

# POLITICS

## Union Budget 2020-21

After Acche Din, New India, it seems the government has abandoned the target of \$5 trillion economy. Budget confirms not only the bankruptcy of economy but also a bankruptcy of govt's ideas ...  
— AHMED PATEL, SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

### Reactions....

The new '16-point action plan for agriculture' makes no mention of any initiatives or schemes to encourage crop diversification, and a failure to diversify would further aggravate the problems for the country on the agriculture front. The Budget is high on pomposity and low on tangibles.  
— Amarinder Singh, Punjab chief minister

The 'positive' Budget is in the interest of the common man and farmers. The middle-class of the country will benefit from the introduced changes in the income-tax slabs and the construction of solar grids on open and barren lands will be beneficial to farmers and traders.  
— Nitish Kumar, Bihar chief minister

I am shocked & appalled to see how the Central Government plans to ambush the heritage & legacy of public institutions. It's the end of a sense of security. Is it also the end of an era? #LIC #IndianRailways #AirIndia #BSNL.  
— Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal CM

It is deeply disappointing for our state. This budget is unjust for Maharashtra and Mumbai which is the country's growth engine. It does not support development of basic amenities in Mumbai.  
— Uddhav Thackeray, Maharashtra CM

The government's 5 trillion economy assertion had turned out to be a 'jumla' and there was no mention of the word employment in the Budget. Will create five new smart cities? No mention of the 100 smart cities!  
— Randeep Singh Surjewala, Congress leader

The finance minister delivered a long budget speech but it was completely a labyrinth of data, disappointing and selling dreams. There is nothing for villages, poor, youth, employment and security of the women.  
— Kamal Nath, MP chief minister

The Union Budget will help in creation of jobs, it is in the interest of farmers, it will boost continuous development and is a development-oriented budget. For this, I would like to congratulate Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.  
— Yogi Adityanath, UP chief minister

The 'most disappointing Budget'. There is no information about how many promises have been fulfilled, which were made by the BJP government. The economy, which is on downturn, will decline further.  
— H.D. Kumaraswamy, Former K'taka CM

## Budget fails to address creation of jobs: Opp.

### Move to sell stake in state-owned LIC comes under severe criticism

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY and YOJNA GUSAI  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

Opposition parties slammed the Union Budget on Saturday saying it had no plans to tackle the biggest issue facing the country which was unemployment. The parties also came down heavily on the government for a bid to "privatise" the Life Insurance Corporation of India.

The ruling BJP though hailed it as "visionary and futuristic, growth-oriented and all-inclusive". Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi described the Budget as repetitive and having a hollow approach. He said it does not address the main issue of unemployment and the poor state of the economy. "The main issues confronting this country today are unemployment and the poor state of economy. I did not see any concrete, strategic idea that would help our youngsters get jobs. I saw a lot of tactical stuff, redundant things, I did not see any central idea," he told the media outside Parliament minutes after the presentation of the Budget.

Former finance minister P. Chidambaram said: "The government is in complete denial that the economy faces a grave macro-economic challenge and the growth rate has declined in six successive quarters. There is nothing in the Budget that leads us to believe that the growth will revive in 2020-21. The claim of 6 to 6.5 per cent growth next year is astonishing and even irresponsible."

On the new income tax regime, which does away with exemptions given under various sections while reducing the tax rates, Mr Chidambaram said: "We would welcome any relief to the lower brackets. But only when you trade off the exemption then you can come to know the actual relief."

The Congress also questioned the government's move to sell off stake in the state-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India.

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot said: "The announcement that the government would sell part of its stake in LIC is disappointing. Common people have invested their hard-earned money in LIC, all those people now feel cheated. The government must not put people's deposits in danger in a bid to privatise LIC."

Describing the Budget speech as "filibuster", CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said the Budget was a complete failure as far as addressing the economic slowdown was concerned.

"The only source of revenue the government is banking on is privatisation," he said criticising the decision to sell off a part of government stake in LIC. He also alleged that talk on only nominal rates as compared to the real ones was an effort to obfuscate data. Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar said that the automobile sector has been completely ignored and unemployment issue is not addressed fairly. "It was the lengthiest speech, but lacked farsightedness and direction," he said.

Trinamul Congress spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien slammed the government over tax cuts and said: "Read the fine print on the so-called IT cuts. The government removes incentives to 'save' in a nation where there is no social security. 70/100 tax exemptions withdrawn. Exemptions were given as incentive to save money in PPF, LIC, health insurance, etc."

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's father Narayanan Sitharaman and her daughter Parakala Vangmayi at Parliament on Saturday.

The government has given up on reviving the economy, or accelerating the growth rate, or promoting private investment, or increasing efficiency, or creating jobs, or winning a greater share of world trade. I am certain that even the most staunch BJP supporters or workers latch onto any idea and take it to the public.

— P. Chidambaram  
Former finance minister

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## FM peppers Budget with Kashmiri poem

### Allocates '30,757cr to J&K, Ladakh gets '5,958cr

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

As questions about the prevailing situation in Kashmir, the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman quoted a Kashmiri poem to indicate that Kashmir Valley is turning normal after the abrogation of Article 370.

"Humara watan khilte hue Shalimar bagh jaise, humara watan Dal lake mein khilte hue kamal jaise, nau jawanon ke garam khoon jaise, mera watan tera watan, humara watan, duniya ka sabse pyara watan," she said while beginning her Budget speech.

The government has allocated ₹30,757 crore for Jammu and Kashmir, and ₹5,958 crore for Ladakh, both of which are new Union Territories. Following the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was converted into a Union Territory. Ladakh, which was part of the state, was formed as a separate Union Territory.

The government has provisioned ₹279 crore as the contribution to Union Territory Disaster Response Fund while ₹30,478 has been allocated for meeting its resource gap, the Budget document said.

In Ladakh, the government has allocated ₹83.38 crore for rural development, ₹80.69 crore for public works, ₹54.07 crore for power, ₹52 crore for civil aviation and ₹47.50 crore for tourism sector among others.

The Centre had abrogated special status of Jammu and Kashmir state under Article 370 on August 5 last year and split it into two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced insurance of 6.11 crore farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna.

the growing unemployment, rural wage crash, farmers' distress suicides and galloping prices," he tweeted. CPI general secretary, D. Raja said the Union Budget exposed how the government is abdicating all its responsibilities by privatising public assets.

"This budget is a budget for privatisation and everything is to be done using PPP route including rail-

## CBI gets nominal hike of 4cr

New Delhi: The premier investigation agency, CBI, has been allocated ₹802.19 crore in the Budget, a marginal increase of 4 crore from last year. The agency has on its hands several extradition cases where legal battles are being fought in courts abroad, corruption cases, banking scams and special crime cases domestically which need large-scale deployment of workforce and resources. It received an increase from 798 crore allocated last year to ₹802.19 crore in 2020-21.

According to astrology, Saturday belongs to Saturn and the colour of the day is dark-blue. But finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman came wearing a bright yellow sari to present her second General Budget. Yellow is the colour for Thursday.

Those who believes in wearing colour of the day believes that yellow is the colour of aspiration. In fact, some journalists tweeted in the morning that the finance minister will present an aspiration budget. And lo and behold, while reading her speech, Ms Sitharaman mentioned several times that this was an aspirational Budget.

Ultimately, however, she could not finish her speech because she suddenly felt uneasy. Veteran MPs claimed that she is the first finance minister who could not read the full Budget speech.

## TMC's DOCTOR MP HELPED MINISTER TO BECOME STABLE IN THE HOUSE

At the fagend of her Budget speech, Ms Sitharaman suddenly started sweating and was visibly feeling uncomfortable.

Watching this from the Opposition benches, TMC MP Dr Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, who is a regular medical practitioner, realised that there was a problem and she rushed towards her and tried to shake her hands forcibly. Speaker Om Birla could not realise what the MP was doing and asked the MP to go back to her seat and not to disturb the minister.

Later Dr Kakoli explained that if someone stands for a long in one place, the pulse rate could fall and blood circulation can get disturbed. In this situation someone has to bring her to her senses by pulling her hands. And that's exactly what she tried to do.

At that point defence minister Rajnath Singh wanted to know from her how many pages were left in the speech. By that time she had spoken for 2 hours 40 minutes and the defence minister asked her to stop and lay the rest of the speech on the table of the House.

## Nothing offered to alleviate peoples' misery, rural wage crash: Yechury

### Budget about 'platitudes, slogans': Left

New Delhi, Feb. 1: Left parties on Saturday said that the Union Budget was all about "platitudes and slogans" and exposed how the government is abdicating all its responsibilities by privatising public assets.

Slamming the Union Budget presented by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Left parties said it was a "budget of privatisation" and has nothing substantial to alleviate "people's miseries".

"The less you have to say longer will be the speech. The budget has completely failed to address the current economic slowdown. It does not have a road map on how the economy can be turned around," CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said.

He said the Indian economy is bordering on recession and the FM's speech didn't take the advice given by her Chief Economic Advisor of "increasing public expenditure."

"The actual figures of revenues and expenditure plan was not mentioned in the Budget speech. The government is meeting the revenue shortfall by privatisation like selling stakes in the Life Insurance Corporation of India.

"They have announced that there will be lowering of central funding for centrally sponsored schemes and the burden will be passed on to states," Mr Yechury said, adding that this is another attack on federalism.

He also said the Budget was one of "platitudes and slogans."

"Nothing substantial to alleviate peoples' misery,

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Farmers carry cabbage from their field on the outskirts of Amritsar on Saturday. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced insurance of 6.11 crore farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna.

the growing unemployment, rural wage crash, farmers' distress suicides and galloping prices," he tweeted. CPI general secretary, D. Raja said the Union Budget exposed how the government is abdicating all its responsibilities by privatising public assets.

## Modi govt chooses to consolidate on past reforms

Budget continued with the thrust on infrastructure, social welfare, improvement in ease of living, simplification on taxes and leveraging technology for better governance. Full tax exemption to Sovereign Wealth Funds for investments in Infrastructure and other notified sectors is a significant positive. It was also heartening to see the focus on sustainability through measures on environment and climate change.

Similarly, the continued focus on cooperative federalism is positive. The personal tax reduc-

tions was well-intentioned but the flip side is that removal of exemptions could have negative implications for savings. More could have been done for the real estate sector beyond increasing the window of tax exemptions by a year given its multiplier impact on the economy. Hopefully, the government will pay attention to the needs of the sector going forward.

After the initial reaction, expect investor focus to shift back on earnings and global cues.

In our view, significant easing in financial conditions, both locally and glob-

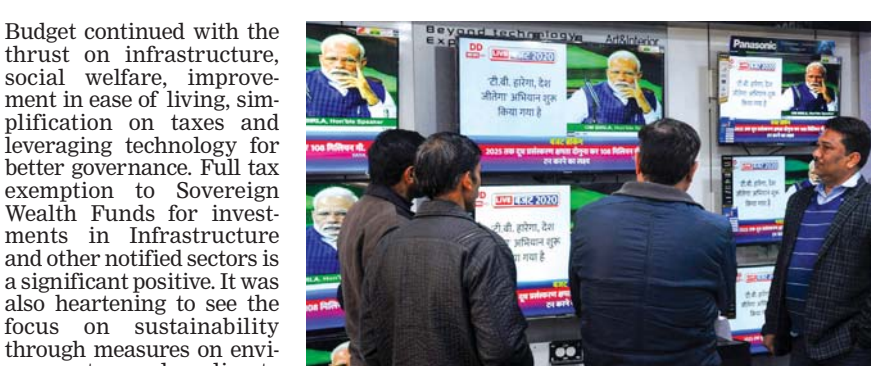
ally, improving prospects for the rural economy given increase in food prices and better acreage, and the various measures taken by the government to stimulate the economy so far should bring about an improvement in both economic activity and corporate earnings going forward. However, in the absence of a significant growth boost in the Budget and given the cautious global environment owing to the spread of Coronavirus, market should stay volatile in the near term.

The writer is ED and CIO of SBI Mutual Fund

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## BUDGET DIARY

BY GAUTAM LAHIRI

### FINANCE MINISTER SITHARAMAN'S ASPIRATIONAL COLOUR

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# BUSINESS



## Union Budget 2020-21

I am less optimistic about strong economic revival. Removal of exemptions on DDT will hurt individual tax payer and affect consumer spending. Why no export incentives?

— KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW, BIOCON

### Reactions....

**NIRANJAN HIRANANDANI, PRESIDENT, NAREDCO**

Marathon Budget...failed to announce much-awaited economic stimulus to fuel kick-start of a \$5trillion economy. It subsequently lacked incremental allocation inadequacies with over-emphasis on fiscal prudence and inflation target.

**RAJESH AGGARWAL, MD, INSECTICIDES INDIA**

The budget provisions for the agricultural sector to increase farmers' income by using fallow/barren lands to set up solar plants is an innovation and welcome step.

**R. K. GURUMURTHY, HEAD TREASURY, LVB**

The worry is that there is no specific mention for bank recapitalisation, which, when read with RBI's Financial Stability Report that NPLs could still haunt banks in India, could raise concern and cripple the ability of banks to lend.

**KAMLESH RAO, CEO, ADITYA BIRLA SUN LIFE INSURANCE**

While, listing of LIC is a good move which will bring focus on the life insurance sector, other expectations of sector could have been met better. The insurance industry will be watchful of the implication of the direct tax changes in the new tax regime.

**SIMON GEORGE, PRESIDENT, CARGILL INDIA**

Government's initiative to encourage the states to adopt the three central model laws on agricultural land leasing, agricultural produce & livestock marketing and contract farming should go a long way to get these laws implemented on ground.

**KRISH IYER, PRESIDENT & CEO AT WALMART INDIA**

The Budget 2020 would lead to creation of a New Aspirational India, anchored around Agriculture, Health and Education. This Budget seeks to strengthen grassroots of the economy with its positive push towards creation of a strong agriculture infrastructure.

**RAJEEV CHABA, PRESIDENT & MD, MG MOTOR INDIA**

We feel that the customs duty hike on EVs assembled in India from 10% to 15% is a bit harsh, as this may impact the nascent category which was beginning to expand off late.

**VISHESH C CHANDIOK, CEO, GRANT THORNTON INDIA**

Direct tax dispute resolution, e-invoices & refunds, tax-payers charter, no small company audit, instant PAN allocation, subordinate debt as equity, are all steps that will build trust and propel growth.

**L. VISWANATHAN, PARTNER, CYRIL AMARCHAND MANGALDAS**

"The announcement of Rs 22,000 crore as support to infrastructure pipeline to cater for equity support to infrastructure finance companies...to create a further financing and significant source of long-term debt for infrastructure projects is welcome.

## A 1,000-decibel boo from market

**ASHWIN J PUNNEN, MUMBAI, FEB. 1**

The budget announcement coincided with massive selling in the market. The Sensex plunged by over 1,000 points intra-day, its biggest fall in a decade, as the budget failed market expectations.

Investors pressed the sell button on Saturday as the finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman pegged the fiscal deficit at 3.8 per cent for the current fiscal, compared with the earlier target of 3.3 per cent of GDP and no growth-boosting measures were seen in the lengthy document for the sagging economy.

The Sensex ended 987.96 points, or 2.43 per cent, lower at 39,735.53. On similar lines, the Nifty-50 plunged 300.25 points, or 2.51 per cent, to close at 11,661.85. Investor wealth, meas-



ured in terms of value of all listed shares on BSE, eroded by Rs 3,46,256.76 crore to settle at Rs 1,53,04,724.97 crore.

This was the benchmark's biggest drop since October 24, 2008, when it had plummeted 1,070.63 points, and the fourth biggest fall overall.

"Expectations were very high and therefore market is a bit disappointed but there are a lot of incentives for the foreign investors," said Nirmal

Jain founder & chairman, IIFL.

Since the last Budget presentation in July 2019, the Sensex has gained only 222.14 points or 0.56 per cent, while the Nifty slumped 149.30 points or 1.26 per cent.

Sitharaman also proposed lower income tax slabs for those foregoing various exemptions, and removed dividend distribution tax on companies, effectively shifting the tax burden to the recipients.

Analysts said income tax slab rejigs stoked fears of declining inflows in tax-saving investment avenues, while the proposed transfer of dividend distribution tax to investors added to the negative sentiment.

"The lack of major growth boosting measures in itself is negative for the equity market. The new income tax regime would also be negative for tax exempt equity savings schemes. Recasting of dividend taxation norms also seem to be on the balance negative for most domestic equity investors. Overall, the budget seems to be negative for the equity market," said Sujan Hajra, chief economist and executive director, Anand Rathi Shares & Stock Brokers.

The biggest losers in the Sensex pack were ITC, L&T, HDFC, SBI, ONGC,

ICICI Bank and IndusInd Bank, losing over 6 per cent. Sectorally, the BSE Realty Index plunged 7.82 per cent, followed by capital goods, industrials, finance, Bankex and metal. IT and Teck ended with gains of up to 1.41 per cent.

Sitharaman said certain government securities will be open for foreign investors, adding that the Centre plans to increase investment limit for FPIs in corporate bonds from 9 per cent to 15 per cent.

"We are extremely disappointed with the budget. No significant announcement for industry or consumers. Namesake changes in income tax slabs only to create political mileage that may not lead to any significant changes in growth prospects in near-term, Abhinav Gupta, President, Capital Market, Share India Securities, said.

## Bank deposits insured upto ₹5 lakh now

**FALAKNAAZ SYED, MUMBAI, FEB. 1**

In a confidence-boosting measure, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed to increase the limit of insurance cover in case of bank failure on deposits to Rs 5 lakh from the existing Rs 1 lakh. The proposal comes in the wake of the scam at Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative Bank (PMC) and the furore over the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) Bill, which had a bail-in clause for customer's bank deposits.

Fixed deposits of all banks, including foreign banks, regional rural banks and co-operative banks are currently insured up to Rs 1 lakh (both principal and interest amount) by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) against default of banks due to liquidation, cancellation of banking licence or merger. Banks have to pay a nominal premium for the cover from DICGC, a subsidiary of the RBI. All deposits of a depositor maintained across all branches of the failed bank are insured upto Rs 1 lakh only on the aggregate amount.

"I wish to inform this august House that robust mechanism is in place to monitor the health of all scheduled commercial banks and that depositors' money is safe. Further, the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) has been permitted to increase Deposit Insurance Coverage for a depositor, which is now one lakh to five lakh per depositor," said Sitharaman in her Budget speech.

Experts said that while



higher insurance cover on bank deposits should support the deposit accretion of banks, it would increase the premia cost for banks.

C.H. Venkatchalam, general secretary of All-India Bank Employees Association, said, "Already, under the provisions of the Banking Regulations Act, the deposits of our banks enjoy the guarantee and no bank can be closed down. By increasing the insurance cover, the cost will go up for the banks which in turn will be put on the shoulders of the banking public through hike in service charges. Increase in insurance cover on bank deposits is warranted only for urban co-operative banks, which are vulnerable."

The current insurance cover of Rs one lakh continues from May 1, 1993 during this time the value of rupee has eroded sharply, necessitating immediate augmentation of coverage. However data pointed out that the bulk of the claims have come from co-operative banks.

Up to March 31, 2019, cumulatively Rs 295.9 crore has been paid towards claims for 27 commercial banks since the inception of deposit insurance in January 1962.

## Bullion bourse to become reality

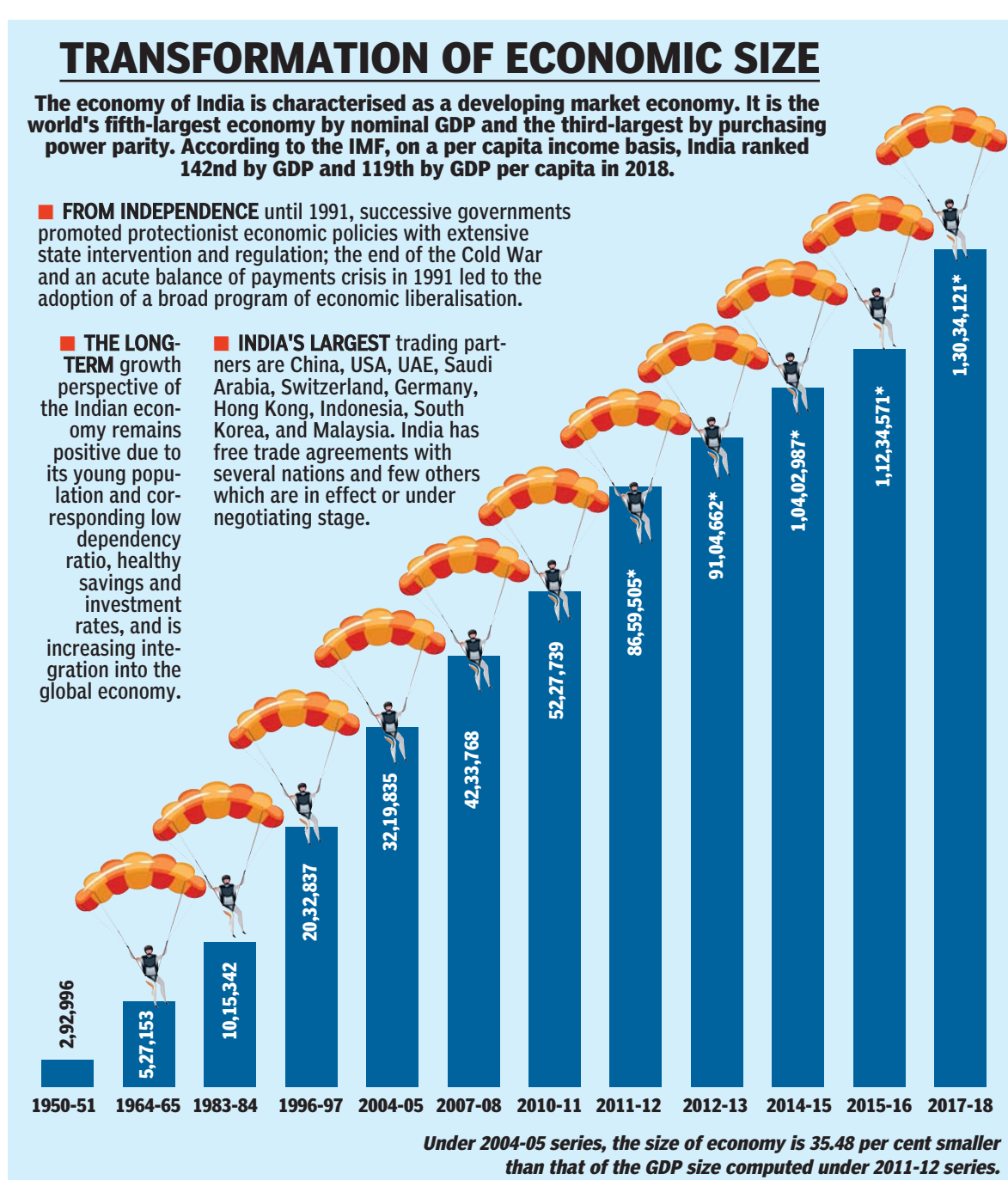
**SANGEETHA G, CHENNAI, FEB. 1**

While the gold policy is still pending, the government proposes to implement one of the recommendations—bullion exchange.

"GIIFT City would set up an international bullion exchange(s) in GIIFT-IFSC as an additional option for trade by global market participants. This will enable India to enhance its position worldwide, create jobs in India and will lead to better price discovery of gold," said the finance minister.

GIIFT IFSC already has an approved Free Trade Zone for housing vaults. It also has 19 insurance entities, 40 banking entities. It has also provided for setting up precious metals testing laboratories and refining facilities.

"The creation of an International Bullion Exchange by GIIFT CITY will add liquidity and depth to the gold commodity market. There is tremendous value potential to be unlocked from the gold industry in India in terms of it being one of the largest consumers of the precious metal globally and in terms of the finesse of jewellery produced in India, said Somasundaram PR, managing director, India, World Gold Council.



## FM takes care of many concerns of MSMEs

**SANGEETHA G, CHENNAI, FEB. 1**

The budget has tried to address some of the major concerns of the micro small and medium sized companies. Enhancing financing opportunities, promoting exports and easing regulatory hurdles are some of the budget proposals for the sector.

"The budget has proposed to make necessary amendments to the Factor Regulation Act 2011 to enable NBFCs to extend invoice financing to the MSMEs through TReDS. Working capital credit remains a major issue for the MSMEs. It is proposed to introduce a scheme to

provide subordinate debt for entrepreneurs of MSMEs. This subordinate debt to be provided by banks would count as quasi-equity and would be fully guaranteed through the Credit Guarantee Trust for Medium and Small Entrepreneurs (CGT/MSE).

The corpus of the CGT/MSE would accordingly be augmented by the government," said the finance minister.

"The lack of timely finance and working capital has always been the top-most concern for MSMEs, be it for local or global

trade. The provision to enable NBFCs to extend invoice financing to MSMEs will open up an additional financing channel for MSMEs, helping in economic and financial sustainability of the MSME sector.

Getting timely access to capital would even allow more MSMEs to explore global opportunities as well as increase the volume of the trade," said Pawan Gupta, founder of Connect2India.

According to the minister, more than five lakh MSMEs have benefited

from restructuring of debt permitted by RBI in the last year. The government has asked RBI to extend restructuring window by one year to March 31, 2021.

Further, an app-based invoice financing loans product will be launched. This will obviate the problem of delayed payments and consequential cash flows mismatches for the MSMEs. Further, a National Logistics Policy is being proposed to create a single window e-logistics market and focus on generation of employment, skills and making MSMEs competitive.

Promoting exports by mid-sized companies, selected sectors such as

pharmaceuticals and auto components will receive handholding support for technology upgradations, R&D, business strategy etc. A scheme of Rs 1,000 crore will be anchored by Exim Bank together with Sidbi. Both these institutions would contribute Rs 50 crore each and debt funding of Rs 900 crore from banks would be made available.

Currently, businesses having a turnover of more than Rs 1 crore have to get their books of accounts audited by an accountant. This has now been raised by five times to Rs 5 crore, if businesses carry out less than 5 per cent business transactions in cash.

## Near-term market volatility likely over unmet expectations



By Invitation  
**Motilal Oswal**

The Union Budget 2020-21 was announced in the backdrop of unfavourable economic environment, with real GDP growth weakening to sub-5 per cent. As such, there was high expectation from the budget to reinvo-

rate the economy by 1) stimulating investment and 2) boosting personal consumption. Nevertheless, the fiscal space to stimulate the economy was very limited. Given the constraints, the finance minister seems to have done a tight-rope

walk, to meet the key expectations of boosting investment and consumption.

Despite all the constraints, the FM in some way attempted to address the key demands such as 1) removal of 20 per cent dividend distribution tax (DDT) and 2) lowering personal taxes in line with corporate tax rate and 3) boosting investments. While DDT was completely abolished and made taxable at the hand of recipients at marginal tax rates, FM has introduced an optional sim-

plified tax structure based on income tiers with lower rates for individuals, but without any exemptions. Given the multitude of exemptions available to a salaried person, the net benefit to the individual would depend on his utilisation of existing deductions. Hence, benefits seem

limited on this front despite lower tax rate in this option, while removal of deductions could have implications for financial intermediate plays.

With an eye to boost investments, the FM has allowed sovereign funds a 100 per cent tax exemption on interest, dividend and

capital gains for investment made before March 2024. This seems like a key positive and should help government in its disinvestment plans for FY21.

The key misses for the budget seems to be a) there were expectations of TARP like structure to address the NBFC issue and boost credit in the unorganised segment, b) No significant policy allocation for Make or Assemble in India and c) No measures to resolve the real estate stalemate.

Given the constraints, the FM seemed to have been able to only partially meet some of the high expectations the market had. This could imply near-term market volatility for the retail investors. However, this should not discourage the long-term investors as India continues to provide significant bottom up entrepreneurial investment opportunities.

— The author is, MD & CEO, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.





Too often, we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought

Entrepreneurship is all about deferred gratification

# DECCAN Chronicle

2 FEBRUARY 2020



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

## Of dogs of mayhem and passing dogs

This Republic Day, I dozed off watching a cricket match after the Parade, and dreamt that I could understand dogs speaking. I was leading our two dogs to the beach for our regular evening walk when I heard them discuss me. "He doesn't like us," the older one, Fudge, told Wonder, the baby.

"Why do you say that?" asked Wonder. "He feeds us only twice every day, but he himself eats at least thrice, and he feeds the cat five times," replied Fudge. "I'm hungry all the time."

"We must get him to feed us more," said Wonder. "Maybe he could give us some of his lunch. He's stupid enough for us to persuade him to do that."

Then we turned a corner and saw an old white stray who lives in a dry spot under a culvert. He used to be the leader of a local pack of dogs and he carries the scars of many battles. He's old now, and stiff and weak, and lives on scraps that neighbours give him. Though he can no longer fight, other young strays often keep him company, and I've always wondered why. Well, I just found out, because this two-year-old who lives on the beach was asking his advice, making soft growling noises.

"There are these dogs that hang around the temple," the two-year-old stray said, "eating scraps that the priests throw them. They want my pack to join them. They say the dogs that hang around by the mutton shop near the mosque plan to attack them."

"And what do you think?" asked the wise old dog. "I wanted to be fair, so I spoke to one of the mutton shop dogs," said the stray. "He told me it was the other way round, that the temple dogs plan to attack them. I really don't know what to think."

"Did you ask these fellows where they got their opinions from?" asked the old dog.

"Sure," said the youngster. "From the humans around them."

"And did you try to find out what the humans feel?" asked the old dog.

"Sure," said the youngster. "We live by the beach, so there are plenty of humans around. Some from the temple, others from the mosque. They say the same things. But the ones from the mosque... Well, they don't like us much, though they leave food lying around for us."

"What do you mean?" asked the old dog.

"Well, they try to drive us away if we go too close to them," came the reply, "but they bring food to the beach, just like the temple crowd. They leave it lying around, so we eat well most days. They might drive us away but they feed us, so maybe they don't really dislike us."

"Ah!" said the old dog. "Now you understand. They don't hate anyone but their own kind. They like to fight."

The youngster shook his head. "How could that be?" he asked. "Us dogs fight over territory, maybe over a bit of food, or a female... But I don't hate any dog, and I don't fight without reason."

"Right," said the old dog, "but these humans, they fight all the time, and they do terrible things!"

"Like what?" asked the youngster.

"They have these machines to light fires far away," said the old dog, "and thundersticks with which they can kill from a distance, and iron birds that fly and breathe fire. They're the only animals I've ever seen that kill what they'll never eat."

"How do you know all this?" asked the young dog in bewilderment.

"Humans have these boxes inside their houses which make noise and show moving pictures," said the old dog.

"Yes," said the youngster. "I've seen them. At first I was a little scared of them but no longer. They don't bite."

"They don't bite," said the old dog, "but they show you a lot of nasty stuff that humans can do. This morning they had a display of men carrying firesticks and firebirds and all kinds of other terrible weapons. And you know the strange thing about all that? Every single thing they showed off was meant to kill other humans... That's all they think about: how to kill large numbers of each other. They're even proud of it!"

"They must be crazy!" said the youngster, shaking his head. "I thought they were smart, because they know how to get food whenever they like, but maybe they're not so smart after all."

"Exactly," said the old dog. "So don't let your pack join either of the gangs. If the humans begin to fight, and they bring out their blades and firesticks, we've all had it anyway."

"But then what am I going to tell the pack chief?" asked the youngster. "He told me to get your advice so he can decide."

"Think for yourself," said the old dog. "You see these two fellows up there, with the fat hairy human?" He indicated us with an eyebrow.

"Yes," said the youngster. "I've seen those fellows. They live inside the house and the human feeds them."

"Just now they were trying to figure out a way to get the human to feed them more. That's how you should think. How to get the most out of humans..."

The clamour of Fudge and Wonder barking at a passing dog woke me up just then, and I went back to watching cricket. But that evening, when I took the dogs to the beach, we passed the old dog snoozing under the culvert and I couldn't help wondering who was the smarter of us...

Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.

Subhani



## New poster boys of an old vocabulary



Shreya Sen-Handley

No More Mansplaining

Old white men telling us what to do. Old brown men pontificating on our purpose in the world, if any. Self-important young jerks joining in. And the Women of Patriarchy, those handmaidens of mansplaining, parroting the same preposterous message. It doesn't matter who does it, it grates like the word itself. Because mansplaining is onomatopoeic, embodying its meaning perfectly in the heavy-handed violence of its sound.

Its bludgeoning thud also gives me a sense of déjà vu, because I've been here before. Not only being mansplained to (who amongst us hasn't had that pleasure?), but on my Sherwood Forest soapbox telling y'all about it. Writing about mansplaining and more seven years ago for a popular column, and for the book *Memoirs of My Body* that followed. I hadn't anticipated that we'd be agonising over it still, and with greater urgency than before. Because these seven years have sprung upon us a new-old mansplaining vocabulary, with new-old poster boys spreading it forth.

Yet, "chill". Not because you should roll over, but because this happy-hippie usage is now part of the Mansplainer-in-chief, Donald Trump's spiteful arsenal, and should fill you with icy horror. Incensed by Greta Thunberg's impassioned crusade against climate change and his Bully Boys' Club's remorseless resource-stripping of this planet (as well as her pipping him to the post of *Time Magazine's*

Person of the Year 2019!), the septuagenarian lashed out at the young activist, ordering her to go instead to "an old-fashioned movie, and chill". And despite his disparagement of her at the World Economic Forum in Davos again last month, she hasn't rolled over, nor should we. Because, as Bangladesh drowns, Antarctica melts and Australia burns, killing a billion beautiful creatures, Emperor Gluteus Maximus' squawks and tweets, which we'd dismissed as comedy dog, continue to fire up millions against the good sense that might save us.

Merely a minion in comparison, but nauseating nevertheless, British actor Laurence Fox, of the inbred Fox acting family, insisted on BBC that even if, contrary to his own belief, Sikh soldiers had played a part in World War I, their casting in the Oscar nominated film *1917* was "forced" and "incongruous". Nearly nothing could be incongruous in post-Brexit Britain, so wildly has it gone off the rails, but to hear a thousand racist slugs shriek from under their prehistoric rocks in support of this outrageous opinion still beggared belief. Britons, unsurprisingly mainly women, did speak up to put Laurence in his place, but the actor remained resolutely foxed. Well, PO-HA to you, Larrykins!

You wouldn't think this innocuous cereal could sound offensive till it is shouted in your face. I may not be a fan of what's called "chire" in Bengal, having grown up with folks who liked it moist and mashed with

on-the-turn bananas, but never in my wildest imaginings (of which very little is about *chire*) did I think it could become a tool in the hands of the divisive. Yet politician Kailash Vijayvargiya saw in this humble staple a manifestation of 'otherness'; a not-eating-North-Indian-roti-ness. He claimed that the *poha*-eating habits of poor Bengali migrants in Bengaluru marked them out as undesirable aliens aka. illegal Bangladeshis, when all it is, is a measure of impecuniosity.

This, of course, is just one in a long list of boxes you must tick to be a bonafide *Bharatwashi*, known nowadays as the CAA/NRC/NPR/Poha Test. Otherwise, you are necessarily "anti-national"; that favourite word of nitpicking aunty-nationals and the crafty uncles who pull their strings. Anti-nationals number in the millions, including those with an aversion to having Hindi rammed down their throats, native tongue as it is of only a section of India, or those who possess a healthy scepticism about the tall tales of our technological derring-do in Vedic times that are now being peddled as fact. And while Poha is beginning to smell a lot like bratwurst before the Second World War (another war in which millions of Indian soldiers fought and died for the world, Larrypops), it ain't new.

In the mid-eighties, my middle school Sanskrit

**In the mid-eighties, my middle school Sanskrit teacher made me stand outside the classroom every day for being 'obharotiyi'...** Other 'aliens' like Muslims, dalits, Christians and idealistic students are subjected to worse.

teacher made me stand outside the classroom every day for being "obharotiyi", because my accent was American and my Sanskrit non-existent, having spent much of my childhood abroad. And if I wasn't being humiliated for the whole school to see, she ensured I stayed in after class to write a hundred clumsy lines on the blackboard in this (undoubtedly sophisticated but) defunct tongue. Other "aliens" like Muslims, dalits, Christians, idealistic students, dogged journalists, MANY nonconforming women, and other defenders of India's civil liberties and the right to differ, are subjected to much worse. Especially assault, incarceration and a s s a s i n a t i o n . Especially now.

Yet the writing's been on the wall for decades. We cringed at the cries of "Jai Shri Ram" from atop the demolished mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 but plugged our ears till they faded. We found ourselves at odds with the self-congratulatory "India shining" polemic that surfaced at the start of this new millennium. Some paid no heed, whilst others felt pushed out by the rising tide of insularity. But in recent years, even across the oceans, we can hear the blows that bludgeon dissenters, the bullets that obliterate the likes of Gauri Lankesh, and know no matter where we turn in this burning world, we can never outrun this hatred for "the other". So, the soapbox is back. Because words are never just words, and mansplaining can be a prelude to terror. Listen.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published Strange: Stories, the award-winning *Memoirs of My Body*, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures

### LETTERS

#### BJP'S DIRTY TRICKS

The BJP seems to be pulling out all stops to stay in power even if it is at the cost of communal harmony or mortgaging the interests of the nation. The irresponsible statements of their leaders is vitiating the atmosphere. It's sad to see the party with absolute majority in the Lok Sabha playing cheap politics. There is no talk about development or solutions to CAA/NRC for which the protests show no sign of abating. They should take a cue from Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal who has so far conducted himself in a mature manner.

Abdul Hakeem  
Hyderabad

#### SALUTE TO NURSES

Hats off to all the nurses from health organisations in India and abroad (Year of nurses, Feb. 1). They are offering their services selflessly to all the patients suffering from various ailments irrespective of caste, religion, and colour. I must say that women are capable of handling any role and that is why they are called nari shakti.

M. Dikshant Agarwal  
Secunderabad

#### NIRBHAYA JUSTICE

It is astonishing that Nirbhaya has still not got justice (Will fight till convicts hanged: Asha Devi, Feb. 1). It is a reflection of the sorry state of our country where we cannot deliver justice to the inconsolable parents even after the rapists-murderers are convicted. Escaping the death sentence with legal loopholes will only make things worse. We must ensure such criminals are hanged within six months. The fast track courts should do their part in delivering justice.

Mohammed Wasif Ali  
Secunderabad

#### UNFORTUNATE

Justice delayed is justice denied. It is unfortunate that the hanging of convicts was postponed. Is our judiciary so weak that it prolongs judgments and leaves a wrong message to criminals? Is encounter killing justified as in the case of veterinary doctor Disha of Telangana state? Let the judiciary wake up and instill confidence in people.

Fatima Zafar  
Secunderabad

#### IT'S FRUSTRATING

The reprieve given to rapists is unfortunate. The decision of the Delhi court is not in tune with the sentiments of Asha Devi and the public. She is heart-broken and one can imagine her frustration.

Dhiraj Dangoria  
Hyderabad

#### RAPES ON RISE

It is so sad to see rape cases increasing daily even though Nirbhaya Act, POCSO Act are in force. Can we expect strict laws to protect us from atrocities? Even today I read about a 36-year-old man who raped a minor. The accused has been arrested, but will such crimes stop with continued delay in justice?

Sree Deepthi B.  
Hyderabad

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

### War of the TV channels

It's a matter of seniority that has to be settled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A panel has recommended the merger of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha TV channels but the big issue remains unresolved about administratively heading it. Rajya Sabha chairman and vice-president Venkaiah Naidu is senior to Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla but traditionally the Lok Sabha speaker is considered more weighty than his Rajya Sabha counterpart. So whether Rajya Sabha TV or Lok Sabha TV will become the administrative head, will be decided by the Prime Minister.

### Stay put

The Congress is sitting idle in poll-bound Delhi. A number of senior

party leaders like Jitin Prasad, R.P.N. Singh and Salman Khurshid are residents of Delhi but the party has not asked them to step out and campaign for Congress nominees. Each morning, these leaders go on their own to parks and public places trying to gauge public opinion and get a sense of involvement in the poll campaign. Rahul Gandhi seems happy holding rallies and public meetings in Jaipur, Wayanad and other places away from the national capital. The Congress' interim chief, Sonia Gandhi, has a meeting planned at Shastri Park just before the poll campaign ends.

## Venkaiah, Om — who is the top dog?

### Meeting of like minds?

Now Congress leader from Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad and his Lok Sabha counterpart Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury will be neighbours. Chowdhury is moving into the house opposite Azad's in South Avenue. This house was earlier occupied by Ashok Chavan. For any strategy meeting, the neighbours just have to walk across the road. But Congress insiders say it's not going to be that easy.

### Curbs on hacks

During the Budget Session of Parliament, Lok Sabha secretariat



By WAQYANAWIS

has reportedly slowed down giving press gallery passes to reporters. Informally speaking, so far the reporters only needed a letter from their organisation and PIB accreditation. Lower rung parliamentary officials approved their passes. But now, each application is reportedly vetted with many checks to see if the organisation indeed has the requisite quota. All eyes are on Lok Sabha secretary general Snehlata Shrivastava.

### Wikipedia economists

Another first. The Economic Survey of India tabled by the

Union finance ministry had a data reference to Wikipedia, on page 150-151. At point 1.26, the Survey has stated that GDP is the ultimate measure of the wealth of the country. Senior bureaucrats wonder how the chief economic adviser, having an entire battery of minions to do paperwork and research, found it necessary to look up Wikipedia but did not look at the relevant reference in the same Wiki article as a follow-up. On the other hand, if the relevant information was unreferenced, then the CEA must be ashamed of using such a statement. Wikipedia as a first reference is fine but it takes a serious researcher further, the bureaucrats agreed.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power



The garbage that accumulates in some cars, particularly in the back seat reaches a maximum, after which it declines irreversibly

# Sitharaman Budget: Long in form, short in content



Mohan Guruswamy

**T**he challenge of Budget making is to take enough from the 15 per cent of the population (about 200 million, or 40 million households) liable for direct taxes without dissatisfying them too much — these are the ones you mostly see on TV groaning, moaning and wanting more.

And to provide enough to blunt the edge of popular anger of the 60 per cent who make little more than subsistence in terms of income — given their property and tradeable skills. This covers around a population of 700-750 million people, or 150 million families. These people have largely been bypassed by the huge growth gains made since 1998. That means under the two NDA and two UPA terms.

Indirect taxes involve a bigger population cohort considering that the consumer finally pays

the GST. Thus, even a match-box results in tax revenues. The GST course has been set and mercifully the finance ministry doesn't have too much discretion in tinkering to favour some and punish others.

The challenge for the government was very clear. It was to create jobs, and stimulate consumption to kickstart the virtuous economic cycle of higher growth, higher savings, higher revenues and higher investments. The most significant cause for the decline of growth has been the decline in capital investment. It was 39.8 per cent of GDP in 2010 and is now a good 11 per cent lower. Clearly, without an increase of capital investment, one cannot hope for more industrialisation and hence higher growth. The immediate task therefore is obvious. The government needs to step up investment in infrastructure to create demand for core sectors like cement, steel, building materials, power, etc, and create the millions of jobs

needed each year to absorb the 12 million people joining the labour force each year.

Since 2014, under the NDA government, the increase in rural wages worked out to 4.7 per cent in nominal terms and a mere 0.5 per cent in real terms after netting out inflation of 4.2 per cent. In comparison, for the same month of the preceding five years (2009 to 2013), when the UPA was in power, nominal rural wages grew by an annual average of about 17.8 per cent. While CPI inflation for agricultural workers, too, averaged 11.1 per cent, the real growth in wages was still higher at 6.7 per cent a year. Wage increase has frozen due to oversupply brought up by low job creation. Job creation is at a 45-year low. That is the essential problem, which besets a youthful country, in which almost 65 per cent of the population is below the age of 30. So quite clearly, we needed a plan to kick off growth once again.

At the tail end of her inordinately long speech, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman made a passing reference to targeting a nominal GDP growth of 10 per cent. Consider this: the nominal GDP growth now is 6.08 per cent. So how do you get an increase of four per cent in nominal GDP growth? Clearly, it calls for a far greater input by way of capital expenditure.

**To sum up, this Budget lacks any big ideas. It does not seriously attempt to reverse the slide, apparently leaving it to the hidden hand, something the government's chief economic adviser seems to have discovered.**

A Budget is about the ways and means to achieve larger economic goals. The 2020-21 Budget envisages ₹22.99 lakh crores of revenue receipts, ₹30.42 lakh crores as expenditure, leaving it with a fiscal deficit of 3.8 per cent. It means that the government expects to increase revenues by a little over ₹3 lakh crores. Similarly, expenditure is going to increase by a similar ₹3 lakh crores. At the same time, the finance minister expects capital expenditure to increase by 21 per cent. The Central capital expenditure in 2019-20 was ₹3.36 lakh crores. Thus, we can infer that this year capital expenditure will increase by about ₹60,000 crores. Now relate this to the ₹103 lakh crores for the Infra Pipeline announced by the finance minister late last year. Of this, schemes amounting to about

₹23 lakh crores were announced. But for this the new Budget provides a meagre ₹22,000 crores. This is still too little, and too late. What we were looking towards was a grand plan to announce how this huge sum is to be realised. There was not a word about it in her long speech of two hours and 40 minutes.

The speech was replete with minute details like ₹100 crores for the G-20 summit, which India will host next year, but not before she fondly alluded to how Prime Minister Narendra Modi will now take the top 20 global economies to new heights. Like George W. Bush had announced "mission accomplished" after occupying Iraq, Ms Sitharaman proclaimed that Swachhh Bharat was a great success, while every street corner and open maidan in the country tells us another story. So she announced just ₹12,000 crores for it this year.

Elsewhere, she announced special schemes for 100 water-stressed districts, while announcing 20 lakh solar pumps. The irony should not be missed here. Most of the water-stressed districts are so due to the uncontrolled exploitation of subterranean water resources. Clearly, the bigger task is to replenish the underground water resources.

The PM had broadly spoken about a national water-harvesting scheme, but there was no allotment for it in this Budget. But she did make an exciting announcement.

Ms Sitharaman said the government had promised to provide piped water to all households in the country entailing an expenditure of ₹3.36 lakh crores. This was a rare instance of the government offering to put its money where its mouth was.

Added to this, the government has to promise to deliver all this with a most expensive public administration (11.4 per cent of GDP), and an almost defunct delivery system. A majority of government employees — over 25 million — are the bedrock of the direct taxes-paying cohort. So, in effect, a good part of the direct taxes that are realised by the government are from those who are paid by it.

We have more problems now. The biggest driver of economic growth is the State's capital expenditure, which by its consumption of core industrial material like cement, steel, etc, and employment triggers further cycles of investment, consumption and employment. In the past half a dozen years, we have seen a noticeable drop in investment, both public and private. With the government's

coffers low and shrinking, where is the money to lead the expansion going to come from? This, to my mind, is Prime Minister Modi's biggest challenge. It can come from more taxation or by selling off more chunks of the generally unproductive public sector, or by borrowing. To this extent, the finance minister named some PSUs like Air India, Concor and LIC, from which the Centre plans to fully or partly exit. People will make arguments against all, but the government now needs to do all of them in ample measure. It needs money to invest, that in turn will drive private investment.

It's a tough act. To compound it, growth buoyancy is determined largely by an optimistic national mood. Only that will get growth to go up, and hence government revenues.

To sum up — this Budget lacks any big ideas. It does not seriously attempt to reverse the slide, apparently leaving it to the hidden hand, something the government's chief economic adviser seems to have discovered. The world has moved on since Adam Smith!

*The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.*

## Budget 2020: India is cruising for a bruising



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

**T**he Indian economy is currently in an unenviable condition, and if the Budget were any indication, the government has not even fully absorbed the enormity of the crisis. It's almost as if the economy is suffering from the coronavirus, and the diagnosis done and medicine administered is for the common cold. None of the measures announced in the Budget will positively affect the manufacturing, real estate or the shadow banking sectors, where the majority of the problems lie.

Unemployment is rising sharply, consumption, savings and investment are down and inflation is rearing its ugly head again. In addition, our banking sector is in shambles with one cooperative bank collapsing after the other. This, after we embraced the neoliberal economic order in 1991, and were poised for rapid growth from at least the first decade of the third millennium onwards. To get back on the high growth track, the government should have reduced the compliance burden, included impetuses to improve liquidity in the real estate sector, comprehensively addressed the trust deficit plaguing the shadow banking sector and most importantly addressed the growth slowdown by fixing the demand side of the economy. The Budget fails miserably on all these counts, as the finance minister's announcements are a mere eye-

wash that will not produce either immediate or lasting gains for the Indian economy.

The Indian economy grew at roughly 3.5 per cent in the pre-liberalisation years, 5.4 per cent when the secular coalitions were in power from 1991 to 1998, 5.7 per cent during the Atal Behari Vajpayee years, 8.02 per cent during 10 years of the UPA government, and at 5.5 per cent (despite the change in base year to arrive at the new growth rate calculations) during the first NDA government's tenure starting 2014. With a young population, industrial base and scientific education, these moderate levels of growth both in the era of the command economy and post-liberalisation show that both economic models have not been suitable for India. With growth down to a trickle at 4.5 per cent during the second quarter of FY20 and with the World Bank predicting further deceleration in FY21, we can safely say that we are now amidst a structural slowdown.

The entire financial ecosystem, including public and private sector banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), housing finance companies (HFCs) and cooperative banks has become weak, fragile and prone to disasters. Glaring cases of financial misconduct have come to light starting from the "industrialists" who kept on taking debt despite the poor financial health of their companies. The IL&FS debacle then further hurt the shadow bank-

**The fundamentals of our economy have never been weaker, the banking system is in acute distress and to top it all, there is unrest in the entire country due to the BJP stoking communalism**

ing sector due to the contagion effect. Next to go was Dewan Housing Finance Ltd., which defaulted on its payment obligations. And then finally, it was the turn of the cooperative banks, with the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank biting the dust after it loaned 73 per cent of its loan book to a certain Housing Development Infrastructure Ltd. (HDIL), which was already an NPA. The most recent casualty of the state of our economy has been Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Bank, a Karnataka-based cooperative bank, on which the RBI has also placed withdrawal curbs.

But the collapse of our financial institutions is not surprising given that the fundamentals of the Indian economy have been under attack for a while now. The fundamentals, namely employment, consumption, savings and investment have been giving distress signals. Recently, released figures from thinktank CMIE peg the unemployment rate at 7.7 per cent in December 2019, which is an increase from over 7.48 per cent in November and 7.02 per cent in December 2018.

The economic slowdown was evidenced in the export sector too, with India's exports contracting for a fifth straight month in December 2019 by 1.8 per cent to \$27.36 billion. Imports were down as well by 8.83 per cent at

\$36.61 billion. Oil imports, which are used to gauge economic activity, were down 0.83 per cent last month from December 2018. Electricity production, another indicator of economic activity, too fell 5 per cent in November 2019. In fact, a leaked NSSO survey states that India's overall consumption fell by 3.7 per cent from 2011-12 to 2017-18. The government refused to release the report citing "data problems". Not only are people consuming less, but they are also saving less. Household savings declined from 23.6 per cent of GDP in 2011-12 to 17.2 per cent of GDP in 2017-18. This can only mean that people are earning a lot less.

A logical conclusion of reduced earnings and minimal savings is that people are investing a lot less too. Private sector investments declined by 59 per cent in the quarter ending September 2019. FDI as a percentage of GDP dropped to 1.55 in 2018 from a healthy 3.62 in 2008. What is even more troubling is that most of the new foreign investment coming into India has been speculative in nature. Hardly any new investment is being made into manufacturing or into greenfield infrastructure projects. A key reason for reduced investments is the compliance burden on the investor. A combination of capital gains tax and the Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) had disincentivised investors altogether. Both were expected to be remedied in the Budget, but neither reality was, save for a charade around scrapping the DDT, which effectively takes us back to the old regime of taxing the shareholder. In addition, rather than reducing the direct tax compliance burden, the government has

increased it. Now the citizenry must choose from six slabs instead of three, and from two very different tax systems, one with exemptions and one without exemptions.

This government has paid mere lip service to its goal of putting more money in the hands of the people. MGNREGA, which is the government's flagship rural spending programme, has seen no meaningful growth in outlay. And in spite of no increase in expenditure, government finances appear shaky, as was evidenced when the finance minister revised the fiscal deficit target for FY20 to 3.8 per cent up from 3.3 per cent and set a target of 3.5 per cent for the next fiscal. What is even more concerning is that the fiscal deficit target for FY21 will be primarily met via disinvestment revenues, which are unpredictable. So to place one's money on disinvestment helping in meeting the fiscal deficit target is almost like betting on the wrong horse and setting one up for failure.

It's almost like the Budget has done nothing to remedy our collapsing economy. The fundamentals of our economy have never been weaker, the banking system is in acute distress and to top it all, there is unrest in the entire country due to the BJP stoking the fire of communalism. With social strife spreading, it is only natural that more and more money will leave India, making us financially weaker and weaker. We are cruising for a severe bruising.

*The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcast minister. The views expressed are personal.*

*Twitter handle @manishtewari*

## It's a credible balancing act by a pragmatic FM



Chandrajit Banerjee

**F**inance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has presented a focused, bold, pragmatic and growth-oriented Budget which has attempted a credible balancing act between scripting a blueprint for sustaining the growth momentum in the Indian economy on the one hand, while taking up issues of social inclusion on the other.

Being embedded in the three major themes — aspirational India, economic development and a caring society — the Budget reflects the government's commitment towards satisfying the aspirations of the common man even while striving to revive growth in the economy. Moreover, it contains far-reaching and comprehensive provisions which are anchored in the social and macroeconomic reality of the country. No doubt, it will find resonance among the hopes and aspirations of key stakeholders in the economy.

In fact, the finance minister has been proactively making bold Budget-like announcements in the last few months to stimulate investment and promote inclusive growth. Examples include reduction of the corporate tax rate, removal of enhanced surcharge on FPIs, provision of additional depreciation to the automotive industry, bank recapitalisation, a package for housing and exports, among others. The Budget marks an ongoing process than a one-off approach towards taking our development journey forward.

The Budget has adopted just the right approach for catalysing growth with social inclusion. It has provisions which cover almost all sections of society. The finance minister has taken path-breaking measures towards improving agricultural productivity and doubling farmers' income. Besides, developing human capital by providing a fillip to health, education and skills, introducing mega tax cuts for the lower and middle class, making bold announcements on infrastructure and affordable housing, providing an impetus to domestic industry, addressing the concerns of SMEs and startups, simplifying taxation, encouraging foreign investors and supporting futuristic technologies, among others, are versatile moves. In this way, the Budget has ticked all the

right boxes, which would propel the economy to the path of inclusive growth.

The finance minister made rural India the centrepiece of her second Budget's narrative. The 16 action points enunciated in the Budget are breakthrough ideas, and if implemented they would go a long way to transform the rural economy. The move to encourage states to adopt model acts will pave the way for adoption of much needed agri reforms, leading to better returns for farmers as well as enhanced private sector engagement with agriculture. Similarly, the introduction of Kisan Rail, that will build a seamless national cold supply chain for perishables, is another landmark scheme. Besides, measures like Krishi Uddan, integrating the financing on Negotiable Warehousing Receipts (e-NWR) with e-nam, promoting horticulture, fish farmer producer organisations, among others, are to make farming more remunerative and enhance economic prosperity in the rural heartland.

The finance minister's move to restructure income tax slabs for individual taxpayers who forego deductions and exemptions is noteworthy.

Besides, enhancing the basic limit of exemption on personal tax rates for the salaried middle class, with no income tax up to ₹5 lakhs, is in line with industry's suggestion and would support consumption through an increase in disposable income.

The Budget has given a bold thrust to boost manufacturing. The fillip given to individual sectors like electronics and technical textiles, in which India has a cost advantage, is noteworthy. For MSMEs, the Budget has tried to address finance and marketing problems. The national logistics policy will help in enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs.

The proposal to give the option of a concessional corporate tax rate of 15 per cent to power generating companies would encourage investment in electricity generation. On the external front, reviewing the Rules of Origin under various FTAs will address the issue of Indian industry getting impacted due to imports getting routed through FTA countries.

The Budget has taken major strides towards building a climate of business confidence among entrepreneurs. Decriminalisation of

business laws, by enshrining the "taxpayers' charter" in the statute, on the lines of what is being done for the Companies Act, will be well received. Similarly, the "Vivad se Vishwas" scheme to resolve pending income-tax cases and introduction of faceless appeals are concrete steps to build trust between the government and industry. The Investment Clearance Cell to facilitate clearances at the Central and state levels, will also improve the ease of doing business.

The government's decision to abolish dividend distribution tax (DDT) and return to the classical tax system, where income-tax is levied separately on company income and on dividends received by shareholders, is in line with CII's position and would reduce the cost of equity capital in the country. The move to allow deduction for the dividend received by a holding company from its subsidiary would also remove the cascading effect of DDT.

The government has done well to retain its focus on infrastructure to fulfil its development aspirations. The follow-up on the National Investment Pipeline, with the 6,500 projects across sectors like housing, safe drinking water, access to clean and affordable energy, healthcare for all, etc, as well as the focus on the transport sector and railways and involvement of youth in construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure would be an important lever to generate growth with equity. The ₹22,000-crore equity support to IIFCL and NIF to create a funding pipeline of ₹103,000 lakh crores, and granting 100 per cent exemption to interest, dividend and capital gains income of Sovereign Wealth Funds in respect of investment made in infrastructure are very important initiatives for funding infrastructure creation. The proposal to extend a tax holiday by a year for the developers of affordable housing project is also commendable.

The Budget also sends a strong message towards the continuity of fiscal prudence despite the economy being buffeted by domestic and global challenges. The fiscal deviation in this year's Budget is on expected lines and it is heartening to note the deficit will be used to finance capital expenditure.

Overall, the Budget reflects a pragmatic approach and displays a vision to drive the economy back to the path of inclusive growth.

*The writer is the director-general of the Confederation of Indian Industries*

### Normalcy returns to Haryana: vigil continues

CHANDIGARH, February 1.

EXTENSIVE patrolling and "flag-marches" by the Army have been organised all over Haryana even as the situation in the State improved greatly today after two days of rioting sparked off by the Union Government's decisions to give Chandigarh to Punjab. Announcing this here this

evening Chief Minister Mr. Bansi Lal told a Press conference that the army patrolling had been organised in both rural and urban areas as a precautionary measure in view of the mass "satyagraha" being launched by some political party from tomorrow to protest against the Union Government's decision. The situation all over the State was "completely under

control," Mr. Bansi Lal added. A bus was burnt at Balot village, near Rohtak, this morning. This was the only incident of violence reported today.

Traffic on the Grand Trunk Road was "normal" and Haryana Roadways had resumed its services on several routes. Train services on some routes had also been resumed, the Chief Minister added.

More than 800 persons, including about 175 students of

Kurukshetra University, have been arrested since the outbreak of violence on Saturday.

All educational institutions in Kurukshetra and Thanesar have been closed for an indefinite period.

Mr. Bansi Lal, who was due to broadcast a message to the people of the State from the Jullundur station of All India Radio at 2030 hours today postponed the same in view of his preoccupation with his party meeting.







## Yes and no

Pawan Kalyan praises Centre for giving funds to neglected sections, criticises Jagan government for failing to get adequate funds

## INSURANCE If you need insurance

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 1

The All India Insurance Employees Association (AIIEA) has strongly opposed the proposal in the Union Budget to list the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) in the stock market.

While presenting the Budget, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government would sell part of its stake via a public offering. Insurance officials said this move was against the national interests. Insurance employees will go for one-hour walk-out preceding the lunch recess on February 4, AIIEA president V. Ramesh said.

He said the domestic savings of LIC policyholders is utilised for developmental activities. The contribution of LIC to the five-year plans and investments in social sector to the tune of more than 80 per cent for the last 68 years will receive a great setback.

The LIC is growing faster than the GDP. The last six months of this financial year have been particularly phenomenal for its growth, he said. It has a share of over 73 per cent in the insurance market. The claim settlement record is also exemplary, he stated.

At a time when the government is facing a severe resource crunch because of dwindling tax collections, disinvestment of LIC would amount to squandering away precious resources for the benefit of the corporate houses. It has recently paid a dividend of ₹2,611 crore to the government against an initial equity of ₹100 crore.

The LIC also has the distinction of contributing more than 25 per cent to the total budgetary efforts of the Union government. Selling part of LIC's stake to private interests and its disinvestment would be a surest blow to the resource mobilisation efforts, AIIEA general secretary Shreekantha Mishra said.

## TEXTILES

### Body welcomes Union Budget

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

The textile association has welcomed the Union Budget, saying it provided for all sectors and sections of the population.

Mr Prakash Ammanabolu, president, Telangana State Federation of Textile Associations, said that under the National Technical Textiles Mission, the finance minister had allocated ₹1,480 crore, which is good move for an area of industry which offers huge employment.

Traders were disappointed by the tax structure - while for big corporates it is 23 per cent tax, it is 30 per cent for traders, he said.

On the direct taxes front, Mr Ammanabolu said, the income-tax slabs and rates have been reduced for individuals who earn up to ₹15 lakh per year, which is a good move. "It will leave a little more money in the hands of consumers and spur demand in general. If savings exemptions had also been allowed along with the new slabs and rates, it would be a great boost for individual tax payers, he said.

## FARMERS

### Budget fails us: AIKSCC

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) on Saturday said the Union Budget was a failure when it comes to increasing rural demand and purchasing power. Instead, it said the Budget would only boost the profits of big corporates and MNCs.

A release from the AIKSCC said the Budget offered no boost to the rural sector in spite of the need to increase demand and purchasing power in the rural areas.

"The total budget allocations for agriculture, irrigation and rural development was ₹2.68 lakh crore in 2019-20, which has been nominally increased to ₹2.83 lakh crores. In real terms, taking inflation into account, this amounts to zero increase," it said.

# KCR: Incompetent Centre cuts funds

### 18.9% reduction highlights faulty management

From Page 1

He alleged that it is a "sheer incompetence of the centre" to decrease the ratio of the state in central funds given to states. "There is a need to collect taxes in 2019-20 and release the share of funds to states," he said.

Reminding people that there have been occasions when there were variations of one or a half per cent even before, he said reducing funds to the tune of a whopping 18.9 per cent in 2019-20 clearly demonstrated the centre's faulty fiscal management.

He said that with the allocations proposed in the current budget having reduced the share of funds of Telangana from 42 per cent to 41 per cent, the state would lose ₹2,381 crore.

According to the Chief Minister's office, the centre, which cut a whopping ₹3,731 crore funds from its share announced in Parliament in the last financial year, was now proposing ₹16,726 crore in the current financial year. "No one knows how much the reduction will

● Agriculture sector 3.65% funds were allocated in FY 2019-20 - in FY 2020-21 allocation cut to 3.39%.

● For medical and health sectors, allocations last year were 2.24%, now reduced to 2.13%.

● For rural development, last year 4.37% funds were allocated, now only 3.94%.

● For education sector, 3.37% funds allocated last year, now only 3.22%.

od of five years.

As per that promise, the centre owes the state a compensation of ₹1,137 crore. "The Centre has not given any clarity on these compensation funds," he said. Stating that there was a substantial cut in the budget in funds allocated to urban development, he said that due to this, Telangana, which was witnessing rapid urbanization, would be adversely affected. He said that for urbanization in Telangana, the last budget had allocated ₹1,037 crore, which was now reduced by ₹148 crore to only ₹889 crore.

He found fault with the centre for not considering Niti Aayog has recommendation to allocate ₹24,000 crore to Telangana for Mission Bhagiratha and Mission Kakatiya programmes, despite several requests from the state government. He criticised the Centre for not having taken any decision to put the country's financial situation back on track.

"It is a regressive measure to cut allocations to all sectors," Mr Rao added.

## BUDGET WATCH

The families, whom Deccan Chronicle had interviewed in the run-up to the Union Budget, react to the marthon of a Budget presented by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman.



### Outright Utopian'

Tipirneni Seshagiri Rao  
Chairman of Sentini Group  
Family income: More than ₹10 crore

Rao, reacting to the Budget, said the 10 per cent growth rate envisaged during 2020-21 is "utopian in nature". On the revision of personal income tax slabs, he said, "The revision may only help citizens who don't care about tax planning," he said. The founder-chairman of the city-based Sentini Group, which has recorded revenue of over Rs 2,000 crore, Rao said the permitted invoice discounting by NBFCs would help SMEs garner additional short-term working capital.

"However, not much has been done in terms of banking reforms. Nothing much has been done to encourage FDIs either," he said.

The businessman said the reduction in corporate tax and abolition of dividend distribution tax would help corporates but large individual investors in the highest income tax slab rates would be at a loss. "In my opinion, overall, the budget is mediocre and may not augment creation of wealth," he said.



### Nothing for the common man

Amos Lentin  
BPO worker  
Family income: ₹ 4.4 lakh

Though it's not a feel-good budget, a good augury for people like me is that I fall in the ₹5-7.5 lakh slab and as against the earlier 20 per cent tax, I have to now pay 10 per cent, which gives some relaxation. Apart from that, the budget is beyond the common man's understanding. Cost of living has gone up, government has to look into those aspects where costs on basic necessities have gone down."



### Boost for education sector

Jithender Surana  
Financial analyst  
Family income: ₹10L-15L

We feel that the budget has touched all the significant aspects and we think it is satisfactory. The allocation of ₹99,300 crore for education sector and ₹3,000 crore for skill development in 2020-21 is appreciable. The degree-level full-fledged online education system by top 100 institutions in the National Institute of Ranking Framework (NIRF) is also impressive. It will give flexibility to students who are aspiring for online courses. Most of my expectations from the budget have been met. When it comes to decreasing tax slabs, family firmly believes that income tax should be abolished and taxes should be on banking transactions instead on the income.



### Deposit insurance hike is good

Anil Kumar, Business Consultant, Family income: ₹50 lakh

The Budget was good, as there are a slew of tax benefits that have come the common man's way. Another good measure is that the bank deposit insurance has been raised from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh. However, we need to be wary as the GDP growth rate has not been as impressive as stated. The finance minister has said that there would be a growth of 10 per cent,

but we are still at 6 per cent. As the government has increased customs duty on imported furniture, going to IKEA might pinch your pockets.

## Strike continues



SBI staff and their families participate in the second day of the bank strike at Secunderabad on Saturday. - DC

# Budget disappointing for Telangana, says TPCC chief

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy described the budget presented by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday as highly disappointing, especially for Telangana.

In a press statement, he said except for some changes in income tax slabs, there is nothing new in the budget. "The budget has nothing for unemployed youth, farmers, women, and students. Sectors that generate jobs have been completely ignored," he pointed out.

The TPCC chief underlined that the budget remained completely silent on rising unemployment in the country, which is at a 45-year high. The finance minister neither made a mention of unemployment nor proposed any measures to address the problem. There is no mention of rising inflation in the country.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said the government did not specify as to how it plans to double the income of farmers by 2022. Crores of farmers, who are in distress, have found no mention, though thousands of them were committing suicides. "Why is the Modi government not speaking



The Union Budget is uninspiring. There is nothing new and in the second term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government there is no single flagship scheme. There are no new ideas in the allocation of funds, they have been made routinely. The Modi government is talking about Young India but it has not introduced a single scheme for the younger generation. Though the Centre claims it has given priority to the education and health sectors, the allocation is insufficient.

B. Vinod Kumar  
Planning Board Vice Chairman



The Union Budget will lead to a new India. The Budget has given first priority to agriculture, irrigation and village development. Second priority has been given to health, sanitation and drinking water. The Budget also has made several measures to education and child welfare. The new income-tax slabs would be greatly useful to the middle class. The allocations will ensure a good future for the people.

Dr. K. Laxman  
BJP state chief

The Centre has shown an empty hand to Telangana state. The Budget will have an adverse impact on the GDP growth rate. There was no mention in the Budget about fulfilling the promises made in the AP Reorganisation Act.

R. Chandrasekar Reddy  
TD politburo member



about M. S. Swaminathan Report, which has sought implementation of input cost + 50 percent as MSP for agriculture produce," he sought to know. The TPCC chief observed that agriculture growth rate must be at least 11 percent if the government wishes to double the farmers' income by 2022. "However, as per the Economic Survey 2019-20, the annual growth rate in real terms in agriculture and its allied sectors was 2.88 per cent from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and the estimated growth rate in 2019-20 is 2.9 per cent. Under the circumstances, the finance minister needs to clarify how the government plans to achieve the target of doubling the farmers' income by 2022," he asked.

## REAL ESTATE

# Budget doesn't enthuse sector

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

Stakeholders of the real estate sector were lukewarm in their response to the Union Budget. Mr C. Shekar Reddy, chairman, Indian Green Building Council, Hyderabad chapter, said the Budget was an "uneventful" one for the sector.

"It is a budget that maintains the status quo. That's all," said Mr Shekar Reddy, who is a former president of Credai, the Real Estate Developers' Associations of India.

Mr P. Rama Krishna Rao, president, Credai, Hyderabad, said the

Budget offered no major sops for developers and home buyers. However, the allocation of ₹3,000 crore for skill development would benefit skilling requirements of the sector.

The Budget provides some liquidity to NBFCs, which will ease funding to developers. He said. The Budget proposes listing of LIC, which will provide more liquidity in the system. The Budget offers a boost to affordable housing by extending the sunset clause for all tax sops for one more year till March 2021, Mr Rao noted.

Developers can look at alternate asset class of data centres and logistics

parks for which government is coming out for a policy Mr Rao said.

Mr Shekar Reddy said the real estate sector is expecting measures that would relieve the ailing sector. However, the Budget hasn't addressed most of the problems.

"There is also a lack of clarity on many issues. For instance, previous tax exemptions on builders working on affordable housing and PM Awaas Yojana have only been extended for a year. We don't know if new projects will be exempt," he said. Mr Shekar Reddy said the government had not removed or reduced taxation on housing units

held by builders due to their inability to sell them. "The economy needs a push from the demand side. This Budget provides no stimulus that could achieve this," he said.

Mr Anuj Puri, chairman of the real estate research firm Anarock said the Budget missed out on many "quick fixes". "The Budget missed major announcements for easing liquidity in the real estate sector, a major worry for most developers. Project delays, the biggest fallout of the cash crunch, have severely dampened buyer sentiments. It needs to be addressed," he said.

# Andhra Pradesh will lose about ₹6,500 crore in FY20

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, FEB 1

The Andhra Pradesh government will lose about ₹6,500 crore in devolution of taxes in the current fiscal due to fall in Central tax collections, adding to the woes of the already cash-strapped state government.

Budget 2020 has brought with it only bad news for Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan

Mohan Reddy who has lined up several welfare schemes as part of fulfilling his electoral promises.

The first hit is in the form of a massive shortfall in the devolution of tax revenue for the current fiscal followed by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman ignoring financial assistance to projects varying from Polavaram to new ports to the petrochemical

complex besides, of course, the Special Category Status.

Official sources told Deccan Chronicle that the state government kept a budgetary provision of ₹34,833.18 crore vis-a-vis devolution of taxes but will get only ₹28,242 crore.

This is in addition to huge revenue shortfall expected in state's own tax revenues. Except for excise, the

GST and stamps and registration have been witnessing shortfall in revenues projected in the Budget.

Of the ₹55,000-crore target fixed for the state's own GST, officials feared that only 70 per cent would be realised. This would mean shortfall of another ₹15,000 crore.

The Centre gave another shock to the state by projecting a lower devolution for the next fiscal too.

The Centre indicated a revenue of ₹32,237 crore for 2020-21, compared to the projected revenue of ₹34,833 cr in 2019-20.

"The Centre did not consider our request to take the 1971 Census as the base for devolution and went ahead with the 2011 Census by which time we achieved good progress in population control," a senior official said, adding that the percentage of

devolution had further come down to 4.11 per cent from 4.38 per cent.

The only silver lining is that the 15th Finance Commission has recommended to the Centre to extend financial assistance to the Andhra Pradesh government to compensate for the revenue deficit it witnessed after bifurcation.

The Finance Commission told the Centre to

release ₹5,897 crore in 2020-21 to the state towards compensation. The amount pertained to one fiscal year and the subsequent amounts would be known later.

"We are thoroughly disappointed with the Budget. They completely ignored all our requests," said finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy in his reaction to the Union Budget.





## Prez arrives

KCR receives President Ram Nath Kovind, who is on a two-day visit, at Begumpet airport in Hyderabad

### POWER | SHUTDOWN

7.30 am to 7pm: Bandi Mettu, Maruthi Veedi, Second Bazar, Kumarguda, Chapal Bavi, Rezimental Bazar, Gurudwara. 9.30 am to 11 am: Palka Bazaar, South India Church, Prakash Hospital, Old Ganchi Hospital area, Afzal Allaiddin Crystal Plaza. 11.30 am to 1.30 pm: Srinidhi Janata, HP Petrol Pump, St Patricks School, Nagarjuna Health, Rezimental Bazaar. 2.30 pm to 4 pm: Basera Hotel area, ICICI Bank, South India Church, Madhava Hospital. 4 pm to 5.30 pm: St. Mary's Church, IBP Petrol Bunk, St. Ann's School area. 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm: Passport office, Sri Sai Ganesh Lodge, Rathfile Bus Station.

# Illegal encroachment in Hussainsagar FTL razed

## Encroachers had laid roads and barricaded the area

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

Taking cognizance of a report published in *Deccan Chronicle*, 'Over 10 acres in Hussainsagar FTL encroached' (January 25), the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) swung into action on Saturday and razed the illegal layout constructed in the full tank level of the lake. The state government took serious note of the report and instructed the corporation officials to take stern action.

GHMC commissioner D.S. Lokesh Kumar, in an official release, said that the civic body has demolished the structures.

"As per the instructions of the government to take immediate action on the illegal encroachments on water bodies, the zonal commissioner and town planning staff officials demolished the structures with JCBs," Mr Kumar



A JCB machine being used to demolish illegal layout constructed in full tank levels of Hussainsagar lake on Saturday.

said. He said there was no scope for any mercy for illegal structures raised on government lands, lakes, ponds and they would be demolished immediately and criminal action will be initiated

against the offenders. The report highlighted the encroachment of 10 acres of the full tank level (FTL) of the lake on the Necklace Road side, along the Kukatapally nala. The encroachers had

THE STATE government took a serious note of the DC report and instructed the corporation officials to take stern action.

laid roads and barricaded the area, which is not visible from the ground but can be seen in satellite images. The report verified the encroachments with documents from the Catchment Area Development (I&CAD) office at Secunderabad. Plotting had been done at the site, tar roads laid, barricades put up and construction work is underway.

The area was denoted as 'pillars A279 to A287' as per the 'draft' FTL map given by the North Tanks Division of I&CAD. Neither the GHMC nor the HMDA were aware of the encroachment and illegal constructions.

# Man masturbates near girl's hostel, video goes viral

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

The video of an alleged policeman masturbating in front of an inmate of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) girls' hostel in Hyderabad went viral on social media on Saturday.

Although the incident took place four months ago and was reported to the Rachakonda SHE Team through social media, no action was taken. Following the video going viral on Saturday, the SHE Team approached the student and made her lodge a complaint at the Adibatla police station.

The video shows a man masturbating outside the TISS girls' hostel in broad daylight. His dress resembles that of a policeman. The incident occurred on October 20 at around 3 pm when the complainant was walking towards a nearby shop from the girl hostel.

Though the student starts recording the act, the man continues masturbating even while looking at the camera. The man leaves the place only after the girl screams for help. He drives away on his bike, which has no number plate.

There are around 120 girl students of TISS staying in the hostel. Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, a friend of the student, who witnessed the incident, said, "Although we approached



An unidentified man caught in obscene act outside the TISS girls hostel in broad daylight.

THE DRESS of the culprit resembles that of a policeman. The incident occurred on October 20 at around 3 pm when the complainant was walking towards a nearby shop from the girl hostel.

THE DISTANCE between the college campus and the hostel is around 500 metres. There are bushes around the area.

Security deployed at the hostel is insufficient to deal with such incidents. There is a woman security person in the day shift and a male employee in the night at the hostel for security. When contacted about police inaction on the incident for the last four months, Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh M. Bhagwat said, "The incident came to my notice only on Saturday. I have immediately ordered an enquiry into the issue and sent DCP SHE Team Saleema for inquiry. A through probe will be conducted and further action taken accordingly," Mr Bhagwat stated.

incidents of masturbation and harassment of women have occurred near the hostel premises in Brahmanapally.

The distance between the college campus and the hostel is around 500 metres. There are bushes around the area.

Security deployed at the hostel is insufficient to deal with such incidents. There is a woman security person in the day shift and a male employee in the night at the hostel for security.

When contacted about police inaction on the incident for the last four months, Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh M. Bhagwat said, "The incident came to my notice only on Saturday. I have immediately ordered an enquiry into the issue and sent DCP SHE Team Saleema for inquiry. A through probe will be conducted and further action taken accordingly," Mr Bhagwat stated.

### IN BRIEF

#### Traffic curbs near BHEL Junction

Hyderabad: In view of the road recarpeting works from BHEL Junction (Kanukunta Junction) towards the Lingampally railway under-bridge via Tananagar, the Miyapur traffic police imposed traffic restrictions on Saturday. The restrictions will be in place for 30 days. Traffic from Gachibowli, Gulmohar Junction, Lingampally RUB via Tananagar towards BHEL Junction will be allowed. Traffic from BHEL junction via Tananagar main road and Lingampally RUB will be diverted towards Nallagandla flyover, ulmohar Park and Gachibowli. Alternatively, vehiclists will have to take the road from Kanukunta junction, Rail Vihar Colony, the road under Nallagandla flyover and Lingampally railway station. Police advised motorists to take alternative roads to avoid congestion from Kanukunta junction towards the Lingampally RUB via Tananagar main road.

#### 4 die in 3 separate road accidents

Hyderabad: Four persons died in three different accidents in the city on Saturday, including two persons in a four wheeler on the Outer Ring Road. The accident on the ORR occurred when a car rammed into a lorry at about 1.30 am at Rallagadda. The victims were identified as T. Bal Reddy, who was at the wheel, and Mulluru Narsimha. M. Shanker survived the accident. Police said Bal Reddy died on the spot and Narsimha at a private hospital. In the second case in the Rachakonda commissionerate, B. Raviteja, a 29-year-old, who was returning home on his two-wheeler died when an unidentified vehicle rammed into him at SV Colony, Bairamalguda, LB Nagar, at about 1 am. He died on the spot. On Saturday, at about 7.10 am, a four-wheeler rammed into an auto rickshaw at Bapujinagar near Pallavi Model School, Bowenpally. The driver of the auto rickshaw died on the spot.

#### Bhainsa clash: 17 get conditional bail

Hyderabad: As many as 17 accused in the recent Bhainsa communal clashes were released from the Adilabad district jail on conditional bail on Saturday. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Suhasini Reddy of Adilabad met the accused after they were released from jail and inquired about their health. Meanwhile, the victims of clashes met Nirmal superintendent of police (SP) Sashidhar Raju and submitted a memorandum requesting him that the state government pay the compensation for loss of property in the violence clashes.

# 3,600 children rescued under Operation Smile

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

The police has rescued 3,600 children including 2,923 boys and 677 girls during the month-long Operation Smile VI that ended on January 31. A unique feature was the extensive use of technology by the rescue teams in the form of facial recognition apps such as TS Cop as well as Darpan, said inspector-general Swathi Lakra.

Of the rescued children, 1,982 were handed over to their parents or guardians and 1,618 were admitted in rescue homes. Among the rescued, 1,292 children were from outside the state. Ms Lakra said that the aim was to rescue children who have gone missing or were pushed into child labour, bonded labour or begging or were trafficked.

"We have identified the black spots where most child workers are found such as railway stations, bus stations, religious places, traffic junctions,

mechanic shops, brick kilns, shops, tea stalls and footpaths and kept a tab on the surrounding premises," she said.

Ms Lakra said the Darpan app was used to compare photographs of missing children with those who were traced or rescued. The app helped identify two children. A boy missing from Kalwakurthy in Nagarkurnool district was traced by the Chikkadpally subdivision team and a boy from Alwal was identified by the Kushaiguda subdivision team.

The database of children in child care institutions managed by the women and child welfare department (WCD) has been digitised and shared with the police. Each sub-divisional search team had a sub-inspector, four constables including a woman officer.

They worked in coordination with the WCD, labour, health, child welfare committees, district child protection units, NGOs and shelter homes.

#### 411 CASES BOOKED UNDER OP MUSKAAN

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

During Operation Muskaan-V, the police booked 411 cases regarding crimes against children. These cases will be further categorised into trafficking and non-trafficking sections.

The highest number of cases, 182, was registered in Cyberabad followed by Nalgonda district (37), Khammam commissionerate (34), Bhadradi Kothagudem (32) and Hyderabad (27). In one case, Cyberabad police rescued 12 child labour

who are working in Shaal Foods at Katedan based on a tip-off. In another case, the Rachakonda police rescued 11 children from other states — five from UP, four from Bihar and two from Odisha.



#### SMOKERS CAUSE MINOR FIRE IN FOREST AREA

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

An improperly stubbed out cigarette is being stated as the reason for a fire that broke out in the south beat of the Domalapeda forest range.

According to officials, it was a minor fire and put off with the assistance of the base camp watchers.

"Only dry grass got burnt. Dried leaves on the forest floor caught fire from the cigarette butt. The fire broke out at half past noon and was put out in 45 minutes," the official said.

# Wider highway through tiger corridor gets nod

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

The recently reconstituted State Board for Wildlife cleared a slew of projects in different forest areas of the state on Saturday. The meeting, chaired by board vice-chairman and forest minister A. Indrakaran Reddy, was skipped by three TRS MLAs — Koneru Konappa, Marri Janardhan Reddy, and Vanama Venkateswara Rao.

Permissions are being given without causing any damage to the forests or the environment, the minister said. Principal Chief

Conservator of Forests (head of the forest force) R. Shobha, who gave a presentation on the proposals, said that all necessary precautions have been ordered to ensure that there is no damage to forest areas or wildlife following the approval of the proposals.

Among the proposals approved were conversion of a 94.602-km portion of National Highway 363 between Mancheril and Chandrapur in Maharashtra into a four-lane highway.

Part of the road falls in the crucial tiger movement corridor. Also approved were a

bunch of road projects in Eturunagar wildlife sanctuary in the erstwhile combined district of Warangal, laying of optical fibre by Reliance Jio Infocomm and Vindhya Telelinks through forest and wildlife areas in the erstwhile Warangal and Adilabad districts.

The board also discussed permission for construction of a commercial complex in the eco-sensitive zone of the KBR National Park in Banjara Hills.

Some proposals were not approved as the user agencies had not submitted the required information in a proper format and details were insufficient.

# No graft in sheep scheme, HC told

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

The government told the High Court that the sheep population had gone up to 1.95 crore as per the Livestock Census 2018 because of the sheep distribution scheme. Preventive measures had been taken to curb irregularities in the implementation of the scheme, and police cases were registered against 505 persons where discrepancies were noticed, the government said.

The assertion was contained in a counter affidavit of the government in response to a PIL filed by Watch-Voice of the People, a society represented by its president P.

Narayana Swami of Mahabubnagar district, seeking a CBI probe into alleged largescale irregularities and misuse of public money under the scheme.

Denying the petitioner's allegation of misappropriation of funds, the government claimed that the beneficiaries were selected in the gram sabhas and each had been given a unit of 20 female and one male sheep.

The implementation was entrusted to the collector and funds were released into the collector's account from the Telangana State Sheep and Goat Development Cooperative Federation Limited. It has been implemented in 7,062 villages.

## Inauguration of Road Safety Clubs



Telangana State home minister Mahamood Ali, Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar, additional commissioner of police (Traffic), Anil Kumar, actors Samantha and Nagashourya during the launch of Road Safety Clubs in schools, at Ravindra Bharathi on Saturday.

# 600 ex-servicemen, families take part in rally Army veterans recall old memories

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 1

A large number of armed forces veterans were seen reviving old memories. The occasion was the ex-servicemen rally organised by the Artillery Centre, Hyderabad, under the aegis of the Headquarters, Dakshin Bharat area, in Nizamabad. Over 600 ex-servicemen and their dependents took part in the rally, which served as an occasion for bonhomie and bonding with

the veterans as well as resolution of pension-related grievances and extending CSD (Canteen Stores Department) facilities for them. Apart from being a forum for the young to honour the veterans, arrangements were also made to provide medical examination for the ex-servicemen.

A team of Army doctors including medical and dental specialists and paramedical staff of empanelled hospitals were also drafted for the purpose. Free medicines

APART FROM being a forum for the young to honour the veterans, arrangements were also made to provide medical examination for the ex-servicemen. Free medicines were also distributed.

were distributed to the ex-servicemen and their dependents. Lt. Gen. P.N. Rao, General

Commanding, Dakshin Bharat, Maj. Gen. R.K. Singh, General Officer Commanding, Telangana and Andhra sub area, and Brig. R.R. Kumar, Commandant, Artillery Centre, Hyderabad, interacted with the veterans and their families.

Administrative officials of Nizamabad led by collector C. Narayana Reddy, police commissioner Kartikeya and municipal commissioner John Samsun extended their support to the veterans.

# Rats eat eyes of body in Eluru hospital mortuary

DC CORRESPONDENT ELURU, FEB. 1

Rats have gnawed at the eyes of a body kept in the mortuary of the government hospital at Eluru of West Godavari.

District Collector Revu Muthyala Raju has ordered a probe into the incident which is believed to have occurred three days ago.

Deputy Chief Minister and health minister Alla

Kalikrishna Srinivas aka Nani and Mr Raju visited the government hospital on Saturday. Mr Srinivas expressed anger over the grave negligence.

The hospital authorities had two explanations, one that only one out of the four freezers were working, and that freezer could hold just two bodies.

Due to lack of space, the body was kept outside the freezer and was attacked by rats.

Another version was that there was a hole in the freezer through which the rats got to the body.

The minister blamed it on the negligence of the officials and promised stringent action against those responsible.

The minister also apologised to the affected family members and said that the state government would ensure such an incident does not repeat.

# NINE ARRESTED FOR CHEATING LANDOWNER

Hyderabad: Keesara police nabbed a nine-member gang for cheating a landowner by impersonation and forging documents to register a plot of land in Nagaram of Keesara. Police identified the accused as Nakka Sahadev Goud, Bolla-boina Praveen Yadav, Annamraju Haribabu, Md Ahmed, Lailola Raju Goud, Maqdam Mohiuddin, Irfani bin Alaiddin, Syed Jawad-uddin and Kondagalla Raja Mallesh.





## Containing efforts

Army chief Gen. Manoj Naravane says the Army is playing its part in containing the novel Coronavirus epidemic

### SHORT TAKES

## GAS LEAKAGE AT HALDIRAM'S UNIT, 1 DIES

DC CORRESPONDENT NOIDA, FEB. 1

A 42-year-old worker died allegedly after ammonia gas leak at a Noida's Sector-65 Haldiram's manufacturing and production unit on Saturday. Police said that more than 300 workers were evacuated from the building safely.

The man who died has been identified as ammonia operator Sanjeev Kumar. According to a senior National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) official, a call regarding the leakage was received at around 12 pm on Saturday following which there was immediate deployment of police, firefighters and the NDRF teams.

"There are two adjoining units of Haldiram's in the building, one was the production unit and the other was its cooling or the maintenance unit. We sprayed water in the air to neutralise the ammonia, which got mixed in the air in and around the building. The ammonia solution was also used on the condensers to check the leak. The main gas pipeline has been closed since," said a fire department official.

"The gas leak had occurred through the valve of one of the four ammonia condensers in the maintenance unit where around 22 people were working and evacuated. One of them was taken to a hospital, where he died later," a police official said.

"More than 300 workers were in the production unit and they were also evacuated immediately and the building marked isolated for the time being," said the police official.

"A team of NDRF personnel, firefighters and Noida Police officials, including senior officers, were at the spot and the situation was brought under control by 3 pm," said the police official.

Exposure to high concentrations of ammonia, also used as a refrigerant gas, causes immediate burning of eyes, nose, throat and respiratory tract and can result in blindness, lungs damage or death.

## BENGALURU HAD HOTTEST JAN. IN 150 YRS

Bengaluru, Feb. 1: The Pensioners Paradise, as Bengaluru had been known for its salubrious weather, is becoming hot as the city recorded 33.4°C on Thursday last, the highest in January in the last 150 years ever since the India Meteorological Department (IMD) started recording the temperature.

The IMD's observation affirmed the general observation that winter this time disappeared quite quickly, giving people wind of a severe summer ahead.

"The highest-ever temperature recorded in the city on January 30 was 33.4°C. It has crossed all the previous records," director of the IMD Geeta Agnihotri said on Saturday. On the same date, HAL airport had recorded 32.5°C whereas it was 33.6°C at the Kempegowda International Airport, she said.

Thursday's temperature broke the previous highest record of 33.4°C recorded on Jan. 21, 2000.

## SHOOTER SAYS ONLY HINDUS' WRIT WILL RUN

From Page 1

The incident occurred around 4:45 pm on Saturday, two days after a teenager fired from a pistol at the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protesters at Jamia Millia Islamia, injuring a student.

According to sources, "Couple of days ago, Baisla got stuck in a traffic jam while going to his sister's wedding in Lajpat Nagar from Noida. He felt agitated which made him very upset and angry."

One of the women protesters said they were inside the tent when the incident happened. "We rushed to the spot after hearing gunshots. Many women and children were inside the tent when the incident happened and started crying. Everyone is scared about their safety" she said.

Another woman protester said that those who are against their protest are trying to scare them but the protesters will not step back.

# 6 students with fever left behind in Wuhan

### 324 airlifted, another aircraft heads for virus-hit zone

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

India on Saturday sent its second Air India aircraft to evacuate more Indians stranded at Wuhan in China following the outbreak of novel coronavirus that has left more than 250 dead and over 12,000 infected globally. The World Health Organisation had on Friday declared coronavirus a "global emergency."

Five doctors from the Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital who were onboard the first flight are also in the second flight.

On Friday, 324 Indians returned in the first Air India flight that was sent by the Indian government. The plane carrying 211 students, 110 working professionals and three minors, reached around 7.30 am.

The evacuees have been put up in a quarantine facility of Indian Army and ITBP for observation. Officials said they will be monitored for any signs of the infection for two weeks.

However, six Indians were stopped from boarding the flight due to high fever, officials said. They were stopped by the Chinese immigration officials after they tested for high temperature.

The six students may have to undergo tests to determine whether they have symptoms of the coronavirus.

Before departure, Air India chairman and managing director Ashwani Lohani said, "No service will take place in the plane. Whatever food is there will be kept in seat pockets. As there will be no service, there will be no interaction (between cabin crew and



Indian nationals being screened by doctors of the specially-prepped Air India's B747 aircraft, that airlifted Indians from China's coronavirus-hit Wuhan, in New Delhi on Saturday.

passengers). "Masks have been arranged for the crew and passengers. For our crew, we have also arranged a complete protective gear," he added.

Meanwhile, two more people suspected of being affected by coronavirus were admitted to the isolation ward of Delhi's RML Hospital, taking the number of patients housed at the facility to eight. On Friday evening, two men, aged 23 and 46 years, complained of respiratory problems and fever at

the hospital which has been designated by the government to deal with such cases.

The 23-year-old had been staying at Wuhan for the last five years and returned to India on January 24. The other man visited Changsha and returned to India on January 18.

Six people were already under observation at the isolation ward. The samples of the eight people, who are all residents of Delhi, have been sent for testing and reports are awaited, the hospital

authorities said.

India reported its first case of novel coronavirus in Kerala on Thursday and the patient, a female medical student, has been kept in an isolation ward in the state.

Authorities have been screening patients at 21 airports, ports and borders for possible coronavirus infection and the health ministry has urged people to report themselves if they show symptoms of the virus such as cold and respiratory distress.

# AAP supplying biryani to protesters, says Yogi

## Anti-CAA agitators, beware, warns Azad

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB. 1

Bhim Army chief Chandrashekar Azad on Saturday cautioned the people agitating against the Citizenship Amendment Act across the country, to beware of the attempts being made by right wing extremists to disrupt the peaceful protests.

Azad called upon the protesters to maintain peace even in the face of grave provocation. "Our biggest victory is our peaceful protest. They are scared of our peace-

ful protest and want to create trouble to weaken us," he said referring to the incidents of shooting that took place at Jamia and near Shaheen Bagh.

Radicalised youth were being sent to such places to terrorise the agitators. Azad was addressing the march organised by SDPI in Thiruvananthapuram.

He said the anti-CAA agitation will continue till the BJP-led Central government scraps the 'divisive' law. The Bhim Army leader lauded the valiant fight of women in Shaheen Bagh.

## MOBILES BANNED INSIDE MAHA COLLEGE

Aurangabad, Feb. 1: In a bid to improve students' focus on education, a women's college in Maharashtra's Aurangabad city has banned the use of mobile phones inside its campus.

The move comes at a time when mobile phones have become an indelible part of everyday living, where youngsters are glued to social media.

Principal of Dr Rafiq Zakaria Women's College, Dr Maqdoom Farooqui, said, "We were searching for measures to enhance the process of learning and we found that students could concentrate better when they are not allowed to carry their cellphones to classrooms."

# AAP warns on 'violent' plans at Shaheen Bagh

New Delhi, Feb. 1: AAP on Saturday asked the Election Commission to direct the police chief and other agencies to take appropriate measures to prevent unrest and violence planned by "certain political parties" in the city to sabotage the Delhi elections.

In a letter to chief election commissioner Sunil Arora, the Aam Aadmi Party said it has come to know through its sources that certain "anti-social elements in connivance with certain political parties" are planning to create unrest and violence on Sunday to subvert law and order in Delhi and to impede the conduct of free and fair election.

"THE AAP, in a letter to the EC, said it has come to know through its sources that certain "anti-social elements in connivance with certain political parties" are planning to create unrest to subvert law and order in Delhi and to impede the conduct of free and fair election.

video wherein a group can be seen giving a call to assemble near Sarita Vihar in large numbers. We have attached the picture of one of such hoarding being put in some parts of Delhi," the letter said.

"In the light of these, we apprehend that this may be a well planned conspiracy to sabotage

the Delhi Legislative Assembly elections 2020," it said in the letter.

The AAP urged the EC to act immediately and direct the commissioner of police and other agencies to investigate and take appropriate measures to pre-empt any such criminal act.

The AAP claimed that the BJP is planning a "big disturbance" on February 2 at Delhi's Shaheen Bagh and Jamia Millia Islamia, where anti-CAA protests are underway and urged the Election Commission to take cognisance.

Elections in Delhi will be held on February 8 and results will be declared on February 11.

# Another Nirbhaya convict seeks mercy

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

Soon after President Ram Nath Kovind rejected the mercy petition of Vinay Kumar Sharma, one of the convicts in the Nirbhaya case, another convict, Akshay Thakur, filed a mercy plea before the President on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Tihar jail authorities, on Saturday, requisitioned for the Delhi High Court challenging a trial court's order staying the execution of the four convicts in the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape-cum-murder case.

The jail authorities have challenged the trial court's Friday order, which had stayed the execution of the convicts till further orders.

According to Sandeep Goel, the director general of prison, in view of rejection of the mercy petition of Vinay Kumar Sharma by the President, Tihar jail is approaching the Patiala House court for fixing the date of execution in respect to all the four convicts.

On Saturday, Akshay Thakur, one of the convicts in the Nirbhaya case, filed a mercy plea before President Kovind.

Earlier in the day, the President rejected the mercy plea of Sharma.

This is for the second time that the execution of the death warrants has been deferred. The first order for execution of

death sentence, issued on January 7 for January 22, was stayed on January 17.

Mukesh Kumar Singh, 32, Pawan Gupta, 25, Vinay Kumar Sharma, 26, and Akshay Thakur, 31, were scheduled to be hanged on Feb. 1 at 6 am.

The Tihar jail administration has completed all formalities for their execution.

The hangman, Pawan Jallad, requisitioned for the hanging, has even carried out a dry run of the hanging and has been housed in the jail premises.

The second warrant, issued on January 17, for February 1, was stayed on Friday.

Advocate A.P. Singh, the counsel for the three convicts — Pawan, Vinay, and Akshay — had urged the court to adjourn the matter 'sine die' saying their legal remedies were yet to be exhausted.

With Mr Singh contending that their legal remedies were yet to be exhausted, the hanging date remains uncertain.

As of now, Mukesh has exhausted all his legal remedies including the clemency plea which was dismissed by President Kovind on January 17 and the appeal against the rejection was thrown out by the Supreme Court on January 29.

The curative petitions of Vinay Kumar Sharma and Akshay have also been rejected by the apex court.

# KUNAL KAMRA SENDS LEGAL NOTICE TO INDIGO

New Delhi, Feb. 1: Days after IndiGo banned Kunal Kamra for a six-month period for allegedly heckling journalist Arnab Goswami on a flight, the comedian has sent a legal notice to the airline demanding an unconditional apology, revocation of the ban and ₹25 lakh compensation.

In the notice sent to the airline on Friday, Kamra's lawyer stated that his client has suffered "mental pain and agony" due to "illegal, arbitrary and high-handed decision" of the airline. Kamra was banned by IndiGo for six months on Tuesday for allegedly harassing the Republic TV Editor.

As aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri advised other airlines to impose restrictions on the comedian, SpiceJet, GoAir and Air India imposed a similar ban on him without specifying any period.

—PTI

**NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM**  
Tender Notice No. 13/2019-20/S.No. 08 dt 15.11.2019  
Subject :- Secondary Vertical Damper for LHB Coaches.  
Ref.-Adv. Tender No. 07193459 Due on 31-01-2020.  
The due date and other Conditions of above tender has been changed and also published on Website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) in all other terms and conditions remain unchanged.  
No. 07193459/P07 Dated: 30.01.2020 338/20  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM**  
Tender Notice No. 27/2019-20/S. No. 4  
Subject :- BI-FOLDING LAVATORY DOOR LEFT WITH FRAME COMPLETE  
Ref.-Adv. Tender No. 07180263B Due on 03-02-2020.  
The due date and other Conditions of above tender has been changed and also published on Website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.  
335/20  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system  
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

SN	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	18195145B	ROUTER (02X10/100/1000LAN+02X02 MBPS WITH ACCESSORIES)	67 NOS	20-02-20
02	02191915	DOUBLE INTER CENTRIFUGAL BLOWER ASSEMBLY	146 NOS	05-03-20
03	12201611	ELECTRON BEAM IRRADIATED / CHEMICALLY CURED MULTISTRANDED COPPER CABLE	8072 MTR	24-03-20

NOTE - 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for details.  
2. No Manual offer will be entertained.  
Tender Notice No. 34/2019-20 Dated: 31.01.2020 340/2020  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
Ministry of Communications  
DEPARTMENT OF POSTS

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Govt. of India has notified the Rules (Senior Citizen Welfare Fund Rules, 2016) for management and handling of the unclaimed money of the depositors lying with the Post Offices and Banks etc. As per these Rules, the details of such accounts wherein amounts are lying unclaimed (accounts inactive or un-operated for more than 10 years) are to be notified publicly. Accordingly the Department of Posts has published the details of such accounts on its website ([www.indiapost.gov.in](http://www.indiapost.gov.in)). Local Post Offices may be contacted for further details.

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Candidates can apply ONLINE through the official website as stated above.

On-line Application Starts	07 February, 2020
On-line Application Ends	08 March, 2020
ISI Admission TEST	10 May, 2020

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### Election

#### Hillary Clinton jabs again at Bernie Sanders, says he didn't unite the party

### BRIEF

#### Khalilzad set to meet Ghani

Kabul: The US special envoy leading negotiations with the Taliban was set to meet with the Afghan president Saturday, an official confirmed, in an apparent renewed push for talks on an agreement with the insurgents. Washington and the Taliban are still wrangling over a possible deal that would see American troops begin to leave Afghanistan in return for security guarantees. However, in recent weeks, the US has been largely quiet on the exact status of the talks. US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad was prepared to hold talks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in the afternoon, according to the leader's spokesman. The details of what they were planning to discuss were unknown. The US embassy in Kabul did not immediately comment on the envoy's arrival.

#### US RELAXES PAK TRAVEL ADVISORY

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, FEB. 1

The United States has relaxed travel advisory for Pakistan due to improving security situation. Pakistan foreign office described the update in US Travel Advisory as a step in the right direction, saying it has made resolute efforts to enhance security throughout the country. Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said: "Pakistan has noted the update in the U.S. Travel Advisory, which has acknowledged that "Pakistan's security environment has improved." This is a step in the right direction." "Significant improvement in the security environment has led the United Nations to re-designate Islamabad as a family station for its personnel," she said. "Recently, the UK, while acknowledging the measures taken by Pakistan, has revised its Travel Advisory which is a welcome development," the spokesperson added. "Pakistan has also been declared as one of the "Best Holiday Destinations for 2020" by an award-winning travel magazine," she added.

# Virus toll soars to 259

## Countries scramble to evacuate their nationals from Wuhan

Beijing, Feb. 1: Several countries, including India, scrambled to evacuate their nationals from the Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, as the death toll in China soared to 259 and nearly 12,000 people infected with the deadly virus. The virus that emerged in early December and traced to a market in Hubei province capital Wuhan that sold wild animals, has now spread to more than two dozen nations, including India where the first case is confirmed in Kerala, the US, Britain, Russia and Sweden. Chinese health authorities on Saturday announced that the death toll has increased to 259 as 46 more people, all but one in Hubei, died in the preceding 24 hours. With 2,102 new infections, the total confirmed cases in China increased to 11,791, the biggest increase since China began reporting the spread of the virulent virus on January 21. China's National Health Commission in its daily report on Saturday said that 1,795 patients remained in criti-



Medical workers in protective suits move a coronavirus patient into an isolation ward at the Second People's Hospital at Fuyang in China's Anhui Province. — AP

cal condition, and 17,988 people were suspected of being infected with the virus as of the end of Friday. So far about 124 cases have been reported in other countries, including India where the first case is confirmed in Kerala. Several countries, including India, US, Japan, South Korea, UK and Bangladesh, have evacuated their nationals from

Wuhan by sending special aircraft. Air India's jumbo B747 aircraft carrying 324 Indians, including 211 students, 110 working professionals and three minors, reached New Delhi on Saturday morning from Wuhan city. Another flight of the airline departed for the Chinese city from New Delhi on Saturday afternoon. Five doctors from

the Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital who were onboard the first flight are also in the second flight, the Air India spokesperson said. The Indian Army has set up a quarantine facility in Manesar near Delhi to keep around 300 Indian students being evacuated from China's Hubei province in view of the coronavirus infection outbreak. — PTI

RESEARCHERS, USING computer modelling, have calculated that up to 75,800 individuals may have contracted the novel coronavirus in the Chinese city of Wuhan as of January 25, a number that is far greater than the official estimate of 1,300 infected people, according to a study, published in the journal *The Lancet*.

A WORLD Health Organisation official said other governments need to prepare for "domestic outbreak control" if the disease spreads in their countries. WHO said it was especially concerned that some cases abroad involved human-to-human transmission.

# Trump set for acquittal

Washington, Feb. 1: The Republican Party-controlled US Senate on Friday narrowly rejected the opposition Democrats' motion to call new witnesses and documents for the impeachment trial against President Donald Trump. As a result, the Senate is expected to acquit Trump of the charges early next week. Trump is scheduled to deliver his third State of the Union Address on February 4. The move to invite new witnesses was defeated by 51 to 49 votes. In the 100-member Senate, the Republican Party has 53 seats and the Democrats 47. Two of the Republican Senators, Mitt Romney and Susan Collins, sided with the Democrats in this vote to call former White House national security adviser John Bolton and other Trump aides to testify. The Democrats need 67 votes to convict and remove Trump from the White House. "The vote represented a major victory for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Trump, both of whom have been

calling for Republicans to reject the motion and move towards ending the trial," *Politico* said. The House, where the Democrats enjoy a majority had impeached Trump on two counts of misuse of power and obstruction to the Congress. The Senate started the impeachment trial last week. "The Radical Left, Do Nothing Democrats keep chanting 'fairness', when they put on the most unfair Witch Hunt in the history of the U.S. Congress. They had 17 Witnesses, we were allowed ZERO, and no lawyers. They didn't do their job, had no case. The Dems are scamming America!" Trump said in a tweet moments before the voting on move to call new witnesses. "Democrats = 17 Witnesses. Republicans = 0 Witnesses," Trump tweeted after the vote justifying the Senate vote against the move to call new witnesses. "The vote Friday represented a major victory for Republican leadership," *The Wall Street Journal* said. — Agencies

# Cheers, ciao mark UK exit from EU

London, Feb. 1: The UK's divorce from the European Union has come into force over three years after the landmark Brexit vote, making it the first country to exit the economic bloc after 47 years of membership, triggering celebrations across the country to mark the historic moment. Brexit came into force at 2300 GMT on Friday. Johnson, in his video message, promised hope and opportunity to every part of the United Kingdom. A party at Parliament Square and a

The war is over: we have won. This is the single most important moment in the modern history of our great nation — NIGEL FARAGE, Leave campaigner

Brexit is a material change in circumstances. Scotland will return to the heart of Europe as an independent country - #LeaveALightOnForScotland.. — NICOLA STURGEON, Scotland's First Minister

light display count down at Downing Street marked the historic moment, while elsewhere in the country there were some anti-Brexit rallies. "Let us celebrate tonight as we have never done before. This is the greatest

moment in the modern history of our great nation," said Nigel Farage, the leader of the Brexit party and someone who has campaigned incessantly for the UK to leave the EU. — PTI



A countdown to Brexit timer and the colours of the British Union flag illuminate the exterior of 10 Downing Street, the residence of the British Prime Minister, in London, on Friday midnight. — AP

### Sports

#### Sports gets ₹50cr hike in Oly year

New Delhi: The government on Saturday allocated ₹2826.92 crore to the sports budget for the next financial year, which is an increase of a mere ₹50 crore from the revised estimates of 2019-20. The government gave a substantial hike of Rs 312.42 crore to its flagship Khelo India programme by allocating ₹890.42 crore as compared to the 2019-20 revised amount of ₹578 crore, which meant that most of the other heads got reduced allocation in an Olympic year. The highest reduction was in National Sports Federations with ₹245.00 crore being allocated ₹55 crore less. — PTI

#### NADA goofs up doping samples

New Delhi: The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) on Saturday apologised for wrongly attributing a wrestler caught for doping as a U-23 World championships medalist. Wrestler Ravinder Kumar was on Friday banned for four years for failing a dope test but the NADA created confusion by identifying him as a world U-23 silver medalist which was not the case. It was Ravinder Dahiya — not Ravinder Kumar — who had won a silver medal in the U-23 World Championships last year. Ravinder Dahiya said he had not been tested by the NADA. — PTI

# Sofia surges to title

## Born in Russia, raised in USA, Kenin wins in Australia

Melbourne, Feb. 1: America's Sofia Kenin stunned two-time Major champion Garbine Muguruza to win the Australian Open on Saturday, completing a surprise run where she has come from nowhere to win her first Grand Slam title. Despite making her debut in a Major final Kenin, 21, showed all her trademark aggression as she fought back from a set down to win 4-6, 6-2, 6-2 in 2hrs 3mins against the shellshocked Spaniard. The 14th seed, who will now jump as high as seventh in the world, was in tears at the end and headed straight for her father Alexander, who is her coach. It was the final twist in a tournament of upsets, after Williams went out in the third round and Kenin upset Australia's world number one Ashleigh Barty in the semifinals. "My dream officially came true, I can't describe this feeling. It's amazing, dreams come true. If you have dreams, go for it, it's going to come true," said Moscow-born Kenin. She was resurgent in Melbourne over the past fortnight, but after grabbing the first-set lead, her serve failed her spectacularly. She totted up eight double-faults in all, three of them in the final game — including one on the second championship point, handing the title to her younger opponent. "The past two weeks have been the best of my life," she told Rod Laver Arena, as her father — who left the Soviet Union in 1987 to give the family a



Sofia Kenin kisses the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup after defeating Garbine Muguruza 4-6, 6-2, 6-2 in their women's singles final of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on Saturday. — AFP

better life — filmed her victory speech on his phone. At 21 years and 80 days, Kenin is 22 days younger than Japan's Naomi Osaka when she won the title last year. Kenin is the youngest Australian Open champion since Maria Sharapova — her idol — won was 20 in 2008. Before the final, Kenin's father Alexander, who is also her coach, retold the family story. He and wife Lena left the Soviet Union in 1987, initially for New York,

settling in Florida and Kenin says her parents sacrificed themselves "so I could have the American dream." Alexander said: "I wanted a better future for my kids and it (then Soviet Union) was a completely different country (to what it is today). Nothing was allowed and we tried to get out for eight years. They controlled everything, we didn't see the world, you were just stuck." Leaving friends and family behind and heading into the unknown of the United States was a wrench, said Alexander, and life was tough eking out a living in New York.

Alexander was a taxi driver by night and went to English and computer school by day. "I don't think she experienced all the sacrifices we had to go through, but she knows about them," he said. "It was very, very tough. I had to work at night, go to school in the morning. Driving in New York, speaking English on the (taxi) radio. I had no idea what they were saying. But it's amazing the things you do to survive. She knows about that and I think it made her tough," he added. Unlike Kenin's hero Maria Sharapova, who made a similar journey with her family to the United States but represented Russia, Alexander says there was never a debate about where her loyalties lay. "She has very little connection with Russia, except the fact she was born there. She's the best person in the world, that's it," he said. "King" Novak Djokovic has won all seven Australian Open finals he has contested, he is on a 12-match winning streak and will become world number one if successful in the Melbourne Park decider on Sunday. Against those overwhelming odds, few are giving Dominic Thiem much of a chance to wrench the title from his iron grip and clinch a maiden Grand Slam. But the Austrian, remarkably, is the one with the recent edge. Djokovic is 6-4 in their career head-to-heads. — AFP

# Virat & Co. gear for final hurrah

Mt. Maunganui (New Zealand), Feb. 1: Invincible so far, India will eye a rare 5-0 white-wash against a bruised and battered New Zealand in the final T20 International here on Sunday. New Zealand have never lost all games in a bilateral T20I series (three or more matches) at home. Since 2005, they have only once lost all games in a bilateral T20I series at home, going down 2-0 to England back in February 2008. While this puts India in a unique position going ahead, they will still stay fifth in the ICC T20I rankings behind Pakistan, Australia, England and South Africa. India will have their mind set elsewhere though, pertinently the experimentation cycle ahead of the T20 World Cup in Australia. The fourth T20I was a step in that direction, but it mostly came to nought with the likes of Sanju Samson and Shivam Dube wasting their opportunities. Samson has been pro-

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moted up the order in his limited opportunities against both Sri Lanka and New Zealand, and has been dismissed while attacking the bowling. The team management would want him to show more patience, while backing him to come good once again. Meanwhile, Dube has lacked footwork against both spinners and pacers. Elsewhere, with Manish Pandey firming up the number six spot, Shreyas Iyer could be promoted to number three. The bigger question is about the keeper-batsman spot. Ever since the Australia series at home, K L Rahul has played with an increased workload in that role. Pre-series, skipper Virat Kohli had more or less confirmed that Rahul would continue to keep in the ensuing three-ODI series. — PTI

#### REAL WIN MADRID DERBY

Madrid, Feb. 1: Real Madrid extended their winning run and increased their Spanish league lead by defeating Atletico Madrid 1-0 in the Spanish capital derby on Saturday. Karim Benzema scored a second-half winner to give Madrid its eighth straight victory this year and a six-point lead over second-placed Barcelona, which hosts Levante on Sunday. The loss virtually ended Atletico's title hopes, as they stayed 13 points off the lead and were in danger of dropping to seventh place by the end of the weekend. Madrid are now unbeaten against Atletico in the league in seven consecutive matches, but it hadn't defeated its rival at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in six straight games, before this match. — AP



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