in patrolling in the section of SSE/P.Way/Hill/Lumding, SSE/P.Way/New Haflong under the jurisdiction of DEN/III/Lumding. **Tender Value:** ₹1,72,23,840/-, **Earnest Money:** ₹2,36,100/-, **Date & Time of closing of tender: 15.00** hrs. **21-02-2022 & opening at 15.00** hrs. of **22-02-2022**. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto **15.00** hrs. of **21-02-2022** in website **www.ireps.gov.in.**

DRM (W), Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
NOTICE
Outreach Camp for Course Completed Act Apprentices at CLW

A help desk will be operational at **Technical Training Centre/ CLW/Chittaranjan** for the course completed Act Apprentices of CLW. The help desk will be operational **from 10.00 hrs. to 17.00 hrs. , with a break at 13.30 hrs. to 14.30 hrs. for five days, i.e. from Monday to Friday.** The Course Completed Act Apprentices of CLW may submit their concern/grievance/ suggestions/views at the Help Desk or they can submit through mail to apohq@clw.railnet.gov.in.

PR2-314 PCPO/CLW/CRJ.
Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

E-TENDER NOTICE

The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/Freight Services, Northern Railway, Ambala Cantt. for and on behalf of President of India invites open tender through IREPS website from **"Registered leaseholders of Ambala Division"** registered under CPLP-2014 for the contract of leasing of 4-tonnes/3.9-tonnes SLR/SLRD compartment in Brakevans of various Mail/Express Trains over Ambala Division for a period of 05 years as per following details:-

1	**Tender Notice No. & Date**	**C-12/Parcel Leasing/UMB/2021 Dated 27.01.2022**
2	**Cost of Tender Document**	Rs.1,180/- including 18% GST per SLR/SLRD Comptt.
3	**Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)**	Rs.1,00,000/- per SLR/SLRD Comptt.
4	**Tender Closing Date**	21.02.2022, 15:00 Hrs.
5	**Tender Opening Date**	21.02.2022, immediately after 15:00 Hrs.
6	**Address of Tender Inviting Officer**	Sr.DCM/FS, Northern Railway, DRM Office, Rail Vihar, Ambala Cantt.
7	**Railway E-tender Website**	**www.ireps.gov.in**

Details of 4-Tonnes/3.9 Tonnes SLR/SLRD space of Brakevans available for leasing in Various Mail / Express Trains

Sr. No.	Train No.	Station From	Station To	Space Per SLR/SLRD Comptt. (in Tonnes)	Available SLR/SLRD Comptt. for Leasing	Frequency in a week	Reserve Price of one SLR/SLRD Comptt. Per Trip (Rs.)	E-Tender No.
1	12312	Kalka	Howrah	4.0	F-2, R-1	Daily	25,758	UMB-F2-12312-01-2022 UMB-R1-12312-02-2022
2	22456	Kalka	Sainagar Shirdi	4.0	F-I,F-2,R-1	2 Days	25,008	UMB-F1-22456-03-2022 UMB-F2-22456-04-2022 UMB-R1-22456-05-2022
3	12006	Kalka	New Delhi	3.9	FSLR	Daily	8,056	UMB-F-12006-06-2022
4	12012	Kalka	New Delhi	3.9	FSLR	Daily	8,056	UMB-F-12012-07-2022
5	12046	Chandigarh	New Delhi	3.9	FSLR	6 Days	7,367	UMB-F-12046-08-2022
6	12232	Chandigarh	Lucknow	4.0	F-1,F-2,R-1	Daily	11,508	UMB-F1-12232-09-2022 UMB-F2-12232-10-2022 UMB-R1-12232-11-2022
7	14218	Chandigarh	Prayagraj Sangam	4.0	F-1,F-2,R-1	Daily	15,352	UMB-F1-14218-12-2022 UMB-F2-14218-13-2022 UMB-R1-14218-14-2022
8	22356	Chandigarh	Patliputra	3.9	FSLR	2 Days	18,351	UMB-F-22356-15-2022
9	22452	Chandigarh	Bandra Terminus	3.9	FSLR	2 Days	23,915	UMB-F-22452-16-2022
10	12450	Chandigarh	Madgaon	3.9	FSLR	2 Days	31,376	UMB-F-12450-17-2022
11	22686	Chandigarh	Yeshvantpur	4.0	F-1, R-1	2 Days	36,130	UMB-F1-22686-18-2022 UMB-R1-22686-19-2022
12	12218	Chandigarh	Kochuveli	3.9	FSLR	2 Days	39,328	UMB-F-12218-20-2022
13	14522	Ambala Cantt.	Delhi	4.0	F-1, F-2, R-1	Daily	4,032	UMB-F1-14522-21-2022 UMB-F2-14522-22-2022 UMB-R1-14522-23-2022
14	14525	Ambala Cantt.	Shri Ganganagar	4.0	F-1, F-2, R-1	Daily	6,868	UMB-F1-14525-24-2022 UMB-F2-14525-25-2022 UMB-R1-14525-26-2022
15	14524	Ambala Cantt.	Barauni Jn.	4.0	F-1, F-2, R-1	2 Days	21,060	UMB-F1-14524-27-2022 UMB-F2-14524-28-2022 UMB-R1-14524-29-2022
16	19718	Daulatpur Chowk	Jaipur Jn.	4.0	F-1, F-2, R-1	Daily	8,571	UMB-F1-19718-30-2022 UMB-F2-19718-31-2022 UMB-R1-19718-32-2022
17	14554	Daulatpur Chowk	Delhi	4.0	F-1, F-2, R-1	Daily	8,040	UMB-F1-14554-33-2022 UMB-F2-14554-34-2022 UMB-R1-14554-35-2022
18	12326	Nangal Dam	Kolkata	4.0	F-1, F-2, R-1	1 Day	26,497	UMB-F1-12326-36-2022 UMB-F2-12326-37-2022 UMB-R1-12326-38-2022

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
NORTHERN RAILWAY
230/2022
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In partial modification to the Public Notice **"Augmentation of Trains"**, published in various newspapers on 01.02.2022, the following amendments are being issued:-

Train No. & Name	Augmented by	Already Published Date	Revised Date
12572 Anand Vihar T.-Gorakhpur Jn.Humsafar Exp.	AC 3 Tier-1	**From Anand Vihar T. :** 02.02.22 to 30.03.22	**From Anand Vihar T. :** 03.02.22 to 31.03.22

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 may please be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

RailMadad Helpline No. **139**
Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in
Download Railmadad App
Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
Follow us on :-
NORTHERN RAILWAY
Your Convenience - Our Concern
Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 232/2022

JIVAN RAM SHARMA, 72, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Retired government employee Jivan Ram Sharma outside a Covid vaccination centre in Shimla after receiving a booster dose on Monday. *Pradeep Kumar*

INCOME: The pensioner from Chaupal village lives in a house with his three sons and a daughter. He gets Rs 20,000 a month

DID ANYONE IN FAMILY GET COVID: Sharma is thankful that no one in his family contracted Covid-19. Everyone in his household is vaccinated

WORRY ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD: "I hope that this virus is not here to stay permanently. With precautions, we can be safe"

SIGN OF HOPE: The pensioner feels that the pandemic situation in the country is now under control, and hopes it will improve in days to come

FISCAL DEFICIT 6.4% GDP

Interest rates to rise as govt borrows more to spend more

PRANAV MUKUL & SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

INDICATING ITS reliance on economic growth to drive fiscal consolidation, the government has projected a fiscal deficit of 6.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for financial year 2022-23 — in line with the aim of fiscal consolidation, announced last year, to achieve a fiscal deficit of 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. The government said it will pursue a "fairly steady" decline in deficit levels over this period.

For FY22, revised estimates in the Budget pegged the fiscal gap at 6.9 per cent against the 6.8 per cent estimated during the 2021-22 Budget. Higher buoyancy in tax collections is helping fund elevated capex, while bringing down fiscal deficit but at a slow pace. Revenue growth targets are realistic for next year while infrastructure spending plan is ambitious.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the total expenditure for the upcoming financial year is estimated to be Rs 39.45 lakh crore, while the total receipts other than borrowings are estimated at Rs 22.84 lakh crore. "While setting the fiscal deficit level in 2022-23, I am conscious of the need to nurture growth, through public investment, to become stronger and sustainable," she said Tuesday during the Budget Speech.

Notably, the government increased the gross market borrowings expected to be at Rs 14.95 lakh crore for the upcoming fiscal, compared to Rs 10.46 lakh crore as per revised estimates of 2021-22. Analysts note that this would put pressure on bond yields and which could touch 7 per cent in near future. The 10-year yield surged sharply and closed at 6.85 per cent Tuesday, from its previous close of 6.68 per cent. This indicates overall borrowing costs will rise.

The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act mandated Central Government to limit the fiscal deficit up to 3 per cent of gross domestic product by the 31st March, 2021. However, Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdown led to a sharp rise in deficit level as government spending jumped to support economy. The Centre's fiscal deficit was at an all-time low of 2.5 per cent of GDP in 2007-08. Government is betting on a virtuous cycle of growth, resulting from higher investments boosting private sector Capex and aggregate demand, to ultimately help in reducing deficit.

Economists believe that the sharp increase in capital expenditure levels and only a moderate rise in revenues points to a less gradual fiscal consolidation path than earlier assumed. "Our own calculation of the primary balance (excluding one-off revenues) suggests a higher 70 bps consolidation in the math. For states, a fiscal deficit of 4% of GDP will be permitted again, which includes 0.5% room which hinges on implementation of power sector measures," Radhika Rao, senior economist at DBS noted in a research report.

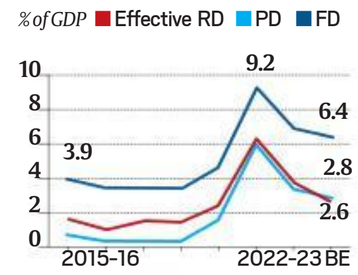
Even as gross tax revenues increased at 50.3 per cent April-December 2021, the Centre's net tax collections, after devolution to states, rose at a much higher rate of 64.9 per cent during the same period, budget documents show, reflecting the increasing reliance on cess collections that are not shared with the states.

During April-November 2021, total revenue receipts of the Centre, at about 76 per cent of budget estimates, were significantly higher than last five years moving average of 50.3 per cent of Budget Estimates (BE). Tax revenue (net to centre) and Non-tax revenue receipts achieved 73.5 per cent and 91.8 per cent of their budget estimates, respectively.

Interest payments are the largest component of Centre's revenue expenditure. In revised estimates of 2021-22, interest outgo is estimated at about Rs 8.14 lakh crore, which is 25.7 per cent of revenue expenditure. For the next year, total interest payments is estimated at about Rs 9.41 lakh crore, or 29.4 per cent of the revenue expenditure.

Expenditure on major subsidies is estimated to increase from Rs 3.36 lakh crore in budget estimates 2021-22 to Rs 4.33 lakh crore in revised estimates of 2021-22. But in BE 2022-23, major subsidies spend is slated to slide down to Rs 3.18 lakh crore, or 1.2 per cent of the GDP.

Deficit Trends



FD: Fiscal deficit: RD: Revenue Deficit

EXPLAINED

Gross borrowings rise over 40%

THE GOVERNMENT increased the gross market borrowings expected to be at Rs 14.95 lakh crore for the upcoming fiscal, compared to Rs 10.46 lakh crore as per revised estimates of 2021-22. This led to a sharp jump in bond yields on Tuesday to 6.85 per cent, in an indication of rising borrowing costs in the near future.

Lower subsidy bills, but silent on reform

₹68,000 crore for Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, which provides ₹6,000 in three equal instalments to all landholding farmer families

HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE GOVERNMENT has budgeted lower outgo for both food and fertiliser subsidy in 2020-23, with the savings arising largely from discontinuation of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) and expected easing of global crop nutrient prices.

The Centre's food subsidy bill hit an all-time-high of Rs 541,330.14 crore in 2020-21. That was on account of the Food Corporation of India's (FCI) outstanding loans totaling Rs 339,236 crore taken from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF) being repaid at one go, along with implementation of PMGKAY. The latter scheme entailed issue of 5 kg of free grain per month to some 80 crore persons, over and above their regular public distribution system (PDS) quota of 5 kg wheat or rice at Rs 2 and Rs 3/kg, respectively.

PMGKAY was introduced post the Covid-19-induced lockdown. In 2020-21, it was effective for eight months, from April to November 2020 till the Bihar Assembly elections. In the current fiscal as well, the revised food subsidy of Rs 286,469.11 crore has overshot the budget estimate of Rs 242,836 crore mainly because of PMGKAY. The scheme was reintroduced in May 2021 following the second wave of Covid and has been extended till March 2022, when elections to Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and three other states are over.

In the coming fiscal, the budgeted food subsidy is only Rs 206,831.09 crore, with no FCI dues to be cleared and also no further issue of free grains under PMGKAY. FCI was earlier being forced to borrow from NSSF, at interest rates ranging from 7.4% to 8.8% per annum, as its subsidy requirement (on account of selling grain at way below economic cost) wasn't being fully covered through the Union budget. In 2020-21, 31.52 million tonnes (mt) of rice and wheat was distributed free of cost under PMGKAY. During April-December 2021, 30.84 mt has already got distributed, with total allocation for the fiscal at 44.86 mt.

The fertiliser subsidy bill, too, shot up to Rs 127,921.74 crore in 2020-21 following the Centre's move to pay off past arrears to companies. For the current fiscal, the subsidy was budgeted at only Rs 79,529.68 crore. The revised estimates have, however, ended up higher at Rs 140,122.32 crore. The overshooting has been primarily due to spiraling global prices.

Urea imports into India are taking place now at $900-1,000 per tonne (cost plus freight) and di-ammonium phosphate at $900, while ruling at $300 and $400 respective levels a year ago. Prices of MOP (muriate of potash), too, have surged over this period, from $230 to $600 per tonne. So have that of imported inputs: phosphoric acid ($689 to $1,330), ammonia ($300 to $900), rock phosphate ($100 to $200) and sulphur ($150 to $300).

For coming fiscal, the fertiliser subsidy has been pegged lower at Rs 105,222.32 crore. This is based on the expectation of international prices of fertilisers and their raw materials/intermediates easing. The rating firm ICRA Ltd has estimated the actual requirement of subsidy at Rs 130,000-140,000 crore. If prices don't ease, the Centre may have to make additional allocations, as has been the case in 2021-22.

Significantly, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget speech has not spelt out any plans for rationalisation of food or fertiliser subsidy. These would involve raising or deregulating urea prices and bringing it under a fixed per-tonne nutrient-based subsidy regime (like in all other fertilisers), increasing PDS grain issue prices and ending open-ended procurement of wheat and rice at minimum support prices.

The budget has neither proposed any reform of the existing food and fertiliser subsidy regimes nor signaled greater reliance on less market-distorting direct income support to farmers. An amount of Rs 68,000 crore has been allocated towards Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, which provides a payment of Rs 6,000 in three equal installments to all landholding farmer families. This is only marginally higher than the Rs 67,500 crore in the revised estimates for 2021-21 and Rs 60,990 crore in 2020-21.

FOOD, FERTILISER SUBSIDY BILL (₹ CR)

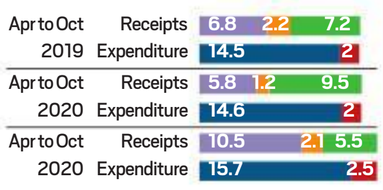
Fiscal year (Apr-Mar)	Food Subsidy	Fertiliser Subsidy
2013-14	92,000	67,339
2014-15	1,17,671	71,076
2015-16	1,39,419	72,415
2016-17	1,10,173	66,313
2017-18	1,00,282	66,468
2018-19	1,01,327	70,605
2019-20	1,08,688	81,124
2020-21	5,41,330	1,27,922
2021-22*	2,42,836	79,530
2021-22**	2,86,469	1,40,122
2022-23*	2,06,831	1,05,222

**Budget Estimates; **Revised Estimates.*
Source: Union Budget papers for various years

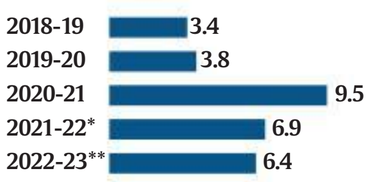
Buoyant tax mop-up helps in capex push

Direct and indirect tax collections have remained buoyant this year, enabling the government to push up capital expenditure next year while continuing the fiscal consolidation that began this year

Trends in Fiscal situation: Composition of receipts and expenditure

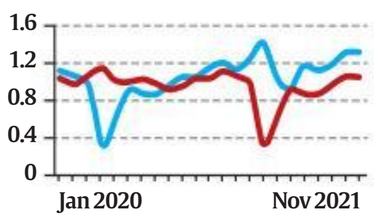


Fiscal Deficit to GDP Ratio (%)

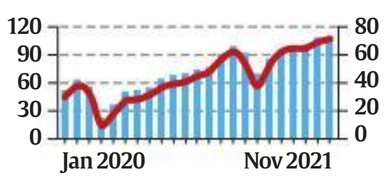


**RE, **FY23BE; source: Finance Ministry*

GST Revenue Collection



Daily Average ETC Collection and Count



Note: COPPY is Corresponding Period of Previous Years; source: GSTN, Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways

POST TATA GROUP ACQUIRING AIRLINE IN ₹18,000-CR DEAL

A large chunk of spending — ₹51,971 cr just to settle Air India debt before sale

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

HAVING CLOSED the high-profile disinvestment process of Air India, the government also decided to retire the airline's debt, which it transferred to a special purpose vehicle. In the Union Budget 2022-23, the government allocated an additional Rs 51,971 crore towards the settlement of outstanding guaranteed liabilities of Air India and its other "sundry commitments".

This amount has been accounted in the Revised Estimates of the total expenditure in 2021-22.

"As against a total expenditure of Rs 34.83 lakh crore projected in the Budget Estimates 2021-22, the Revised Estimate is Rs 37.70 lakh crore. The Revised Estimate of capital expenditure is Rs 6.03 lakh crore. This includes an amount of Rs 51,971 crore towards settlement of outstanding guaranteed liabilities of Air India and its other sundry commitments," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said during the Budget speech.

The Tata Group acquired a 100 per cent stake in the airline in a deal, which closed on January 27, for Rs 18,000 crore. Of this, Rs 15,300 crore was taken on as debt and Rs 2,700 crore was paid to the Centre in cash. For servicing the high-cost debt that it has taken on with the airline, a consortium led by State Bank of India has approved a plan to provide long-term debt to the Tata Group.

As per the Revised Estimates of 2021-22, the SPV — AI Asset Holding Ltd — has received Rs 62,057 crore, of which Rs 36,254 crore was infused as equity for repayment of past government-guaranteed borrowings of Air India; Rs 12,357 crore for repayment of borrowings for sale and leaseback rentals for aircraft; and Rs 13,446 crore for repayment of other dues and liabilities.

The huge amount of debt carried by Air India, resulting from years of loss-making operations, was one of the key hindrances in the past disinvestment attempts by the government. During the last divestment process, the government tweaked the bidding conditions to allow potential bidders to place a bid at the enterprise value — meaning they could decide the quantum of debt they would want to take on.

Also, upon finalising the decision to sell its stake in Air India, the government, over the last two years, had stopped infusing funds into the airline and was instead guaranteeing its loans.

Air India flight at Chandigarh International Airport. The huge amount of debt carried by Air India, resulting from years of loss-making operations, was one of the key hindrances in the past disinvestment attempts by the government. *Express file*

NOMINAL GDP PROJECTION OF 11.1% FOR FY23

Betting on growth, wary of 'disruptions'

SUNNY VERMA & SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

EVEN AS the Economic Survey pegged FY23 real GDP growth at 8-8.5 per cent, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has projected a nominal GDP growth of 11.1 per cent, implying a real growth rate of around 7 per cent (at RBI's targeted inflation of 4 per cent).

The Finance Ministry's growth rate projection is on the lower side as it has taken into consideration the impact of Omicron on the economic activity.

"We had very difficult job of estimating the nominal GDP. The Survey has given the estimate for real GDP at 8-8.5 per cent. The first difficulty we have is that the current year's GDP which we have taken from the NSO's first advance estimate which came on January 7, is essentially an estimate which is pre-omicron in its construction...they did not have the omicron trends with them," said T V Somanathan, Finance Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

There could, however, be downward revision to this projection as the government said that this GDP growth has been projected on the assumption that "the year ahead will not experience pandemic induced disruptions on economic activity and liquidity withdrawal in both domestic and global markets will be orderly," the budget document said.

The government is optimistic on this growth rate as it feels that there has been a rebound in several high frequency indicators, an uptick in economic activity and will be supported by rapid progress in vaccination coverage.

Estimating the nominal GDP growth of 11.1 per cent, the government said that the key economic activity indicators confirm strengthened momentum of India's economic recovery. It however said that "recent surge in Omicron infections and global inflation due to persistent supply bottlenecks continue to pose challenges to the pace of recovery," said the document.

THE GOVERNMENT IS OPTIMISTIC ON THIS GROWTH AS IT FEELS THAT THERE HAS BEEN A REBOUND IN SEVERAL HIGH FREQUENCY INDICATORS AND AN UPTICK IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

As for inflation, it has witnessed a rise over the last one year. While, in the period between April - December 2021, the retail inflation rate moderated to 5.2 per cent in 2021-22 (April-December) as against 6.6 per cent in the corresponding period last year, the wholesale price index (WPI) jumped 12.5 per cent in for April-December and stood at 13.6 per cent in December 2021. Earlier, the WPI declined from 4.3 per cent in 2018-19 to 1.3 per cent in 2020-21.

Even as the inflation concerns loom large over the economy, experts feel that the budget has created several tailwainds to push growth in the economy. "By raising capital expenditure spends significantly, especially in the infrastructure segments such as roads, railways, solar modules and affordable housing, it hopes to trigger multiplier effects and crowd in private sector investments in construction, cement, steel and capital goods," said Gurpreet Chhatwal, MD, Crisil.

As per the first Advance Estimates of annual national income released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), India's real GDP is estimated to grow by 9.2 per cent in 2021-22, as compared to a contraction of 7.3 per cent in 2020-21. It is further supported by strong rebound seen in several high frequency indicators in Q3: 2021-22 and rapid progress in vaccination coverage.

Even on the demand side, the recovery has been broad based. According to the government's assessment, while investment and exports have achieved more than full recovery of corresponding prepandemic 2019-20 levels, private consumption has also improved to recover 97.1 per cent of corresponding pre-pandemic levels and stands fully recovered in H2 of FY 2021-22.

Concurrently, the government expects the private consumption expenditure to grow at 6.9 per cent in 2021-22 as against a contraction of 9.1 per cent in 2020-21 and fixed investment to grow by 15 per cent in 2021-22 as against a contraction of 10.8 per cent in 2020-21.

Also, the government consumption expenditure is estimated to grow by 7.6 per cent in 2021-22 as against 2.9 per cent in 2020- 21. Exports and imports of goods and services are estimated to grow by 16.5 per cent and 29.4 per cent (at constant prices) respectively in 2021-22.

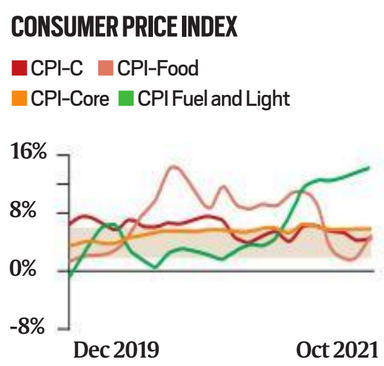
EXPLAINED

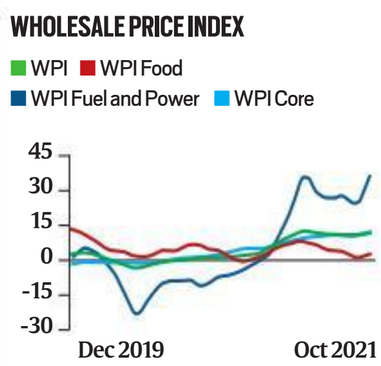
Demand-side recovery

ON THE demand side, recovery has been broad based. According to government assessment, while investment and exports have achieved more than full recovery of corresponding pre-pandemic 2019-20 levels, private consumption has also improved to recover 97.1 per cent of corresponding pre-pandemic levels and stands fully recovered in H2 of FY22. The government expects the private consumption expenditure to grow at 6.9 per cent in 2021-22 as against a contraction of 9.1 per cent in 2020-21.

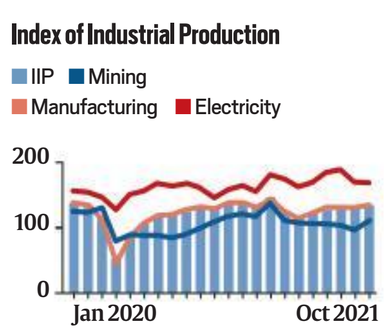
Economic Indicators Up, So is Inflation

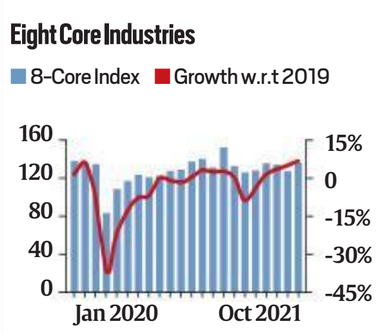
Alongside a pick-up in various economic indicators, such as industrial output and core sector production, inflation rate has started edging up both at retail and wholesale levels. Macroeconomic parameters like fiscal deficit, current account deficit , and forex reserves flows remain stable



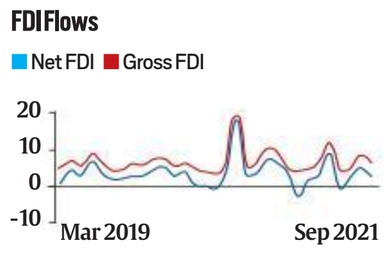


Source: MoSPI, DPIIT

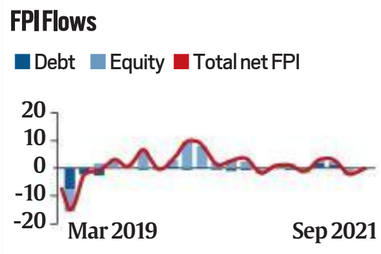




Source: MoSPI Office of Economic Advisor, DPIIT



Source: RBI



Source: CDSL

SULOCHANA AADIWASI, 21, MAHARASHTRA

Migrant worker Sulochana Aadiwasi, who hails from Madhya Pradesh, on the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Expressway. *Vallabh Ozarkar*

INCOME: Working on the construction of the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Expressway since January 2020, Sulochana earns Rs 300 per day

DID ANYONE IN FAMILY GET COVID: No one from Sulochana's family has been infected with the coronavirus so far

WORRY ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD: With her work on the expressway almost nearing its end, she worries when she will get work again

SIGN OF HOPE: Sulochana hopes that the government will ensure more work with better wages for workers like her this year

PRODUCTION PUSH

1 year extensions: Concessional 15% corporate tax rate for new manufacturing cos, startup sops

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 1

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday kept the corporate tax rate unchanged in the Union Budget for 2022-23, but offered a concessional rate of 15 per cent for 1 more year till March 2024 for newly incorporated manufacturing companies.

Section 115BAB of the Income-tax Act provides for an option of concessional rate of taxation at the rate of 15 per cent for new domestic manufacturing companies, provided that they do not avail themselves of any specified incentives or deductions and fulfill certain other conditions. The Act provides that the new domestic manufacturing company is required to be set up and registered on or after October 1, 2019 and is required to commence manufacturing or production of an article or thing on or before March 31, 2023, according to the Budget document.

Sitharaman also offered sops for startups by extending the date of incorporation for eligible startup for exemption. The existing provisions of the Section 80-IAC of the Act provide for a deduction of an amount equal to 100 per cent of the profits and gains derived from an eligible business by an eligible start-up for three consecutive assessment years out of 10 years, beginning from the year of incorporation, at the option of the assesses.

Due to the Covid pandemic, there have been delays in setting up such units. In order to factor in such delays and promote such eligible startups, the government has proposed to amend the provisions of Section 80-IAC of the Act to extend the period of incorporation of eligible start-ups to March 31, 2023, according to the Budget document.

The government has revised upwards the direct tax collection estimates for 2021-22 fiscal from Rs 11.08 lakh crore in Budget estimates (BE) to Rs 12.50 lakh crore in revised estimates (RE). The government expects to collect Rs 6.35 lakh crore from corporate taxes and Rs 6.15 lakh crore from personal income taxes (PIT) as against the budget estimate of Rs 5.47 lakh crore and Rs 5.61 lakh crore in corporate taxes and PIT, respectively.

In most of the cases, the optional corporate tax regime has lowered the corporate tax rate to 22 per cent, plus surcharge and cess resulting, at an effective tax rate of 25.17 per cent.

Improved profitability of the corporates, formalisation of the economy and improved compliance due to tax reforms are noteworthy, the Economic Survey for 2021-22 said. The corporate income tax registered a growth of 90.4 per cent over April-November 2020 and 22.5 per cent over April-November 2019.

Further, the Budget has proposed changes on dividends of corporates.

Rohinton Sidhwa, partner, Deloitte India, said, "On withdrawal of Sec 115BBD — Indian corporates benefited from a lower tax rate on dividends of 15 per cent received from their foreign "affiliates" (where the shareholding was 26 per cent or more). This has now been withdrawn and such dividends will now be taxed at regular rates. The justification for this is being traced back to the removal of dividend distribution tax. The lower rate provided an incentive to bring back the cash to India."

Concerns had been expressed by corporate taxpayers on the limited time available for revising tax returns, acknowledging a part of the concern the Finance Bill has proposed an extended timeline for an updated tax return.

"However, what the FM did not mention in her speech is that the same would come with an additional tax at 25%/ 50% on the tax and interest due on the additional income furnished would be required to be paid. While this does provide one more opportunity to taxpayers to ensure comprehensive reporting, is the additional tax fair and whether it would encourage voluntary tax compliance would remain to be seen," said Pranay Bhatia, partner and leader-tax and regulatory services, BDO India.

PPE manufacturing factory, Ahmedabad. In most of the cases, the optional corporate tax regime has lowered the corporate tax rate to 22 per cent, plus surcharge and cess resulting, in an effective tax rate of 25.17 per cent. *Express file*

AMT for co-op societies cut to 15% from 18.5%

Mumbai: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced a reduction in the alternate minimum tax (AMT) for cooperative societies to 15 per cent from 18.5 per cent, bringing the rate for cooperatives in-line with companies.

She also reduced the surcharge on co-operative societies from 12 per cent to 7 per cent for those having total income of between Rs 1-10 crore.

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

ECLGS extended till next fiscal, guarantee cover raised to ₹5L cr

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

WITH A view to help sectors such as hospitality and other close contact sectors, which faced repeated disruptions owing to restrictions put in place to control the spread of Covid, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday proposed to extend the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) till the end of March 2023, with an expanded guarantee cover of Rs 5 lakh crore.

"ECLGS has provided much-needed additional credit to more than 130 lakh MSMEs (micro, small and medium scale enterprises). This has helped them mitigate the adverse impact of the pandemic. Hospitality and related services, especially those by micro and small enterprises, are yet to regain their pre-pandemic level of business. Considering these aspects, the ECLGS will be extended up to March 2023," Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

An additional amount of Rs 50,000 crore will be earmarked exclusively for the hospitality and related enterprises, the finance minister said. Apart from the ECLGS, the Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises scheme will also be revamped with required infusion of funds, Sitharaman said, adding that it would facilitate an additional credit of Rs 2 lakh crore for MSMEs, while also expanding employment opportunities.

"Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme with outlay of Rs 6,000 crore over 5 years will be rolled out. This will help the MSME sector become more resilient, competitive and efficient," the finance minister said.

THE CREDIT GUARANTEE TRUST FOR MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES SCHEME WILL BE REVAMPED WITH REQUIRED INFUSION OF FUNDS, FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN SAID

Under the ECLGS, which is for helping companies tide over liquidity crunch resulting from Covid curbs, banks provide additional loans to existing borrowers without asking for extra collateral. To encourage banks, these loans are fully guaranteed by the government against credit losses. This scheme will be key to ensure that MSMEs impacted by intermittent lock downs in states get funding to stay afloat.

Sanctions and disbursements under the facility are relatively fast since lenders have the Central government's guarantee in case of default against these loans. Companies from hospitality, travel & tourism, and leisure & sporting sectors are expected to benefit from the relaxation in the scheme. Hotels, restaurants, canteens, caterers, marriage halls, tour operators, as well as amusement parks and theatres can avail the facility. Accounts that are classified as non-performing assets or where overdues have crossed 60 days (SMA-II) are not eligible.

In order to support Covid-hit MSMEs, the government last announced an extension of its ECLGS till 31 March, 2022, or till guarantees for an amount of Rs 4.5 lakh crore are issued under the scheme, whichever is earlier.

JAL NAL, ROADS GET RECORD OUTLAYS

Surety bonds replace bank guarantees, free up capital

PRANAV MUKUL & SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

TO BOOST private sector capex in infra sector, the Budget has announced to provide an alternative to the guideline of seeking bank guarantees for infrastructure projects and replacing them with surety bonds. A broad-based increase in capital spending targets across key sectors including roads, railways, telecommunications and rural infra projects has also been unveiled.

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways received the highest boost in its allocation which has jumped to Rs 1.99 lakh crore, against Rs 1.18 lakh crore last year year. Ministry of Railways has been allocated Rs 1.40 lakh crore, up from Rs 1.10 lakh crore budgeted last year, the Ministry of Rural Development gets Rs 1.38 lakh crore, compared with Rs 1.33 lakh crore last year.

Private sector infra investments will also benefit from changes outlined in the budget. With typically 20 per cent of the funds getting locked up in bank guarantees, this is expected to free up an estimated Rs 8 lakh crore of private sector funds over the entire spread of National Infrastructure Pipeline projects.

"To reduce indirect cost for suppliers and work-contractors, the use of surety bonds as a substitute for bank guarantee will be made acceptable in government procurements. Business such as gold imports may also find this useful. IRDAI has given the framework for issue of surety bonds by insurance companies," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

A surety bond is provided by the insurance company on behalf of the contractor to the entity, which is awarding the project. When a principal breaks a bond's terms, the harmed party can make a claim on the bond to recover losses, replacing the existing system of bank guarantee. Industry chambers CII and FICCI as well as Ministry of Road Transport and Highways had suggested introduction of surety bonds by general insurance companies ahead of the budget.

At the heart of the Budget's Capex plan is the PM Gati Shakti scheme driven by seven engines — roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways, and logistics infrastructure. In addition, the public spending includes an ambitious plan to build 80 lakh houses in the upcoming financial year, for which the government has allocated Rs 48,000 crore.

During 2022-23, the government will also award contracts for laying optical fibre in all villages, including remote areas, under the BharatNet project through public-private partnership. The completion of this project is expected in 2025. Including this, and other telecom sector projects, the Ministry of Communications has been allocated Rs 1.05 lakh crore. "The capex allocations are broad-based with the government not only focusing on the traditional infrastructure sectors, but also new economy imperatives such as climate and digital investments…But those looking for a greater policy thrust on social expenditure and direct support for job creation are likely to be disappointed, as the continued emphasis on capex relies on both more modest revenue expenditure trends and a pick-up in fiscal receipts," said Priyanka Kishore, Head, India and South East Asia Economics at Oxford Economics. The projected shares of both education and health in overall expenditure remain below pre- pandemic levels for the third consecutive year and hopes of an urban employment scheme similar to the MNREGA have not materialised, she said.

The share of capital expenditure is projected to rise to 2.9 per cent of GDP in FY23, even as the share of overall spending is forecast to fall to 15.3 per cent of GDP from 16 per cent.

For the social sector, the government has made an allocation of Rs 60,000 crore with an aim to cover 3.8 crore households under the Har Ghar, Nal se Jal scheme in 2022-23.

Among major schemes, Rs 19,000 crore has been allocated to the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana during the upcoming fiscal (compared to Rs 14,000 crore in RE 2021-22), Rs 39,553 crore to the National Education Mission (against Rs 30,796 crore in RE 2021-22), and Rs 37,800 crore to the National Health Mission (against Rs 34,947 crore in RE 2021-22).

As for the major production linked incentive schemes, Rs 5,300 crore has been allocated for large scale electronics and IT hardware sector for 2022-23, Rs 529 crore for telecom and networking products and Rs 1,629 crore for pharmaceuticals.

Sarkhej-Gandhinagar highway, Ahmedabad. *Express file*

EXPLAINED

Broad-based allocation

CAPEX ALLOCATION in the Budget is broad-based. Apart from focussing on traditional infra sectors, new economy initiatives have also been included. The share of capital expenditure is projected to rise to 2.9 per cent of GDP in FY23, even as the share of overall spending is forecast to fall to 15.3 per cent of GDP from 16 per cent.

NEHA KHATUN, 21, WEST BENGAL

Beautician Neha Khatun at work in a salon in Baguiati, on the outskirts of Kolkata, on Monday. *Partha Paul*

INCOME: At the peak of lockdown restrictions, Khatun's income plummetted to Rs 5,000 per month from the Rs 16,000 she used to earn before the pandemic. "Now, I manage to earn Rs 9-10,000," she says

DID ANYONE IN FAMILY GET COVID: Khatun, who lives in the neighbourhood of Lake Town in the suburbs of Kolkata, says that fortunately no one in her family has contracted Covid-19 till now

WORRY ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD: She worries about the future of the beauty parlour business that has been hamstrung by repeated closures and strict restrictions imposed because of the pandemic

SIGN OF HOPE: Living through a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic has been difficult for Khatun. Although the situation is improving slowly, she does not expect life to return to normal in the immediate future

India Inc banks on govt spending before drawing up investment plan

SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

EVEN AS the government has made a big push for capital investment in infrastructure and the finance minister has said that it will crowd-in private investments, bankers and business leaders don't see an immediate response from India Inc and they will wait for uptick in demand and rise in capacity utilisations before they commit investments.

"As of now, even large corporations are in the process of deleveraging and cleaning their balance sheets. They are in no hurry to leverage and invest and they will wait for demand to pick and capacity utilisations to rise before they go for expansion. I think big private sector investment is still 12-18 months away," said a top banker who did not wish to be named. He added that while some ancillary demand will rise following public investments and it may result in some investments in those areas, but big private sector capex will take some time.

There is, however, a sense among industry leaders that the big budget push by government on public capital investment, is the best that the government could have done at this point of time and that needs to continue over the next 1-2 years.

While the government seems inclined to provide the initial push, it expects the private sector to follow up and play its role. "The virtuous cycle of investment requires public investment to crowd-in private investment. At this stage, private investments seem to require that support to rise to their potential and to the needs of the economy. Public investment must continue to take the lead and pump-prime the private investment and demand in 2022-23," said the finance minister in her budget speech.

But, India Inc seems inclined to wait and focus more on improving their balance sheet and wait for demand to reach a critical mass.

The RBI data shows that at an aggregate level, capacity utilisations for the manufacturing sector declined to 40 percent in Q1FY'21 and then rose to 69.4 in Q4'FY21. It, however, fell to 60 per cent in Q1FY'22. While the situation seems to have improved over last couple of quarters, industry insiders say that the capacity utilisations will have to reach a critical mass before they can step in.

"There is optimism in the market, but as of now it will be mostly driven by government. The investment and borrowing will be mostly quasi-government for sometime now. Once the confidence on demand front comes back, then the economy may start witnessing big investments from the private sector," said the head of a financial services firm.

On Tuesday, the markets rose and stood their ground after the budget announcements and the benchmark Sensex and Nifty and BSE and NSE rose 1.5 and 1.4 per cent respectively, in affirmation to the budget announcements. In line with the big capex push by the government for infrastructure, the metal index and capital goods index at BSE jumped 4.9 per cent and 2.9 per cent respectively. Even the industrial and banking indices at BSE rose 1.7 per cent and 1.3 per cent respectively.

A factory near Mumbai. While the government seems inclined to provide the initial push, it expects the private sector to follow up and play its role. *File*

THERE IS A SENSE AMONG INDUSTRY LEADERS THAT THE BIG PUSH ON PUBLIC INVESTMENT IS THE BEST IT COULD HAVE DONE IN THE CURRENT SCENARIO

HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE TO BE SET UP

FM call for paradigm change in urban planning 'opportunity of a lifetime': Experts

RITU SHARMA
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 1

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman's call for a "paradigm change" in urban planning, while announcing a high-level committee of reputed urban planners, urban economists and institutions to advise the government, was welcomed as an 'opportunity of a lifetime' by planners, managers and experts in Gujarat.

Bimal Patel, Ahmedabad-based urban planner-architect and director at HCP Design and Project Management Private Ltd (HCPDPMPL), said India's urban planning is still "informed by the planning philosophies of the socialist era". He told The Indian Express on Tuesday, "It (Urban planning) is characterised by a command and control approach, a yearning to establish a license-permit raj and an anti-market outlook. On account of this, it not only does not work, not only causes more problems than it solves, but also does grievous harm to the poorest sections of the urban population. Indian urban planning urgently needs reform and liberalisation. It is very hopeful that this has been recognised by the FM in the Budget."

Keshav Varma, former World Bank director and chairman of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Corporation Ltd (SRFDCL), who is advising the Uttar Pradesh government on urban affairs, called the announcement "the most important thing that has happened in urban planning."

Varma said, "It is very crucial as well planned urbanism will add to the GDP and an another dimension to economic growth". Varma is chairman of the committee for urban development for the cities of Jammu and Srinagar, of which Patel is also a member.

Sitharaman, in her Budget speech, spoke on how when India will celebrate its 100th independence day, nearly half the population would be in urban areas.

Elaborating further, she said: "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. This would require us to reimagine our cities into centres of sustainable living with opportunities for all, including women and youth. For this to happen, urban planning cannot continue with a business-as-usual approach. We plan to steer a paradigm change."

Patel feels the urban planning in Gujarat is "more advanced than in the rest of the country". Asked about the difference, Patel said, "In Gujarat urban planning actually works. Urban Development Plans are actually implemented, peripheral growth is orderly on account of the use of Town Planning Schemes, redevelopment and densification of built-up areas is accompanied by infrastructure strengthening and the compliance to Building By -laws is high...".

Dr Subhalaxmi Mohapatra, associate professor and co-director, Centre for Urbanism and Cultural Economics, Anant National University, Ahmedabad said: "The emphasis on a paradigm change of the urban sector through the involvement of the stakeholders at multiple levels is a welcome step."

Varma said urban planning in its true sense has been missing in most of the cities "as their growth trajectory determined by realtors". "Now this is an opportunity for mega cities as world class planning will lead to global city regions. For instance, if 25 global city regions are developed, these will add to our competitiveness which can be engines of economic growth. Professional urban planning crucial for secondary cities-tier 2,3 and 4. Their economic growth is pulled by the magnet city like central cities of Delhi, Mumbai or Chennai. For that public transport is essential. It is critical to create mobility grids that would connect these secondary cities to mega cities and make it possible for people to live outside cities and come back," Varma said.

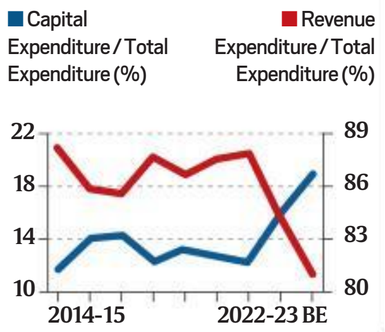
Given that every city has its own character, economy and trajectory of growth, Patel — who has been associated with several national projects like the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor and the Central Vista redevelopment — when asked how this high-level committee is expected to play out, said: "Plans have to address specific problems and characteristics of specific cities. However, the philosophy and approach informing diverse plans can be similar..."

THE FM SAID WHEN INDIA WILL CELEBRATE ITS 100TH INDEPENDENCE DAY, NEARLY HALF THE POPULATION WILL BE LIVING IN URBAN AREAS

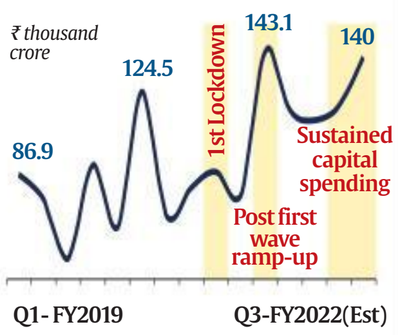
Firing up economic engines

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has pushed capital expenditure, with higher spending on highways to affordable housing, to fire up key engines of the economy

Prioritising Capital Expenditure

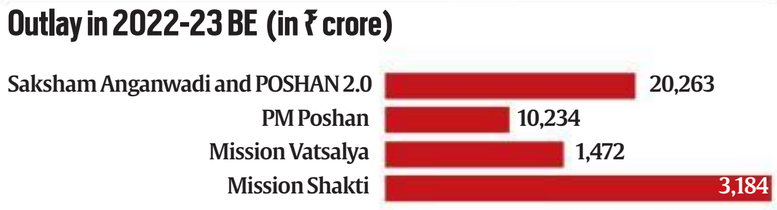


Capital Expenditure



Allocation under PLI Schemes, 2022-23 BE (in ₹ crore)

Outlay in 2022-23 BE (in ₹ crore)



GAINS FROM CRYPTO ASSETS TO BE TAXED AT 30%

Tax on digital assets, but cryptos see hope

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

IT'S LIKELY the first instance of an industry cheering the imposition of a steep levy on the asset class it trades in.

Investors and startups operating in the virtual digital assets and cryptocurrency ecosystem hailed Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's move to tax at 30 per cent "any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset", calling it the furthering of the "mainstreaming excitement" on the asset class.

Cryptocurrency investors and coin exchanges believe that the government moving to tax them provided them with clarification as well as the first step in eventually legitimisation of this asset class.

"The regulatory guidance on tax from the government furthers the mainstreaming excitement of this emerging asset class with over $6 billion worth of investments in India. It is also the gateway to the future decentralized world, aka Web3.0. The budget provides clarity on taxation and shows the government's intent to take a business-friendly approach while protecting the interest of consumers and the exchequer," said Ashish Singhal, founder and Chief Executive Officer of CoinSwitch.

Singhal is also the co-chair of Blockchain and and Crypto Assets Council, an industry body of cryptocurrency startups formed under the Internet and Mobile Association of India.

The industry's optimistic outlook comes despite Sitharaman's clarification that the move to tax should not be considered as a step of legitimisation of the asset class. In a post-budget interview, the Finance Minister said that she could not do anything on regulating or formalising a framework for regulation of cryptocurrencies or other virtual digital assets.

Apart from the Finance Minister's caution on the issue, the government is yet to introduce The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill. It was listed for introduction in the last winter session of the Parliament, and proposed to "create a facilitative framework for the creation of the official digital currency to be issued by the RBI". It sought to "prohibit all private cryptocurrencies" while allowing for "for certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology".

Despite these, cryptocurrency coin exchanges and other experts are confident that the taxation move is "a positive step as it legitimizes crypto and hints at an optimistic sentiment towards further acceptance of crypto and NFTs (non-fungible tokens) across stakeholders in the country.

"Tax has always been applicable to gains on virtual digital currencies, but the ecosystem did not have clarity on it. The move to tax virtual digital assets gives the entire ecosystem including investors and exchanges transparency on the road ahead. The government has come a long way in its stance towards crypto from last February to today and we are confident that this will herald a new era of growth and innovation for India," said Avinash Shekhar, the chief executive of ZebPay, a cryptocurrency exchange.

The industry also cheered the government's move to set up its own digital rupee, likely to be launched by RBI, and hoped it would familiarise investors as well as non-investors with virtual currency, while also "building an appetite" for the asset class.

EXPLAINED

A shot at legitimacy?

INVESTORS AND firms in the cryptocurrency space have uniformly hailed the government's move to impose a steep tax on the asset class, viewing it as the first step towards legitimisation. The Finance Minister was quick to downplay such speculation, but that still has not deterred those operating in the space, who now hope for acceptance for NFTs.

A new digital currency, but by govt: RBI to issue virtual equivalent of rupee this fiscal

New Delhi: The government has proposed to issue the digital rupee, or Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), in the fiscal year 2022-23. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday said the digital rupee will be issued by the RBI using blockchain technology.

CBDCs are the virtual or electronic form of fiat currencies (like the Indian rupee or US dollar). Other central banks such as the US Fed and the People's Bank of China are also planning their own digital currencies. A CBDC is the legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form. It is the same as a fiat currency and is exchangeable one-to-one with the fiat currency. Only its form is different. CBDC is not comparable to the many private virtual currencies that have mushroomed over the last decade. These private currencies sit at substantial odds to the historical concept of money. **ENS**

Investment in Indian start-ups

Year/ Investment	Less than $1 million	$1-$10 million	$10-$50 million	$50-$100 million	$100-$500 million	More than $500 million
2020	263	308	105	15	21	1
2021	478	436	173	44	66	4

Number of unique institutional investors

Year/ Investment	Less than $1 million	$1-$10 million	$10-$50 million	$50-$100 million	$100-$500 million	More than $500 million
2020	86	196	177	45	44	7
2021	156	378	274	109	133	23

Source: NASSCOM

For EV viability, a battery swapping policy in the offing

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE GOVERNMENT announced Tuesday that it will bring out a battery swapping policy in addition to formulating interoperability standards for EV batteries — a move aimed at making electric vehicles more viable and reducing range anxiety for potential buyers. The government also gave infrastructure sector status to energy storage systems.

This was a part of the 2022-23 Union Budget's focus on sunrise opportunities, energy transition and climate action.

"Considering the constraint of space in urban areas for setting up 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 eco- system," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her speech for the Union Budget 2022-23.

The move to come out with a policy on battery swapping is essentially an extension of the government's scheme for e-buses to swap drained batteries with fully-charged ones at depots across key metros, as a part of its ambitious plan for a mass shift to electric vehicles by the year 2030.

With battery swapping, owners of EVs will be able to swap their drained batteries with charged ones at designated stations. This eases the use of such vehicles, which otherwise take hours to recharge.

While some players have, on earlier occasions, flagged concerns with battery swapping for larger vehicles such as buses, there has already been adoption of battery swapping technology for two-wheelers. Last year, Jio-BP — the joint-venture between Reliance Industries and BP — announced the setting up of a network of EV charging stations and battery swap stations. E-mobility company Bounce also announced more than 3,500 battery swapping stations across 10 cities.

The government's move to assign infrastructure status to the clean energy storage sector is expected to help the sector access credit. "Data Centres and Energy Storage Systems including dense charging infrastructure and grid-scale battery systems will be included in the harmonized list of infrastructure. This will facilitate credit availability for digital infra and clean energy storage," Sitharaman said.

The Economic Survey called for focus on building storage for intermittent electricity generation from solar PV and wind farms. In addition to this, the Budget also proposed an additional Rs 19,500 crore for a production linked incentive scheme in the solar sector for manufacturing of high efficiency modules, to facilitate domestic manufacturing for the goal of 280 GW of installed solar capacity by 2030.

File

Designated charging stations will double up as battery swapping points.

BITAN SARKAR, 25, KOLKATA

A resident of Beleghata in Kolkata, Bitan Sarkar is a delivery partner with Swiggy. *Partha Paul*

INCOME: Before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, Sarkar's monthly income was around Rs 15,000. Now, he says, his earnings have plummeted to around Rs 5,000 per month

DID ANYONE IN FAMILY GET COVID: Sarkar says no one from his family was affected by Covid-19. However, he remains apprehensive that he may catch the virus and spread it to his family, considering his line of work

WORRY ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD: "We used to get Rs 35 per delivery. After Covid, it fell to Rs 20 with some scheme. In my work, there is always a chance of of catching Covid. Earnings and Covid are the main worries," he says.

SIGN OF HOPE: Sarkar says he has little hope for the next two years. "We have to struggle through this time. Even the future seems tough. Besides that, I fear that there may be new variants of the virus," he adds.

In digital banking push, industry eyes rural gains

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 1

THE GOVERNMENT has proposed setting up 75 digital banking units (DBUs) in 75 districts across India through scheduled commercial banks, an attempt at a major push to the growth in the digital economy.

Simply put, digital banking involves taking all traditional banking activity online — doing away with paperwork like cheques, pay-in slips, demand drafts and so on.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made the proposal, which is expected to ensure the acceleration of digital payments across the country, in the Union Budget unveiled on Tuesday.

THE SETTING UP OF DIGITAL BANKING UNITS IN 75 DISTRICTS IS EXPECTED TO ENSURE THE ACCELERATION OF DIGITAL PAYMENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

According to industry participants and stakeholders, the move will open up the rural market for service providers besides providing a boost to credit flow.

"The budget proposes to set up 75 digital banking units (DBUs) in 75 districts of the country by scheduled commercial banks. This proposal is in sync with our ongoing digital banking initiatives," said Dinesh Khara, Chairman, SBI.

Indian Bank Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Shanti Lal Jain said this measure will accelerate the financing and augmenting credit flow to the economy.

According to Anand Kumar Bajaj, Founder, MD and CEO, PayNearby, for India to become a digital economy, villages should have the same access to digital resources as urban areas.

"To augment this, the setting up of 75 digital banking units in 75 districts of the country is a commitment to taking high-end tech to the bottom of the pyramid. This step will ensure that the benefits of digital banking reach every nook and corner of the country in a consumer-friendly manner," he said.

Adding 75 digital banking units by scheduled commercial banks and opening full banking activities in 1.5 lakh Indian Postal Offices and permitting interoperability across banks for digital transfers will provide a big boost to fintech companies trying to grow into rural areas and are currently limited by digital awareness, said Archana Elapavuluri, Founder of Pickright Technologies.

Given the rapid rise of digital banking, digital payments, and FinTech innovation, it was critical to develop digital infrastructure to support digital banking, which has enormous potential, said Mandar Agashe, Vice-Chairman and MD, Sarvatra Technologies.

5G TIMELINE: AUCTIONS BY MARCH, ROLLOUT BY FY23

Govt lays ground for 5G rollout; pushes rural broadband deadline to 2025

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE AUCTIONS for 5G spectrum and the subsequent rollout of the technology is likely to happen in the forthcoming fiscal, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, adding that design-led manufacturing would be launched to build a strong ecosystem for 5G as part of the production-linked incentive scheme.

"Telecommunication in general, and 5G technology in particular, can enable growth and offer job opportunities. Required spectrum auctions will be conducted in 2022 to facilitate rollout of 5G mobile services within 2022-23 by private telecom providers," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget speech on Tuesday.

Further, 5 per cent of the annual collection from universal service obligation fund (USOF) would be allocated to enable broadband and mobile service proliferation in rural areas, she said. Of the 8 per cent adjusted gross revenue payable by private telecom service providers and other telecom licence holders, 5 per cent goes into the USOF, while the rest goes into the central exchequer. Currently, the USOF kitty has more than Rs 60,000 crore.

CONTRACTS FOR LAYING OPTICAL FIBRE IN ALL VILLAGES, INCLUDING THOSE IN REMOTE AREAS, UNDER THE BHARATNET SCHEME, WILL BE AWARDED IN THE NEXT FISCAL

Contracts for laying optical fibre in all villages, including those in remote areas, will be awarded in the next fiscal. The government aims to complete the project in public-private partnership (PPP) mode, planning to spend Rs 19,041 crore as viability gap funding. Overall, the government plans to spend Rs 29,432 crore to implement the project.

Under the PPP model, a concessionaire will be selected through a competitive international bidding process and will be responsible for creation, upgradation, operation, maintenance and utilisation of BharatNet. The revised strategy will be followed in 16 states for now.

The government, however, also pushed the deadline for completion of BharatNet by close to two years to 2025.

The initial aim of BharatNet, which was started as NOFN, was to connect 2.5 lakh gram panchayats (GPs) with high speed broadband internet by 2014. The initial phase one was supposed to connect 1.5 lakh GPs, while phase two was supposed to connect the remaining 1 lakh GPs. In 2020, the scope of the scheme was expanded when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on August 15 that over the next 1,000 days, BharatNet would connect all six lakh villages through high speed internet.

Govt says working to expedite 5G auction process. *File*

On Tuesday, telecom minister Ashwini Vaishaw also said that the auctions for 5G would be held in 2022, as the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India recommendation on the technology and its auction is likely to come by March.

Vaishnaw also said that the Department of Telecommunications was working parallely on other auction-related aspects to expedite the entire process.

The budget for 2022-23 also announced announced a fund infusion of Rs 44,720 crore in Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited for the next fiscal, while an additional financial support of Rs 7,443.57 would be provided to state run telecom service provider to clear the voluntary retirement scheme dues.

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

IF A FREE SOCIETY CANNOT HELP THE MANY WHO ARE POOR, IT CANNOT SAVE THE FEW WHO ARE RICH.

— JOHN F KENNEDY

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

MEASURED STEPS & A LEAP TO SPEND

FM Sitharaman's budget keeps a calm head as pandemic continues, and politics heats up. It bets on investment, desists from fiscal adventurism, holds back on privatisation

ON MONDAY, PRIME Minister Narendra Modi called for delinking the Union budget from elections -- the former's importance "transcends our (political) differences", he said. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's budget for 2022-23 appears to take its cue from the PM's exhortation. Even as elections in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab,Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa are around the corner, the budget has refrained from measures that put more money in the hands of people – whether through increasing cash transfers to farmers under PM-Kisan from the current Rs 6,000 per year, or by providing income tax relief to the middle class. The outlay on MGNREGA has been slashed to Rs 73,000 crore, from Rs 1,11,700 crore in 2020-21 and Rs 98,000 crore in revised estimates (RE) for 2021-22.

The focus of the budget, instead, has been on ramping up public sector capital spending. The Centre's own capex for the coming fiscal is budgeted at Rs 7.5 lakh crore, which is Rs 2 lakh crore higher than the 2021-22 RE and more than double the Rs 3.36 lakh crore in 2019-20. This step up in government expenditure in the form of investment as opposed to consumption is bold, and welcome. Bold, because it resists the temptation of raising spending that can yield political dividends in the short term. An announcement on hiking the annual PM-Kisan benefit amount to, say, Rs 9,000 per farmer, would have certainly appealed to rural voters in the context of the upcoming elections. Welcome, because it looks at the medium and long term. The Indian economy needs investments in roads, railways, mass transport, irrigation and waterways that will boost productivity and reduce logistics costs. Given their long gestation periods, investments in such projects can today be undertaken only by the government. These investments can, in turn, stimulate demand for steel, cement, capital goods and commercial vehicles, apart from crowding-in private investment.

OF COURSE, THIS approach carries its own risks. For one, it assumes a return to normal economic activity in 2022-23, which would hopefully be free of disruption from a new wave of infections. The fact is that the economy will continue to struggle from the setbacks induced by the pandemic over the last two years. The poor and lower middle class households have suffered income losses along with a significant draw-down of savings. This is going to act as a drag on private consumption for some time to come.

The Modi government has also had to reckon with the problem of scarce resources at its command. Any attempt to boost both consumption and investment would have come at the cost of a higher fiscal deficit. The resultant increase in government borrowings would have further driven up interest rates, harming growth prospects. In fact, even with its fiscal deficit budgeted lower at 6.4 per cent of GDP, as against 6.9 per cent in 2021-22 (RE), the Centre's gross market borrowings are pegged at a whopping Rs 14.95 lakh crore. That alone was the reason for yields on the benchmark 10-year government bond to close at 6.83 per cent on Tuesday, up from 6.68 per cent the day before. To that extent, Sitharaman has made the right call. Any fiscal adventurism would, moreover, have backfired in the present global context, where governments and central banks are in the process of tapering their pandemic-induced stimulus measures. Simply put, 2022 is not 2020.

THAT SAID, THE budget has some glaring absences. The most prominent one is the scaling back of the disinvestment target. Last year's budget invited praise for its boldness in targeting Rs 1.75 lakh crore receipts from the sale of government stake in PSUs. The revised estimates show collections at a modest Rs 78,000 crore – in a year of record capital raised by the private sector, including the likes of Zomato, Paytm, and Nykaa. For the coming fiscal, a mere Rs 65,000 crore is being budgeted from disinvestment. This could arguably be a consequence of the recent protests by young people over limited public employment opportunities amid perceptions of a "sell-off of national assets". Whatever be the reason, there was not even a mention of privatisation or asset monetisation in Sitharaman's budget speech this time. Nor has any attempt been made to raise urea prices and bring it under the nutrient-based subsidy regime or to phase out the current open-ended minimum support price procurement of wheat and paddy. The possibilities of such reforms appear remote ahead of the 2024 general elections.

On the whole, Sitharaman's budget holds no big surprises. To a large extent, it does good by not doing bad. The markets have heaved a sigh of relief not only because of the step-up in capital outlays, but also because of the absence of any proposals on wealth or inheritance tax or grandiose new schemes. Now, the focus needs to shift to implementation of schemes that are already drawn out, such as production-linked incentives and the ambitious Gati Shakti digital platform. Bringing back growth is not just an economic necessity, but also a political imperative. It is important to do this in a manner that is fiscally sustainable, while bringing down general government debt to much below the existing 90 per cent of GDP.

UNBLOCK

Mere mortals need Twitter to rant and rave. For West Bengal Governor, CM it should be the opposite

EVEN BY THE hyper-partisan standards of Twitter, a chief minister of a state blocking the governor on a social media platform is bad form. But West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has gone ahead and done just that. She blamed her ire on the frequent comments of Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, who she accused of trying to become a "super paharadar (guard)" over an elected government. Several Trinamool Congress leaders have followed their leader – they too have blocked the governor's tweets. Dhankhar, who, it has to be said, is not known for a record of restraint or reticence in keeping with the constitutional office he holds, most recently called West Bengal a "gas chamber" of democracy. Neither the friction, nor the war by hyperbole between the chief minister and the governor is surprising. But this – refusal to even communicate -- is a new low.

Some would argue that Banerjee's decision is mere grandstanding, with little real-world effects, and hence unimportant in the larger scheme of things. Or, that in the hurly-burly of social media, where few rules of etiquette anyway apply, chief ministerial conduct cannot be held to unrealistically high standards. But it must be remembered that the constitutional relationship between a chief minister and the governor is bound by propriety and decorum. It does not allow, surely, one to block another, like a common troll. Even if the relationship comes under strain, it does not behove the West Bengal Chief Minister to use the weight of her office to settle a petty verbal duel.

The world over, the use of social media platforms by politicians has eroded the common or middle ground of public spheres. While the "real world" task of politics, by definition, is about negotiating and navigating conflicting points of view, social media has only licensed confrontation and adversarial aggression. It indulges the leader's fantasy of an Opposition-mukt or criticism-free public discourse. But blocking Dhankhar's tweets does not really achieve much beyond the dopamine high of point-scoring. Neither does the governor's over-enthusiasm for using his Twitter handle as a megaphone for his dissatisfaction serve the cause of his office. Both Banerjee and Dhankhar need to signal a ceasefire in their hostilities. Like for much of West Bengal, a chat over tea at Raj Bhavan might help.

The struggle to spend

Governments face a new fiscal situation: They have more funds than they can allocate

NEELKANTH MISHRA

FOR ALL OF the last decade, the primary metric for evaluating budgets was the fiscal deficit. How much would the government target to bring it down by, and how credible were the numbers? The source of that stress was the massive stimulus set in motion by the government well before the global recession showed up, as it was inundated by taxes in the 2006 to 2008 period. The challenge with that stimulus was that it was hard to roll back, much of it being a large increase in state and central government salaries and pensions.

The narrative after the recent economic downturn could not have been more different. It is now "how much can the government really spend"?

Tax collection is surprising positively, and should be more than 1 per cent of GDP higher than before the Covid-19 lockdowns (though assumptions are lower). Further, financial markets appear to be expecting both central and state governments to incur large fiscal deficits for several years, with the anchor shifting higher by 3 per cent of GDP. Let us assume that GDP being below where it was supposed to be if the pandemic had not happened means an extra per cent-and-a-half of costs for the government. Interest costs have risen as governments borrowed to bear a large part of the economic loss during the lockdowns. Further, some government expenses, like salaries and pensions, keep rising irrespective of the level of GDP. This still leaves 2.5 per cent of GDP of space for governments to increase spending.

Even for governments, it is difficult to spend such large sums productively at short notice. Struggling to spend, the central government has been clearing arrears and bringing into the budget expenditures that were earlier off the budget. Last year, it did so with the fertiliser and food subsidies, and this year, the use of extra-budgetary resources has dropped to nearly zero. Further, more than Rs 50,000 crore of export incentives were paid, in addition to a similar amount for the debt write-off for Air India. While the transparency this brings is commendable, and clearing of arrears is prudent, they do not add to aggregate demand.

In any case, despite these efforts, government cash balances with the RBI are now at a record high of Rs 5.5 trillion; for perspective, this number should be around half a trillion in normal times. We estimate that more than half of this is cash parked by state governments.

> If the tax-to-GDP ratio continues to climb, as it appears likely to, fiscal space may continue to expand, even if headline deficit ratios fall as planned over the next four years. While a permanent increase in government spending may be unwise until we are sure this trend will last, a surge in unused sums also runs the risk of some governments getting tempted into wasteful expenditure.

The challenge for the next year remains much bigger. During the pandemic, the distribution of free grains, higher demand for MGNREGA work, and free vaccinations necessitated significant government spending. The surge in fertiliser prices also meant higher fertiliser subsidies. However, nearly none of this is required next year (fertiliser prices should normalise going forward). How, then, can the spending be maintained, or, to stretch things a bit, boosted?

The sharp increase in capital expenditure from Rs 5.45 trillion to Rs 7.5 trillion shows the intent of the government is to stay away from distributing freebies (commendable, given the upcoming state elections), and focus instead on productive spending, which may be rolled back if necessary. However, half of this increase is an allocation for interest-free loans to state governments for capital expenditure, and some of the rest is the inclusion of off-budget provisions in last year's budget in the budget numbers this year. There are increases in the allocation for defence (particularly once adjusted for the lower spend on aircraft purchases this year), the Nal se Jal scheme, and for roads and railways, but these are incremental rather than substantial.

Allowing state governments more fiscal space (deficits up to 3.5 per cent of GDP are allowed, with another half a per cent if the state undertakes power sector reforms), and dangling the carrot of more funding if they undertake capital expenditure is the right approach in theory. Much of the necessary investments need to occur at the state level: Like in health, education, urban infrastructure, water supply, sanitation and power distribution. However, the gap between states' intent to spend and their execution has widened substantially during the pandemic, and their total spending is far lower than budgeted, despite increases in non-discretionary expenses like interest costs, salaries and pensions.

The budget also seems to have built significant buffers in tax receipts. Growth in gross taxes has been north of 40 per cent for the first nine months of this fiscal year, and 21 per cent in the last three months, including in December. Yet, assumptions in the revised estimates for this year imply a decline in taxes in the last quarter. On this low base, the assumed growth for next year is small as well. The 11.1 per cent growth assumed for nominal GDP is below consensus, which itself needs substantial upgrades, in our view.

The reluctance to increase permanent expenditure heads for the government is prudent, for one never knows when the narrative may change. However, keeping deficits high without meaningful expenditure means the worst of both worlds: Large headline deficit numbers push interest rates higher for borrowers, whereas the benefits of higher government spending are missing. The delay in clarity on India's inclusion in global bond indices, which needed some clarity on taxation, is also a concern for bond markets. A premature rise in interest costs is as much a monetary as a fiscal issue, particularly given elevated sovereign debt levels. This can delay fiscal consolidation.

This is a new fiscal situation for governments (the Union as well as states) — having more funds than one can spend. But this may not be the last year of such a challenge. If the tax-to-GDP ratio continues to climb, as it appears likely to, fiscal space may continue to expand, even if headline deficit ratios fall as planned over the next four years. While a permanent increase in government spending may be unwise until we are sure this trend will last, a surge in unused sums also runs the risk of some governments getting tempted into wasteful expenditure. During this year, if government cash balances keep rising, and states are unable to scale up spending even after lockdowns are lifted, the government having to reduce its borrowing targets remains a possibility.

The writer is co-head of APAC Strategy and India Strategist for Credit Suisse

SETTING THE STAGE FOR GROWTH

Budget 2022 resolves legacy issues, focuses on the future

AKHILESH MISHRA

THE BUDGET FOR FY 2022-23 has been presented in unique circumstances. Read along with the Economic Survey, it offers a convincing case of its economic management. Legacy issues have been resolved and the stage set to make this India's decade of growth. In an earlier speech, PM Narendra Modi referred to the 2020s as "techade". It may also be the "growthade".

Consider the structural legacy issues inherited from the UPA and how they have been resolved.

First, the chronic NPA problem. Solved. Gross and net NPA ratios are steadily declining. Second, low bank capitalisation was adversely affecting credit, thereby affecting investment. Solved. The capital-to-risk weighted ratio is now over 16.5 per cent from below 13 per cent in 2013-14. Third, the indirect taxation mess was hampering capital efficiency. Solved. GST has now stabilised, with over Rs 1.4 lakh crore collections in January 2022. Fourth, sluggish private sector investment. Solved. There has been record resource mobilisation through IPOs from a low of Rs 1,500 crore in 2013-14 to 1.04 lakh crore in 2021-22 (April-December). Fifth, stalled infrastructure creation. Solved. National highways doubled from 71,772 km in 2011 to 1,40,152 km in 2021. Operationalised airports doubled from 62 in 2016 to 130 in 2021. Sixth, stalled privatisation and disinvestment. Solved. The privatisation of Air India is now complete. Other sectors like space, IT-BPO, drones, coal mining and geospatial mapping have been deregulated.

> The hugely successful ECLGS scheme, which provides credit to the MSME sector, has been extended by another year with an overall outlay of Rs 5 lakh crore, and Rs 50,000 crore is reserved for just the hospitality sector. With over Rs 2.7 lakh crore budgeted for direct benefits transfer to farmers as MSP, the rural economy will continue to be infused with cash. The huge increase in capex and infrastructure spends, especially in rural areas — such as the Rs 48,000 crore for housing and Rs 60,000 crore for household tap water — will create a virtuous cycle of jobs, consumption and growth in the rural sector.

The pandemic created its own problems. Yet, India today is the fastest-growing major economy in the world, with growth pegged at 9 per cent or above by most major financial institutions. Here is how the budget sets the agenda for the "growthade".

First, by empowering the future industry. The taxation of virtual digital assets will bring them into the mainstream, making India a hub for the productive use of this resource. The drone industry, already opened to private enterprise, has been given a huge captive market by integrating it with agriculture. The battery interoperability protocol for electrical vehicles is potentially a game-changer as it resolves the conundrum of long charging times. The introduction of the government's own digital currency, using blockchain, will further boost the digital economy.

The time frame for availing the 15 per cent tax rate for new manufacturing units being extended till 2024 and tax incentives for start-ups being extended by a year will give impetus to sectors that have flourished in the last few years and created jobs. With over 25 per cent spending reserved for private-sector R&D and over 68 per cent of the defence procurement budget reserved for domestic industry, the military-industrial complex is finally on its way in India.

Second, empowering the 80 per cent to empower India. The hugely successful ECLGS scheme, which provides credit to the MSME sector, has been extended by another year with an overall outlay of Rs 5 lakh crore, and Rs 50,000 crore is reserved for just the hospitality sector. With over Rs 2.7 lakh crore budgeted for direct benefits transfer to farmers as MSP, the rural economy will continue to be infused with cash. The huge increase in capex and infrastructure spends, especially in rural areas — such as the Rs 48,000 crore for housing and Rs 60,000 crore for household tap water — will create a virtuous cycle of jobs, consumption and growth in the rural sector.

Third, a cycle of investment, which creates jobs that generate higher incomes, inducing greater consumption and driving higher growth, thereby fueling more investment. All the enhanced investment is in productive assets, and they create jobs across the skills value chain: Unskilled to semi-skilled jobs in rural areas through PMGSY and housing (over 80 lakh houses) and tap water connectivity (over Rs 1 lakh crore), semi-skilled jobs through Gati Shakti and national highway construction (25,000 km), skilled jobs in manufacturing sector, highly skilled top-end jobs in startups and high-end tech jobs in the defence manufacturing industry. The PLI schemes will generate over 60 lakh jobs and over Rs 30 lakh crore of new production.

Taken together, the economic management by the PM's team and the budget proposals are well-positioned to make India the growth driver of the world economy in the 2020s. This "growthade" will be the story to watch out for.

The writer is CEO, Bluekraft Digital Foundation and was earlier director (content) MyGov

FEBRUARY 2, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

INDIAN EXPRESS

KERALA ASSEMBLY

ON A DAY of high drama in the Kerala Assembly, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker resigned to join the ranks of the opposition and the Janata Legislature Party split to give a one-vote edge to the ruling side. The Assembly, which met in the morning adjourned abruptly, as the speaker, A P Kurian, a motion for whose removal was listed first on the agenda, made the dramatic announcement of his resignation. The Deputy Speaker, Zakaria Saif, who accepted the resignation and took the chair, announced the adjournment of the House and his own intention to resign. Minutes before the Assemby session started, the five-member Janata Legislature Party split formally, with three members — Mr P Bhaskaran, Mr P C Thomas and Mrs Kamalam — walking out to offer their support to the one-month-old Karunakaran ministry, in defiance of the party high command's directive.

LOK DAL TURMOIL

FOUR SENIOR LEADERS of the Lok Dal revolted against their party chief, Charan Singh, for his "unilateral" dissociation with the coordination committee set up last month to facilitate the merger of the Lok Dal, the Janata Party and the Congress (S). Biju Patnaik, George Fernandes, Karpoori Thakur and Kumbha Ram Arya, in a joint requisition, asked Charan Singh to convene immediately a meeting of the Dal's parliamentary board to discuss his action.

ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE

A CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE Agency document which fell into the hands of the Iranian authorities when the US embassy was captured reveals some astonishing details of Israel's worldwide intelligence network. It discloses, among other thing,s that some of the Muslim countries professing support for the Arab cause have, in fact, close relations with Israeli intelligence.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"If Tory MPs choose to keep Mr Johnson after this debacle, then they will have shown to have had no regard for standards in public life or integrity in parliament."

— THE GUARDIAN

Voices the budget didn't hear

Budget avoids populism, but encroaches on states' domains. Its problematic politics is evident in low allocations to health, MGNREGA, absence of policy push on employment generation, protection

PALANIVEL THIAGA RAJAN

THE ANNUAL BUDGET is a statement of the government's economic philosophy. It translates into numbers the principles and priorities that guide the government's actions. Most politicians would agree that reduced communication and feedback are the unfortunate but inevitable corollary of increasing responsibility and authority. More so at the Union than at the states, the key is to ensure that the finance department doesn't shape policy with the inputs of only those who can reach the rarified corridors of power, and makes conscious efforts to seek out the voices of the under-privileged who are rarely heard. In that context, I fear that this budget leaves something to be desired.

But let me start with the positives. That the Union finance minister spoke in English (instead of Hindi as in the past) was welcome for many reasons, starting with my own ability to fully understand her speech. It also behooves India's standing in global markets that her speech should be immediately and directly accessible in a widely spoken language. The restraint shown in not descending to irresponsible populism even on the verge of elections in many states is to be highly commended. As is the Union government's holistic approach to many programmes under a single umbrella. The progressive view on several leading-edge technologies, including the promised blue-print for battery-swapping to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles, and the incentives for the creation of green jobs are visionary elements. The continuation or extension of MSME relief programmes shows the government has not lost all touch with the stark problems facing MSMEs even now.

But true to the form of the past few years, the budget was tinged with "one rule for us, another for you" hypocrisy and increasing intrusion into the states' rights. For example, the Union's fiscal deficit is well above 6 per cent and projected to stay there in the coming year. The projected glide path to a 4 per cent fiscal deficit stretches to 2025-2026. Yet the Union sets the state's fiscal deficit limit at 3.5 per cent unconditionally (about half of its own level), and at 4 per cent conditioned on power sector reforms. The continuing expansion of centrally sponsored schemes even while shifting the burden of many programmes to the states, is characteristic of the anti-federal nature which is at this government's core.

Exquisitely creative accounting is another hallmark of this government, as evidenced by the absorption of FCI loans (till-then accrued off the government's books) in FY '20 to indicate increased capital expenditures (as promised but not delivered in actual projects) during the pandemic, or indeed the capture of over Rs 50,000 crore of Air India's liability settlement in this year's Revised Estimates to show increased capital investments as a function of increasing revenues. But the true work of art — even by Wall Street standards — is the transfer of spending on various grants and schemes into the Rs 1 lakh crore interest-free long-term loan to states. This accomplishes the triple-magic of converting grants to loans, revenue spending to capital investment, and showing an eye-watering 35 per cent year-over-year increase in annual capital investments.

C R Sasikumar

My other broad concerns are the usual suspects. The penchant to name everything "Pradhan-Mantri XYZ", instead of "National XYZ", or indeed, just "XYZ". The laser-like focus on naming, framing and marketing irrespective of the delivery is bound to catch up with the country someday. A classic example of outcomes falling way short of announcements is the Saksham Anganwadi Programme, under which 2 lakh anganwadis are targeted for improvement. Yet the response to an RTI request on this programme (budgeted at over Rs 20,000 crore) in December 2021 stated: "This ministry has no information to furnish as Objectives of Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0 is not yet finalised."

In some cases, the focus on "political publicity value" is precisely counterproductive. For example, it makes no sense that the countermeasure to overcome two years of the ills arising from "remote learning", should be more remote learning with the catchy slogan of "One Classroom, One TV" and label of "E-Universities"!

The announcement of "One Nation, One Registration" is also puzzling. Registration is a state subject under the Constitution, and most states have inadequate electronic land ownership records even now. Further the rates, concession policies, and validation protocols, all of which are crucial to both states' revenue as well as effective control of criminal fraud, vary greatly across states. In fact, the land classification system itself varies across states. Given these circumstances, this is a case of kite-flying at best, or an extreme case of poor judgement at worst.

> Exquisitely creative accounting is another hallmark of this government, as evidenced by the absorption of FCI loans (till-then accrued off the government's books) in FY '20 to indicate increased capital expenditures (as promised but not delivered in actual projects) during the pandemic, or indeed the capture of over Rs 50,000 crore of Air India's liability settlement in this year's Revised Estimates to show increased capital investments as a function of increasing revenues.

The reduction of surcharges for corporates from 12 per cent to 7 per cent is also puzzling considering stock indices are at record highs. Corporates are earning record profits and sitting on huge piles of cash while private investment is still in the doldrums, and the overall ratio of direct to indirect taxation has skewed grossly towards regressive indirect taxation. As is the (merely) marginally higher fiscal allocation for defence in the face of increasing aggression from China (defence only up 5 per cent).

The inherent contradiction between a long-term policy vision founded on "*atmanirbharta*" while expecting to scale up exports in a big way seems a bit contradictory. Will other countries really ramp up purchases of our goods and services while we scale down purchases from them as we become increasingly domestically self-reliant? Time will tell.

But the biggest disappointment is reserved for what did not feature in this budget. No holistic approach (like the other PM–XYZ schemes) for either social sector spending or employment generation and protection (MGNREGA budget allocation is 20 per cent below this year's R.E.), even as we are yet to come out of the second year and third wave of the pandemic — one that has greatly exacerbated inequality and affected most of the bottom two-third of our country.

Perhaps my fears of the inherent risk in budget preparation have been realised, and the right voices did not feature adequately at the right place and time.

The writer is Finance Minister, Tamil Nadu

The missing focus on health

It seems no lessons have been learnt from the pandemic. Budget has little by way of building people's resilience

K SUJATHA RAO

The Covid pandemic has amply demonstrated the health sector's direct and indirect intersectoral impacts and its devastating power in creating disruption. It was, therefore, not surprising to see its imprint on the Economic Survey.

Given the learnings of the pandemic, it was reasonable to expect a "health-centred" budget. That was not to be. The budget's main focus is on increasing capital expenditures for expanding the economic infrastructure under the PM Gati Shakti scheme. TV discussions centred around the GDP, as if a 7.7 per cent or an 8.2 per cent recovery holds any meaning for the millions who have been impoverished by the pandemic-induced income losses, hunger, sickness and trauma.

Inequalities have widened. An estimated Rs 70,000 crore have been spent by the people out-of-pocket in this short time for medical treatment that the government ought to have provided. Spending at a time when earnings were down, pushed millions below the poverty line and hunger has emerged as a major issue placing India low on the malnutrition and hunger index rankings. Children have lost two years of schooling that in real terms will be three, as they have lost what they had learnt when they last went to school.

The budget allocation for the post-Covid year is a princely amount of Rs 83,000 crore, up by 16.4 per cent over last year's Rs 71,268 crore. The budget for the flagship National Health Mission that funds all health initiatives in partnership with the states has been increased by 7.4 per cent from Rs 36,576 crore to Rs 37,000 crore. It is under the NHM that all disease control programmes and reproductive and child health programmes including immunisations -- they pertain to ailments that cost little to treat, but are life and death for the large masses of the poor — are implemented. Covid resulted in an over 30 per cent shortfall of coverage under all these programmes giving rise to fears of drug-resistant HIV and tuberculosis and left lakhs of children unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases. These programmes required a much bigger boost alongside strategies to ensure they are insulated from another viral outbreak. But do we care?

Instead, the obsession is with digitisation. How does a digitised health record help a patient in ICU? What India's health system requires are strong policies that enhance the availability of doctors and nurses and access to drugs and diagnostics.

Another announcement by the FM was establishing 23 telehealth centres of excellence for mental health. Why a special mention in the speech when the mental health budgetary allocation was increased only nominally — from Rs 597 crore to Rs 610 crore? Mental health impacts over 6-8 per cent of our population and is a major unaddressed epidemic, estimated to cost the economy $1.03 trillion and accounting for 2,443 disability-adjusted life years per 1 lakh population — equal to cardiovascular diseases and more than stroke or COPD. Addressing this requires the implementation of the Mental Health Act through an infusion of substantial money, ideas and imagination. We have a severe shortage of trained human resources, drugs are expensive and services are scarce and unavailable in most parts of the country.

The budget outlays for public hospitals has increased by 30 per cent — from Rs 7,000 crore to Rs 10,000 crore — though the much-needed investment for strengthening the surveillance system has a nominal 16.4 per cent increase. The flagship Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme (PMJAY) continues to be grossly underfunded at Rs 6,412 crore — the same as last year. But then it had, quite strangely, spent only Rs 3,199 crore despite the huge medical needs people faced on account of the pandemic. An important takeaway ought to have been greater investment in health research. It has seen a miserable 3.92 per cent increase from Rs 2,663 crore to Rs 3,200 crore. It is out of this inadequate budget that the network of laboratories are expected to be built till such time additional money is mobilised from the World Bank or ADB.

This year, the health budget was required to build the required resilience so that we never go through the disruptions we have witnessed. Sadly, it contained neither a vision nor a direction towards bridging the glaring gaps in the health system. Despite all the evidence and data, year after year, we only lament the poor health budgets that have been stuck at about 1.5 per cent of the GDP.

At the end of World War II, England had a flattened infrastructure, a wrecked economy and a tired people. Yet, the political leadership had the courage to announce a National Health Service — universal free health care to all — on grounds that "Social insurance fully developed may provide income security; it is an attack upon want. But want is only one of the five giants on the road to reconstruction and in some ways the easiest to attack. The others are disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness." Given that India too needs a massive building up of its economy to ensure a minimum quality of life for all its people, we need to envision a transformative change by attacking inequality, disease and ignorance by investing in health, education, nutrition and employment to ensure equal opportunities. Covid gave us that opportunity. It's a pity we missed seizing it.

The writer is former Union Health Secretary

Letting down the bottom half

Budget does little to address inequality, insecurity of poorest households

AMIT BASOLE

THIS YEAR'S UNION Budget, presented to Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, is the second budget during the pandemic period. As with last year, the twin challenges this time were offering vital income support to poor and vulnerable households which have suffered greatly during the pandemic, while stimulating broad-based recovery in growth. The two goals are intimately connected. However, even more than last year, this budget does not make direct provisions for the former.

The Economic Survey provides the context for the decisions made in the budget. The survey emphasises rapid economic growth of 9.2 per cent in 2021-22. But given the low base effect of the pandemic year, it is more instructive to compare real GDP in 2019-20 (the pre-pandemic year) to that in 2021-22. This comparison reveals modest growth of 1.26 per cent. This is not nothing. It indicates that the losses of the pandemic were made up for completely and then some, during the past year, at least in aggregate terms. But when we look at the composition of this recovery, some worrying signs emerge. Consumption, which is the largest part of the GDP, is still short of its pre-pandemic value in real terms by 3 per cent. Government spending is up 10 per cent while private investment is up by 2.5 per cent, indicating that public investment has driven the recovery.

As is well known, the GDP numbers do not capture the informal sector adequately. Here we must rely on household surveys. As per nationally representative household data from the CMIE, employment has been back to its pre-Covid levels for several months now, but incomes remain stagnant at around 80 per cent of their pre-pandemic levels. That is, the average household has lost almost a year and a half to depressed incomes. Recall that, as per the Periodic Labour Force Survey data, the average Indian worker earned only around Rs 11,000 a month prior to the pandemic, and a monthly income of Rs 50,000 per month placed a worker in the top 5 per cent of the income distribution. In this context, a persistent income gap over more than a year, signifies almost certain hardship. Indeed, multiple smaller surveys show a large build-up of informal debt and households resorting to pawning jewellery to make ends meet. Food insecurity also persists.

Given this macro and welfare context, the budget ought to have substantially increased total fiscal outlay, in part towards capital expenditure and growth, and in part to an expanded safety net. In fact, the total outlay for next year is 39.4 lakh crore, up from 37.7 lakh crore, the revised estimate for 2021-22. In real terms, assuming inflation of 5 per cent next year, this means that the total spending is approximately the same for the coming year as it was in this year.

We can look at two key big ticket social expenditure items, MGNREGA and PDS, to get a sense of the thinking behind the budget. During the first pandemic year, the total allocation for MGNREGA was Rs 1,11,170 crore. Field reports and surveys indicated that this was inadequate given the large increase in demand for work under the programme from returning migrants as well as distressed rural workers. In the second pandemic year, the budgeted amount was reduced to the pre-pandemic level of Rs 73,000 crore. However, distress and the resulting sustained high demand for work under the programme forced the government to increase the outlay, which finally rests at Rs 98,000 crore for the current financial year. Even this is not adequate, given the prior pending wage payments and the current demand. Hence the budget estimate for the coming year, once again at Rs 73,000 crore, is nowhere close to sufficient. It is likely that more funds will be released over the course of the year as needed.

The amount budgeted for foodgrains delivered via PDS has also been reduced from Rs 2,10,929 as per the revised estimate of 2021-22 to Rs 1,45,920 in the coming year. This too reflects the thinking that the worst effects of the pandemic, reflected in increased hunger, are safely behind us. But this is not the case. And even if households are now earning enough to meet their basic food needs at the pre-pandemic level, provisioning of expanded rations will enable them to devote some resources to other ends, such as paying down debt or increasing consumption on other items. This will improve their living standards as well as contribute to increased aggregate demand.

Before concluding, a small point worth noting, given the continuing debate on the state of economic statistics in the country, is that last year's budget allocated Rs 28 crore for the National Programme for Improving Quality of Statistics in India. But the revised estimates show that nothing was spent on this programme and its allocation for the coming year has been reduced to a token Rs 0.01 crore.

In sum, the Union Budget scores reasonably well on the continued emphasis on alleviating supply-side problems via infrastructure investment and improving ease of doing business. But it scores poorly on spending that will compensate the bottom half of Indian households for the enormous sacrifices made during the past two years. To the extent that this means continued low levels of aggregate demand, it also risks a return to slow economic growth once the base effect of 2020-21 has disappeared.

The writer heads the Centre for Sustainable Employment at Azim Premji University

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COSMETIC EXCERCISE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial 'Ramp up support' (IE, February 1). The customary economic survey report presented every year by the Union Finance Minister hogs the limelight for a day and is over-shadowed by the budget next day. The annual budget is equally a cosmetic exercise, devoid of any sanctity and accountability. For one, GST on goods, especially fuel prices, is revised time and again keeping common man perpetually on tenterhooks. Even after the budget ,the various financial packages and programmes are rolled out around the year which are politically motivated and reek of crony capitalism. Secondly, the government is never held accountable for not meeting the targets spelt out in preceding fiscal year. Failed disinvestment is a textbook case. Therefore painting a rosy picture year after year does not cut much ice when ground reality is at variance. More and more people are being pushed into poverty, people are struggling to make both ends meet and are left to fend for themselves.

Deepak Singhal, *Noida*

TELL THE TRUTH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Court and Pegasus' (IE, February 1). The NYT's claim that Pegasus was a larger backroom deal makes the issue even more serious. If the findings are true, the Indian government not only jeopardised citizens' privacy but also violated the core principles of the Constitution. Shockingly, this subversion of democracy was done with public money. One eagerly awaits the results of the probe into the matter by the Supreme Court panel. National security is no excuse for spying on citizens.

S S Paul, *Nadia*

THIS REFERS TO the editorial 'Court & Pegasus' (IE, February 01). The government must come out clean on this issue, especially, when such software is capable of planting incriminating material in the devices of the targeted persons without their knowledge. Such forged evidence is then likely to be misused against the targeted persons as has allegedly happened in the cases of Surendra Gadling and Rona Wilson reported by The Washington Post in July 2021. This software is potentially capable of subverting the fundamental rights of the citizens by way of denial of privacy and justice. The Supreme Court panel must act fast before the irreversible damage is done to the constitutional safeguards provided to the citizens.

Pritam Singh, *Jaipur*

WELCOME SURVEY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The room to grow' (IE, February 1).This year the survey has made a welcome recognition of the need for flexible policies that encourage economic flexibility through innovation, entrepreneurship and risk-taking on one hand, and simultaneously invest in resilient infrastructure, social safety-nets and macro-economic buffers on the other.

It is heartening to see that India did not waste its scarce fiscal resources in trying to pump up discretionary consumption and instead focussed on ushering process reforms to position the government as a facilitator of economic activity.

Shreyans Jain, Delhi

RS 68,000 CRORE FOR PM-KISAN

Outlays for PM-Kisan and Fasal Bima schemes flat

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman announced a new scheme in public- private partnership (PPP) mode for delivery of digital and hi-tech services to farmers and a new fund with blended capital to finance start-ups for agriculture and rural enterprise in the Union Budget 2022-23.

"For delivery of digital and hi-tech services to farmers with involvement of public sector research and extension institutions along with private agri-tech players and stakeholders of agri-value chain, a scheme in PPP mode will be launched," Sitharaman said, during her budget speech in Lok Sabha.

She said, "A fund with blended capital, raised under the co-investment model, will be facilitated through NABARD. This is to finance start-ups for agriculture & 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 at farm level, and technology including IT-based support."

The use of 'Kisan Drones' will be promoted for crop assessment, digitization of land records, spraying of insecticides, and nutrients, she added.

The budget documents show that several existing schemes of the Agriculture Ministry have seen a cut or marginal increase in their allocation. For instance, the government has allocated Rs 68,000 crore for Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) in the Union Budget 2022-23, which is just 4.6 percent higher than the Budget Estimates of Rs 65,000 crore for 2021-22 and only 0.74 per cent higher than the Revised Estimates of Rs 67,500 crore for the current financial year.

The allocation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) has been kept at Rs 15,500 crore for financial year 2022-23, which is lower than the Budget Estimates of Rs 16,000 crore for 2021-22 and revised estimates of Rs 15,989.39 crore for the current financial year.

EXPLAINED

PPP for farm start-ups

A fund with blended capital, raised under the co-investment model, will be facilitated through NABARD. This is to finance start-ups for agriculture & 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 at farm level, and technology including IT-based support.

Similarly, the allocation of Market Intervention Scheme and Price Support Scheme (MIS-PSS) has been reduced to Rs 1,500 crore in 2022-23 from Rs 3,595.61 crore in RE 2021-22. The budget of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY)- Per Drop More Crop has been reduced to Rs 2,000 crore in 2022-23 from Rs 4,000 crore in RE 2021-22.

"To reduce our dependence on import of oilseeds, a rationalised and comprehensive scheme to increase domestic production of oilseeds will be implemented," she said.

Sitharaman said that the procurement of wheat in Rabi 2021-22 and the estimated procurement of paddy in Kharif 2021-22 will cover 1208 lakh metric tonnes of wheat and paddy from 163 lakh farmers, and Rs 2.37 lakh crore direct payment of minimum support price (MSP) value to their accounts.

Sitharaman also announced that Chemical-free Natural Farming will be promoted throughout the country, with a focus on farmers' lands in 5-km wide corridors along river Ganga, at the first stage.

The finance minister also announced that the government will provide a comprehensive package with participation of state governments for farmers to adopt suitable varieties of fruits and vegetables.

In demand, but MGNREGS gets no hike

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THERE WAS no hike in allocation for the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in the Union Budget 2022-23, with the Finance Ministry retaining it at Rs 73,000 crore for the next fiscal year.

The development comes even as the Economic Survey 2021-22, tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament a day before, said that the demand for MGNREGS is still higher than the pre-pandemic levels.

The scheme guarantees 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It has emerged as one of the key safety nets for the poor and migrant workers who were among the worst hit by the pandemic.

The Rs 73,000 crore figure is the same as the MGNREGS budget estimates (BE), but lower than the revised estimates (RE) of Rs 98,000 crore for the current fiscal year (2021-22), and the actual expenditure of Rs 1,11,170 crore during 2020-21.

On Tuesday, MGNREGS was not mentioned in Finance Minister Sitharaman's 90-minute Union Budget speech in the Lok Sabha. So far, the minister has referred to MGNREGS once in her budgetary speeches -- in 2020 -- since she took over the post in 2019.

According to the Economic Survey 2021-22, the demand for work under MGNREGS is still higher than pre-pandemic levels -- indicating that employment levels, especially for the blue collar workers, may be far from normal despite economic recovery.

"An analysis of the latest data on demand for work under MGNREGS suggests the following trends in the rural labour market: (i) MGNREGS employment peaked during the nation-wide lockdown in 2020 (ii) the demand for MGNREGS work has stabilized after the second Covid wave; (iii) aggregate MGNREGS employment is still higher than pre-pandemic level…" said the survey.

According to the latest data available on the NREGS portal, 6.74 crore households (9.75 crore individuals) availed the rural job guarantee scheme and 301.09 crore person-days have been generated till February 1 in the current financial year. In the last financial year, 389.1 crore persondays were generated, and 7.55 crore households (11.19 crore individuals) availed the scheme.

The scheme guarantees 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household

ON TUESDAY, MGNREGS WAS NOT MENTIONED IN FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN'S 90-MINUTE UNION BUDGET SPEECH IN THE LOK SABHA

Fewer farmers in crop cover scheme

For the years 2020 and 2021, the number of farmers being covered under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana dropped sharply, both in the Kharif and Rabi seasons

Crop Season/ Particulars	Total Premium	Central government Premium	State government Premium	Farmer Premium
2021 Rabi	10,022.91	4,034.95	4,785.75	1,202.21
2021 Kharif	16,858.5	7,250.25	7,556.22	2,052.03
2020 Rabi	10,317.52	4,033.59	5,023.78	1,260.15
2020 Kharif	18,421.49	7,879.39	8,227.39	2,314.71
2019 Rabi	6,278.99	2,562.67	2,628.16	1,088.16
2019 Kharif	17,937.48	7,470.18	8,046.42	2,420.88
2018 Rabi	7,236.99	2,879.72	2,980.59	1,376.68
2018 Kharif	15,370.17	6,401.39	6,668.11	2,300.67

Figures in ₹ crore where applicable
Source: Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

Job days under MGNREGA fall

For this fiscal, until Jan 28, the government has spent nearly ₹90,223 cr on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

PARTICULARS/YEAR	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Total Expenditure	90,222.95	1,11,422.78	68,265.97	69,618.59
Total release by Centre	80,322.65	1,09,842.29	71,020.35	62,125.07
Material & Skilled Wages	25,885.86	29,523.65	16,192.15	19,465.87
Avg cost/day/person	₹292.72	₹265.75	₹235.28	₹247.19
Avg days of employment/household	44.33	51.52	48.4	50.8

Data as of January 28, 2022, Figures in Rs crore where applicable, Source: MNREGA Website, Department of Rural Development Note: As per the MNREGA website, the data for Assam, Goa, Karnataka, Puducherry, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh is not available due to internal technical upgradation

BALKAR SINGH, 33, PUNJAB

Balkar Singh, who is from Gurdaspur, works at the land at Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana on Monday. *Gurmeet Singh*

INCOME: A contract labourer at the university's farms, Singh earns about Rs 10,000 per month. His family owns 10 acres of land near the Beas river in Gurdaspur, and their annual income is Rs 5-6 lakh

DID ANYONE IN FAMILY GET COVID: There are 24 people in his joint family, including his father, uncle, brother and three sons, in the village of Shekhopur. None of them have contracted the disease yet

WORRY ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD: The family struggled to sow sugarcane during lockdown, and thus failed to get a good yield. The farmer says their hardship will continue if inflation is not brought under control

SIGN OF HOPE: Singh says his family is struggling to match its average monthly budget. He hopes the government will implement some measures to control the rising price of essential commodities

Farmers cold to natural farming plan, say not viable

PARTHA SARATHI BISWAS & ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
PUNE, JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 1

DEEPAK BHISE is not too impressed with the push for "chemical-free natural farming" in Nirmala Sitharaman's latest budget. This 4-acre vegetable farmer from Yedgaon village in Pune district's Junnar taluka claims to have burnt his fingers by trying out such methods of cultivation 10 years back.

"I was able to harvest hardly 3 tonnes per acre of tomatoes, as against my average of 15-20 tonnes from regular farming. Forget making money, I could not even recover my input costs," says the 36-year-old. He alleged that the government was trying to divert attention from rising costs of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, which has already made agriculture less profitable. "This (natural farming) will make it totally unviable."

In her budget speech, Sitharaman said that chemical-free farming will be promoted throughout the country, starting with fields within a 5-km wide corridor along the Ganga River.

Further, states would be encouraged to revise the syllabi of agricultural universities "to meet the needs of natural, zero-budget and organic farming, modern-day agriculture, value addition and management".

Ganesh Nanote, a cotton and soyabean grower from Nimbhara village in Barshitakli taluka of Maharashtra's Akola district, concurs with Bhise.

"The Green Revolution made India self-sufficient in food grain. The government, on one hand, wants us to also become atmanirbhar (self-reliant) in pulses and oilseeds. But on the other hand, it is propagating methods that will reduce yield. Natural farming means going back on the progress we have made," he points out.

Chemical-free farming entails cultivation using farmyard manure, cow and buffalo dung, urine vermin-compost and other such natural ingredients, instead of urea, diammonium phosphate and other synthetic fertilisers and pesticides.

Votaries of this method of cultivation insist that it leads to improvement of soil health and reduced cash outgo for farmers.

"All that may be true. But how will we be compensated for lower yields? Natural farming is what our great-grandparents were doing. If the government wants us to do the same, it should come out with a roadmap so that we can divert area from chemical to non-chemical-based agriculture in phases. And during this period of shift, we should be provided financial support since yields are bound to fall," says Paramjit Singh, a 5-acre farmer from Parvez Nagar village of Punjab's Kapurthala district.

Charanjit Singh Aulakh, who heads the School of Organic Farming at the Punjab Agricultural University in Punjab, made a distinction between "organic farming" and "natural farming".

In organic farming, farmers also use non-chemical fertilisers/manure, bio-fertilisers and bio-pesticides that are sourced from outside. In natural farming, nothing that is off-field can be used. Everything, including cow dung and urine formulations/cultures, has to come from within the same farm.

"They (the proponents) say that the requirement of up to 30 acres can be met from a single cow. Organic farming can be more viable, but yields even here are only 35-50% of normal in the first year and 75-80% in the fourth or fifth year. For this period of low yields, farmers have to be given some financial support, especially when creating a market for such niche produce is not going to be easy," he notes.

Interestingly, Subhash Palekar, the Padma Shri awardee and original proponent of zero-budget natural farming (ZBNF), did not sound very enthusiastic about the latest budget proposal.

Palekar, who is based out of Amravati in Maharashtra, had shot to fame when Sitharaman's 2019-20 budget had mentioned about ZBNF and how it could "help in doubling our farmers' income".

However, Palekar said that the Narendra Modi government was only "talking about this method of farming, but has not contacted me to understand it fully".

The term "zero-budget", he added, is misleading. "I have dropped it a long time back in favour of Subhash Palekar Natural Farming. Ye the finance minister continues to call it zero-budget, which is wrong," he told *The Indian Express*.

Co-operative societies now on a par with companies; to be taxed at 15%

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES will now have to pay a lower Alternate Minimum Tax, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Tuesday, in a relief to the groups with members mostly from rural areas and the farming communities.

AMT brings into the tax net companies or groups who, in spite of earning profits, pay "zero tax" due to various concessions under tax laws.

"Currently, cooperative societies are required to pay Alternate Minimum Tax (AMT) at the rate of 18.5 per cent. However, companies pay the same at the rate of 15 per cent. To provide a level playing field between cooperative societies and companies, I propose to reduce this rate for the cooperative societies also to 15 per cent," Sitharaman said in her budget speech.

For cooperatives with a total income above Rs 1 crore up to Rs 10 crore, the Finance Minister also proposed to reduce the surcharge from the present 12 per cent to 7 per cent. "This would help in enhancing the income of cooperative societies and its members who are mostly from rural and farming communities," she said.

Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah

Welcoming the move, Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah said the tax relief will end the "injustice" with the country's cooperative sector.

"Today @narendramodi ji has reduced the AMT rate for the cooperative sector from 18.5% to 15% and surcharge from 12% to 7%, ending the injustice which was done to the cooperative sector for decades and bringing it at par with the rest of the sectors. This will ensure Modiji's resolve of prosperity with the cooperation," Shah tweeted.

Besides relief to cooperative societies, Sitharaman has allocated Rs 900 crore to the newly created Ministry of Cooperation for 2022-23. Out of this, Rs 624 crore has been earmarked for two centrally sponsored schemes – 'Digitalization of Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies' (Rs 350 crore), and 'Prosperity through Cooperatives' (Rs 274 crore).

The Ministry of Cooperation was created in July last year. Its secretary, Devendra Kumar Singh, told *The Indian Express on* Tuesday the budget announcements will boost people's confidence in cooperative societies.

"This budget has important tax provisions for cooperatives on MAT and Surcharge rationalizations. Removable of such distortion would create confidence of people in the Cooperatives and help them to prosper," Singh said, adding creation of a separate ministry had helped in focus for betterment of the sector.

Govt focus on digitation of land records

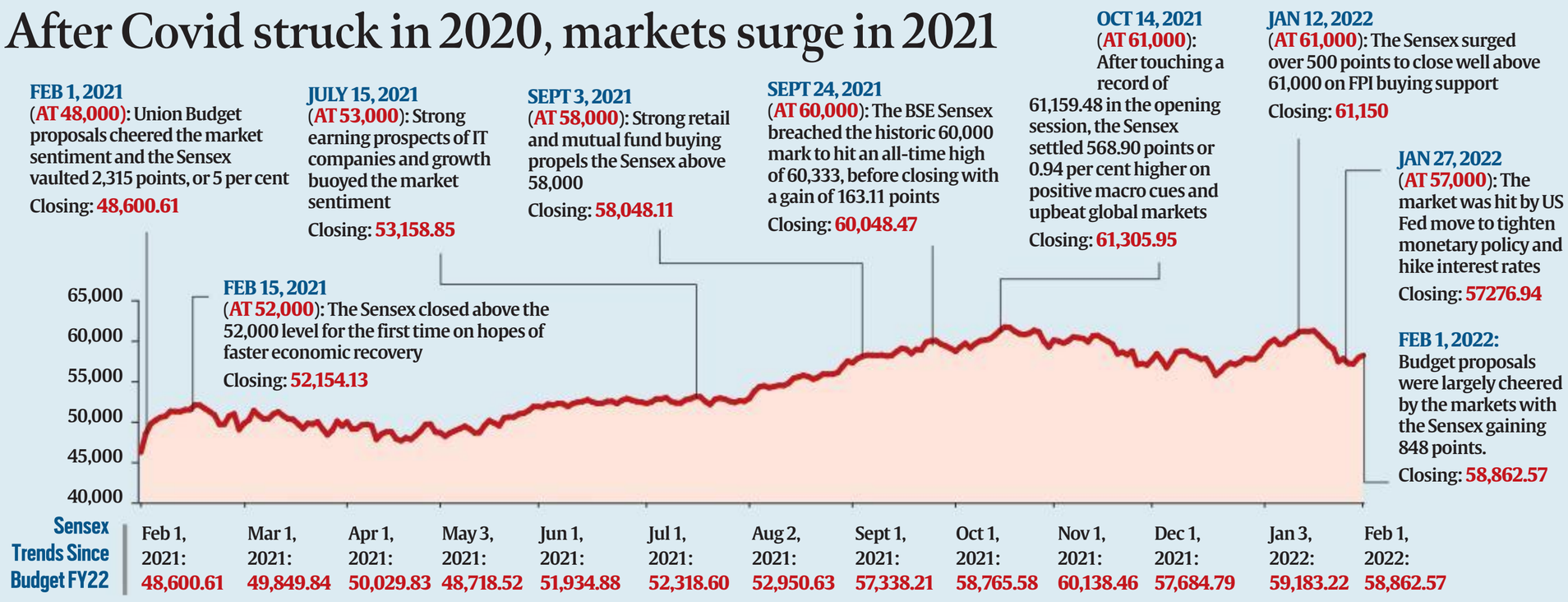
HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE LINKAGE of National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) with the 'One-Nation One-Registration Software' will be promoted as an option for uniform registration process and "anywhere registration of deeds & documents", Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Tuesday.

"Efficient use of land resources is a strong imperative," Sitharaman said, adding that, "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."

The Centre has focused on digitisation of land records through its scheme Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme (DILRMP). According to the Department of Land Records, over 90 per cent of land records have been digitised across 24 states.

After Covid struck in 2020, markets surge in 2021



Biggest Budget day Rallies

Budget day	Closing	Change over last session
Feb 29, 1992	3,017	9.4%
Feb 28, 1997	3,651	6.5%
Feb 27, 1999	3,399	5.1%
Feb 1, 2021	48,600	5%
Feb 28, 2001	4,247	4.4%
Feb 28, 2005	6,713	2.2%
July 24, 1991	1,485	2.1%
Feb 1, 2017	28,141	1.8%
Feb 1, 2022	58,862	1.4%
Feb 28, 1994	4,286	1.2%
Feb 26, 2010	16,429	1.1%

SENSEX UP 1.46% TO 58,862 PTS

As capex push lifts market, metal, steel & cement surge

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 1

THE BUDGET hasn't offered any direct sop or incentive to stock markets. Even then, the benchmark Sensex rallied 1.46 per cent, or 848 points, to 58,862.57 and the Nifty Index rose 237 points, or 1.37 per cent, to 17,576.85.

The market sensed the Budget as a strong positive indicator for growth potential of Indian companies, the main drivers of stock market valuations. Stock markets have factored in higher capex spending by the government, the status quo on direct taxes and no incremental taxes on capital gains as key factors that will eventually benefit the capital market.

The market is taking the mega capex plan and a strong market signal to promote growth through structural reforms as major support for the market momentum. The Budget has focused on boosting overall demand and has proposed more investment in infrastructure.

Corporates and the capital market will be major beneficiaries of this thrust in the Budget. Nilesh Shah, group president & MD, Kotak Mahindra AMC, said, "This Budget is focussed on supporting growth through encouraging investments and encouraging entrepreneurs, startups and taxpayers by creating trust."

Capital expenditure has moved from 12 per cent of Budget in FY15 to 19 per cent of Budget in FY23. Revenue receipt growth at 6 per cent is significantly lower than 27 per cent last year. Another factor highlighted by analysts is that the Budget hasn't offered any significant sops aimed at the forthcoming state elections.

Sector-wise, the BSE metal index soared 4.92 per cent on Tuesday, followed by basic materials, capital goods, FMCG, healthcare, realty, industrials and IT.

The market community observed that the government presented a progressive Budget with a vision on ensuring long-term economic growth. It continued with its policy of fiscal prudence and pegged FY22 fiscal deficit at 6.9 per cent while setting a target of 6.4 per cent for FY23, which cheered the market.

Most analysts said that it was clearly a capex driven budget with the thrust of the government on sustaining the economic growth through spending across infra ecosystem. Capital spending for FY23 is targeted to increase by 35.4 per cent to Rs 7.5 lakh crore, with focus on infrastructure development, supply chain and boosting rural demand. While the market has noted these factors, there could be volatile movement in the short-term in the wake of US Federal Reserve plan to hike rates. "We expect the market to take the Budget positively as it largely remains growth focused and despite several upcoming state elections, the government didn't resort to populist measures," said a analyst with an investment bank.

According to mutual fund managers, initiatives that are expected to trigger equity markets over a longer term include unprecedented thrust on capital expenditure with an aim to enhance job creation, extension of ECLGS by another year, and guarantee cover proposed to be expanded 10 times to Rs 5 lakh crore for small businesses, proposed cap on the surcharge on long term capital gains arising on transfer of any type of assets at 15 per cent and overall PM Gati-Shakti.

Bond yields up 17 bps

Meanwhile, bond yields rose sharply after the Finance Minister announced higher government borrowing in the Budget on Tuesday. Yield on the 10-year benchmark bond jumped 17 basis points to 6.85 per cent. The net borrowing will be Rs 11.19 lakh crore in 2022-23 as against Rs 7.76 lakh crore in the current fiscal.

The higher borrowing means there will be upward pressure on interest rates. "This deficit will still mean high borrowing comparable to that of last year. We may expect interest rates to be elevated and can look forward to the RBI to do more regular fine tuning to balance liquidity with growing demand," said Sanjiv Chadha, MD & CEO, Bank of Baroda. The large borrowing number will put sustained pressure on interest rate. Key tailwinds in the last two years like RBI's active OMO purchase and tepid credit growth will be missing in FY23.

EXPLAINED E. Infra investment to be major focus

THE STRONG push for capital expenditure, or capex, as well as incentives for capital gains in the Budget were a positive for the stock markets. The strong focus on investment in the country's infrastructure development could bode well for corporates as well as capital markets.

A P SHUKLA, 57, MAHARASHTRA

Investor A P Shukla in front of the BSE in Mumbai. *Ganesh Shirsekar*

INCOME: Investor A P Shukla, who earns Rs 40,000 per month, says his family income fell 30% amid the pandemic

DID ANYONE IN FAMILY GET COVID: A number of his family members tested positive for Covid -19 in the first wave

WORRY ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD: Shukla is worried about the employment of 2 daughters who have lost their jobs

SIGN OF HOPE: He says Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies give him hope for 2022

A new retro amendment: Cess, surcharge are not deduction

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

MAKING A retrospective amendment to the Income-tax Act from 2005-06, the Budget clarified that cess and surcharge will not be allowed to be claimed as deductions in the form of expenditure. The Budget has also made changes to the I-T law making space for questioning by the tax department to explain the source of funds at the hands of the creditor.

Citing some court rulings over the years that had given benefit to taxpayers in claiming cess as expenditure and not tax, the tax department said the retrospective amendment is being done to correct the anomaly. "This amendment will take effect retrospectively from 1st April, 2005 and will accordingly apply in relation to the assessment year 2005-06 and subsequent assessment years," the Budget documents stated. The change is being brought from AY 2005-06 as education cess was brought in for the first time by the Finance Act, 2004.

Rakesh Nangia, chairman, Nangia Andersen said the court rulings differentiated between income tax and education cess on income tax and in absence of a specific disallowance for 'education cess', courts had taken a view beneficial for taxpayers. "In order to nullify the effect of such Court rulings and consider such rulings against the intention of law, a clarificatory amendment has been introduced in income tax law, providing that any surcharge or education cess on income tax shall not be allowed as business expenditure," he said.

CITING COURT RULINGS, THE TAX DEPARTMENT SAID THE RETROSPECTIVE AMENDMENT IS BEING DONE TO CORRECT THE ANOMALY OF EXCLUDING CESS AND SURCHARGE

In another legislative change, a provision has been introduced stating that the source of funding for loan and borrowings for a recipient will be treated as explained only if the source of funds is also explained in the hands of the creditor. This could have an impact on funding of businesses, especially startups, if the creditor is not a venture capital fund, a venture capital company registered with Sebi.

"Earlier, if any company used to have bogus entries, the taxpayer would just provide details such as PAN and other financial details of the creditor and that was enough for the tax department. Now, it's upon the recipient to prove that it's the right source of income and they had right net worth to provide this amount. So, earlier that was the interpretation and what several court rulings had held, now they are saying the onus is on the taxpayer. Earlier, it was only for equity, now it's for debt also," Amit Maheshwari, tax partner, AKM Global, said.

The Budget has also clarified that gifts and freebies to doctors shall not be treated as business expenditure under section 37 of the Income-tax Act.

Citing various court rulings, the Budget said the legal position is clear that the claim of "any expense incurred in providing various benefits in violation of the provisions of Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002 shall be inadmissible under section sub-section (1) of section 37 of Act being an expense prohibited by the law".

CHARGE ON GAINS FROM INVESTMENT IN STARTUPS WERE AS HIGH AS 37% EARLIER

Booster for startups: 15% surcharge cap on LTCG, extension on tax benefits

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

IN A move likely to boost investments in startups and make employee stock options (ESOPs) a more lucrative proposition to attract and retain top talent, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed to cap the surcharge on long-term capital gains from shares of unlisted companies at 15 per cent in the Union Budget.

Separately, the government has added a provision in the Finance Bill asking non-regulated entities to explain their source of funds should they provide a loan to a closely-held company. This could disincentivise individuals from investing in startups through debt, given the additional onus of explaining the source of funds.

"The long-term capital gains on listed equity shares, units etc are liable to maximum surcharge of 15 per cent, while the other long-term capital gains are subjected to a graded surcharge which goes up to 37 per cent. I propose to cap the surcharge on long term capital gains arising on transfer of any type of assets at 15 per cent," Sitharaman said in her speech.

The proposal is likely to address a long-pending demand of investors of the startup ecosystem, who have been urging the Centre to introduce parity in surcharge on the long-term capital gains (LTCG) from listed and unlisted companies, industry executives said.

"The change announced today will help startup founders, employees and domestic VCs selling unlisted shares, which in turn will set off a virtuous cycle of more investments in the startup ecosystem," said Siddarth Pai, managing partner of venture capital firm 3one4 Capital. Investors like Pai and others usually choose to put money in high-risk startups in the unlisted market.

The cap on surcharge on LTCG from shares of unlisted companies is likely to boost investments in startups. *File*

The LTCG surcharge on gains made from their investment in such startups earlier used to go as high as 37 per cent. "For ESOP holders, this change is a step forward to the long-awaited ask of tax parity between listed and unlisted securities. This will boost ESOPs as a means of attracting and retaining talent and increase rupee capital participation in the Indian startup ecosystem," Pai added.

The announcement comes after what was a record breaking year for startup funding in India. The country saw a record 42 startups turn unicorn — valued at over a billion dollars — in 2021. Overall, the startup ecosystem raised more than $40 billion, according to a report by Orion Venture Partners, an investor in early stage of startups.

Elaborating on the provision seeking information about source of funds for creditors of private companies, the explanatory memorandum of the Finance Bill noted: "... the nature and source of any sum, whether in form of loan or borrowing, or any other liability credited in the books of an assessee shall be treated as explained only if the source of funds is also explained in the hands of the creditor or entry provider. However, this additional onus of proof of satisfactorily explaining the source in the hands of the creditor, would not apply if the creditor is a well regulated entity, i.e., it is a Venture Capital Fund, Venture Capital Company registered with SEBI."

The Budget also had other incentives for startups in the country, including an extension in the tax benefits available to eligible startups in the country, by one year, until March 2023. "Eligible startups established before 31.3.2022 had been provided a tax incentive for three consecutive years out of ten years from incorporation. In view of the Covid pandemic, I propose to extend the period of incorporation of the eligible startup by one more year, that is, up to 31.03.2023 for providing such tax incentive," said Sitharaman in her Budget speech.

To further boost venture capital and private equity funding in startups, the Finance Minister said an expert committee would be created to examine and suggest "appropriate measures" on scaling up such investments.

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) will also facilitate a fund with blended capital, raised under a co-investment model, to finance startups in the agriculture industry. The expectation is that these startups would support farmer producer organisations (FPOs) with machinery for farmers on a rental basis at the farm level, and technology including IT-based support.

TACKLING URBAN MIGRATION

New panel to prepare cities for India at 100

ANISHA DUTTA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech Tuesday announced central the government's plans to set up a high-level committee of planners, economists and institutions to provide recommendations on issues and policies related to the urban sector.

"By the time of India at 100, nearly half our population is likely to be living in urban areas. To prepare for this, orderly urban development is of critical importance. This will help realise the country's economic potential, including livelihood opportunities for the demographic dividend. For this, on one hand we need to nurture the megacities and their hinterlands to become current centres of economic growth," the finance minister said.

"On the other hand, we need to facilitate tier 2 and 3 cities to take on the mantle in the future. This would require us to reimagine our cities into centres of sustainable living with opportunities for all, including women and youth. For this to happen, urban planning cannot continue with a business-as-usual approach. We plan to steer a paradigm change. A high-level committee of reputed urban planners, urban economists and institutions will be formed to make recommendations on urban sector policies, capacity building, planning, implementation and governance," she said.

The finance minister also announced that modern building by-laws will be introduced and five institutions that will be designated centres of excellence will come up with an allocation of Rs 250 crore each for "India-specific urban knowledge".

In a bid to push clean fuel consumption in public policy Sitharaman said: "We will promote a shift to public transit usage through special zones with zero tolerance for non-public transit and encourage Electric Vehicles only operations." Sitharaman announced that to foster further efficiency in the electric vehicle ecosystem, a battery swapping policy will also be deployed.

"For setting up battery stations at scale a battery swapping policy will be brought out and interoperability standards will be formulated," Sitharaman said.

"The private sector will be encouraged to develop sustainable and innovative models for battery and energy as a service which will increase efficiency in the EV ecosystem," she added in her Budget speech.

In the 2021-22 Budget, the finance minister had allocated Rs 18,000 crore to boost public transport in urban areas.

The minister had announced Public Private Partnership models to run more than 20,000 buses. The government had also announced 'MetroLite' and 'MetroNeo' technologies to provide metro rail systems at much lesser cost with similar experience in Tier-2 cities and peripheral areas of Tier-1 cities.

"Innovative ways of financing and faster implementation will be encouraged for building metro systems of appropriate type at scale. Multimodal connectivity between mass urban transport and railway stations will be facilitated on priority. Design of metro systems, including civil structures, will be re-oriented and standardised for Indian conditions and needs," Sitharaman said.

OM PRAKASH, 38, GOA

Om Prakash, who works in a canteen, at Karmali railway station in Goa. *Express*

INCOME: Om Prakash, from Kolhapur in Maharashtra, earns Rs 500 a day. He says he had no income during lockdown.

DID ANYONE IN FAMILY GET COVID: Om Prakash says no one from his family has been infected with Covid-19

WORRY ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD: He worries about losing his income if lockdown is imposed again

SIGN OF HOPE: He hopes to continue earning a living from his job at a canteen in Karmali railway station

400 Vande Bharat trains lined up on tracks

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

TAKING A decisive step towards engine-less propulsion system for passenger trains in future, India has decided to manufacture 400 new, more efficient Vande Bharat trains in the next three years, according to announcements by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget on Tuesday.

The 400 will be in addition to 102 Vande Bharat trains already in the pipeline, sources said. With an eye on farmers, the Railways will also develop "One Station One Product", which will leverage local produce carried on trains, Sitharaman said. Bringing out new products, the Railways will also roll out postal railways for parcels, giving a thrust to a new business area.

"400 new-generation Vande Bharat trains with better efficiency to be brought in during the next 3 years; 100 PM Gati Shakti Cargo terminals to be developed during next 3 years and implementation of innovative ways for building metro systems," Sitharaman said in Lok Sabha.

The highlight of her announcement, part of a larger, multi-modal plan for infrastructure development under the umbrella of PM Gati Shakti, is the new Vande Bharat trains.

The 400 trains will mostly be made of lightweight aluminum, as opposed to steel, marking a departure from India's traditional choice of metal for making its coaches, sources said. Officially, the Railways has kept mum on it.

Being made of aluminum, each train set is around 50 tons lighter, consuming much less energy than their counterparts made of steel. The cost of each train set is around Rs 25 crore more than current ones, which cost around Rs 106 crore per set of 16 coaches.

But sources said that by factoring in inflation and other associated costs of the current steel-made Vande Bharat sets, the aluminum ones come out to be marginally higher, whereas the money saved by way of less energy consumed is much higher, translating into a higher revenue potential for Railways, officials said.

This is called distributed traction power, which is increasingly becoming the norm the world over, as opposed to locomotive-hauled trains.

"Any new technology we bring in should be viewed from the perspective of passenger… reduced noise levels, reduced vibration, better safety and experience. That kind of Vande Bharat we will bring," Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told the media after the Budget presentation.

"The first version of Vande Bharat is already running," he said. "Version 2 will be (in) production by August-September this year. The target given today will be next and it will be an upgrade. Like mobile phones come with new and better versions, this technology will also get better with each version."

This year, the Finance Ministry has laid out capital investment worth Rs 2.45 lakh crore from Railways, in which around Rs 1.08 lakh crore will be raised through Extra Budgetary Resources. Last year, Railways had set out a capital expenditure target of Rs 2.15 lakh crore, which it will be able to maintain by end of this fiscal, as per Budget documents.

"The increased allocation will be used for safety and capacity augmentation through super-critical and critical projects," Vaishnaw said.

Railways hopes to finish this fiscal with an Operating Ratio of 98.93%, as per Revised Estimates, which is worse than the 96.15% pegged in Budget Estimates last tear.

In terms of earnings, the national transporter estimates its earnings to be around Rs 2.4 lakh crore, around Rs 38,000 crore more than last year. Banking on recovery of its passenger business, which has been hit since 2020 due to the pandemic, the Railways estimates to earn Rs 58,500 crore in passenger business, up by Rs 14,000 crore, which is a growth of around 31 per cent from last fiscal.

Next year, Railways has targetted an ambitious 1,475 million tonnes of freight. In freight business, Railways has outperformed its Budget estimates for this year. While the estimate for this fiscal was to carry freight worth Rs 1.37 lakh crore, in Revised Estimates it hopes to do business worth Rs 1.45 lakh crore. The next fiscal it hopes to take this figure to Rs 1.65 lakh crore.

As for safety, the indigenous anti-collision system, called Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) now rechristened "Kavach", which has been in various stages of use over the past several years, will cover 2,000 km of railway network.

The Railways is already in the process of making an installment of 44 Vande Bharat trains, in order to have Vande Bharat trains running on at least 75 routes by August 15, 2023. In his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that 75 Vande Bharat trains would connect different parts of country by 2023.

Receipts target derailed, but capex plan on track

Two waves of pandemic during the fiscal mean that the Railways are likely to miss the targets for total receipts in FY22. The Railways will likely see an uptick in Budgeted capital expenditure

	2019-20	2020-21 RE	2021-22 BE	2021-22 RE	2022-23 BE
Capex (₹ cr)	1,60,792	2,40,840	2,14,858	2,14,800	2,45,600
GBS (₹ cr)	70,000	1,08,398	1,07,300	1,17,100	1,37,100
Goods carried	1,208.4 MT	1,210 MT	1,270 MT	*	*

Earnings (in ₹ cr)	2019-20	2020-2021 RE	2021-22 BE	2021-22 RE	2022-23 BE
Passenger traffic	50,669	15,000	61,000	44,375	58,500
Goods traffic	1,13,488	1,24,184	1,37,810	1,42,575	1,57,000
Total receipts	1,74,695	1,46,609	2,17,460	1,99,300	2,32,000
Operating ratio	97.46%	96.96%	96.15%	*	*

*GBS stands for gross budgetary support; *Data to be furnished in Railway Budget; Source: Union Budget*

Rs 48k cr for universal housing; focus on EWS and urban middle class

ANISHA DUTTA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE GOVERNMENT has allocated Rs 48,000 crore for its flagship "housing-for-all' scheme in the Union Budget, with a focus on expediting approvals for housing constructions for the middle class and economically weaker sections in urban areas.

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

The announcement comes ahead of the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa and Manipur where the Union government is banking on several of its flagship schemes to woo voters.

According to data till January 3, around 114.02 lakh houses have been sanctioned across states so far under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY-Urban). Out of these, only 53.42 lakh houses have been completed till now.

Among the poll-bound states, Goa has performed the best, constructing 98 per cent of the sanctioned houses. Uttar Pradesh has completed 9.82 lakh houses, which is 55 per cent of its sanctioned target; Uttarakhand has completed 22,523 houses (36 per cent), Punjab has completed 48,616 (43 per cent). Manipur has performed the worst, with only 10 per cent of sanctioned houses constructed.

"The Union government will work with the state governments for reduction of time required for all land and construction-related approvals, for promoting affordable housing for 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 reduction in cost of intermediation," Sitharaman said.

In last year's Budget, the finance minister had announced an additional deduction of interest amount to Rs 1.5 lakh for all loans taken up till March 31, 2022 for purchasing affordable houses.

EXPLAINED

Push ahead of polls

The Union government's flagship housing scheme is among its most popular programmes in both rural and urban areas. It assumes even more significance ahead of the forthcoming Assembly elections in five states. With the model code of conduct in place across Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa and Manipur, the Government will aim to utilise the budgetary announcements of its popular schemes.

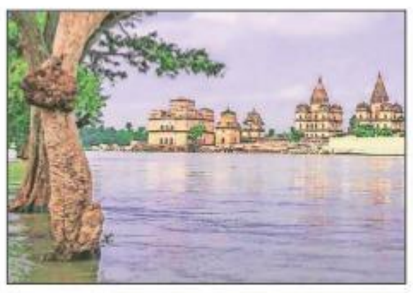
Rs 1,400 cr to implement Ken-Betwa river linking

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman, presenting the Union Budget 2022-23 on Tuesday, said the government has earmarked Rs 1,400 crore for implementation of the Ken-Betwa Linking Project.

Under the project, water from the Ken river will be transferred to the Betwa river — both tributaries of river Yamuna. The project will cover Bundelkhand, a drought-prone region, which spreads across 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Work for the project is expected to be completed in 8 years.

"The implementation of the Ken-Betwa Link Project at an estimated cost of Rs 44,605 crore will be taken up. This is aimed at providing irrigation benefits to 9.0 lakh hectare of land, drinking water supply to 62 lakh people, 103 MW of hydro [power], 27 MW of solar power. Allocations of Rs 4,300 crore in the RE 2021-22 and Rs 1,400 crore in 2022-23 have been made for this project," Sitharaman said during her Budget speech in Lok Sabha on Tuesday.



A view of the Betwa river. *File*

The announcement was made just weeks before seven districts of Uttar Pradesh, which fall under the Bundelkhand region, are scheduled to vote in the third, four and fifth phases (February 20, 23 and 27) of Assembly elections.

The minister also said draft project reports for five other river links — Damanganga-Pinjal, Tapi-Narmada, Godavari-Krishna, Krishna-Pennar and Pennar-Kaveri -- have been finalised.

ENHANCED OUTLAY OF RS 1.99 LAKH CRORE FOR HIGHWAYS SECTOR

In a year, 25,000 km in highways; ropeways on public-private mode

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE NATIONAL highways network will be expanded by 25,000 km during 2022-23 and the national ropeway development programme will be taken up in public-private partnership (PPP) mode under the banner of Parvatmala, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in her Budget speech.

Sitharaman said contracts for implementation of multi-modal logistics parks at four locations through the PPP mode will be awarded in 2022-23. Besides, Rs 20,000 crore will be mobilised through innovative ways of financing to complement public resources, she said.

"PM Gati Shakti Master Plan for Expressways will be formulated in 2022-23 to facilitate faster movement of people and goods. The national highways network will be expanded by 25,000 km in 2022-23," she said.

Sitharaman said that as a preferred ecologically sustainable alternative to conventional roads in difficult hilly areas, the National Ropeways Development Programme will be taken up on the PPP mode. The aim, she said, is to improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism.

She said contracts for eight ropeway projects for a length of 60 km will be awarded in 2022-23.

Contracts for implementation of multi-modal logistics parks at four locations through the PPP mode to be awarded in 2022-23. *File*

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said this year's Budget has given the highest priority for development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and farmers.

Stating that the Budget has given priority to the infrastructure sector, Gadkari said the National Ropeways Development Programme will benefit states in the Northeast, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and J&K.

The Budget has provided an enhanced outlay of Rs 1.99 lakh crore for the highways sector. Allocation of Rs 1.18 lakh crore was made for the sector for 2020-21, which was revised to Rs 1.31 lakh crore.

The International Road Federation, in a statement, welcomed stepped-up investment on highways and infrastructure projects and welcomed the thrust on seven growth engines of PM Gati Shakti: roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways and logistics.

New scheme to build infra in villages along China border

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman briefly touched upon a scheme to boost infrastructure in villages along the border with China in her Budget speech. Prime Minister Narendra Modi later mentioned that developing infrastructure in such villages are also necessary for the country's security.

In her speech, Sitharaman said that border villages with sparse population, limited connectivity and infrastructure often get left out from development gains. Now, under a Vibrant Villages programme, "such villages on the northern border will be covered", and 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".

She said that "additional funding for these activities will be provided, existing schemes will be converged". Modi later said that "for the first time, the Parvatmala scheme is being started for such areas as Himachal, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Northeast". Under the scheme, the government will build "modern system of transportation on the mountains" which will help "the border villages" become vibrant, he said.

HEALTH

Fighting Covid stress, mental health strain on priority list

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

AS INDIA enters the third year in its fight against the global pandemic, the focus of the public health sector will be to further strengthen the health systems at levels of primary, secondary and tertiary in responding effectively to the future wave of infections.

In 2022-23, the Budget estimate for the health sector is Rs 86,200.65 crore — a 16.59% increase compared to 2021-22 Budget estimate.

Besides augmenting the health infrastructure, the government has also placed its priority on another critical issue related to the pandemic: mental health.

This year's Budget will take forward the announcements made last year in the backdrop of the strain on health systems experienced during the pandemic.

In her last Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made the big announcement on the launch of Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana scheme, now renamed Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PMABHIM), with an outlay of Rs 64,180 crore over six years. This year, the government will transfer Rs 4,176.84 crore to the states — to be utilised to support wellness centres, setting up of integrated public health labs, and critical care hospital blocks in districts with a population of more than 5 lakh.

The allocation is a significant increase: under revised Budget estimates for 2021-22, only Rs 595 crore was allocated under this scheme, compared to Rs 4,176.84 crore this year.

With Covid-19 negatively affecting mental health and triggering an exponential rise in mental health issues among vulnerable population groups, the government announced the roll-out of the national tele-mental health programme.

The development comes in the backdrop of growing scientific evidence that mental health sequels post-coronavirus infection. During the pandemic, patients have been reporting anxiety and depression, as well as 'Long Covid', where recovered patients experience brain fog and are not able to think clearly. Patients also show neurological symptoms.

The third big focus of the Budget has been on digital health.

In her Budget speech. Sitharaman announced the roll-out of an open platform for the national health ecosystem. She said the digital ecosystem will comprise an exhaustive list of digital registries of health providers and health facilities, unique health identity, consent framework and universal access to health facilities.

Significantly, the national digital health mission has been allocated Rs 200 crore, compared to just Rs 30 crore allocated in the previous Budget.

At the same time, another important flagship initiative — Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana — has Rs 6,412 crore, which is almost at the same levels of allocation of Budget estimation of 2021-22 (Rs 6,400).

Under the Central sector schemes and projects, the government has allocated Rs 15,163.22 crore — a 43.5% increase compared to 2021-22 Budget estimates. Under this, Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana has been further increased this year: Rs 10,000 crore has been allocated to the scheme, a 35% increase compared to 2021-22 Budget estimates.

The Department of Health Research, which played a key role in development of vaccines in India, has been allocated Rs 3,200 crore. However, this is only a 4-percent increase compared to the revised 2021-22 estimates.

Experts welcomed the focus on mental health.

Dr Pratima Murthy, director, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), welcomed Budgetary announcement for a national tele-mental health programme and said that as per a recent national mental health survey, 10.4% people have a diagnosable mental health condition but that did not mean that everyone needs to be seen in a hospital. "This programme will be useful to identify mild forms of mental illness, which may not require medication or in patient care," she told *The Indian Express*.

According to a 2019 ICMR study, one in seven persons suffered from mental disorders of varying severity in India. Noted psychiatrist Dr Harish Shetty said, "We are in the middle of a mental health pandemic. Setting up a tele-mental health helpline is a small gesture and we hope it multiplies. However, this is not enough. We need intensity on mental health as much as the Centre and states have done for combating Covid-19..."

INPUTS FROM ANURADHA MASCARENHAS

EXPLAINED

How tele-mental health service helps

THE PROGRAMME will include a network of 23 tele-mental health centres of excellence, NIMHANS being the nodal centre and IIIT-Bengaluru providing technology support. The 23 centres have specialised mental healthcare resources and will help states and UTs set up tele-health helplines to train counsellors to provide first-level psychological care, according to NIMHANS's Dr Murthy.

Combating loss in education a priority, but digital learning outlay sees a dip

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

IN A Budget expected to look into reversing Covid-induced learning losses and implementing key proposals of the New Education Policy announced nearly two years ago, overall financial allocation for 2022-23 has not increased much.

While it went up from Rs 93,224 crore (budget estimate) in 2021-22 to Rs 1.04 lakh crore, as announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday, the increase does not appear as substantial when seen against Rs 99,311 crore earmarked in 2020-21.

In her Budget speech, Sitharaman emphasised on strengthening digital modes of learning to aid supplementary teaching and proposed to establish a digital university. But allocation under the Digital India e-learning component was reduced to Rs 421 crore — from Rs 645 crore in 2021-22.

The revised estimate for 2021-22 was Rs 367 crore.

The rise in overall allocation owes mainly to the jump in amount earmarked for samagra shiksha (school education sector) — from Rs 31,050 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 37,383 crore in 2022-23. But even after the increase, allocation under this head is marginally more than 2019-20 (Rs 36,322 crore).

Sitharaman emphasised on strengthening digital modes of learning. *Express*

"Due to the pandemic-induced closure of schools, our children, particularly in rural areas and those from SC and ST communities and other weaker sections, have lost almost two years of formal education," Sitharaman said. "Mostly these are children in government schools. We recognise the need to impart supplementary training and build resilient mechanisms for delivery."

She said the "one class-one channel" initiative under PM e-VIDYA, launched in May 2020, will be scaled up from 12 channels to 200 channels to enable all states to provide supplementary education in regional languages to children for classes I to XII. The channels, where recorded lectures shot in NCERT campus are telecast, are currently available on Doordarshan's free dish and some private DTH platforms.

Sitharaman said a digital university will be established to provide students across the country access to "universal education with personalised experience". The content in it will be available in all Indian languages, and the university will come up under a "hub and spoke model", she said.

This essentially refers to a network design in which a centrally located network hub will branch out to connect to remotely located network pockets, also called hubs. It appeared to be a repackaged version of the proposal in 2020 Budget to "start a degree-level full-fledged online education programme by institutions who are ranked within top 100 in the National Institutional Ranking framework".

The mid-day meal scheme, which was rebranded as PM-Poshan last year, also saw a drop in Central allocation from Rs 11,500 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 10,233 crore. The revised allocation for 2021-22 was also Rs 10,233 crore, indicating that the total fund earmarked for the scheme could not be spent during the ongoing financial year amid long closures of schools.

DR SHUBHANGI AGARWAL, 27, NEW DELHI

Dr Agarwal at the CWG Village Covid care centre in Delhi. She has worked here and at another centre in the capital since the pandemic began. *Tashi Tobgyal*

INCOME: Dr Agarwal says her family faced many problems with managing its finances, considering the multiple lockdowns and increased medical expenses during the pandemic's second wave

DID ANYONE IN FAMILY GET COVID: She as well as her family have had the virus. Dr Agarwal says she was affected twice — during the second and third waves — though it was a mild infection both times

WORRY ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD: Dr Agarwal's biggest worry is the emergence of a new variant of the coronavirus. "The current Omicron variant has been relatively mild," she says

SIGN OF HOPE: "Rapid vaccination is the only hope. The government is doing a commendable job with this. We live in a country with different cultures and beliefs, and have given 1.65 billion doses so far," Dr Agarwal says

DEFENCE

Procurement push: capital outlay raised by 10%

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE GOVERNMENT has increased its defence capital outlay by nearly 10 per cent from last year's Revised Estimates to Rs 1.52 lakh crore, boosting the Armed Forces' push for procuring modern equipment.

Compared to the Rs 1.35 lakh crore outlay in the Budget Estimates from 2021-2022, the jump becomes even more pronounced, at nearly 13 per cent.

The increased allocation comes at a time when the Army, Navy and Air Force are in the process of procuring new equipment including submarines, fighter jets, tanks, artillery guns and drones.

Of the total capital outlay, Rs 1.24 lakh crore is for capital acquisition, while the rest is for other capital expenditure.

The jump of 9.74 per cent over the Revised Estimates, which stood at Rs 1.39 lakh crore in 2021-2022, is significant compared to the 0.4 per cent rise that was seen the previous year.

There is also a marginal drop in the share of the overall defence budget in the total budget. This year, the defence budget stands at Rs 5.25 lakh crore, which is 13.3 per cent of the Rs 39.45-lakh crore budget. The share last year was 13.73 per cent.

The defence budget this year is 9.8 per cent more than the Rs. 4.78 lakh crore allocated last year. Compared to last year's Revised Estimates of Rs 5.03 lakh crore, the growth stands at 4.4 per cent.

The total revenue component this year is Rs 3.6 lakh crore, of which pensions account for Rs 1.19 lakh crore. The pension bill is higher than last year's Budget as well as Revised Estimates.

The government had allocated almost Rs. 1.16 lakh crore last year, while the Revised Estimates stood close to Rs. 1.17 lakh crore.

Between the forces, when it comes to comparing the Budget Estimates from last year, the Navy has got the highest jump. Compared to the revised estimates, the widest gap is for the Army. The reason is that the Army's Revised Estimates are considerably lower compared to the Budget Estimates, which is the reverse for the Navy.

The Navy was allocated Rs 33,254 crore in the budget, while the Revised Estimates went up to Rs 46,022 crore.

It has been allocated Rs. 47,591 crore this year, which is 43 per cent more than the Budget Estimates from last year, but only 3.4 per cent more than the Revised Estimates.

For the Army, the allocation of Rs 32,015 crore is lower than the Budget Estimate of Rs 36,482 crore in 2021-2022. However, the Revised Estimates for the Army for last year stood only at Rs 25,377 crore. While, the jump over the Revised Estimate for the Army is 26 per cent, but when it comes to Budget Estimates, there is an actual reduction of more than 12 per cent.

The Air Force, which has the largest capital outlay among the forces, has seen a stable though marginal growth. It has been allocated Rs 55,587 crore this year, which is 7.2 per cent higher than last year's revised estimates at Rs 51,831 crore, but just 4.5 per cent over the budgeted estimates of Rs 53,215 crore last year.

Express file

Defence spending to maintain rising trend

The allocation for salaries in the defence budget has consistently risen over the years and is likely to rise further as the armed forces continue to expand. The capital outlay is also likely to go up significantly in the next fiscal as the government looks to buy weapons and tech

Major heads	2019-2020 (Actual)	2020-21 (RE)	2021-22 (BE)
Salary	1,35,771	1,35,787	1,42,778
Capital outlay	1,06,483	1,31,510	1,28,150
Pension	1,17,810	1,25,000	1,15,850
Stores	42,907	49,660	44,861
Other expenses	50,026	42,780	46,557
Total	4,52,996	4,84,736	4,78,196

All figures in ₹ crore where applicable
Source: Expenditure Budget, PRS Legislative Research

For Atmanirbhar defence, quarter of research budget goes to private players

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

IN ANOTHER push to the defence manufacturing industry in India, a quarter of the research and development (R&D) budget of the Ministry of Defence will be set aside for private players, including start-ups and academia, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday.

Sitharaman also said over two-thirds of the capital outlay will be earmarked for the domestic industry in the 2022-23 fiscal.

The increase in the share of equipment to be procured from the domestic market is part of the government's flagship campaign for self-reliance in defence.

"Our government is committed to reducing imports and promoting 'atmanirbharta' (self reliance) in equipment for the armed forces," Sitharaman said while presenting the Union Budget 2022. "68 per cent of the capital procurement budget will be earmarked for domestic industry in 2022-23. Up from 58 per cent in 2021-22." This will amount to Rs 84,598 crore, which is 68 per cent of the Rs 1.24 lakh crore, from the capital acquisition budget of the Defence Services.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the increase in capital procurement budget was "in line with the 'Vocal for Local' push" "It will certainly boost the domestic defence industries," he tweeted. He also said the proposal to reserve 25 per cent of the R&D Budget for start-ups and private entities was "an excellent move".

The "58 per cent" capital procurement budget Sitharaman mentioned in her speech was the allocation in 2020-21, when such a component was set aside for the domestic defence industry for the first time. In 2021-22, the government had actually earmarked 63 per cent of the capital outlay for domestic sources.

Commenting on the budget announcements last year, Rajnath Singh had said the ministry had "planned to invest about 63 per cent of the outlay for 2021-22 on domestic procurement, about Rs 70,221 crore for domestic defence procurement". He had said the increase will positively impact enhanced domestic procurement and have a "multiplier effect on our industries, including MSMEs and start-ups". It would also increase the employment in defence sector, he had said.

On R&D in defence, Sitharaman further said the private industry will be encouraged to take up design and development of military platforms and equipment "in collaboration with DRDO and other organisations" by creating Special Purpose Vehicles.

To promote testing and certification from private entities, she said, "an independent nodal umbrella body will be set up for meeting wide-ranging testing and certification requirements."

"The proposal to reserve 25 percent of the R&D Budget for start-ups and private entities is an excellent move," Rajnath Singh tweeted.

'Through public spend, there will be crowding in of pvt investments'

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said a virtuous cycle can happen only with the government leading the way. Excerpts from her post-Budget interview with *DD News*

How would you characterise the Budget?

That time when I made that statement ("once-in-a-hundred-year Budget") that this Budget is being prepared at a time that once in a 100 years pandemic has hit us and we are preparing this Budget. But it so turned out that everyone started saying that it is a "once-in-a-hundred-year Budget". No no, (this) Budget was being prepared in a once-in-a-100-year situation. But never mind, that stuck with me in a way.

But this Budget is a Budget for continuity, it certainly is a Budget for sustaining the stimulus, which is being given. We want to honestly undertake the public investment in asset creation, public infrastructure expenditure and only through this we feel, there will be a crowding in of private investments. So the virtuous cycle can happen only by the government leading the way and we have unhesitatingly come forward. Otherwise, within one year, capital expenditure going up from Rs 5.5 lakh crore to Rs 7.5 lakh crore in not small and ... within this Rs 7.5 lakh crore, we have given Rs 1 lakh crore to the states as a 50-year interest free grant and that's not going to be cutting down on their borrowing.

Earlier, India did not use to have the resources. But now, back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that at least Rs 20 trillion of resources are available. Which means you need about Rs 60 trillion worth of projects. So we do not have at this stage, the shovel-ready projects, do you think that will pose a constraint on this growth?

No, I don't think. Since after the introduction of the National Infrastructure Pipeline, which was end '19 and early '20, we had been adding a lot of projects as well to that list and many states have come with very well-designed projects with which we are able to move forward. Over and above what is in that, there is also a keenness now among states to compete for renewable energy related projects. We find a lot of states coming up with very doable projects, and also when sovereign funds from abroad come to India, they are looking for projects, which are scalable. They want projects of that size, they don't want to invest in ten projects, rather invest in two. We've also given them a lot of fiscal benefits and the emphasis that PLI has brought in, ... the business has understood that it is for incentivising production at a scale. So every unit that is getting added, is getting added to a particular level. Many states have shown keenness even on that, and therefore I see the approach to large projects, which has an impact, multiplier effect, impact on immediate job creation.

Does the Budget recognise cryptos as an asset class but not as a currency?

I am not yet doing any of that ... I want you to give me the opportunity to explain it. There is a process of consultation, which is going on, about crypto ... Before the consultation is completed, I won't be able to do anything on regulating them or formalising a framework for regulation for them, this is one side of the story. Second is, everything that is crypto cannot be a currency. What is a currency? A currency is something which is issued by as a fiat. It is issued by the authorities concerned, by the government or the central bank. If they show something, even if it is digital, only then can it be currency. What happens in the world of crypto, otherwise, is they are creating very many different types of assets, using the digital technology and also using the distributed ledger technology. All of them are not necessarily currency. Currency is that which comes from a central bank, which has the authority to issue currency. So what we have now made a provision for, is for the Reserve Bank of India to issue a digital currency. And that obviously will be riveted in, or based on certain value of gold, or money or government assets or something of that kind. So it will be asset-backed. It will be sovereign-backed in a way, so that is what is currency. The rest ... we don't know yet how we are going to regulate them, because consultation is going on. However, because there is a lot of buying and selling and transacting, resulting in some kind of a profit and it is a sovereign right to tax such transactions and profit making, I have come up with a proposal for a taxation on them and that is to an extent of 30 per cent for profits earned out of such transactions and also a TDS. So that I know who is buying and selling. In the sense, what is the transactions about, money trail, whether it is a) money or b) money ... whatever. So, the taxation is on those activities, which are not currency, currency is with the Reserve Bank, but these are some kind of assets being bought and sold, various types of it, I am taxing them.

You have assumed a growth of 11.1 per cent in the next fiscal. What is the logic of this?

It's not underpromising, it's being realistic, one. And secondly, when last year's Budget was brought in, we hadn't seen Omicron, we hadn't seen the second wave, at that time, before the second wave, I had given the, Budget. Now second wave has come, hopefully it has gone, now Omicron is on, but even more you have the US Fed, you also have the international crude oil prices going up, metals have become very expensive. So, we will have to keep all this in mind. We are not getting into details of which is considered a challenge, which is considered a headwind, which is not, but at the same time, I think Prime Minister has been very clear that we will have to work out to make the Budget a lot more...a speaking document, it should say what it has, there's no point in saying things beyond a certain...and that's what we have followed.

The middle-class have been hurting for the last two years and the anticipation among them is always linked to some tax-break. So, I heard you, you said that I did not raise taxes for the last two years. So, what is your message for the middle-classes?

I fully recognise, every section of the society has suffered, middle-class has definitely suffered but when we talk about middle-class I understand, you understand, all of us understand and each of us also perceive that there is an element of middle-class in us also and therefore we understand the element of suffering. But yet we also belong to some other group, for instance if you or your brother or your son would start a startup and he gets benefits, isn't that middle-class? If his children are going abroad and if I give them all the facility to transfer money for their education abroad and give them also a passport, which is going to be futuristic and ensure that when they come back they can have a skilling programme and I also make sure that high-class universities are set up in India, isn't that not addressing the middle-class? And similarly, would we want to think that the farmers are not middle-class? Would they not get benefits, will we think that the MSME running person is not middle-class, so middle-class is a large spectrum, which has that middle-income as being the common factor, but are spread across the board, in one or the other way the government is dealing with it. Affordable housing, is that not for middle-class?

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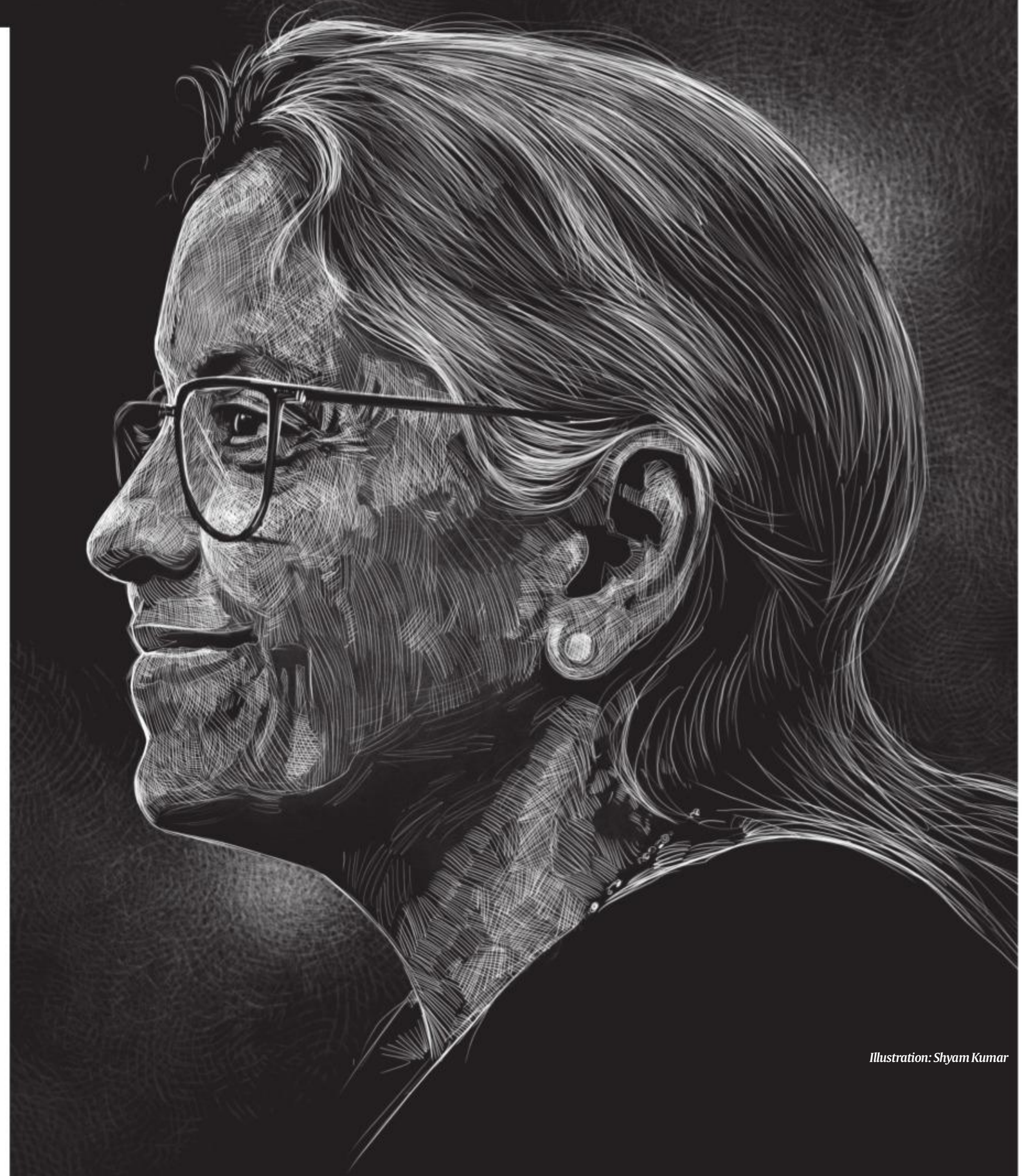


Illustration: Shyam Kumar

> PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN VERY CLEAR THAT WE WILL HAVE TO WORK OUT TO MAKE THE BUDGET A LOT MORE...A SPEAKING DOCUMENT, IT SHOULD SAY WHAT IT HAS, THERE'S NO POINT IN SAYING THINGS BEYOND A CERTAIN...AND THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE FOLLOWED

> THERE IS A PROCESS OF CONSULTATION, WHICH IS GOING ON, ABOUT CRYPTO ... BEFORE THE CONSULTATION IS COMPLETED, I WON'T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING ON REGULATING THEM OR FORMALISING A FRAMEWORK FOR REGULATION FOR THEM, THIS IS ONE SIDE OF THE STORY

FROM UJJWALA, NAL JAL TO INTERNET ECONOMY

People-friendly, creates new opportunities for jobs and growth: PM

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

THE UNION BUDGET was "people-friendly, progressive" and full of possibilities for infrastructure, investment, growth and jobs, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

Modi said, in a televised statement, that an important aspect of the Budget was the welfare of the poor.

"The Budget aims to ensure pucca house, toilet, tap water and gas connection for every poor household. At the same time, the focus is on modern Internet connectivity also," the Prime Minister said.

The Budget this year has come with new confidence of development amidst the once-in-a-century calamity, Modi said, adding that it will create new opportunities for the common people along with providing strength to the economy.

The Prime Minister said the Budget is "full of opportunities for more infrastructure, more investment, more growth, and more jobs".

"This will further open the green job sector. This Budget not only solves contemporary problems but also ensures a bright future for the youth."

Modi said the Parvatmala scheme will create a modern system of transportation in hilly areas such as Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast.

"The quest for modernity and technology in every sphere of life through steps such as drones for farmers, Vande Bharat trains, digital currency, 5 G services, national digital health ecosystem will hugely benefit our youth, middle class, poor, Dalit and backward classes," he said.

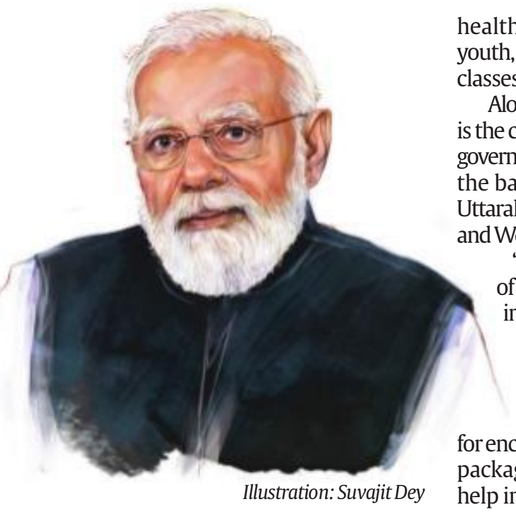


Illustration: Suvajit Dey

Along with the cleaning of the Ganga, which is the centre of faith of millions of Indians, the government will encourage natural farming on the banks of the river in the five states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, the prime minister said.

"This is a significant step for the welfare of the farmers and will also help in making the Ganga chemical-free."

He said the provisions in the Union Budget also aim to make agriculture lucrative and full of new opportunities.

"Measures such as a special fund for encouraging new agriculture startups and package for food processing industry will help in increasing income of farmers. More than Rs 2.25 lakh crore are being transferred in the accounts of farmers through MSP purchase," he said.

Modi said along with a record increase in the credit guarantee, many schemes have been announced in the Budget.

"India's MSME sector will be greatly benefited by the reservation of 68 percent of the Defence Capital Budget for the domestic industry. Rs 7.5 lakh crore worth of public investment will give a new push to the economy and create new opportunities for small and other industries," he said.

Later, in a series of tweets, he said, "Today's #AatmanirbharBharatKaBudget brings with it new energy and strength to our development trajectory, especially at a time when we are courageously fighting a once-in-a-lifetime global pandemic. This Budget brings more infra, more investment, more growth and more jobs."

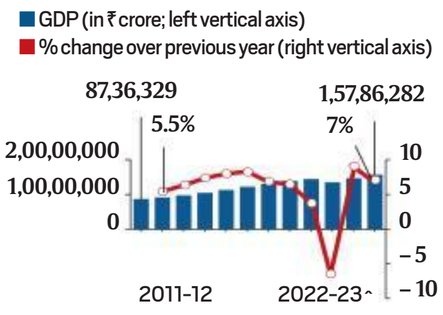
He said people from all walks of life have welcomed the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Ka Budget' and the youth of India see this Budget as one that will give wings to their ambitions.

The emphasis on futuristic technologies in all spheres is noteworthy and will benefit a cross section of our citizens, the prime minister said. Modi said this year's Budget caters to the development needs of people in remote areas, hill states and those states on the banks of the Ganga. This is in line with our focus on all-round and inclusive development, he added.

There are many provisions in this Budget aimed at transforming the agriculture sector including ensuring credit, record MSP, boosting food processing and encouraging start-ups in the sector, Modi said.

WITH PTI

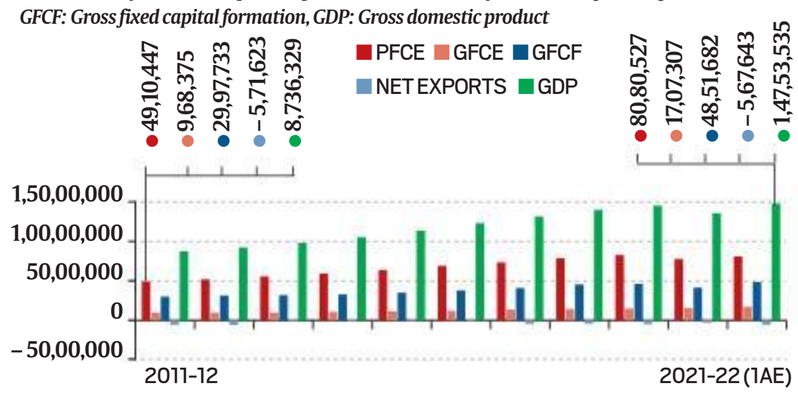
GDP



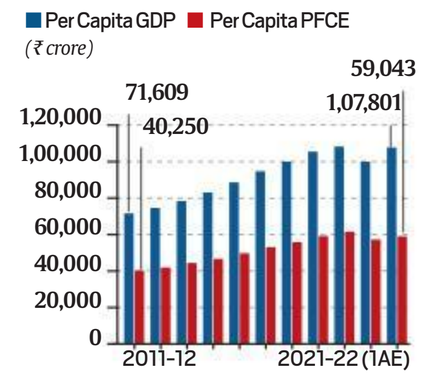
2018-19: Third RE; 2019-20: Second RE; 2020-21: First RE; 2021-22: First Advance Estimates; 2022-23: Assuming 4% inflation and 7% real growth

ENGINES OF GROWTH (IN Rs CRORE)

PFCE: Private final consumption expenditure, GFCE: Govt final consumption expenditure, GFCF: Gross fixed capital formation, GDP: Gross domestic product



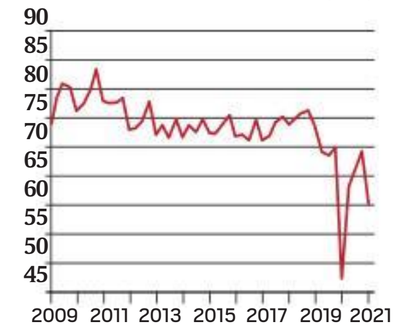
AVERAGE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE LEVELS



EMPLOYMENT RATE FALLING SINCE 2016

ER: Employed as a % of working age population
Source: CMIE, Express Research

MANUFACTURING CAPACITY UTILISATION (%)



Source: Oxford Economics/CEIC

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Five questions: the Budget big picture

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has bet on significantly ramping up capital expenditure to start a virtuous cycle of growth. The strategy has obvious benefits in normal times — but India's economy is still Covid-scarred, demand is weak, and capital assets have a long gestation period

UDIT MISRA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

AS FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman rose to present the Union Budget for 2022-23 on Tuesday, she was faced with several competing demands. On the one hand, the government's fiscal deficit (or total borrowings from the market) was a concern. On the other, there were demands for continued support to the weaker sections of the economy.

If she spent more to provide direct financial support to various sections of society, the fiscal deficit, which was already more than twice the prudential norms, would worsen. If she tried to sharply curtail expenditure, it might hurt vast sections of the economy that are already struggling in the wake of Covid-induced disruptions.

In the end, she chose a strategy that substantially ramps up capital expenditure or capex (that is, expenditure towards making new productive assets) while largely holding back revenue expenditure (that is, expenditure to meet day-to-day expenses).

While prioritising expenditure for building capital assets is a macro-economically sound strategy in normal times, it remains to be seen whether this will work for India as it comes out of the Covid-induced setback with significant scars.

What were the challenges facing the economy?

India's GDP growth rate had been decelerating since 2017-18 with unemployment touching a four-decade high. Data released on January 31 showed GDP growth in 2019-20 was just 3.7%. It was at that point that the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

Between a sharp contraction and an equally sharp recovery, the next two financial years (FY21 and FY22) essentially amounted to the loss of two full years of incomes and jobs. Also, the recovery in aggregate GDP hides the pain in large sections of the economy. Most surveys and data point to a K-shaped recovery, which has meant that economically weaker sections still have significant scars.

As the second chart above shows, while overall GDP has recovered, the most important component of GDP — private final consumption expenditure (PFCE), or the money that people spend in their individual capacity — which accounts for 56% of all GDP, is below the pre-Covid pandemic level.

The picture appears worse when one looks at per capita levels of GDP and PFCE *(chart 3)*. The average PFCE (or expenditure) is below 2018 levels. Also, these are still arithmetic mean figures. They suggest that a large section of the population is below even this average level. People are spending less because employment levels have seen a secular decline since 2016 *(chart 4)*; Covid only made matters worse.

Weak PFCE meant that the other big engine of GDP growth — investments or Gross Fixed Capital Formation — would remain weak. That is because weak demand has led to low capacity utilisations *(chart 5)* and that takes away any incentive from private businesses to invest in new capacities, create new jobs and income streams for people.

The only other engine was the money government spends. But too much spending here was ruled out because the fiscal deficit was already twice the prudential norms.

The question before the Finance Minister was: What would be the trigger for growth in the coming year?

So what was the Budget's strategy she chose?

The standout feature of Budget 2022-23 is that the government has chosen to significantly ramp up capital expenditure while largely restricting revenue expenditure. This capex push will get reflected in the "investments" component of the GDP. The chief advantage of capital expenditure is that it gives much higher returns to the overall GDP.

According to different studies, one rupee spent towards capital expenditure can give returns between Rs 2.5 and Rs 4.8 (over periods ranging from 1-7 years), while money spent on the revenue account, such as giving direct cash transfers to the poor, tend to give returns between Rs 0.54-Rs 0.98 (that is, less than a rupee).

Capital expenditure provides better returns not just by creating new jobs but also by creating new productive assets that boost future productivity.

Here's how the government hopes this capex push will play out and lead India's economic recovery: New roads, ports etc., will not only create new jobs but will also reinvigorate several other industries through forward and backward linkages. For instance, apart from new labourers, a new bridge will need cement, iron and steel, etc. It will increase the demand for engineers and other technical and managerial professionals.

When done on a large scale, such expenditure will leave people with more income and that, in turn, will boost the aggregate demand — the PFCE component. That fresh demand will further incentivise the private sector to boost investments of their own and, in fact, take the lead on future investments.

Thus, according to the Budget's strategy, a capex push by the government can dig India out of the current slump and create a virtuous cycle of growth. In time, as tax revenues from new economic activity increase and as private sector investments become self-sustaining, the government will retreat from its leading role in investments, thus bringing down its borrowing requirements.

How is this strategy different from what has been done by countries such as the US?

Countries such as the US unleashed a massive fiscal response to the Covid crisis. That involved a lot of money flowing out of government coffers to people's accounts. In India, most of the help was either in the form of free foodgrain, the rural employment guarantee scheme, and credit guarantees (not actual money flowing to small and distressed firms; just guarantees on the loans they may take). As such, there is no comparison between the direct financial help that developed countries provided (even in percentage terms), and what India provided.

It is for this reason that most estimates suggest a sharp increase in poverty and inequality in India post-Covid. In contrast, the US was among the countries that have seen a genuine 'V-shaped' recovery, getting back to the pre-pandemic growth path, not just the level.

But countries such as the US too have ended up facing a problem: inflation. When lots of money flowed into people's hands, the aggregate demand recovered far too quickly even as supply disruptions persisted, thus creating historic levels of inflation.

CAPEX PUSH IN BUDGET WILL BE REFLECTED IN 'INVESTMENTS' COMPONENT OF GDP. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE GIVES HIGHER RETURNS BY CREATING BOTH JOBS, NEW PRODUCTIVE ASSETS

It is another matter that even with depressed demand, India too has seen fairly high inflation over the last two years.

Similar to the capex push in India, in the US, President Joe Biden has been pushing for an ambitious $1.9 trillion plan called Build Back Better, aimed at growing the US economy "from the bottom up and the middle out".

Will the capex push in the Budget succeed?

Few would argue against the merits of higher capital expenditure by the government because of the obvious benefits, especially at a time when all other engines of growth are struggling. Moreover, there are several points that suggest such an investment cycle will sustain.

In a recent research note analysts at Nomura observed: "At face value, a number of preconditions appear to be in place. The government has announced various reforms, including the national infrastructure pipeline (NIP), the production linked incentive scheme, lower corporate taxes and privatisation. Corporates have deleveraged their balance sheet during the pandemic. The corporate debt-equity ratio has fallen broadly across industries from 0.79 in FY19 and 0.82 in FY20 to 0.63 in FY21."

Add to that the creation of a bad bank, which will enable the banking system to be ready to give loans when the private sector demands them.

But there are reasons why this may not succeed. That's because these are not normal times. There are deep scars in the economy, especially in the informal sector (which accounts for 90% of all jobs), and aggregate demand is still quite weak. Capacity utilisation levels are far below the point where companies may contemplate ramping up investments.

Economists such as Ravi Srivastava of the Institute for Human Development and Radhicka Kapoor of ICRIER believe that success of this strategy would depend on the way these projects are implemented. Both economists pointed out that such capital assets have long gestation periods, and the expected benefits to the common people may take time to accrue.

To the extent that these projects are of a local nature — rural roads instead of a big highway — they may be more effective in providing relief to the weaker sections of the economy. "Given the extent of pain in the economy, this Budget needed to stand on two legs. Capex is fine but the government also needed to provide more direct relief here and now," Srivastava said.

This was the ninth Budget under PM Narendra Modi. Is there a pattern emerging?

Over the past eight years, the Modi government has employed very different economic strategies, without suggesting a settled ideological anchor. Before 2017, he berated farm loan waivers, but just before the UP elections took the lead in promising them. Similar U-turns were seen with regard to programmes such as MGNREGA, doing away with the land acquisition Act, or the recent repealing of the farm laws. In the run-up to the 2019 elections, direct cash transfers were made to farmers under PM-KISAN — politics of dole of the kind he had long criticised.

Likewise, in last year's Budget, privatisation and disinvestment were the biggest themes — but this year they are completely missing.

And, if the Prime Minister believed in a government investment-led growth strategy, it is not clear why this was not done in 2019-20 itself instead of giving a Rs 1.5 lakh crore worth corporate tax cut to firms, who simply pocketed the money — either to pay off their debts or improve their bottom lines.

Illustration: Suvajit Dey

DECISION 2022

UTTAR PRADESH • UTTARAKHAND • PUNJAB • GOA • MANIPUR

MAYAWATI IN AGRA TODAY

Which way will she lean? BSP chief has Dalits in UP guessing

Will Mayawati be kingmaker, go with BJP or keep options open, they wonder

LIZ MATHEW
AGRA, FEBRUARY 1

ON WEDNESDAY, when Mayawati kicks off her campaign in Agra, amid rumours and intense speculation over her party's strategy and prospects, many will hang on to her every word to assess which way the BSP will lean or whether she would stay neutral and keep her options open.

With the party that once dominated UP's political scene now increasingly becoming a fringe player, the chatter on the ground is all about whether Mayawati, a four-time CM, will fight to retain her party's hold over the Dalit votes or prepare the ground for the BJP to return to power in UP.

While die-hard supporters of Mayawati maintain that "Behenji" will be the kingmaker post counting day on March 10, a section of the Jatavs, her core supporters, appear unsure.

"On February 2, Behenji will give us some clarity," said Sarvesh Kumar, a 52-year-old labourer in a leather factory in Agra. Like Kumar, several Jatavs are puzzled at Mayawati's low-key campaign.

"For those of us who had great faith in Mayawatiji and the BSP, this is disappointing. I have been hearing rumours that she has struck a deal with the BJP in many constituencies. That got many in our community to decide that they would support other parties. But our youngsters are disillusioned with the Yogi Adityanath government, so some say we should support the SP," said Biresh Kumar, a tailor in Rajawati Chauraha in Kasganj.

Jatavs form over 50 per cent of the Scheduled Caste communities in the state, with Dhobis, Pasis, Koris, Valmikis, Dhanuks, Gonds and Katiks, who are spread across the state, making up the rest and forming a potent political force. Of the 403 seats in the Assembly, 86 are reserved for SCs. In 2017, the BJP won 70 of those and in 2012, the SP, which won with a majority, won 58 of the 86. When it won a majority in 2007, the BSP had managed 62 of the total SC seats. These seats, in a sense, hold the key to power in UP.

The BSP, which enjoys an overwhelming support among Dalits, especially the Jatavs, had contested 403 seats but won only 19 in 2017. But its vote share stood at 22.23 per cent.

Meanwhile, Yogi has been campaigning in west UP. *PTI*

Anil Kumar, who runs a shop in Agra, points out that law and order and the condition of roads were "much better" during Mayawati's regime (2007-2012). "The leather industry employs many from the lower castes, but this government increased the tax on leather goods. It obviously hurt them and they are shifting their loyalty to other parties. But with the BSP seen to be under the BJP's thumb, the SP is an option," he said.

However, Badri Narayan, author and professor at Allahabad's Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute, said Jatavs transferring their votes to SP or BJP is a "local phenomenon."

"In and around Agra and some parts of eastern UP, BJP has been working very intensely. Its decision to elevate Baby Rani Maurya and to field her from Agra Rural has helped the BJP split Dalit votes. But overall, the Jatavs will remain with the BSP," he said.

Gauri Shankar, a journalist in Tilsai Kala village, is confident that Mayawati, despite her silence so far, will emerge as the kingmaker. "The BSP will win enough seats and it will be a hung Assembly. Then it will be the kingmaker and form a deal with the BJP," predicts Shankar.

Piyush, a teacher in Agra, says, "I think the BSP will end up as the kingmaker. If so, it will either be a BJP government or BSP government. It is unlikely that Maywati won't stake claim for the top post if it's a coalition government," Piyush said, explaining that the BJP "is in trouble because of the growing discontent among traders and Brahmins".

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

FAITH MEETS POLITICS

At the Sangam in Allahabad on Tuesday. Amid polls and the pandemic, about 1.30 crore people took a dip in the Ganga river during the annual Magh Mela. Allahabad votes on February 27 in the fifth phase of elections in UP. *Reuters*

HASHTAG POLITICS

• Kejriwal begins Goa campaign

AAP convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal reached Goa on Tuesday for a four-day election campaign in the state. He listed out two options for Goans in this election. "Either form an honest government, or vote for any other party that will directly or indirectly benefit the BJP," @AAPGoa quoted him as saying.

• A #LollipopBudget: Congress

The Uttarakhand Congress called the Union Budget presented in Parliament on Tuesday a #LollipopBudget. In a short video clip, the party claimed that the BJP betrayed the farmers with 'black promises'.

• Maurya rakes up Kairana 'migration'

At an election rally, UP Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya raked up "migration of Hindu families" from Kairana. In a 1.51-minute video posted on his Twitter handle @kpmaurya1, he said that the Samajwadi Party has given tickets to the two 'criminal families' responsible for the 'Kairana migration'.

In Mathura's Mant, BSP MLA aims to make it nine in a row

AMIL BHATNAGAR
MATHURA, FEBRUARY 1

IN DECEMBER last year, in the run-up to the UP elections, Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya had shared a tweet suggesting that a temple would come up in Mathura on the lines of Ayodhya and Varanasi. Weeks later, CM Yogi Adityanath spoke on the same lines, effectively setting the tone for the BJP's campaign in Mathura.

Yet, in Mant, one of the five Assembly constituencies that make up Mathura district, the Sangh's temple agenda is not central to any conversation on the election. Instead, it's the candidate who gets a lot of attention — Shyam Sundar Sharma, 72, an eight-time winner from Mant, who is considered to be above caste equations. Locals say Sharma, the BSP's candidate, wins purely on popular sentiment.

"There is a reason why Shyam Sundar has won so many times. First, he never refuses anyone's calls. He spends all his time on the ground. From providing handpumps to fixing roads, he has touched several lives. At this point, Shyam Sundar can stand as an Independent ticket and still win," says Ompal Singh, 50, as he sits huddled with his other Jat friends on a wooden bench in Mant's Jasoli Kala.

SEAT WATCH

Shyam Sundar won his first MLA election in 1989 from Mant and has represented the seat ever since. While he fought his first few elections as a Congress candidate, in 2016, he joined the BSP.

The only election he lost was in 2012, when RLD leader Jayant Chaudhary defeated Shyam Sundar by nearly 16,000 votes. But as Chaudhary decided to resign as MLA and keep his MP seat (Mathura), Shyam Sundar won from the same seat in a by-poll which he fought on a TMC ticket for the sake of a symbol.

"The BJP is trying to rake up many issues but it won't work here. People here need someone who can listen to them," Sharma told *The Indian Express*.

This time, he is up against Rajesh Chaudhary of the BJP and Sanjay Lathar of SP-RLD combine.

A seat with a predominant Jat presence, Mant also has a sizeable Bhramin, Thakur and Dalit population.

Both BJP and SP have given tickets to Jat candidates, given the majority population, but Sanjay Lathar, the SP candidate, is on a sticky wicket since he got the ticket in place of Yogesh Chaudhary, an RLD leader who a local favourite.

Residents recall the 2012 by-polls when the SP, in a massive show of strength, sent several ministers to campaign for Lathar. Yet, Lathar lost to Shyam Sundar.

As one travels from Mant to Mathura, a city that revolves around its temples, the crowds get denser. The city is part of Mathura Assembly seat that is represented by Cabinet Minister Shrikant Sharma. In the previous election, Sharma won by a margin of nearly 1 lakh votes against Pradeep Mathur of the Congress.

While residents express their anger at "the lack of development in the last five years" and blame the party and the candidate, Yogi remains a big draw.

"*Shrikant majboori hai kyunki Yogi zaruri hai* (We have no option but to back Shrikant because it's important that Yogi stays). There is no denying that the MLA could have done more. But we believe in Yogi Adityanath because he has given us a sense of security," says Rakesh Agarwal, a trader in Mathura's Holi Gate market.

Shrikant Sharma is up against BSP's S K Sharma, who recently left the BJP after he was denied a ticket from Mant.

In nearby Chaata seat, Animal Husbandry Minister Laxmi Narayan Chaudhary, the sitting MLA and four-time winner, is fighting RLD's Tejpal Singh, a three-time winner. Laxmi Narayan was previously in the BSP and served as Cabinet minister during Mayawati's regime.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

PM ration scheme is clear winner in Muzaffarnagar seat

AMIT SHARMA
BUDHANA (MUZAFFARNAGAR), FEBRUARY 1

ONE OF the six Assembly segments under Muzaffarnagar, Budhana had seen 1,286 NOTA votes, the highest in the district, in 2017, the election in which the Modi wave was at its peak.

Five years, anger over the farm laws, and an alliance between the SP and RLD later, as memory of the 2013 riots fades, opinion in the seat remains as unclear between the contenders.

Of Budhana's around 3.30 lakh voters, Jats at nearly 63,000 form the bulk, followed by Thakurs (nearly 48,000) and Muslims (43,000), with the SCs making up around 37,000. Muzaffarnagar MP and Union minister Sanjeev Baliyan belongs to Budhana, as does BJP Budhana candidate Umesh Malik (Dungar village).

SEAT WATCH

In 2017, all the six Assembly segments of Muzaffarnagar (Purkaji, Budhana, Muzaffarnagar, Meerapur, Charthaval and Khatauli) had been won by the BJP.

What is a clear hit, across sections, is the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana, under which ration card holders have been getting free rations since the beginning of the pandemic.

"We are getting free rations, that too twice a month. What difference does it make to us if the packet has the photo of Modi, Yogi or Akhilesh?" says 43-year-old Abdul Hamid of Mahaljana village, where Muslims make up 550 of the 800-odd population.

Hamid gets free rations twice a month. *Amit Sharma*

The BJP realises the electoral dividend of the scheme, now extended till Holi.

Six km from Mahaljana, in the Thakur-dominated Nagwa village, it is what the UP government has failed to provide, "government jobs", that is the top-most topic.

The change, many feel, should be to the SP-RLD's Rajpal Singh Baliyan, a two-time MLA from here.

Says Rajpal Singh, "The SP-RLD alliance is working magic at the grassroot level. The (Jats) are with the alliance as they have still not forgotten the sacrifices of over 700 farmers during the protests against the farm laws."

In a strategic move, the SP-RLD has not fielded a single Muslim candidate in the six Muzaffarnagar seats. "This will consolidate minority votes in favour of the SP-RLD," says Dilshaad Beg, who runs a furniture shop in the Budhana market.

Even the AIMIM has fielded a Dalit here, Bheem Singh. The only Muslim candidate is the BSP's Anees.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

TRACKING COVID IN ELECTION-BOUND STATES

	UTTAR PRADESH	PUNJAB	UTTARAKHAND	GOA	MANIPUR
Deaths	23,233	17,292	7,564	3,699	2,050
Deaths Today	26	39	18	6	4
Cases	13,654 → 4,651	5,598 → 1,597	3,727 → 1,840	1,582 → 910	411 → 327
	Jan 23 – Feb 1	Jan 23 – Feb 1	Jan 23 – Feb 1	Jan 23 – Feb 1	Jan 23 – Feb 1

I HEREBY DECLARE

PARKASH SINGH BADAL
Shiromani Akali Dal, Lambi

TOTAL ASSETS:
₹15.11 crore (self)
Cash: ₹2.49 lakh
MOVABLE ASSETS:
Self: ₹8.40 crore

IMMOVABLE ASSETS:
Self: ₹6.7 crore
VEHICLES: Tractor
PENDING CRIMINAL CASES: Nil
CRIMINAL CASES: criminal complaint Balwant Singh vs Sukhbir Singh Badal and Others
PROFESSION: MLA and Agriculturist
EDUCATION: BA

AKHILESH YADAV
SP, Karhal (Mainpuri)

TOTAL ASSETS:
₹40.14 crore (self)
IMMOVABLE ASSETS:
Self: ₹8.43 crore
Wife: ₹4.76 crore
Child: ₹10.39 lakh

IMMOVABLE ASSETS:
Self: ₹17.22 crore
Wife: ₹9.61 crore
LOANS AND LIABILITIES:
Self: ₹28.97 lakh
Wife: ₹14.26 lakh
CRIMINAL CASE:: 1 (IPC Section 188, Disaster Management Act, Epidemic Act)
SOURCES OF EARNING: Salary, agriculture and rent
EDUCATION: BE, Civil Environment

ANOTHER CALLING

In Punjab poll fray, an Arjuna awardee, officer who probed sacrilege firing, ex-bureaucrats

MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 1

AN EX-IAS officer who bagged a UNESCO award, an IPS officer who took premature retirement to join politics, a cop who had once arrested Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, an ex-police officer pitted against Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, and an Arjuna awardee who quit his Punjab Police job last year to take the political plunge. These are among a slew of former bureaucrats and police officers contesting the 20 February Punjab Assembly polls as candidates of various political parties.

The ex-IPS officer Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh, who had quit as IG eight years before retirement after the Punjab and Haryana High Court last year slammed his investigations into the Behbal Kalan firing on anti-sacrilege protesters, is the AAP's "poster boy" in Majha and its candidate from Amritsar North. Once posted as an SSP in Amritsar, he was feted by several Sikh organisations following his resignation.

Dr Jagmohan Singh Raju, who recently resigned as additional chief secretary in Tamil Nadu, is the BJP candidate from the high-profile Amritsar East seat where Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu is pitted against Shriomani Akali Dal(SAD)'s Bikram Majithia.

In Doaba, the fledgling Samyukt Samaj Morcha (SSM) has fielded ex-IAS officer Khushi Ram against sitting Congress MLA and ex-bureaucrat Balwinder Singh Dhaliwal from Phagwara. In Malwa, the BJP has given the ticket to a retired Punjab-cadre IAS officer S R Ladhar from Gill constituency.

Raju, who won the UNESCO King Sejong World Prize for Literacy in 2009, says he joined politics because good politicians are essential for good governance. "And the biggest reform Punjab needs is in its political leadership," he says.

Retd IAS officer Jagmohan Singh Raju; (right) former Team India kabaddi player Gurlal Ghanaur

Almost all the candidates attribute their career shift to a greater calling. Raju says his grandfather was a landless labourer, and his father worked hard to join the civil services. Ladhar says he joined politics for the cause of '*khet mazdoor*'. "I took part in the farmer agitation and even went to Tikri but despite the '*Kisan mazdoor ekta zindabad*' pitch, labourers have been left behind," says Ladhar. The AAP's Jandiala nominee, Harbhajan Singh, a 2012-batch PCS officer, says he quit to do social service.

The BJP has fielded former IPS officer and minorities commission chairman Iqbal Singh Lalpura from Ropar. An author of 14 books on Sikh religious scriptures, he is well known as the officer who had arrested Bhindranwale in April 1981.

Most of the former bureaucrats and ex-policemen have been fielded by the AAP. Ex-ADC Jaswinder Singh Ramdas, who is the AAP's candidate from Attari, says he joined politics because of "Kejriwalism" and the AAP's "Delhi model of governance", though his father Ujagar Singj Rangreta was an Akali MLA.

For Harmohan Singh Sandhu, too, who resigned as AIG last year, politics runs in the family. His mother Satwant Kaur was five-time SAD MLA, while his father Ajaib Singh Sandhu was a two-time SAD MLA. Sandhu joined the SAD but switched to its alliance partner BSP when his constituency Chamkaur Sahib went to the latter. He will now contest against CM Channi.

There is a long line-up of sportspersons-turned-policemen who are in the fray. An Arjuna awardee, Surinder Singh Sodhi was part of the Indian hockey contingent that won gold at the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Last year, he took premature retirement from the Punjab Police to join AAP, which has fielded him from Jalandhar Cantt against sitting Congress MLA and ex-hockey captain Pargat Singh.

Gurlal Ghanaur, who was part of India's Kabaddi World Cup winning team, quit as Punjab Police ASI to contest as the AAP candidate from Ghanaur. Gurdit Sekhon, a national-level basketball player, who had taken premature retirement from Punjab Police in 2010, is the AAP's candidate from Faridkot.

THE WORLD

MEANWHILE

NEW ZEALAND JOURNALIST CAN GO HOME

A pregnant New Zealand journalist who was stranded in Afghanistan by her home country's Covid-19 border policy said she will return home after her government offered her a pathway back. Charlotte Bellis said "I will be returning to my home country New Zealand at the beginning of March to give birth to our baby girl".

Israeli police admit Pegasus use raises legal questions

REUTERS
JERUSALEM, FEBRUARY 1

ISRAEL'S POLICE force, accused by rights groups of improperly using powerful hacking spyware, said on Tuesday it had found "anomalies" in its electronic surveillance that meant the legality of some of its information collection was debatable.

The attorney-general's office ordered a probe into police surveillance tactics on January 20, citing allegations about the Pegasus spyware produced by surveillance firm NSO Group. At the time, police said all wiretaps were conducted lawfully.

But the force's deputy chief of investigations and intelligence, Yoav Telem, told a parliamentary oversight committee that further inquiries uncovered "automatic technological anomalies".

These led to the gathering of materials "over which there is a legal debate — whether they are covered by the world of secret monitoring," a transcript published by the panel quoted him as saying.

Lanka to buy fuel from Indian Oil to tide over crisis

Colombo: Sri Lanka has decided to purchase petrol and diesel, 40,000 metric tonnes each, from the Indian Oil Corporation, according to a Cabinet note on Tuesday, as part of the government's bid to tide over the current fuel and energy crisis faced by the island nation.

The move came weeks after Power Minister Gamini Lokuge said that Sri Lanka will hold talks with the Indian Oil Corporation's local entity amidst a severe foreign exchange crisis. According to the Cabinet statement, the Ministry of Energy has discussed with the IOC to procure 40,000 metric tonnes of diesel and 40,000 metric tonnes of petrol. **PTI**

The highly contagious Omicron variant has led to a sharp rise in infections among all ages, including children. *NYT*

Pfizer expected to ask FDA to authorise its vaccine for kids under 5

THE NEW YORK TIMES
FEBRUARY 1

PFIZER AND its partner BioNTech are expected as soon as Tuesday to ask the Food and Drug Administration to authorise a Covid vaccine for children under 5 years old as a two-dose regimen while they continue to research how well three doses work.

Federal regulators are eager to review the data in hopes of authorising shots for young children on an emergency basis as early as the end of February, according to multiple people familiar with the discussions. If Pfizer waited for data on a three-dose regimen, the data would not be submitted until late March and the vaccine might not be authorised for that age group until late spring.

Scott Gottlieb, a Pfizer board member and former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, told CBS News on Sunday that the vaccine might be authorised as soon as March for the youngest age group.

The FDA and CDC are both expected to convene committees of outside vaccine advisers before a decision on whether to clear the shots. That will give independent experts a chance to discuss the data the companies have gathered.

BA.2 sub-variant more infectious than 'original': Danish study

Copenhagen: The BA.2 subvariant of the Omicron variant, which has quickly taken over in Denmark, is more transmissible than the more common BA.1 and more able to infect vaccinated people, a Danish study has found.

The study, which analysed Covid infections in over 8,500 Danish households between December and January, found that people infected with the BA.2 subvariant were roughly 33% more likely to infect others, compared with those infected with BA.1.

"We conclude that Omicron BA.2 is inherently more transmissible than BA.1, and that it also possesses immune-evasive properties that further reduce the protective effect of vaccination against infection," the researchers said.

The study has not yet been peer-reviewed.

"If you have been exposed to Omicron BA.2, you have 39% probability of being infected within seven days. If you instead had been exposed to BA.1, the probability is 29%," researchers added. **REUTERS**

In his address, Putin says US pushing Russia into starting conflict in Ukraine

THE NEW YORK TIMES
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 1

PRESIDENT VLADIMIR V. Putin said on Tuesday that the United States was trying to pull Russia into an armed conflict over Ukraine that Russia did not want, cautioning that the West had not yet satisfied Russia's demands for a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe but that he hoped "dialogue will be continued."

Putin, whose decision to mass 100,000 troops near the Ukrainian border precipitated the current diplomatic crisis, accused the US of trying to goad his government into launching a conflict, in order to create a pretext for tougher Western sanctions against Russia.

"Their most important task is to contain Russia's development," he said of the United States, repeating one of his frequent talking points. "Ukraine is just an instrument of achieving this goal. It can be done in different ways, such as pulling us into some armed conflict and then forcing their allies in Europe to enact those harsh sanctions against us that are being discussed today in the US."

His comments, at a news conference in Moscow with Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary, marked the first since December that Putin had spoken publicly about a crisis that threatens European security and stability, with a large-scale Russian troop buildup around Ukraine that American officials have warned could be a prelude to an invasion.

Putin described the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO as an existential threat not just to Russia, but to world peace. He said a Western-allied Ukraine strengthened with NATO weapons could launch a war against Russia to recapture Crimea — which Russia annexed in 2014, a move unrecognized by the international community — leading to war between Russia and the NATO bloc.

"If we look at all these many questions deeply, seriously, then it becomes clear that in order to avoid such a negative development of the situation — and we want to avoid it — all countries' interests, including those of Russia, must be truly taken into account, and a way of solving this problem must be found," Putin said. "I hope that eventually we will find this solution though it's not easy, we understand that," Putin said. "But to talk today about what that will be — I am, of course, not ready to do that."

A service member walks past tanks of a mechanised brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces during military exercises outside Kharkiv, on Monday. *Reuters*

EXPLAINED

Ukraine gearing up for war or peace?

UKRAINE'S PRESIDENT signed a decree to boost his armed forces by 100,000 troops over three years. He, however, said that he had ordered the increase "not because we will soon have a war... but so that soon and in the future there will be peace in Ukraine". The move is significant as Russia currently has massed over 100,000 troops near Ukraine's borders.

On junta takeover anniversary, strike in Myanmar, concerns worldwide

GRANT PECK
BANGKOK, FEBRUARY 1

OPPONENTS OF military rule in Myanmar marked the one-year anniversary of the army's seizure of power with a nationwide strike Tuesday to show their strength and solidarity amid concern about what has become an increasingly violent contention for power.

The "silent strike" sought to empty the streets of Myanmar's cities and towns by having people stay home and businesses shut their doors from 10 am to 4 pm.

In Yangon, and elsewhere, photos on social media showed normally busy streets were almost empty.

An anti-military government protest rally on Tuesday in Mandalay, Myanmar. *AP*

The anniversary has also attracted international attention, especially from Western nations critical of the military takeover, such as the US. President Joe Biden in a statement called for the military to reverse its actions, free the country's ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other detainees and engage in meaningful dialogue to return Myanmar on a path to democracy.

A statement from the office of UN Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted "an intensification in violence, a deepening of the human rights and humanitarian crises and a rapid rise of poverty in Myanmar," which it said required an urgent response.

Despite tight security in cities including Yangon, Mandalay and Sagaing, young protesters including Buddhist monks held spirited but peaceful protests at dawn, carrying banners and chanting anti-military slogans.

Security forces in Myanmar have arrested dozens of people in a preemptive move to suppress plans for a nationwide strike, state-run media reported. At least 58 people have been arrested since last week, according to reports in the state-run *Myanma Alinn Daily* paper.

The detainees from the cities of Yangon, Mandalay and Myawaddy include shopkeepers, restaurant owners, a doctor, a make-up artist, a mobile phone repair shop owner and an astrologer, Myanma Alinn Daily reported. **AP**

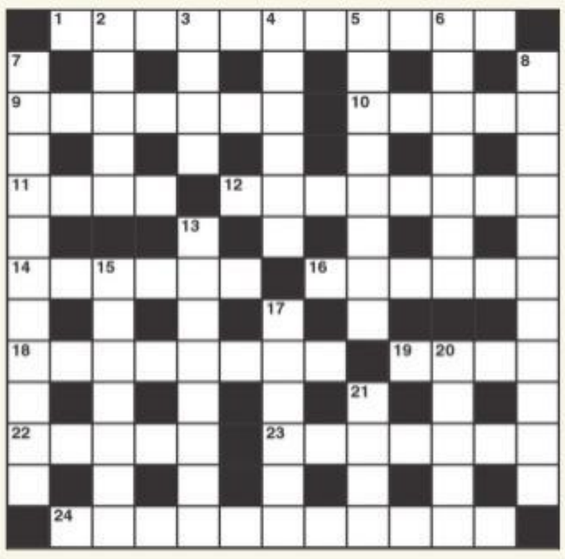
Nepal PM plans local bodies polls, defies coalition

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, FEBRUARY 1

IN A move that may create a rift between Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba-led Nepali Congress and two left-inclined coalition partners, the government seems all set to hold local body elections on May 18.

Deuba, in informal meetings with leaders of the Nepali Congress, said he was determined to hold polls to 753 local bodies across the country on May 18. The coalition parties — Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist centre and the Unified Socialists had sought to defer the polls at least by six months from their current schedule.

CROSSWORD 4653



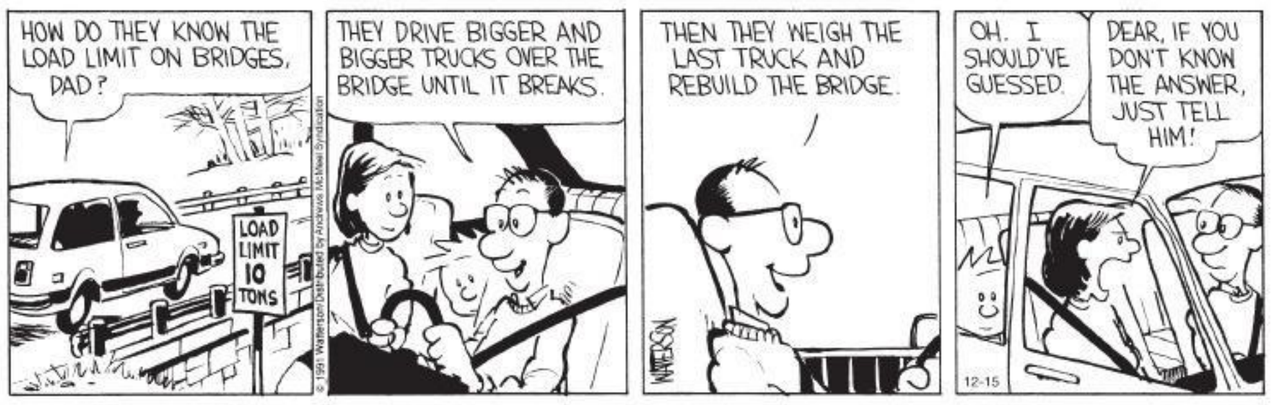
ACROSS
1 Unsteadiness shown when sick in summer break (11)
9 King's daughter in a new production of Lear etc. (7)
10 Something lifted from a carol at Christmas (5)
11 Sort of brake on the turntable? (4)
12 Evidently a painter of note (8)
14 He refuses to eat more quickly (6)
16 Vessel to put to sea (6)
18 A lovely girl in red rose (8)
19 Competent sort of seaman (4)
22 Force one to find a new occupation (5)
23 Representative from the clay pit (7)
24 A band, bond or bind (7,4)

DOWN
2 Declares a piece of poetry lacks point (5)
3 Jot a letter abroad (4)
4 Heartily dislike a hotel under reconstruction (6)
5 A charming thing to wear (8)
6 A bird in doubt - to fly or to land? (7)
7 On the verge of retirement? (5,3,3)
8 They ring for service (6,5)
13 Humiliated and looking dejected indeed (8)
15 It's heavenly under a tree (7)
17 Having failed to win is punished (6)
20 Meat company included in the ban (5)
21 Fight probably rigged (4)

Solutions Crossword 4652: Across: 1 Strata, 4 Beatniks, 9 Resort, 10 Straight, 12 Nile, 13 Hoard, 14 Asti, 17 Disintegrate, 20 Demonstrates, 23 Aged, 24 Pound, 25 Gaga, 28 Seaboard, 29 Maniac, 30 Landlady, 31 Enigma. **Down:** 1 Serenade, 2 Restless, 3 Tore, 5 Enterprising, 6 Tram, 7 Ingest, 8 Sits in, 11 Rose-coloured, 15 Inter, 16 Stars, 18 Stealing, 19 Estancia, 21 Damsel, 22 Regain, 26 Goal, 27 Fawn.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis

CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
You'll know by now that your horoscope is in a state of unrealistic and impractical optimism. Today's extraordinary planetary alignment suggests you have little option but to let life follow its merry course. Allow partners to take the lead if that's really what they want.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
The importance of ethical behaviour now becomes even more acute. If you stray from the straight and narrow you may be the victim of justified censure from your colleagues, let alone a minor legal sanction. All that points to one conclusion: you have to stick to what you know.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Creative speculation of all kinds is on the agenda. You may consider this advice inappropriate, but the stars are urging you to act in an utterly irresponsible manner. Yet the wise Geminian will keep disruption to a minimum, pouring oil on troubled waters.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
The planets are pushing you towards a path which is utterly carefree. Ideally, life should consist of one huge, endless party. However, the downside of current trends is an uncommon tendency to take offence. Why don't you stop being so sensitive and give partners the benefit of doubt?

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
There is a wild nature to your sign, which is why today's exceptionally excitable planetary picture suits you down to the ground. The risk is that you will say or hear things which are unpleasant if not downright offensive. Be wise and hold your tongue.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
By all means take a gamble, place your savings on a race or some other unlikely investment, but don't expect to win. Clever Virgos will now live up to their sign's prudent nature. An added bonus is that the whole of the next month brings the chance of financial favours.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Your family hopes and domestic dreams must take precedence over anything else. Focus on the larger picture and leave the practical details to trustworthy and experienced helpers. Why shouldn't partners do their fair share? After all, you have more important fish to fry.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)
Don't get involved in any back-stabbing or skullduggery, however justified you think you are. People who have done you down will eventually receive their just desserts without any intervention from you. They'll see the error of their ways, you can be sure of that.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)
You will be keen to bring into the open ideas, beliefs and actions which have been taking place behind closed doors. However, you must take pains to be scrupulously fair to all concerned. It's a question of weighing all the pros and cons, and coming to a rational conclusion.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
You must make a conscious effort to maintain an atmosphere of good humour and toleration. This is especially the case at work, or in any public activities in which people are acutely aware of any infringement of their rights. Do try to see other people's points of view.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
For the whole week you must take great care with all travel arrangements. A planetary tendency towards confusion and muddle may be countered by a determination to check all directions and instructions. The real problem lies in your impatience and tendency to overlook details, so slow down.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Yours is an unworldly sign: if possible, put routine cares and chores to one side and allow your visionary nature full scope. Try to broaden your dreams of the future and enhance your understanding of the world you live in. It's just one of those high-minded times.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Unfortunately, our affluent society has also been an ____society. - Hubert Humphrey (8)

LRYEE

HKRSNU

AFULT

IMNUFF

SOLUTION: LEERY, FAULT, SHRUNK, MUFFIN
Answer: Unfortunately, our affluent society has also been an **effluent** society.
- Hubert Humphrey

SUDOKU 4733

Difficulty Level 5s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

	2				1		3	9
7		3					2	
						5		
		5	2		4			
1				9				8
			7		3	4		
		7						
	4					9		3
2	6		3				5	

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4732

4	9	8	3	5	7	2	6	1
2	7	3	9	1	6	8	4	5
6	5	1	2	4	8	7	3	9
5	6	7	8	2	9	4	1	3
9	1	4	5	7	3	6	8	2
8	3	2	4	6	1	9	5	7
7	8	5	6	3	2	1	9	4
3	2	6	1	9	4	5	7	8
1	4	9	7	8	5	3	2	6

MORE TROUBLE FOR GREENWOOD

Manchester United's Mason Greenwood is being investigated for 'sexual assault and threats to kill', the police said. A Greater Manchester Police statement on Greenwood's case said: "Following enquiries so far, he (man in his 20s) has since been further arrested on suspicion of sexual assault and threats to kill." **ENS**

BRIEFLY

Tata Open: Arjun, Ramkumar lose

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 (7-9), 6-4, 3-6 defeat against eight seed Stefano Travaglia, local boy Kadhe lost 6-7 (5-7), 7-6 (6-4), 6-2 to Joao Sousa.

India beat China 2-1 in FIH Pro League

Muscat: 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. After defeating China 7-1 in their debut match on Monday, the Indians emerged 2-1 victorious against the same opponents at the Sultan Qaboos Complex on Tuesday.

I-League to resume on March 3

New Delhi: The I-League season will resume on March 3, two months after it was suspended due to COVID-19 outbreak inside its bio-bubble here, the All India Football Federation said on Tuesday. The AIFF said the bio-bubble will start functioning again from February 20 onwards and strict COVID-19 protocols will be enforced to ensure the safety of the players and officials. Meanwhile in the Indian Super League, Goa and Odisha played out a 1-1 draw on Tuesday.

Cricket lineup confirmed for CWG

Dubai: Cricket is the first discipline to announce its complete line-up for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games after Sri Lanka was confirmed as the eighth team in the women's T20 tournament, the ICC said on Tuesday. Australia, Barbados, England, India, New Zealand, South Africa and Pakistan have already qualified as women's cricket makes its first entry into the Commonwealth Games.

Indian team leaves for Winter Games

New Delhi: Skier Arif Khan, the only athlete representing India at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, left for the Games in the Chinese capital along with Chef De Mission Harjinder Singh and support staff. Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president Narinder Batra wished the contingent luck before its departure for the Games on Monday. Arif, who will participate in Slalom and Giant Slalom events, is aiming a modest top-30 finish in the showpiece which begins on Friday.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

'IPL captaincy right step for India job'

Hardik Pandya, who has led once in his nine-year career so far, has a chance to develop leadership style at Ahmedabad franchise

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 1

THE AUSTRALIANS' trip to India in early 2017 began with a three-day tour match against India A at the Cricket Club of India in Mumbai. Steven Smith and Shaun Marsh got centuries, Shreyas Iyer hammered 202 in 210 balls. Little else stands out from the scorecard, apart from an oddity. It remains, across formats, the only official match in which Hardik Pandya has led a senior representative side in his nine-year career.

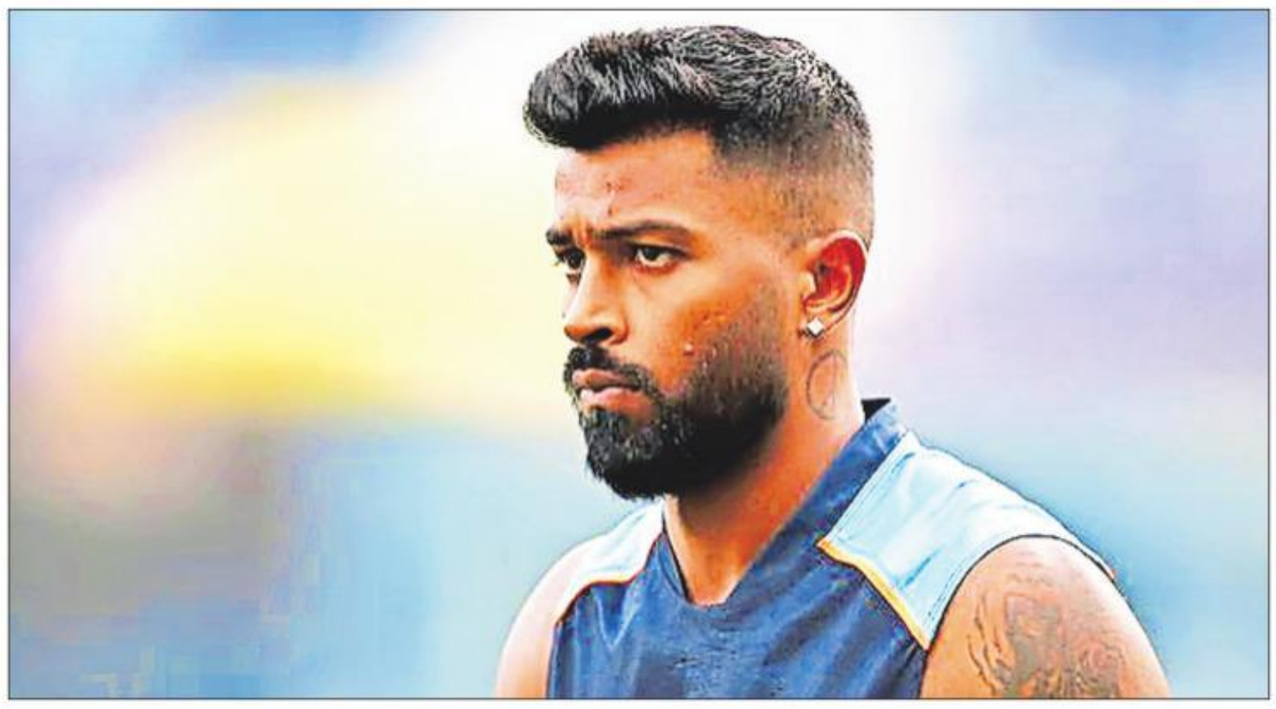
Which is why the newly-formed Ahmedabad Indian Premier League franchise's decision to sign him up as captain has raised more than a few eyebrows. When asked during a media interaction arranged by the franchise on Tuesday about his lack of leadership experience, Pandya, understandably so, didn't even refer to that obscure match at the CCI. "I led when I was in Under-16," he offered, before declaring, "You don't have to be a captain to lead. You lead in a lot of different ways," almost repeating verbatim what Virat Kohli had said on a recent podcast about not being India skipper anymore.

So, what ways might Pandya lead in? Barring the odd match, his international captains so far have been MS Dhoni, Kohli and Rohit Sharma, and he spoke about picking one leadership trait from each.

"From Virat, I will pick his aggression and passion, his energy which is tremendous, to be honest. From Mahi *bhai*, I will pick the composure, the calmness, remaining the same in every situation, and trying to see what new things one can add. From Rohit, I would pick that he lets the player decide what he wants to do. These are the three qualities I'll take from them, and it will be a very good combination."

One doesn't need to have watched Pandya for too long to know that the flamboyant 28-year-old likes the attention. He loves to go over the top not only on the field; he also appears to relish the limelight shining on him. He can easily refer to himself in third person. "Hardik Pandya with bat and ball combined sounds better than just batting."

In that regard, he might even turn out to be an inspired pick. He gives the sense that he wants to be his own man, and now is his chance to be just that. "I genuinely believe it is a new era for us. We can start from scratch, we can create a new culture," he replied when asked how it felt, after so many years, to be in a franchise that was not called Mumbai Indians.



Hardik Pandya has been named the captain of the new Indian Premier League team from Ahmedabad. *Reuters*

New beginning

Pandya said he, Rashid Khan and Shubman Gill – the other two franchise picks so far – were excited at the chance to "create their own legacy on their own terms." It could be a throwaway line among several routinely thrown away at press conferences. Then again, it might be an expression of a real desire to build something the way one has wanted to, but never had the opportunity until now.

Anyway, this is a time in Indian cricket when leadership ambitions are being openly expressed, even by those with no previous exposure to the job. Someone with only a bit of T20 franchise captaincy experience led the country in an overseas Test recently. So, if Pandya feels the IPL provides a pathway for players to come into contention for the national side's captaincy, it should not sound out of place.

"It's a good start because the IPL platform gives a lot of new opportunities, new roles where you get similar kind of pressure," Pandya said. "It's a right step to go ahead and eventually get captaincy for your country, but you don't look for that. If it is supposed to come, it will always come."

Going back to that CCI match - which is admittedly the tiniest of sample sizes – may offer a hint of what Pandya the captain could do. He had opened the bowling both times the Australians batted, and came in at No. 5 the only time India A batted.

That promise has been replaced by a state of such surreal uncertainty that it becomes news if Pandya bowls a few deliveries in the nets now. Pandya himself fuelled the uncertainty on Tuesday. "It is a surprise for everyone," he smiled at the inevitable query on the latest status on his bowling. Pandya had bowled all of four overs in India's five-match campaign in the 2021 T20 World Cup, something he said he did even when he "was not supposed to." He had felt during the tournament that "everything was thrown at me," he said on the show *Backstage with Boria*.

Perhaps that feeling of having been pushed into a corner -- regardless of whether it is justified – has contributed to his belief that a good leader is one who stands with a player in his bad times.

"When someone is on a high and doing well and everything is falling in place, they generally don't need anyone. They are in a good space. I have always believed that when someone is having a bad day, that's when they need you. "So as a captain or as an individual, I will not bother someone who is doing well but when they are down, whatever they need, as a person I will be available. That's the motto I would like to follow and anyone who needs me, I will always be there."

From Virat, I will pick his aggression and passion, his energy which is tremendous, to be honest. From Mahi bhai, I will pick the composure, the calmness, remaining the same in every situation, and trying to see what new things one can add. From Rohit, I would pick that he lets the player decide what he wants to do. These are the three qualities I'll take from them."

HARDIK PANDYA

Wait and watch

Noble proclamation and all, but of course, proof of the pudding is in its eating. That a foreign private equity fund managing an asset portfolio of $122 billion has bought a franchise shows just how incredibly high the stakes have gone in the IPL. Pandya's captaincy baptism will take place in this crucible of commerce. It will be hard to remain good when things turn bad.

Often, Pandya hasn't exactly been one to hide his feelings on the field. During IPL 2018, Jos Buttler had overcome a sluggish Wankhede pitch and was in one of his moods. Mayank Markande, the young leg-spinner, made the T20 sin of giving the last ball of the over some air and was mowed for a six. During the changeover, Pandya began to glare at Markande; he continued to do so without stirring from his spot until Markande lurked away leaden-footed to his fielding position, his eyes unable to meet Pandya's unforgiving ones.

Pandya wasn't leading Mumbai Indians that night. Maybe some of his own bad days since have taught him to conduct himself differently when he leads Ahmedabad. One will find out in a couple of months.

After two years in UAE, IPL likely to take place in India as Covid wave dips

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 1

THE 2022 Indian Premier League is all set to be held in India. According to a top BCCI official, the cricket board has taken a decision in this regard.

Asked if the IPL could go overseas this year, the BCCI official told *The Indian Express*: "It will be in India."

With the third wave of Covid tapering and schools, colleges and other educational institutes are reopening in the states, the BCCI is confident of organising this year's IPL in India, bar any unforeseen circumstances in the future.

For the last two years, the tournament was held in the United Arab Emirates. The 2021 IPL actually had 29 games in India before its Covid-forced postponement and the subsequent relocation to UAE. However, the BCCI feels that unlike last year, when the Covid cases were rising in April-May, the situation this time around is different. The Omicron variant of the virus is on a downward spiral and a lot more people are now double-jabbed. From January, the government has also started vaccination of children for the age group 15-18 years.

The BCCI kept South Africa as back-up options and when in December last year, the third wave of Covid was reaching its peak, it felt like, yet again the IPL would move out of India. But things have changed since.

About a fortnight ago, during the IPL governing council's meeting with the franchise owners, India emerged as a preferred choice to host the IPL this year, although the consensus among the franchise owners was to organise it in Maharashtra only, to shun air travel.

About a fortnight ago, during the IPL governing council's meeting with the franchise owners, India emerged as a preferred choice to host the IPL this year

Maharashtra has four venues, three in Mumbai and the other one in Pune. For two years on the spin, UAE successfully hosted the IPL, across three venues in the country. At the end though, the franchise owners left it to the BCCI as regards to the choice of venue this year, with a request that a final decision before the auction would help them plan their strategies. The full auction will be held in Bangalore on February 12 and 13.

The IPL has two new teams this year following the addition of the Lucknow and Ahmedabad franchises and the tournament will have 74 matches. The BCCI, however, is yet to decide whether to pick Maharashtra as the sole venue or go back to normal; teams playing at their respective home grounds. State associations get Rs 1 crore per game – shared 50-50 between the franchise and the board – as hosting fee. Given that state associations/members are the BCCI's biggest stakeholders, this is also in consideration as well.

Dhawan, Shreyas in top bracket

PTI adds: Top Indian players, including senior opener Shikhar Dhawan and Shreyas Iyer, along with overseas stars Pat Cummins and Kagiso Rabada have been bracketed in the Rs 2 crore highest base price category for the upcoming IPL auction. There will be 590 players who will go under the hammer during the two-day auction. The Australian duo of all-rounder Mitchell Marsh and Steve Smith have also put themselves in top bracket with Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan.

India-WI ODI sans spectators

The three-match ODI series between India and West Indies, scheduled here from February 6 to 11, will be played behind closed doors owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) said on Tuesday. The matches will be played at the Narendra Modi Stadium. After the ODIs, the two teams are scheduled to play a three-match T20 International series in Kolkata, for which the West Bengal government has allowed 75 percent crowd attendance.

UNDER-19 WORLD CUP

While they learn to fly, fledglings fake it till they make it

PRATYUSH RAJ
FEBRUARY 1

WE ALL have been there. Standing in front of the mirror, aping our heroes's batting stance and shots or a bowler's leap and release action. The result wouldn't mirror the original for most of us but a couple of kids have not only replicated but even gone all the way to represent their countries. As that adage goes, fake it till you make it. When the original plays, the experts coo about how his uniqueness can't be copied, that it's a natural action or a shot but these young kids weren't listening to them.

Unsurprisingly, AB de Villiers is a model to imitate. There is an uncanny similarity in how Dewald Brevis plays his shots. Just like his childhood hero, Brevis can play lap shot, scoop, switch hit, ramp, reverse sweep. Brevis is leading the run-scorers charts in the U-19 world cup with 362 runs in four games at 90.50 and a strike rate of 86.39.

Forget the batting style, the youngster even walks and stands like his idol, went to the same high school and even had the same coach Deon Botes. During South Africa's first match against India, the young batter scored a fine 65, and when he completed his half-century, his teammates popped up a placard that read: 'BABY AB!!!' In a free-wheeling chat with The Indian Express, Brevis talked about his obsession with the real AB. "AB is my childhood hero. I grew up close to SuperSport Park. I often watched him play from the grass embankment at SuperSport Park. And he is my mentor too," said Brevis. "My cricket and batting style developed naturally. I never had formal coaching for the first couple of years. I always watched AB playing on TV. It is a massive honour to be compared with AB, but I still have a lot to learn."

Praise from idol

De Villiers, too, is a big fan of Brevis. "I know Dewald very well. I have been his mentor for about two years now and helped him with his batting and his attitude towards cricket," De Villiers told Netwerk24 recently. "We have done quite a few sessions in the indoor nets together. I always invited him for one-on-one sessions when I was preparing for the Indian Premier League, then I threw balls at him, and he at me. "I have to say, I did not expect much until I saw him bat for the first time, then I was quite surprised by the amount of potential he has," said De Villiers. "There are definitely similarities in style, the way he handles the bowlers and his attacking attitude. He still has a long way to go to work out his style and not lose his wicket softly."

The youngster says he is always in touch with AB as he closely monitors his game. "I am in regular touch with AB. His advice is to keep it simple, stay with the basics and play my natural game," said Brevis. "I am good at adjusting to a game situation. My dream is to play all three formats of cricket, and want to prove myself in 4-day cricket and later on in Test cricket."

Brevis hasn't stopped just with AB. For his legspin, he chose Shane Warne. "My brother and I were watching a Test match, and for the first time, I saw Shane Warne's bowling. I started copying him in my backyards, and it has stuck with me since then," he said. "Later, when I joined Affies, Johan Rudolph (father of Jacques Rudolph) worked on my leg-spin. He played a massive role in developing my leg-spin," he added.

South Africa's Dewald Brevis (L), who copies AB de Villiers, is the leading run-scorer in the U-19 World Cup. *Express Photo*

Brevis is a more than handy leg spinner as he has snared four wickets in three matches so far. Brevis has honed his cricketing skills at Afrikaans Hoer Seunskool, more popularly known as Affies. Deon Botes, an Economics professor and now Director of Sport at the school, has played a massive role in the development of several South African cricketers, including the likes of AB de Villers and Faf du Plessis.

"I first met with Botes during a U-14 cricket match between Saints and Affies in 2015. Wian Moulder was playing in that game, and I had a casual chat with Botes about leg-spin. He gave me a few tips, and it made a big difference as I picked eight wickets for 10 in 4 overs against Garsfontein Primary School. I made up my mind and chose Affies as my high school.

"Botes is a legend in school cricket in South Africa. It was a privilege to be mentored by him for the past six years. I spent many hours chatting about cricket in his office instead of sitting in the classroom," said the 18-year-old.

Sibling rivalry

Brevis has grown up in a cricket crazy family, and his elder brother Reinardt is his big inspiration. "My first word was 'ball.' You can say I was born with a bat and a ball in my hand, and I was lucky to have a brother Reinardt, who was equally passionate about cricket. He always wanted to bowl, and I always wanted to bat. It was a dream situation with lots of fights in the backyard, he was trying to take my head off, and I was trying to hit him for a six," recollected Brevis. "My brother was a fantastic fast bowler throughout his school career. His action was often compared to Mike Proctor. Unfortunately, he suffered back injuries and was forced to stop. He is currently studying law at Potchefstroom University and is an assistant cricket coach at Mooiriver primary school," he said.

With de Villiers as his hero and his eagerness to pick Virat Kohli's brain to perfect his cover drive, it is pretty obvious which team Brevis supports in the IPL.

"I support RCB because AB and Virat play there," he said. "In our household, IPL is a huge thing; we hardly miss any games. The biggest conflict is between my brother and me; he is a huge MS Dhoni fan and is a CSK supporter through and through," said Brevis. "Hopefully, one day, I will be able to play in the IPL," he signed off.

Pathirana, the 'Junior Malinga'

Matheesha Pathirana, 19, is called 'Junior Lasith Malinga' in the Sri Lanka cricketing circuit because of his slingy side-on action. Since 2020, the teenager has been a part of Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the Indian Premier League as a reserve player. This is Pathirana's second U-19 World Cup and has snared 7 wickets in the four matches. Pathirana comes from Trinity College of Kandy whose alumni includes Kumar Sangakkara.

India, Australia to meet in a blockbuster SF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COOLIDGE (ANTIGUA), FEBRUARY 1

HEAVYWEIGHTS INDIA and Australia will face off in a blockbuster Super League semi-final of the Under-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.

The four-time champions started the tournament on the right note, overcoming a good South Africa side by 45 runs, but soon ran into a situation where they were struggling to field a playing XI after multiple players were found to have contracted Covid-19 hours before their match against Ireland. Five members of the squad were unavailable for their second group clash, against Ireland on January 19 after a COVID outbreak. Captain Yash Dhull, his deputy Shaik Rasheed, Aaradhya Yadav, Manav Parakh and Siddarth Yadav were part of that group and missed both the Ireland and Uganda fixtures, forcing the BCCI to fly in reinforcements.

But a spirited India got the better of all the challenges thrown. India are back to full strength for the semifinal against Australia.

Live on Star Sports Network, 6.30 pm

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