

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2020

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Saif on Recreating Ole Ole



## NEWSMAKERS

Sad to be only woman of colour in Oscar race: Cynthia

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## NATION | Controversy

Kamra notice to IndiGo seeks apology, ₹25 lakh

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RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

Vol. 26 No. 347 | 48 PAGES | ₹5.00

## WINDOWS



Sofia Kenin of the US holds up the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup after winning against Spain's Garbine Muguruza in their women's singles final match of the Australian Open in Melbourne on Saturday.

Report on Page 16 — AP

## At 33.4° Celsius, Bengaluru hottest in 150 years: IMD

Bengaluru: The Pensioners Paradise, as Bengaluru had been known for its salubrious weather, is becoming hot as the city recorded 33.4 degree Celsius on Thursday, highest in the last 150 years ever since the IMD started recording the temperature. The IMDs observation affirmed the general observation that winter this time disappeared quite quickly, giving people wind of a severe summer ahead. — PTI Full report on Page 14

## Kafeel Khan sent to judicial custody

Alligarh: Child specialist Kafeel Khan, who was accused of making an inflammatory speech at AMU, was remanded to 14 days' judicial custody and later transferred to Mathura jail, officials said on Saturday. — PTI Full report on Page 14

## India wishes Male on C'wealth return

New Delhi: More than three years after it walked out — under a different government — from the Commonwealth, the tiny archipelago nation of the Maldives was admitted to it again. New Delhi welcomed the development. Full report on Page 14

## COUNTERPOINT



If we have money, we can get food, clothes, everything... online!

## WEATHER

Max: 38°C  
Min: 29°C  
RH: 33%  
Rainfall: 20%

Forecast: Thunderstorm

## ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttarayanam  
Tithi: Magha Shuddha Ashtami till 7.59 pm  
Star: Bharani till 11.07 pm  
Varjyam: 7.21 am to 9.06 am  
Durmuhurtam: 4.38 pm to 5.23 pm  
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 7.09 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.27 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 2.52 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 2.19 PM

# MEGA TALKATHON BUDGET

## Fiscal deficit pegged at 3.5%; Nominal GDP to be 10%; Capex scaled to 21% Few takers for differential tax slabs proposed for those foregoing exemptions

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

In a move to boost consumption for bringing the economy out of the worst slowdown phase, the government on Saturday announced some sops to cheer both corporate and *aam admi* in some way or the other, while at the same time, it widened budget deficit targets for the current and next fiscal years to help spur growth. The most remarkable measures announced by the government in its Budget 2020 include, cutting personal income tax on lower slabs, raising deposit insurance to ₹5 lakh from ₹1 lakh at present, scrapping Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) to encourage corporates for more investment, spending more on agriculture and rural sector, raising funds via listing of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), pegging FY21 fiscal deficit at 3.5 per cent of GDP, etc.

Presenting her second Budget in Parliament, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the 2020-21 Budget was aimed at boosting incomes and enhancing purchasing power, stressing that the economy's fundamentals were strong and inflation was well contained in the country.

As far as fiscal deficit is concerned, it is, however, expected that the government will miss its deficit goals for a third year, pushing the shortfall to 3.8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) from a planned 3.3 per cent in the year ending March this year.

"The deficit target for the coming fiscal year starting April 1 was widened to 3.5 per cent," the finance minister said. For the next fiscal, she also pegged net borrowings of ₹5.45 lakh crore and doubled target of raising revenue from the sale of government stake in PSUs to ₹2.1 lakh crore.

Sensing a good economic health in next fiscal, the government also pegged the country's nominal GDP growth rate at 10 per cent in the next fiscal and the capital expenditure is scaled up by 21 per cent to prop up the economy.

However, Sitharaman said, "Receipts for 2020-21 are pegged at ₹22.46 lakh crore while expenditure at ₹30.42 lakh crore. The revised estimated expenditure for FY20 has been pegged at ₹26.99 lakh crore and receipts at ₹19.32 lakh crore."

In a move to boost domestic manufacturing in the country, Ms Sitharaman also raised import duty on a variety of products ranging from tableware and kitchenware to electrical appliances, footwear, furniture, stationery and toys, while at the same time, she provided funds to help farmers set up solar power generation units

## SOMETHING FOR ALL

### FOR YOU AND ME

- Proposed seven slab income-tax regime without exemptions and deductions
- Esops won't be taxed for five years.

### FOR FARMERS AND VILLAGES

- Agriculture target at ₹15 lakh crore
- Airline for farm produce mooted
- Hospitals under PPP mode

### FOR EDUCATION AND WOMEN

- Steps would be taken to allow foreign borrowings and FDI in higher education
- Task force on women's marriageable age

## HEALTH

₹67,484cr  
has been allocated for health, which is ₹3,654 crore higher than the last fiscal's outlay

## FERTILISER SUBSIDY

₹71,309cr  
has been allocated for fertiliser subsidy, which is ₹8,689 cr less than the last fiscal's outlay

THE NEW tax regime shall be optional for the taxpayers. The government intends to remove all Income-Tax exemptions in the long run.

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN,**  
Finance minister



## INSIDE

PG2 | Non-taxpaying NRIs to be taxed as Indian residents

PG3 | ₹103 lakh crore promised for infra projects

PG4 | Budget seeks to perk up agricultural sector

PG5 | Leg-up for Foreign Direct Investment in edu sector

**COSTLY** Butter, ghee, maize, sugar, chewing gum, footwear, hair-removing appliances, water filters, glassware, combs, fans, water heaters, food grinders, ovens, cookers, etc

**CHEAPER** Pure-bred breeding horses, sports goods, microphone, electric vehicles. Page 2



I believe that this budget will increase income and investment, increase demand and consumption

— NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister



I did not see any concrete, strategic idea that could help our youngsters get jobs.

— RAHUL GANDHI, Congress leader

## NEW INCOME TAX SLABS

- Up to Rs 2,50,000 Nil
- ₹2,50,001 to ₹5,00,000: 5%
- ₹5,00,001 to ₹7,50,000: 10%
- ₹7,50,001 to ₹10,00,000: 15%

- ₹10,00,001 to ₹12,50,000: 20%
- ₹12,50,001 to ₹15,00,000: 25%
- Above ₹15,00,000: 30%
- New tax regime won't have any tax deductions. Page 2: Comparison

## MARGINAL HIKE IN DEFENCE; MNREGA FUNDS SLASHED

New Delhi, Feb. 1: In a marginal hike, the defence budget was increased to ₹3.37 lakh crore for 2020-21 against last year's ₹3.18 lakh crore, notwithstanding expectations of a significantly higher allocation to fast-track long-pending military modernisation. Allocations for various flagship schemes under the Department of Rural Development was marginally reduced to ₹1.20 lakh crore for the year 2020-21 from ₹1.22 lakh crore in 2019-20, while the funds allotted for employment guarantee scheme MGNREGA came down by ₹9,500 crore during the same period.

More on Page 4

and set up coal storages to transport perishables. Keeping labour-intensive sectors in MSME as critical for employment generation, the finance minister also pointed out that cheap and low-quality imports are an impediment to their growth.

"Special attention has been taken to put measured restraint on import of those items which are being produced by our MSMEs with better quality. Keeping in view the need of this sector, customs duty is being raised on items like footwear and furniture," she said.

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## Markets collapse, ₹3.4L-cr investor wealth wiped out

ASHWIN J PUNNEN  
MUMBAI, FEB. 1

Massive selling emerged in the market, with the Sensex plunging by over 1,000 points intra-day, its biggest fall in a decade as the Union Budget failed to live up to market expectations.

Investors pressed sell button as the finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman pegged the fiscal deficit at 3.8 per cent for the current fiscal, compared to the earlier target of 3.3 per cent of GDP and there was no growth-boosting measures for the sagging economy.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 987.96 points or 2.43 per cent lower at 39,735.53.

On similar lines, the 50-share NSE Nifty plunged



300.25 points or 2.51 per cent to close at 11,661.85. Investor wealth, measured in terms of value of

More on Page 11

## Bank deposits insured till ₹5L

FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, FEB. 1

In a confidence boosting measure, the finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget 2020 proposed to increase the limit of insurance cover in case of bank failure on deposits to ₹5 lakh from the existing ₹1 lakh.

The proposal comes in the wake of 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 upto ₹1 lakh by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation against default of banks due to liquidation, cancellation of banking licence or merger.

"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.

More on Page 11

## LIC to get listed on stock exchange

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Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget 2020 has announced listing public sector behemoth Life Insurance Corporation of India on the bourses and privatising IDBI Bank.

The proceeds from LIC Initial Public Offering (IPO), IDBI stake sale along with current divestments in progress will

help the government to achieve its aggressive disinvestment target of ₹2.1 lakh crore and fiscal deficit targets. However one needs clarity on the sovereign guarantee that comes with LIC policy.

According to insurance experts, based on a high level of evaluation of LIC's embedded value (future value of the new business), the insurer's market capitalisation could be ₹8 lakh crore to ₹10 lakh crore,

thus more valuable than TCS and Reliance Industries. Listing of LIC would also require amendments to the LIC Act 1956.

"Listing of LIC is a commendable measure provided there is clarity on the sovereign guarantee to policyholders and adherence to the required solvency margin is undertaken. Based on a very high level of evaluation of the Embedded value of LIC's portfolio, the market capi-

talisation of LIC could be ₹8 lakh crore to ₹10 lakh crore," said Ashwin Parekh managing director at Ashwin Parekh managing director at Ashwin Parekh Advisory Services.

"After two capital infusions, the government owns a substantial part of IDBI Bank (46.5 per cent stake) which will be completely sold off. The new investors will seek...

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ments by Democratic prosecutors and White House defence lawyers on Monday and a vote for acquittal on Wednesday.

A Wednesday vote will mean the trial will not have concluded before Tuesday, when Mr Trump is scheduled to give his annual "State of the Union" speech. — AFP More on Page 15

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## Man opens fire in Shaheen Bagh, held

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

A gun-wielding man fired two shots from a country-made pistol near the Shaheen Bagh protest that entered 50 days on Saturday.

Eyewitnesses said that the man, who was standing near the police barricades, which are placed about 100 metres from the Shaheen Bagh protest site,



Kapil Baisla

fired two rounds in the air while shouting "H i n d u R a s h t r a Z i n d a b a d".

The man, identified as Kapil Baisla (25), a resident of East Delhi's Dallupura village, is a milk supplier. He was nabbed by the protesters on the spot and handed over to the police. Even

while the man was in the grip of police, he was heard chanting, "Jai Shri Ram" and was also shouting, "Hamare desh mein kisi ki nahi chalegi, sirf Hinduon ki chalegi."

The incident occurred around 4:45 pm on Saturday, two days after a teenager fired from a pistol at anti-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."

A woman protester said that those who are against their protest are trying to scare them but the protesters will not step back. More on Page 13 Prasad: Centre ready to talk to protesters: Page 14

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Table with 2 columns: Stock Name, Change. Includes TCS, HUL, Nestle India, Tech Mahi, Infosys.

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More on Page 13 Prasad: Centre ready to talk to protesters: Page 14

# TAXES



## Union Budget 2020-21

It's a laundry list of old schemes. There is nothing in the Budget that leads one to believe that growth will revive in 2020-21. The claim of 6 to 6.5% growth next year is astonishing and even irresponsible.

— P. CHIDAMBARAM, FORMER FINANCE MINISTER

### IN BRIEF

#### Exemptions will go: FM

**New Delhi:** After slashing income tax rates for individuals on condition that they give up exemptions and deductions, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the government intends to remove all income-tax exemptions in the long run. Speaking at a press conference after presenting her second budget in the Lok Sabha, the finance minister said income tax cuts follow reduction in corporate tax rates in September last year. The minister said additional capital will be provided to public sector banks as and when required. Her budget speech did not provide for any specific number for additional capital.

#### Parity for InvITs, REITs

**New Delhi:** The government has proposed changes in the Income Tax law to ensure uniform treatment for unlisted Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs). The proposal is part of the Finance Bill tabled in the Parliament on Saturday. The Income Tax Act provides for a taxation regime for business trusts. Definition of a business trust means a trust registered as an InvIT or a REIT under markets regulator Sebi and these units need to be listed on a recognised stock exchange. Further, the market regulator has done away with the requirement of mandatory listing of InvIT and REIT units. — PTI

#### Cess on medical equipment

**New Delhi:** Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday proposed to impose a nominal health cess on import of medical equipment to boost the domestic medical devices sector and generate resources for health services. In her second Budget speech, Ms Sitharaman said till a few years back India was dependent on imports for medical equipment. Now, not only is the country manufacturing medical equipment but also exporting them in large quantities. Stating that this sector deserves further fillip, she said the government is committed to provide health services to all and Ayushman Bharat has made it possible. — PTI

#### No duty on solar cells

**New Delhi:** The government on Saturday announced removal of 20 per cent import duty on solar cells and panels. According to the Budget documents, the customs duty on solar cells and solar cells assembled in modules or made up into panels was reduced from 20 per cent to zero per cent. This assumes significance in view of India's ambitious target of adding 100 GW of solar energy by 2022. India has already achieved installation of 34 GW of solar energy in India. Earlier in July 2018, the government had imposed 25 per cent safeguard on solar cells imports from China and Malaysia for two years to protect local firms. — PTI

#### 1% TDS from e-sellers

**New Delhi:** The government on Saturday proposed a new levy of 1 per cent TDS (tax deducted at source) on e-commerce transactions, a move that could increase burden on sellers on such platforms. "In order to widen and deepen the tax net by bringing participants of e-commerce (sellers) within tax net, it is proposed to insert a new section 194-O in the Act so as to provide for a new levy of TDS at the rate of one per cent," according to Budget 2020-21 documents. This provision will not apply in cases where the seller's sales are less than ₹5 lakh year. — PTI

## New tax regime gives with one hand, takes away with the other

Analysts claim there won't any great savings under new tax regime

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, FEB. 1

The perception that 'millennials like to spend more rather than save' seem to have led to the introduction of a new personal income-tax regime. While the aim was to increase disposable income of people to boost consumption, analysts claim that taxpayers can't save much under the new tax regime, which requires people to forego all tax exemptions and deductions.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday proposed a simplified personal income tax regime wherein income tax rates will be significantly reduced but they have to forego all deductions and exemptions.

Under the new regime, an individual will be required to pay tax at a reduced rate of 10 per cent for income between ₹5 lakh to ₹7.5 lakh against the current rate of 20 per cent. For income between ₹7.5 lakh to ₹10 lakh he will pay at the reduced rate of 15 per cent against the current rate of 20 per cent. Similarly for the income between ₹10 lakh to ₹12.5 lakh the taxpayer will pay at the reduced rate of 20 per cent against the current rate of 30 per cent. The income between ₹12.5 lakh to ₹15 lakh will be taxed at the reduced rate of 25 per cent against the existing rate of 30 per cent. Incomes above ₹15 lakh will be continued to be taxed at the rate of 30 per cent.

The new personal

### If You Avail Deductions, Old Regime Will Be Better

Income	₹5,00,000	₹7,50,000	₹10,00,000	₹15,00,000	₹20,00,000
<b>OLD REGIME</b>					
Tax with no deductions	Nil	₹65,000	₹1,17,000	₹2,73,000	₹4,29,000
Tax with deductions*	Nil	₹33,800	₹75,400	₹1,72,500	₹3,04,200
<b>NEW REGIME</b>					
Tax with no deductions	Nil	₹39,000	₹78,000.0	₹1,95,000	₹3,51,000
Money saved under the old tax regime	Nil	₹5,200	₹2,600	₹22,500	₹46,800

Source: BankBazaar.com

### EXEMPTIONS AND DEDUCTIONS THAT WON'T BE ALLOWED UNDER NEW TAX REGIME

- Standard Deduction: ₹50,000 (for salaried)
- House Rent Allowance: Up to ₹1,00,000
- Professional Tax: ₹2,500
- Payments under 80C\*: ₹1,50,000
- Health insurance 80D: ₹25,000
- Health insurance for parents (senior citizens): ₹30,000
- Interest paid on home loan: ₹2,00,000
- Set off on loss on house property: ₹2,00,000
- Pension fund 80CCC: ₹1,50,000
- No deduction will be allowed for interest paid on education and donations made to charity
- Sec. 80C also includes children's tuition fee.

income tax rates will entail estimated revenue forgone of ₹40,000 crore per year.

To further simplify the tax system and lowering the tax rate, the FM would remove 70 exemptions and deductions which got incorporated in the income tax legislation over the past several decades.

Given the slowing economy, the finance minister has tried to stimulate consumption by reducing tax

rates, especially to the people in the lower tax bracket, said experts.

However, taxpayers were in a tizzy trying to assess which would be better — the old personal income tax regime with exemptions or the new regime without exemptions.

Rather than simplifying individual tax structure, analysts claim that the tax regime has become more complicated. Those earning more than ₹15 lakh

annually will be able to save about ₹75,000 extra. However, without exemptions, it will come down to ₹30,000, they claim.

"It is only for people who never plan for taxes that the new tax regime will be helpful. It will not make much difference to those who have been planning for taxes as there will be no tax savings for them. They will be saving more by sticking with the old tax regime which allows

deductions rather than shifting to the new tax regime," a financial planner said.

Experts claim that people now may not invest and opt for new tax regime but by doing so their savings habit would die which is not good for the common man.

"By splurging their money, people would be happy now but in the long run they will suffer," experts said.

## Dividend will be taxed in hands of investors: FM

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, FEB. 1

Much awaited announcement on Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) received mixed response as the equity market fell sharply in contrast to finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's wish to make equity market more attractive. It would impact the high networth investors (HNIs) who would have to pay DDT now while it will be good for the corporates, especially the multinationals who would be taking home more profits now.

"In order to increase the attractiveness of the Indian equity market and to provide relief to a large class of investors, I propose to remove the DDT and adopt the classical system of dividend taxation under which the companies would not be required to pay DDT. The dividend shall be taxed only in the hands of the recipients at their applicable rate," the finance minister said.

"Further, non-availability of credit of DDT to most of the foreign investors in their home country results in reduction of rate of return on equity capital for them," the FM said.

Currently, companies are required to pay DDT on the dividend paid to its shareholders at the rate of 15 per cent plus applicable surcharge and cess in addition to the tax payable by the company on its profits.

It has been argued that the system of levying

DDT has been abolished and therefore obviously foreign investors will benefit. But it becomes fully taxable in the hands of shareholders which is not the right way of doing it because shareholders are also owners and as owners of the company they pay tax on profits and it gets taxed again.

— NIRMAL JAIN  
Founder and chairman, IIFL

DDT, results in increase in tax burden for investors and especially those who are liable to pay tax less than the rate of DDT if the dividend income is included in their income.

Further, in order to remove the cascading effect, the FM proposed to allow a deduction for the dividend received by holding company from its subsidiary. The removal of DDT will lead to estimated annual revenue forgone of ₹25,000 crore.

DDT is not helping much, only helping people in the lower tax bracket will benefit as DDT will be taxed as per the applicable tax slab, said experts. For the people in 20-30 per cent slab, dividend received will be taxed at the slab rate.

"When DDT becomes fully taxable in the hands of shareholders which is not correct because shareholders are also owners and they pay tax on profits and it gets taxed again," said Nirmal Jain, founder and chairman of IIFL.

## What goes up, what comes down

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's proposals on customs and excise duties would affect the prices of the following items.

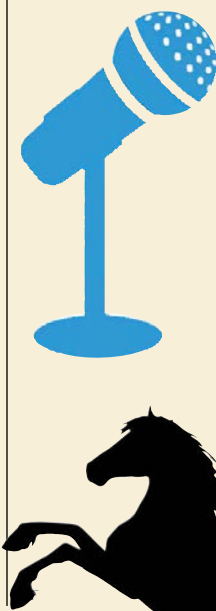
### COSTLY

- Butter, ghee, butter oil, edible oils, peanut butter
- Whey, meslin, maize, sugar, beet seeds, preserved potato
- Chewing gum, dietary soya fibre, isolated soya protein
- Walnuts (shelled)
- Footwear, shavers, hair clippers, hair-removing appliances
- Tableware, kitchenware, water filters, glassware
- Household articles of porcelain or china
- Rubies, emeralds, sapphires, rough coloured gemstones
- Padlocks
- Hand sieves and hand riddles
- Combs, hairpins, curling pins, curling grips, hair curlers
- Table fans, ceiling fans and pedestal fans
- Portable blowers
- Water heaters and immersion heaters
- Hair dryers, hand drying apparatus and electric irons
- Food grinders, ovens, cookers, cooking plates, boiling rings, grillers and roasters

- Coffee and tea makers and toasters
- Electro-thermic fluid heaters, devices for repelling insects and electric heating resistors
- Furniture, lamps and lighting fittings
- Toys, stationery items, artificial flowers, bells, gongs, statuettes, trophies
- Printed Circuit Board Assembly (PCBA) of cellular mobile phones, display panel and touch assembly, fingerprint readers for use in cellular mobile phones.
- Cigarettes, hookah, chewing tobacco, zarda scented tobacco and tobacco extracts and essence.

### CHEAPER

- Pure-bred breeding horses
- Newsprint
- Sports goods
- Microphone
- Electric vehicles



## Non-taxpaying NRIs will be taxed as Indian residents

SANGEETHA G.  
CHENNAI, FEB. 1

The Budget proposed to tax non-resident Indians who are not paying taxes in any foreign country. "An Indian citizen who is not liable to tax in any other country or territory shall be deemed to be resident in India," the Budget said. As a result, he will be taxed in India for his global income.

This amendment will take effect from April 1, 2021 and will, accordingly, apply in relation to the assessment year 2021-22

and subsequent assessment years. The issue of stateless persons has been bothering the tax world for quite some time. It is entirely possible for an individual to arrange his affairs in such a fashion that he is not liable to tax in any country or jurisdiction during a year. This arrangement is typically employed by high net worth individuals (HNWI) to avoid paying taxes to any country/jurisdiction.

The Budget also proposed to reduce the period of stay in India to 120

days from 182 days earlier for PIOs to be categorised as NRIs.

"Instances have come to notice where period of 182 days specified in respect of an Indian citizen or person of Indian origin visiting India during the year, is being misused. Individuals, who are actually carrying out substantial economic activities from India, manage their period of stay in India, so as to remain a non-resident in perpetuity and not be required to declare their global income in India," the Budget said.



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For any grievance or confidential information write to CP Delhi at PO Box No. 171 GPO, New Delhi



# Union Budget 2020-21

The government took steps to rationalise the tax system, boost infrastructure, strengthen banking system, to make India a \$5 trillion-economy.  
— AMIT SHAH, HOME MINISTER

# TRANSPORT



tweets...

PIYUSH GOYAL  
@PIYUSHGOYAL

It's a balanced Budget which prepares the country for the decade ahead of us and prepares it to be a \$5 trillion economy

SHARAD PAWAR  
@PAWARSPEAKS

Automobile sector has been completely ignored and unemployment issue is not addressed fairly. It was the lengthiest speech but lacked farsightedness and direction.

SITARAM YECHURY  
@SITARAMYECHURY

Just platitudes & slogans. Nothing substantial to alleviate peoples' misery, the growing unemployment, rural wage crash, farmers' distress suicides and galloping prices.

ARVIND KEJRIWAL  
@ARVINDKEJRIWAL

Delhi had high expectations from the Budget, but step-motherly treatment has been meted out to it again.

KISHORE TIWARI  
SHIV SENA LEADER

To reverse the present trend of recession, a special bailout package should have been announced for agriculture. Issues such as minimum support price (MSP) for cotton and soybean, new crop loans, new technology, financial assistance for farm widows and higher education for their wards were not addressed in the budget.

DIPA SINHA  
@SINHADIPA

Such a drastic cut in food subsidy - from 1.84 lakh crore 2019-20 BE to 1.08 lakh crore in 2019-20 RE to 1.15 lakh crore 2020-21 BE - What's going on?? What will happen to FCI and what is the future of PDS?

SANTOSH KAMATH,  
PARTNER AND LEADER,  
ALTERNATE ENERGIES, KPMG

The push to solar power (PM Kusum Scheme) in the agriculture sector is positive and builds on what has been started earlier.

RAMESH NAIR,  
CEO & COUNTRY HEAD,  
JLL INDIA

Budget has no direct impact on Real Estate, focus continues on Infrastructure and revival of consumer demand

SUJAN HAJRA,  
CHIEF ECONOMIST, ANAND  
RATHI

The Union Budget FY21 once again tried to do a balancing job between boosting growth and containing deficit. The emphasis seems to have been more on fiscal prudence. Also, on the balance, the budget is focused more towards promotion of consumption than investment/savings.

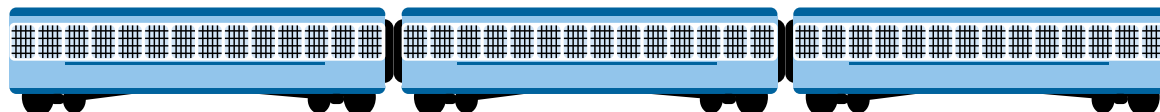
PRASANNA DESHPANDE,  
DEPUTY MD, IIL

It is encouraging to see the government's thrust on launching campaigns to eliminate animal diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis by 2025. This ambitious goal will help in improving animal health in the country and increase livestock productivity.

N. NAGASATYAM,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
OLECTRA GREENTECH  
Allocation of ₹4,400 crore towards promoting clean air in the cities with more than 1 million population and steps to close the thermal power stations surpassing the permissible emission limits, reaffirms Government's commitment towards curbing the pollution. The allocation of ₹1.7 L-cr will help in better transport infra offering a comfortable travel to the commuters

## CENTRE TO SPEND ₹1.61 L-CR ON RAILWAYS

With the aim to build a seamless national cold supply chain for perishables, FM plans Krishi Rail



### Favoured way to travel

Year	Passengers (in million)
1950	1284
1960	1539
1970	2431
1980	3613
1990	3858
2000	4833
2010	8224
2017	8438



RAILWAY PASSENGERS (IN MILLION)

As of March 2017, Indian Railways' rolling stock consisted of 2,77,987 freight wagons, 70,937 passenger coaches and 11,452 locomotives. IR owns locomotive and coach-production facilities at several locations in India. Being the world's eighth-largest employer, it had 1.30 million employees as of March 2016.

telecom. The allocation for rail passenger comfort this fiscal is ₹2,725.63 crore. The budget also proposed freight loading at 1,265 MT, which is 42 MT (3.4 per cent) incremental over RE 2019-20. Revenue receipts amounting to ₹61,000 crore through passenger earnings and ₹1,47,000 crore in goods earnings have been envisaged in the coming financial year.

The gross traffic receipts are thus kept at ₹2,25,613 crore. This is 9.6 per cent above RE 2019-20. The operating ratio, which was envisaged to be 95 per cent

in BE 2019-20 and revised to 97.46 per cent in RE 2019-2020, now stands at 96.2 per cent in BE 2020-21. The budget also proposed setting up of a large solar power capacity alongside the rail tracks on land owned by the railways. Redevelopment of four stations and operation of 150 passenger trains would be done through the public-private-partnership mode. It also announced introduction of more Tejas type trains which will connect iconic tourist destinations. She proposed a 148-km-long Bengaluru suburban transport project at a cost of ₹18,600 crore, which would have fares on the metro model. The Centre would provide 20 per cent of equity and facilitate external assistance of up to 60 per cent of the project cost. With an aim to build a seamless national cold supply chain for "perishables", Sitharaman also proposed setting up of a "Krishi Rail" through PPP arrangements. — PTI

### INDORE TO VARANASI GETS 3RD PVT TRAIN

New Delhi, Feb. 1: The third private train of the IRCTC would run between Indore and Varanasi, Railway Board Chairman Vinod Kumar Yadav said on Saturday. The overnight train would have the same rakes as those of the Humsafar Express, he added. In the last few months, the IRCTC has started operating private trains on two routes — Delhi-Lucknow and Ahmedabad-Mumbai. "The third private train would be run on the Indore-Varanasi route," Yadav said. Officials said the train would run three days a week — two days via Lucknow and another day via Allahabad. — PTI

## Policy on vehicle scrapping

New Delhi, Feb. 1: A policy for scrapping of old vehicles "is in the works" and will be announced after concerned ministries "fine tune" it, Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday. The much-awaited vehicle scrapping policy is awaiting final clearance from the Union Cabinet and would focus on eliminating the fleet of old polluting commercial vehicles plying on the country's roads.

"Scrapping policy is in the works ... I would wait for the concerned ministries also to fine tune everything and tie up the loose ends and then come to a stage where it can be announced by the ministry," Sitharaman said in an interaction with the media after presenting Budget 2020-21. "So many things depend on how far they are mature and right for me to use it in the budget, but that does not mean because I've not announced it in the budget no work is going on in that area," she added. The proposed policy, once approved, will be applicable on all vehicles including two and three-wheelers. Earlier, the policy was sent for a fresh round of consultation with stakeholders in the direction of the PMO.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadakri had earlier said that once the policy is approved, India could emerge as a hub for automobile manufacturing as key raw material available from scrapping like steel, aluminium and plastic are bound to be recycled, bringing down automobile prices by "20-30 per cent". The government on July 26, 2019 had proposed amendments to motor vehicle norms to allow scrapping of vehicles older than 15 years in a bid to spur adoption of electrical vehicles. In a draft notification, the government proposed renewal of fitness certificates for vehicles older than 15 years every six months instead of the current time-frame of one year. It also provided that the newly purchased motor vehicles will be exempted from payment of fees for registration certificate and assignment of new registration mark, if the purchaser produces scrapping certificate of the previously-owned vehicle of the same category issued by the authorised scrapping centre/agency. — PTI

## No big bang effect for auto sector



By Invitation  
S. Viswanathan

There is no big-bang impact that will affect the fortunes of the auto sector that one could glean from the finance minister's pronouncements in Parliament as she presented the Budget for 2020-21. Perhaps this was to be expected as the indirect tax impact on the fortunes of any industry is now dictated by the GST council and the setting of GST rates is not a Central budgetary exercise unlike in an earlier era where excise duty rates were set by the Central budget and sales tax rates were set by the State Budgets. One of the key issues facing the auto sector is the lack of demand for its products partly weighed down by high GST rates ranging from 28 pct to 50 pct based on the size of the vehicle and engine capacity. To kickstart demand the government needs to put more money in the hands of the consumer to buy automotive products. This has been achieved in part by the rationalising of income tax rates and slabs. To compensate for the revenue loss from tax rationalization measures, the government has decided to deepen its efforts towards privatization — the part sale of the Life Insurance Corporation of India must be viewed as such. But this will have the beneficial impact of not allowing money market interest rates to move in

## Import duty on electric vehicles set to increase

New Delhi, Feb. 1: Imported electric vehicles are set to become costlier as Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday announced an increase in customs duty on various kinds of such vehicles as the government pushes to promote local production. "Under 'Make in India' initiative, well laid-out customs duty rates were pre-announced for items like mobile phones, electric vehicles and their components. This has ensured gradual increase in domestic value addition capacity in India," Sitharaman said while presenting Budget 2020-21. Customs duty rates are being revised on electric vehicles (EVs), and parts of such carefully conceived phased manufacturing plans, she added.

To push local manufacturing in the EV segment, the government has increased customs duty on imported completely built units of commercial EVs to 40 per cent with effect from April 1, 2020, from 25 per cent currently. Similarly, the government has proposed to hike customs duty on SKD forms of electric buses, trucks and two-wheelers to 25 per cent from 15 per cent currently, with effect from April 1, 2020. — PTI

## Govt announces ₹103L-cr infra projects

ASHWIN J. PUNNEN  
MUMBAI, FEB. 1

In an effort to boost infrastructure, the finance minister on Saturday announced infra projects worth ₹103 lakh crore. She also promised that the government will soon release a logistic policy, besides accelerating highways construction. The finance minister said ₹1.7 lakh crore has been provided for transport infrastructure in 2020-21. She said ₹103 lakh crore projects, under the National

Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), was launched in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of ₹100 lakh crore infrastructure investment in five years. "The Prime Minister announced ₹100 lakh crore project infrastructure in next five years. NIP was launched on December 31, 2019 with ₹103 lakh crore project pipeline... These new projects include housing, safe drinking water, clean energy, health, modern railway, airport, metro bus, logistics ..." she said in her speech.

Ms Sitharaman said: "NIP is improving the ease of living for every citizen. Generic and sectoral reforms are there... There is huge employment opportunity in construction, operation and maintenance of projects." She said infrastructure agencies of the government will involve youth power in start-ups. "A National Logistic Policy will soon be released," she said and added that there will be a single logistic window. Besides, accelerated development of highways

will be taken up with 2,500 km access controlled highways and 9,000 km of economic corridor. In addition, there will be 2,000 km each of strategic highway projects and port connectivity projects, she said. The minister said Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and two other projects will be completed by 2023 and 12 highway projects worth 6,000 km will be monetised before 2021. She said focus was also on Inland Waterways and Jal Vikas Marg development besides aviation.

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The main issue is unemployment. I did not see any concrete, strategic idea that could help our youngsters get jobs...

— RAHUL GANDHI, CONG LEADER

# Budget seeks to perk up agri sector

Concepts like Kisan Rail, Kisan Udaan, Dhaanyalakshmi, 1 product 1 district set to lift rural economy

**IN BRIEF**  
**Measures lauded by NRI bizmen**

Dubai: Gulf-based NRI businessmen on Saturday welcomed the initiatives related to agriculture, education and infrastructure announced by India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her fiscal 2020-21 budget speech, calling it promising and a move to secure the country's future. Yusuf Ali MA, the chairman of Lulu Group International, said the stress on agriculture and education makes it a promising budget. Promoth Manghat, the Group CEO of Finabl, said the 2020 budget demonstrates the resolve of the government to spur growth in the backdrop of the lowest rate of expansion in over a decade. According to Manghat, the continued rationalisation of personal income tax slabs, the sops announced for the rural and agriculture sectors and the aggressive push on infrastructure spending are steps in the right direction in line with the expansionary policy needed to stimulate growth. Kamal Vachani, the Regional Director of Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) and Group Director, AI Maya Group, said that the announcement of new project to improve electronic production will increase the domestic production of electronics and IT industry and boost the economy. —PTI

**Green energy players give thumbs up**

New Delhi: Experts from the energy industry lauded the governments' decision on expanding the PM-KUSUM scheme and a proposal to allocate about ₹22,000 crore to power and renewable energy sector in 2020-21, saying the step will help generate employment opportunities and give a boost to the agriculture sector. While presenting the budget for 2020-21, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday announced expansion of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Utthan Mahabhayan (PM KUSUM) Scheme under which 20 lakh farmers would be provided funds to set up standalone solar pumps. While presenting the budget for 2020-21, the minister said that farmers would be provided funds to set up grid-connected 15 lakh solar pumps. In her budget speech, she also proposed an outlay of Rs 22,000 crore for power and renewable energy sector for 2020-21. Imaan Javan, the director of operations at Suntuity Renewable Energy India, "We welcome the decision which reflects the union government's commitment and concern for renewable energy generation. One of the heartening features of the Union Budget is its provision for the use of renewable energy sector of ₹22,000 crore." —PTI

**Ryots' body fumes, to go on stir**

New Delhi: Expressing disappointment over the budget, the India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) on Saturday said it will hold a nationwide protest on February 13 against the pro-corporate proposals and failure to address the problems of the farming community. The AIKSCC, which is a nationwide platform of more than 200 farmer organisations across the country, said the budget 2020 offers no boost to the rural sector. "We are very disappointed. This is clearly a Budget that has no space for farmers of this country. The Modi government is yet again communicating to farmers that it is the companies and not the farmers who matter to this government," AIKSCC said in a statement. There should have been measures for relief from debts, for compensation for crop loss, protection from stray animals and crop insurance. But these have not been touched, it said. AIKSCC has called for a nationwide protest on February 13 against the pro-corporate proposals in the budget, failure to address the problems of rising peasant debts and secure remunerative prices from sale of crops, it added. —PTI

SANGEETHA G and MICHAEL GONSALVES  
CHENNAI/PUNE, FEB. 1

A sagging rural economy has been a pain point for the government. In order to perk up the rural economy, the Budget mooted a 16-point agenda for the agricultural sector which included catchy concepts like Kisan Rail, Kisan Udaan, Dhaanyalakshmi and 'One Product One district'.

Overall, the Budget allocated ₹2.83 lakh crore of which ₹1.60 lakh crore is meant for agriculture, irrigation and allied activities and ₹1.23 lakh crore for rural development and Panchayati Raj. Among

some of the innovative ideas that can go a long way in logistics of agricultural products, the Indian Railways will set up a "Kisan Rail" - through PPP arrangements. This will be part of a seamless national cold supply chain for perishables, inclusive of milk, meat and fish.

Krishna Udaan will be launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation on international and national routes. This will immensely help improve value realisation especially in North-East and tribal districts. Understanding the high farm-to-fork wastage levels in India, the Budget emphasized on building cold chain and warehousing

Overall, the Budget allocated ₹2.83 lakh crore of which ₹1.60 lakh crore is meant for agriculture, irrigation and allied activities and ₹1.23 lakh crore for rural development and Panchayati Raj

network. "Our government will provide Viability Gap Funding for setting up such efficient warehouses at the block/taluk level. This can be achieved, where States can facilitate with land and are on a PPP mode. Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) shall undertake such warehouse building on their land too," the Finance Minister said. Dhaanyalakshmi is another way to boost stor-

age capabilities at village level. "As a backward linkage, a Village Storage scheme is proposed to be run by the Self Help Groups. This will provide farmers a good holding capacity and reduce their logistics cost. Women SHGs shall regain their position as "Dhaanya Lakshmi", she said. Financing on Negotiable Warehousing Receipts (e-NWR), which has crossed more than Rs 6000 crore, will be integrated with e-NAM.

The government finds that prosperity to farmers can be ensured by making farming competitive. For this, farm markets need to be liberalised. Distortions in farm and livestock markets need to be removed. Purchase of farm produce, logistics and agri-services need copious investments. Hence, the Budget proposed to encourage those State governments who undertake implementation of following model laws already issued by the Central government. These include, Model Agricultural Land Leasing Act, 2016, Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and

Facilitation) Act, 2017 and Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2018. In order to promote horticulture, 'one product one district' has been mooted wherein one district will focus on one horticulture product. "For better marketing and export, we propose supporting states which, adopting a cluster basis, will focus on 'one product one district'," said the minister. The government also shall encourage balanced use of all kinds of fertilizers including the traditional organic and other innovative fertilizers. "It is necessary step to

change the prevailing incentive regime, which encourages excessive use of chemical fertilizers," the budget said. "Budget 2020 is a mixed bag for agriculture sector. Continued support to women farmers SHG through Dhaanya Lakshmi Yojna will be good for rural economy. In our view the most important item was the government's plan to move farmers towards the use of organic and balanced use of chemical, but this needs to be augmented with the development of new seeds and nutrient management," said Ravindra Agrawal, MD & Founder, KisanKraft.

**ALLOCATION FOR PM-KISAN CUT BY 27.5% THIS FISCAL**

New Delhi, Feb. 1: The government has proposed a lower allocation of ₹54,370.15 crore for PM-Kisan scheme this fiscal, as against the budget projection of ₹75,000 crore because of implementation hurdles in some states, according to the Budget document. Despite lower outgo on the PM-Kisan scheme - under which ₹6,000 is being provided to eligible farmers per year in three equal instalments, the government has kept the budget estimate for the next fiscal at the same level of ₹75,000 crore. The government has disbursed over ₹43,000 crore to more than eight crore farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme so far. According to sources, the allocation has been reduced in the Revised Estimate (RE) for the current fiscal as some states, including West Bengal, have not rolled out this scheme and many others do not have proper data of the farmers. The projection of the number of beneficiary farmers has also been lowered to 14 crore from the earlier 14.5 crore. —PTI

## Balm to soothe ryots' distress

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, FEB. 1

Averting that the farmers' distress will go down if all the programmes, indicated by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, are implemented effectively, eminent agriculture scientist Prof M.S. Swaminathan said the Union Budget 2020 outlays a detailed plan and allocation for agriculture and rural development. Reacting to the Budget speech of the finance minister on Saturday, Prof Swaminathan said, "I am very happy that there is detailed plan for agriculture and rural development; not just in words but also comprehensively on what can be done, as well as in terms of the resources needed. This is important since agriculture is the occupation of the majority."

Pointing out that the Economic Survey of 2020 presented on Jan. 31, 2020 provided statistical and intellectual foundation for the priorities included in the Budget, he called for adopting a holistic approach in helping farmers and farming. "In the 1960s (the green revolution period), technology, techno infrastructure, training and internal and external trade were all attended to in a holistic way. The Economic Survey empha-

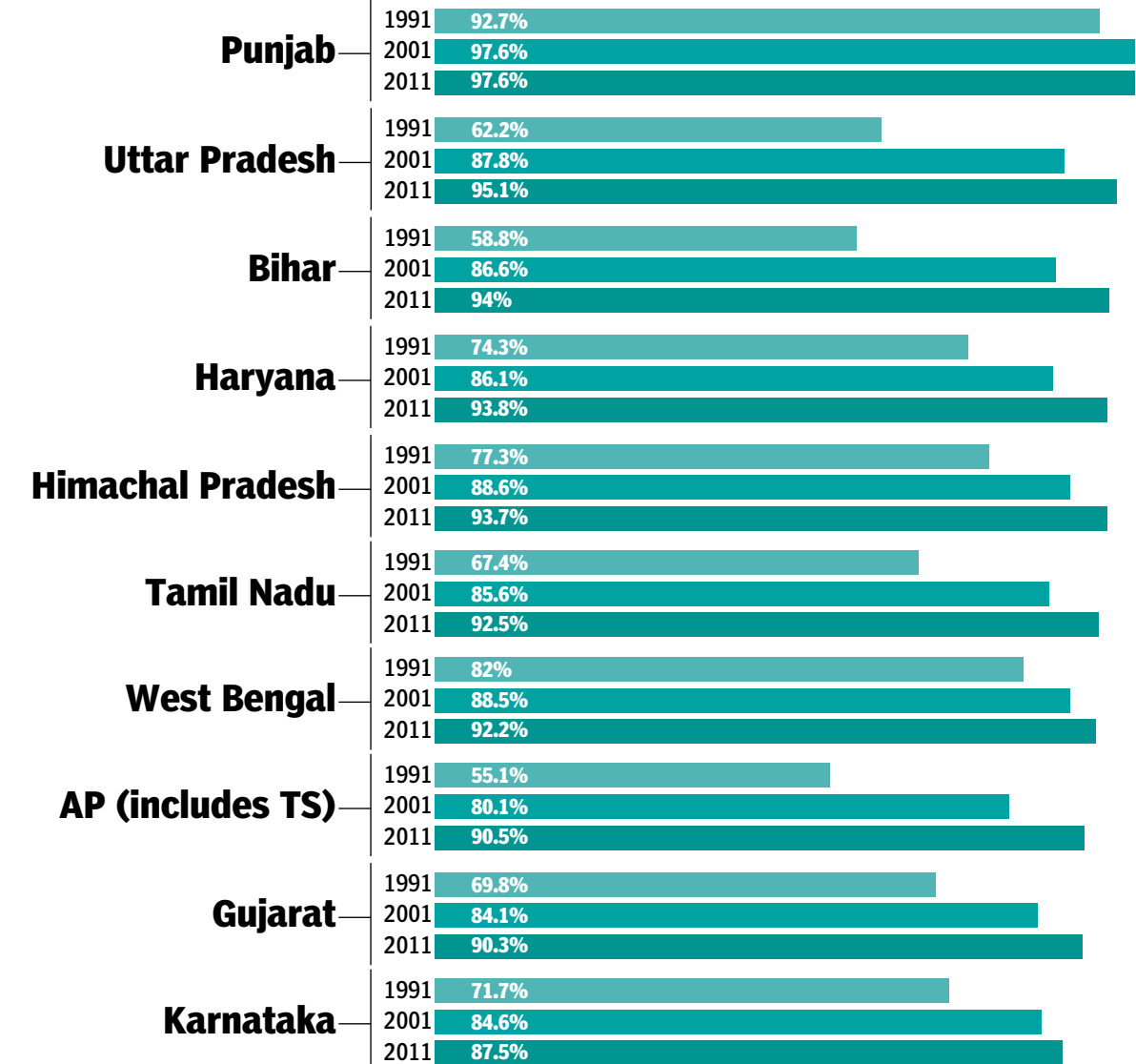
Union Budget 2020 outlines a detailed plan and allocation for agriculture and rural development, says eminent agriculture scientist Prof M. S. Swaminathan

sises the need for a technological upgrading of agriculture as happened during the green revolution period. This will call for greater investment in science and technology as well as in providing farmers with effective support services. Seed villages need to be revitalised. We have all the ingredients essential for agricultural progress, but they need to be brought together," he said.

He congratulated the Finance Minister for clearly articulating on the subject and said she also spoke about fisheries and youth and involvement of the State government since agriculture is a state subject. While thanking the finance minister and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for repeated emphasis on income generation occupation for non-farm income, he said what was now envisaged in terms of balanced utilisation of fertilisers, farming and certification also need to be done in a more scientific way.

**HOUSEHOLD WITH TAP, HANDPUMP OR TUBEWELL**

Contrary to general perception, northern states have fared exceedingly better in providing drinking water facilities to its people. Southern states remained a notch lower on this front, the richest states like Maharashtra fails to find an entry in the top 10 best states on this parameter.



Source: Office of the Registrar General of India

## Marginal dip in rural development schemes

New Delhi, Feb. 1: Allocations in the Union Budget for various flagship schemes under the Department of Rural Development was marginally reduced to ₹1.20 lakh crore for the year 2020-21 from ₹1.22 lakh crore in 2019-20, while the funds allotted for employment guarantee scheme MGN-REGA came down by ₹9,500 crore during the same period. As per the Union Budget document tabled by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament, ₹61,500 crore has been allocated for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGN-REGS) for the year 2020-21,

down by more than 13 per cent from the total estimated expenditure for 2019-20 which was at ₹71,001.81 crore. Sources in the Rural Development Ministry said the actual expenditure incurred in 2020-21 will be higher than the allocated funds and it will at least be at par with this year's total estimated expenditure of MGN-REGS. Senior officials in the ministry said the total expenditure under MGN-REGS during 2008 to 2014, under the Congress-led UPA government, was ₹1.91 lakh crore which jumped to ₹2.95 lakh crore during 2014 to 2020, during the tenure of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-

Sources in the Rural Development Ministry said the actual expenditure incurred in 2020-21 will be higher than the allocated funds and it will at least be at par with this year's total estimated expenditure of MGNREGS

led government. However, the funds allotted under other premier flagship schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (PMAY), welfare schemes for roads and housing respectively in rural areas, have increased.

Talking about the government's welfare schemes for rural areas, Sitharaman said, "Under the Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana for alleviation of poverty, 58 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been mobilised. We shall further expand on SHGs." Unlike the Department of Rural Development, the allocation for the Department of Panchayati Raj has almost doubled to ₹900.94 crore for the year 2020-21 from ₹500 crore from the estimated expenditure incurred in 2019-20. Both departments comes under the same ministry. The allocation for the Department of Panchayati Raj has increased on account of higher funds allotted to the Rashtriya

Gram Swaraj Abhiyan from an estimated expenditure of ₹465.46 crore in 2019-20 to ₹857.53 crore in 2020-21. Speaking on the importance of panchayats, Sitharaman said the government's vision is that all "public institutions" at gram panchayat level such as anganwadis, health and wellness centres, government schools, PDS outlets, post offices and police stations will be digitally connected. So, Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections through Bharatnet will link one lakh gram panchayats this year. It is proposed to provide ₹6,000 crore to the Bharatnet programme in 2020-21, she said. —PTI

## 'Rural development, farm amply funded'

New Delhi, Feb. 1: Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Saturday hailed the Budget 2020 saying funds of ₹1.60 lakh crore has been allocated for agriculture and its allied sector including irrigation for the next fiscal. A 16-point action plan has been chalked out for realising the target of doubling farmers' income by 2022, he said, adding that several schemes like PM-Kisan are benefitting the farming community. "The government's focus has been 'Gaon, gaareeb and kisan' and the focus in the Budget on provid-

ing better facilities to this section reinforces the government's commitment of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas,' Tomar said in a statement. ₹1.60 lakh crore has been allocated for agriculture and allied sector, and ₹1.23 lakh crore for rural development, he added. Tomar, who is also rural development minister, said Budget 2020 proposes to give relief to women and the middle class, as focus has been on addressing issues related to health, education, skill development and clean water. —PTI

## 'Schemes potential enough to boost farm sector'



By Invitation  
**K. Vijayaraghavan**

The Finance Minister has realized deeply the need for diverse farm outputs to be nurtured in an economy where food quality and nutrition will drive future of human development. Doubling farm income is possible through diverse engagement of farmers in economically relevant, diverse farm activities such as crops, horticul-

ture, fishery, dairy and animal meat production. All of the 16 key measures envisaged by the Finance Minister are noteworthy with potential to catalyze game-changing impetus to the agriculture sector. Recognizing changing land use and encouraging States adopting model laws relating to land leasing for productive deployment of land and contract

farming are very encouraging initiatives. Well thought-out encouragement for solar based irrigation is vital support to small farmers to sustain farm income. Solar power generation in shallow land is another productive economic opportunity for rural energy generation. Support to farm nutrients beyond chemical fertilizer is another encouraging proposition. However, the bottleneck in approving such products for application with dormant regulatory system for crop protection and crop nutrient products need to be addressed to help farmers gain from

these generous support programs. Several innovative products in crop protection and crop nutrition are globally relevant but are held up at the product approval stage with review of such products spanning several years. A focus on horticulture as a thrust area is brought in for the first time duly realizing the necessity for India to emerge in this area beyond the cereal pro-

duction. This focus will energize the circular economy triggering opportunity for value-added fruits and vegetable processing industry. The attention to livestock health with focus on comprehensive immunization of livestock is a well thought out effort. This will also help to accomplish the clean milk production. There are, however, some elements that are so vital

for agriculture and food value chain to move to next orbit that are ignored in the budget. The key challenge in agriculture and food value chain is lack of impetus to innovation for farm solutions or for value addition of farm produce. The budget has no impetus for innovation driven agri and food enterprises to save them from valley of death. Funding by SIDBI through the Fund of Fund Scheme has hardly been deployed for this sector with skewed investment in e-commerce sector.

The key ignored elements are lack of attention to agri and food processing industry, lack of

focus on early stage companies engaged in agricultural innovation and food processing and lack of focus on adopting technologies that are so vital for farm productivity. Relief from laws and regulations such as the National Biodiversity Act that are impeding for farm and food sector to emerge to global competitiveness are other elements the government should bestow attention to get best of gains that the Finance Minister has articulated for this sector.

(The writer is the chairman of Sathguru Management Consultants)

# WELFARE



## Union Budget 2020-21

The first budget of the decade gives an outline of a new and confident India. It is a promising, proactive and progressive budget

— RAJNATH SINGH, DEFENCE MINISTER

### IN BRIEF

#### Only platitudes, slogans: Left

New Delhi: Left parties on Saturday said 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," 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 railways, health and infrastructure," he said. He also said despite repeated claims of the government to double the income of the farmers, the distress continues.

#### FDI in education bad idea: SJM

New Delhi: The RSS-affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) on Saturday opposed Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's budget announcement that the government will encourage FDI in education, saying it is a "bad idea" and will lead to "westernisation" of education. Barring the promotion of FDI in education, SJM's co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan appreciated the budget proposals. He praised the government for reviewing free-trade agreements, saying they were not in interest of the country. He said the 16-point action plan proposed in the Budget to create income and employment in rural areas, particularly in fisheries, horticulture and other non-farm activities, is a "welcome move." "The FDI in education is wrong. It is a bad idea and we oppose this proposal," Mr Mahajan said.

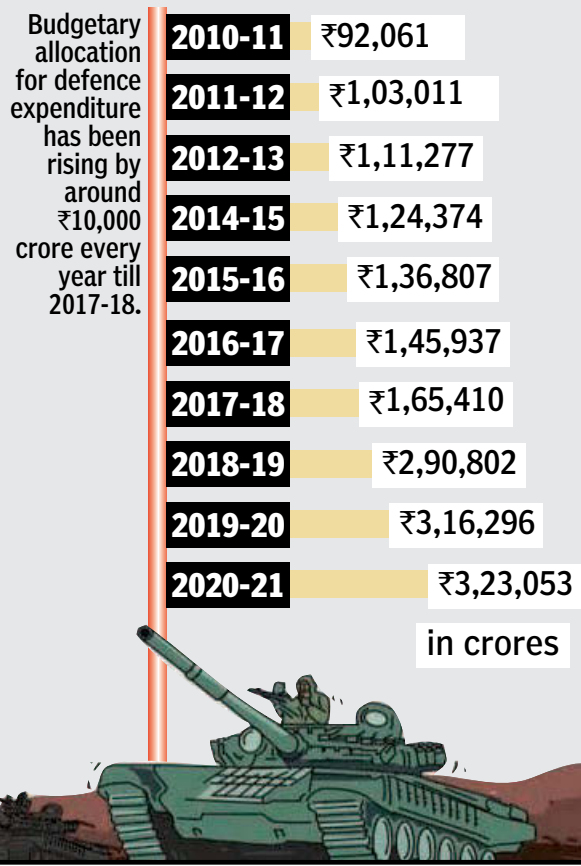
#### PC: CDS must protest loudly

New Delhi: Congress leader P Chidambaram on Saturday said the chief of defence staff should strongly protest against the reduced budget allocation for defence sector and the party will stand in his support. In a marginal hike, the defence budget was increased to Rs 3.37 lakh crore for 2020-21 against last year's Rs 3.18 lakh crore, notwithstanding expectations of a significantly higher allocation to fast-track long-pending military modernisation. "It is for the new secretary, the Department of Military Affairs, and the chief of defence staff to protest loudly. I want him to protest loudly. We hope he will," the former finance minister said when asked about the issue. "He is the Chief of Defence Staff and the Secretary, Department of Military Affairs. So, I want him to protest loudly and I assure him, our voice will join him and in protesting loudly, but he should lead the protest," he added.

#### Rahul Gandhi: Job issue skirted

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the budget does not address the main issue of unemployment confronting the youth of the country. "I did not see any concrete, strategic idea that could help our youngsters get jobs. There were redundant things in the budget and I did not see any central idea," he said. "It describes the mindset of the government, all talk, all talk, all talk, and nothing happening," he added

### Defence expenditure



### Blow to defence modernisation

PAWAN BALI  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

Indian Army, Air Force and Navy which are facing a combined challenge from Pakistan and China, got just Rs 10,300 crore hike in funds to buy new arms and ammunition in the Union budget which could adversely impact their modernisation plans. Indian Air Force, which is in the process of buying new Rafale aircraft and also needs more fighter jets to replace its ageing aircraft, has actually seen a slight decrease in its capital outlay for modernisation at Rs 43,281 crore in 2020-21 against Rs 44,869 crore in the revised budget last year. Indian Navy has been given just Rs 26,688 crore in 2020-21 budget for modernisation against Rs 26,156 crore in the revised budget last year. A shortage in funds is forcing Indian Navy to curtail its plan to be a 200 ships fleet by 2027 as per maritime capability perspective plan. It has already cut some of the acquisition including Mine Counter Measure Vessels and P8i maritime reconnaissance aircraft. Indian Army was also forced to cut some expenditures to ensure that it has ammunition for at least 10 days war. The budget has allocated Rs 32,392 crore to the Indian army for its modernisation plans against Rs 29,666 crore given in the revised budget last year.

The government has kept Rs 3.37 lakh crore (excluding pension) for the defence forces in the Union budget against Rs 3.18 lakh crore last year, an increase of Rs 5.8 per cent. A major part of the money from this goes towards salaries of the military and civilian officials and day to day functioning of the defence forces at Rs 2.18 lakh crore. The percentage of the allocation has almost remained static at around 1.5 per cent of the GDP which is the lowest since the 1962 war with China. Union budget has allocated Rs 1.3 lakh crore for the pensions of military and civilians. The budget allocated Rs 1.13 lakh crore for the capital outlay which is used for modernisation of the defence forces against Rs 1.03 lakh crore in last year's budget. The forces have been demanding an increase in funds allocation to buy new weapons. The Union budget has kept Rs 10,532 crore for defence research and development. If pension is also included the defence outlay comes to Rs 4.71 lakh crore compared to Rs 4.3 lakh crore in last year's budget.

## FM's booster dose to rev up rural economy



By Invitation  
**M.S. Unnikrishnan**

Considering that the resource availability would be insufficient, the Finance Minister has done a fairly good job with the current budget. She has addressed rural distress by way of announcing an allocation of Rs. 2.83 lakh crore that would double the milk production to 108 million tonnes by 2025, fish pro-

duction to 200 lakh tonnes by 2023. Together with the allocation for rural rewards, this should spur the rural economy. She has also announced the concept of a farmer's train totally dedicated to transportation of refrigerated farm output, paving the way for the missing link of a cold chain at affordable prices

## Leg-up for FDI in edu sector

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

The Narendra Modi government will bring out a national education policy, encourage external commercial borrowings and FDI in the education sector for financing infrastructure. The steps were listed by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presenting the Budget for 2020-21. The budget has Rs 99,300 crore has been allocated for the education sector and Rs 3,000 crore for skill development for the next fiscal. The Finance Minister said National Police University and National Forensic University are being proposed, while planning to allow degree level full-fledged online education programme by institutions ranked in top 100. The government has also proposed linking medical colleges to a district hospital through the public-private-partnership (PPP) mode to meet



the shortage of qualified doctors, degree-level full-fledged online education programmes in top 100 institutions and holding the Ind-SAT exam in Asian and African countries for benchmarking foreign students interested in studying in India. The finance minister said an amount of Rs 99,300 crore was allocated for the education sector and another amount of Rs 3,000 crore for skill development. "It is felt that our education system needs a greater inflow of finance to attract talented teachers, innovate and build better labs. Therefore, steps would be taken to enable sourcing of external commercial borrowings and foreign direct investment so as to be able to deliver higher-quality education," she said in the budget speech. "A National Police University and a National Forensic Science University are being proposed in the domain of policing science, forensic science, cyber-forensics etc," Nirmala said and added that the new national education policy will be announced soon. "By 2030, India is set to

have the largest working-age population in the world. Not only do they need literacy, but they need both jobs and life skills. Dialogues have been held with state education ministers, MPs and other stakeholders about the education policy. Over two lakh suggestions were received. The new education policy will be announced soon," the finance minister said. Aimed to boost employability of general stream students, about 150 higher educational institutions will start apprenticeship-embedded degrees or diploma courses by March 2021. Similarly, for the students of technology streams, the government has proposed to start a programme whereby urban local bodies across the country would provide internship opportunities to fresh engineers for a period of up to one year. "In order to provide quality education to the students of the deprived section of the society as well as those who do not have access to higher education, it is proposed to start a degree-level, full-fledged online education programme. This shall be offered only by institutions who are ranked within top 100 in the National Institutional Ranking framework. Initially, only a few such institutions would be asked to offer such programmes," the finance minister said. Giving a boost to the "Study in India" programme, the government has proposed to hold Ind-SAT in Asian and African countries. "India should be a preferred destination for higher education. Hence, under the 'Study in India' programme, Ind-SAT is proposed to be held in Asian and African countries. It shall be used for benchmarking foreign candidates who receive scholarships for studying in Indian higher education centres," the finance minister said.

### ₹4,400cr for clean air action plan in big cities

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

The concerns over the deteriorating air quality in India's big cities have found an echo in the budget speech with finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announcing an allocation of Rs 4,400 crore to states which come up with schemes to ensure clean air in cities which have a population of above one million. "The government proposes to encourage such states that are formulating plans for ensuring cleaner air in cities above one million... Allocation for this purpose is Rs 4,400 crore for 2020-21," she said, presenting the budget. A study last year had reported that 22 of the world's most polluted cities were in India, with Gurgaon topping the list which also had the capital New Delhi at 11th position. The finance minister also proposed to shut down existing thermal power

● A study last year had reported that 22 of the world's most polluted cities were in India, with Gurgaon topping the list

plants and incentives will be provided in form of lower corporate tax for new power projects. "There are yet, thermal power plants that are old and their carbon emission levels are high. For such power plants, we propose that utilities running them would be advised to close them, if their emission is above the pre-set norms. The land so vacated can be put to alternative use," Ms Sitharaman said. Power Minister R.K. Singh said there are certain plants which either do not have space for putting emission control equipment or they simply cannot do that. The initiative is expected to nudge states to close all those old thermal power plants and capitalise vacated land. The finance minister also proposed to extend the concessional corporate tax rate of 15 per cent to new domestic companies engaged in the generation of electricity in order to attract investment in power sector.

### Task force to study motherhood age

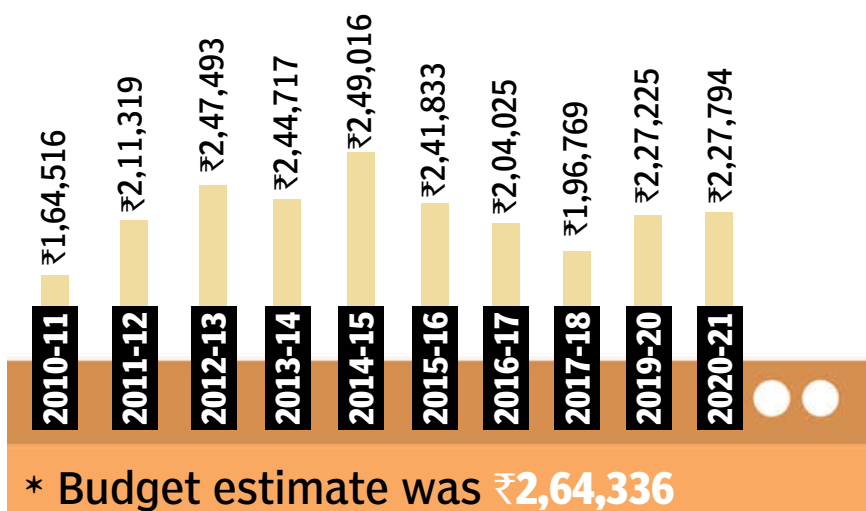
New Delhi, Feb. 1: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Saturday that a task force will be appointed to examine the issue about the age of girls entering motherhood, as she asserted that the government will keep its focus on the welfare of women and children, besides the disadvantaged communities.

She announced a Rs 35,600-crore outlay for nutrition-related programmes for 2020-21 and an amount of Rs 28,600 crore was allocated for programmes specific to women, an official statement said. The budget fixed Rs 85,000 crore for the welfare of scheduled castes and other backward classes (OBCs), and Rs 53,700 crore for scheduled tribes in the next fiscal. Noting that more and more opportunities were opening up for women to pursue higher education and career, Sitharaman said the entire issue about the age of a girl entering motherhood needed to be

seen in a new light and proposed to appoint a task force for the purpose. It would present its recommendations in six months' time, she added. Sitharaman said the government's "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" scheme had yielded "tremendous" results with the gross enrolment ratio of girls across all levels of education now being higher than boys. At the elementary level, it was 94.32 per cent against the 89.28 per cent for boys, and similar trends were also observed at the secondary and higher secondary levels, she said. The budget proposed to provide Rs 35,600 crore for nutrition-related programmes for 2020-21. Speaking about the "Poshan Abhiyan" (nutrition scheme) that was launched in 2017-18, the finance minister said more than six lakh anganwadi workers were equipped with smartphones to upload the nutritional status of over 10 crore households. — PTI

### Major subsidies

In India, subsidies now account for a significant part of government's expenditures although, like that of an iceberg, only their tip may be visible.



for the distressed Indian farmers. Proposal for 112 medical colleges on Public-Private-Partnership basis would certainly help reduce the shortage of doctors being faced by the country. Her announcement to fulfil the promise of the Prime Minister to provide piped water to all Indian homes at an outlay of Rs. 3.6 lakh crore and a current year allocation of Rs. 11,500 crore is a move in the right direction. She has clearly identified over 6,500 projects that would total to an investment of Rs. 103 lakh crore across the next five years

which industries were waiting for. It will be very important for the government to very quickly take these projects off the ground to reverse the dropping trend in GDP growth. Two specific moves announced in the current budget should have a positive impact on the consumption growth that has been challenging in the recent past. Firstly, abolishing Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) should entice companies to declare more dividend. Though this will be taxed in the hands of the shareholders, smaller investors will certainly have more money to spend. Secondly, reduction of income tax for assesseees who earn between Rs. 5

lakh to Rs. 15 lakh (the scheme is not very clear at this point) will benefit the younger crowd, who are predominantly at the early stages of their career and are the main consumers of affordable/ low end housing, consumer durables and automobiles. Even an additional income of a few thousand rupees per month will support the growth of these industries since the youngsters buy mainly through EMIs rather than down payment purchases. She has very well articulated the need to support start ups in our country and has increased the defi-

inition of start up upwards from the current Rs. 25 crore turnover to Rs. 100 turnover. She has also extended the tax relief for them to a longer period, fully recognising the fact that the jobs of the future will come more from start-ups than from conglomerates. I am sure that the market was expecting big bang announcements. But considering the difficult fiscal deficit, she has attempted to do a good job with whatever she could manage with the constrained treasury of the government. (The Author is MD & CEO of Thermax)

THE ASIAN AGE

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."

"Ahh!" 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 gold, 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 impecunuity.

This, of course, is just one in a long list of boxes you must tick to be a bonafide *Bharatvashi*, 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 teacher made me stand outside the classroom every day for being "*obharotiyo*", 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 assassination. 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 dissen-ters, 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 DISAPPOINTED

That Union Budget for 2020-21 doesn't unleash big bang reforms as expected or even measures to address the ongoing slowdown. This is highly disappointing. While it brought cheers to the salaried middle class with a discernible cut in income tax slabs, the announcement to partially disinvest LIC would, in all likelihoods, invite stiff opposition on the ground. Announcements such as Kisan Rail to transport perishable agricultural goods, dairy products and fish and solar pumps to farmers as part of the government's steps to double their income, allocation of ₹4,400 crore for clean air, linking of one lakh gram panchayats through BharatNet and closure of thermal plants with emissions above limits are welcome. But rather than ushering in steps to kickstart rural demand and revive investment, Nirmala Sitharaman broke her own record of having made the longest Budget speech ever by a Union finance minister.

M. Jeyaram  
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

BOOST FDI, FII

THE ECONOMIC SURVEY for 2019-20 presented by chief economic adviser K. Subramanian, is more on an optimistic note than an attempt to revisit the realities on the ground, and suggest realistic measures to revive the nose-diving economy. The GDP has been on a decreasing trend, money becoming scarce, demand and consumption falling, investments inadequate, jobs disappearing and inflation worrying the masses. Of course, the top entrepreneurs have created wealth but the same has not benefited the common man. Many of the industries are capital-incentive and profit-oriented and not labour-incentive. There is need to boost investment including foreign direct investment and foreign institutional investment.

M.Y. Shariff  
Chennai

SIDELINED?

THE KARNATAKA government has sprung a surprise by overlooking the seniority of 1985 batch officer Ashit Mohan Prasad and handing over the baton of director general and inspector general of police (DG&IGP) to Praveen Sood, a 1986 batch IPS officer. The IIT Delhi alumnus will take over the mantle from DG&IGP Neelamani N. Raju who is superannuated. With another four years and four months of service still left, Sood is all set to play a long innings.

N.J. Ravi Chander  
Bengaluru

FOULEST MURDER

IT IS DISAPPOINTING that the hanging of Nirbhaya's murderers has been deferred for the second time due to pending mercy petitions filed by two convicts. The judicial system seems to be making a mockery of itself. In Nirbhaya's case, there should be no room for any mercy. The court should deliver justice to Nirbhaya and her family.

Jacqueline Netto  
Chennai

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: letters.asianage@gmail.com.

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 Prasada, 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.

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

Venkaiah, Om — who is the top dog?



By WAQYANAWIS

has reportedly slowed down giving press gallery passes to reporters. Importantly 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 gouta. 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

THE ASIAN AGE

SUNDAY | 2 FEBRUARY 2020 | NEW DELHI

# Sitharaman Budget: Long in form, short in content



Mohan Guruswamy

The 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

The 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.

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 banking 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

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

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 really 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 govern-

ment'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 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 broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari



'The Oxford comma is tearing this family apart.'

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



Chandrajit Banerjee

Finance 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 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 agrif 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, health-care 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 IIFL and NIIF 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





# Union Budget 2020-21

Tax cut ki goli mat do (don't lie about tax cuts). Read the fine print on the so called I-T cuts. Govt removing sops to 'save'-  
 — DEREK O' BRIEN, TMC LEADER

# WELFARE

**SHORT TAKES**

## Jal Jeevan Mission gets ₹11,500 crore

DC CORRESPONDENT  
 NEW DELHI, FEB. 1:

The Jal Jeevan Mission of the NDA government seeking to provide water to every household in the country by 2024 has got a major push with the union budget allocating Rs 11,500 crore to it. The amount is more than half of the total earmarked funds of Rs 21,518 crore for the department of drinking water and sanitation under the Jal Shakti Ministry. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the Jal Jeevan Mission on Independence Day. "Our government has approved Rs 3.60 lakh crore for this Mission. This scheme also places stress on augmenting local water sources, recharging existing sources and will promote water harvesting and de-salination. Cities with over a million population will be encouraged to meet this objective during the current year itself," he had said. In the last budget, Rs 9416 crore was allocated for this ambitious mission that aims to provide piped water supply to all households by 2024. The Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), another flagship programme of the Modi government, has been allocated Rs 20,000 crore. After the Modi government came to power for the second time, it formed the Jal Shakti Ministry bringing all the water related departments under it. The Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has been earmarked Rs 8,960 crore. Of this, the Atal Bhujal Yojana, aimed at increasing the groundwater level in water stressed districts of the country. The Namami Gange mission, which aims to have been allocated Rs 800 crore.

## Health industry welcomes budget

New Delhi, Feb. 1: The health-care industry on Saturday welcomed the initiatives announced by the government in the budget to improve the access to medical care across the nation. "Budget 2020 is a definitive step forward in the government of India's commitment to making India healthier and a model for the world to emulate," Apollo Hospitals group chairman Prathap C. Reddy said. In addition to initiatives announced to improve access to medical care across the nation and boost human health resources, it was encouraging that vital determinant of good health which includes wellness, nutrition, clean drinking water, and sanitation were at the forefront of this Budget, he added. Calling it a farsighted budget, Dr Reddy said the finance minister has announced "innovative initiatives that will enhance ease of living, improve the health quotient and boost opportunities for education and job creation, for all sections of our society and meet the expectations of an aspirational India." In similar vein, NATHEALTH president H. Sudarshan Ballal said the budget accorded priority on capacity building by improving health infrastructure in tier II & III cities and rural areas. "Setting up hospitals on private public partnership with the provision of viability gap funding in 112 aspirational districts in the country go a long way in creating a robust health infrastructure especially in areas where Ayushman Bharat benefits have not yet reached especially to the weaker section," he added. Calling it a directionally sound budget, Biocon chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw said: "I am happy to see the government's focus on reviving economic growth."



## UNSKILLED PROBLEM

Indian industry faces an acute shortage of skilled labour. Government data suggests that the lack of enough technical education institutes is the root cause for the country having a large unemployable population.

There is one polytechnic for the following population in each state.

WORST FIVE	BEST FIVE	MAJOR STATES
Chhattisgarh 2,55,45,000	Tripura 70,653	West Bengal 6,25,178
Gujarat 60,44,000	Uttarakhand 90,864	Uttar Pradesh 5,58,134
Bihar 19,27,759	Puducherry 13,86,66	Kerala 4,57,616
Madhya Pradesh 11,34,796	Tamil Nadu 1,45,457	Andhra Pradesh 3,20,693
Manipur 14,28,000	Punjab 1,52,434	Telangana 2,31,539
		Karnataka 2,02,301
		Maharashtra 1,67,973

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development

## Environment ministry gets ₹3,100 cr in '20-21

New Delhi, Feb 1: The Centre on Saturday increased the budgetary allocation for the environment ministry from last fiscal by nearly five per cent for 2020-21 with no change in the amount allotted to pollution abatement and climate change action plan. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, allocated ₹3100 crore for the ministry out of which ₹460 crore were allotted to control pollution, which is the same as the money it received in the last budget. Control of Pollution has been conceptualized to provide financial assistance to Pollution control Boards/Committees and funding to National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). Similarly, budget for pollution abatement, which was cut by 50 per cent last year from 2018-19, remained unchanged at ₹10 crore. The minister also announced that states, which are formulating and implementing plans for ensuring cleaner air in cities above one million population should be encouraged. "Parameters for the incentives to be notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate change and the allocation for this purpose is ₹4,400 crore for

● In wildlife arena, the government-initiated projects — Project Tiger and Project Elephant — saw some changes with the former getting reduced by ₹50 crore and the other being raised by ₹5 crore. The fiscal's allocation of ₹350 crore for Project Tiger, an initiative for conserving the wildcat, reduced to ₹300 crore and ₹30 crore for Project Elephant, which was launched to conserve jumbos across the country, is now ₹35 crore.

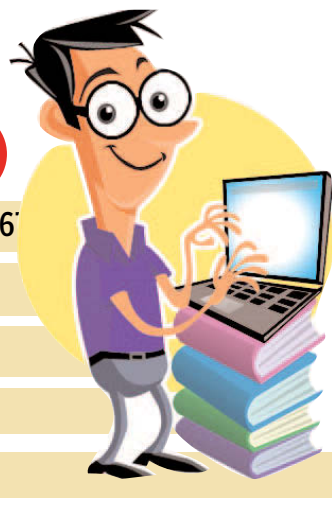
2020-21," Sitharaman said. However, a top official from the environment ministry said this amount has not reflected in the budget yet. For Climate Change Action Plan, an amount of ₹40 crore has been allocated, which is the same as last fiscal. The budgetary allocation for National Mission for Green India has been raised from ₹240 crore in the last financial year to ₹311 crore this time with national afforestation programme alone being allotted ₹246 crore, higher than last year's amount of ₹179 crore. In wildlife arena,

the government-initiated projects -- Project Tiger and Project Elephant -- saw some changes with the former getting reduced by ₹50 crore and the other being raised by ₹5 crore. The fiscal's allocation of ₹350 crore for Project Tiger, an initiative for conserving the wildcat, reduced to ₹300 crore and ₹30 crore for Project Elephant, which was launched to conserve jumbos across the country, is now ₹35 crore. The budget for National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a statutory body under the ministry responsible for tiger census and conservation of wild cats, saw a minor raise of ₹50 lakh from ₹10 crore last year to 10.5 crore for 2020-21. The budget for National Coastal Mission was also raised slightly with the government allotting it ₹103 crore this year, compared to ₹95 crore in the last fiscal. Under the National Coastal Mission, the environment ministry is responsible to ensure livelihood security of coastal communities including fisher folks, to conserve, protect the coastal stretches and to promote sustainable development based on scientific principles. — PTI

## Literacy rate in major states (in %)

Despite government programmes, India's literacy rate increased only "sluggishly".

TOP	WORST	5
Kerala 94	Andhra Pradesh * 61	
Himachal 82.8	Rajasthan 66.1	
Maharashtra 82.3	Jharkhand 66.4	
Tamil Nadu 80.1	Arunachal 65.4	
Uttarakhand 78.8	Bihar 61.8	



# Viability gap funding set to cheer up pvt health sector

SANGEETHA.G  
 CHENNAI, FEB 1

The private healthcare sector and medical equipment manufacturers have something to cheer about this year's budget. The Budget has announced viability gap funding for hospitals in PPP mode and smaller cities and levied cess on imported medical equipments to promote domestic manufacturing. The viability gap funding window will be provided to hospitals which are setting up centres in tier II and III cities. The first phase will cover the 112 aspirational districts. "Presently, under PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) there are more than 20,000 empanelled hospitals. We need more in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities for poorer people under this scheme. It is proposed to set up Viability Gap funding window for set-

● The measures proposed in the budget will support to regulate the gap and play an important role in making health a priority for one and all and creating further awareness for health insurance, says Ashish Mehrotra, MD & CEO, Max Bupa Health Insurance

facilities. India has recorded highest out of pocket expenditure on healthcare, as compared to other developing countries. The measures proposed in the budget will support to regulate the gap and play an important role in making health a priority for one and all and creating further awareness for health insurance, Ashish Mehrotra, MD & CEO, Max Bupa Health Insurance. In order to fund this, the government will impose a nominal health cess, by way of a duty of customs, on the imports of medical equipment and use the proceeds for creating infrastructure for health services in the aspirational districts. This will also promote the domestic manufacturing of medical equipments. Medical equipments will also be part of "Network Products"

which are being promoted for exports. Aiming at addressing the shortage of qualified medical doctors, the Budget proposed to attach a medical college to an existing district hospital in PPP mode. Those states that fully allow the facilities of the hospital to the medical college and wish to provide land at a concession, would be able to receive Viability Gap Funding. The government will encourage large hospitals with sufficient capacity to offer resident doctors fellow of National Board (DNB/FNB) courses under the National Board of Examinations, Jan Aushadhi Kendra Scheme to all districts offering 2000 medicines and 300 surgicals by 2024. The Budget has allocated ₹69,000 crore for health care and this includes ₹6400 crores for Prime Minister Jan Arogya Yojana.

## GOVT'S SUBSIDY BILL PROJECTED SLIGHTLY UP AT ₹2.27 LAKH CRORE FOR FY-21

New Delhi, Feb. 1: The government's food, fuel and fertiliser subsidy bill has been pegged marginally higher by 0.23 per cent at ₹2,27,793.89 crore for the 2020-21 fiscal, according to the Budget document.

About ₹2,27,255 crore has been allocated for the current fiscal in the revised estimate. Of the total subsidy bill estimated for the next financial year, maximum fund allocation has been made for food, followed by fertiliser and fuel. For 2020-21 fiscal, ₹1,15,569.68 crore fund has been allocated for supplying subsidised food-grain through the public distribution system (PDS) and welfare schemes, which is up by 6.33 per cent from the current year's revised estimate of ₹1,08,688.35 crore. The allocation for providing subsidised fuel, especially LPG and kerosene, has also been increased by six per cent to ₹40,915.21 crore for the next fiscal. For the current year, ₹38,568.86 crore fund has been allocated in the revised estimate as fuel subsidy. The allocation for LPG subsidy has been increased to ₹37,256.21 crore for the next fiscal from the revised estimate of ₹34,065.86 crore for the current year. But the allocation for kerosene subsidy has been reduced to ₹3,659 crore for the next year from the revised estimate of ₹4,483 crore for the current year. — PTI

# Data Centre Parks to come up across country

SANGEETHA.G DC  
 CHENNAI, FEB 1

The Budget proposed to take the country one step ahead in data management and quantum technology. It has mooted data centre parks throughout the country and outlaid ₹8,000 crore over a period five years for the National Mission on Quantum Technologies and Applications. Repeating the cliché, "data is the new oil", the Finance Minister said the country needs to take advantage of Analytics, Fintech and Internet of Things (IOT). In this regard, she proposed to bring out soon a policy to enable private sector to build Data Centre parks throughout the country. "It will enable our firms to skilfully incorporate data in every step of their value chains. Our vision is that all "public institutions" at Gram Panchayat level such as Anganwadis, health and wellness centres, government schools, PDS outlets, post offices and police stations will be provided with digital connectivity. So, Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections through Bharatnet will link 100,000 gram panchayats this year," she said. The Budget proposed to provide ₹6000 crore to Bharatnet programme in 2020-21.

● Union Budget 2020 is a defining moment for the Indian IT industry by bringing in proactive policy measures on emerging technologies such as AI, ML, Data Analytics and Quantum Computing. In addition to this, the policy on establishing data centers across the country will strengthen the necessary IT-grade infrastructure required for discharging services to the remotest part of the country while bridging the digital divide and significantly play a catalytic role in securing data sovereignty of the nation. Further, the minister found that there is a growing need for the Indian Statistical system to meet the challenges of real time monitoring of our increasingly complex economy. Data must have strong credibility. The proposed new National Policy on Official Statistics would use latest technology including AI. It would lay down a road-map towards modernised data collection, integrated information portal and timely dissemination of information. The government also finds IFSC, GIFT city to be having the potential to become a centre of international finance as well

as a centre for high end data processing. "Union Budget 2020 is a defining moment for the Indian IT industry by bringing in proactive policy measures on emerging technologies such as AI, ML, Data Analytics and Quantum Computing. In addition to this, the policy on establishing data centers across the country will strengthen the necessary IT-grade infrastructure required for discharging services to the remotest part of the country while bridging the digital divide, revolutionize the digital economy and significantly play a catalytic role in securing data sovereignty of the nation, and eventually it will also bring enormous FDI into this sector," said Omkar Rai, Director General, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI). Similarly, quantum technology is opening up new frontiers in computing, communications, cyber security with wide-spread applications, said the minister. "It is expected that lots of commercial applications would emerge from theoretical constructs which are developing in this area." "It is proposed to provide an outlay of Rs 8000 crore over a period five years for the National Mission on Quantum Technologies and Applications," she added.

## TAMIL LIT, SARASWATI-SINDHU CIVILISATION IN BUDGET SPEECH

New Delhi, Feb. 1: A Kashmiri verse, quotes from Tamil poets and references to Saraswati-Sindhu civilisation peppered Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's 160-minute long marathon Budget speech on Saturday which got cut short at the end after she felt unwell. As the minister delivered the longest Union Budget speech ever, some of her remarks, including regarding 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' programme, were met with protests from Opposition benches. Her first Budget speech in July 2019 went on for around 137 minutes. The minister quoted woman Tamil poet Avvaiyar, Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar, a verse from Raghuvamsa by Kalidasa also. — PTI

## GOVT DEPTS TO CREATE OVER 2.6 L JOBS BETWEEN 2019 AND 2021

New Delhi, Feb 1: Amid a chorus of criticism by opposition parties over lack of employment generation, the Union Budget presented on Saturday estimated that more than 2.62 lakh jobs are likely to be created between March 2019 and March 2021 in various organisations. The strength of government establishments was 32,62,908 as on March 1, 2019, which will increase to 35,25,388 by the same date in 2021 - an increase of 2,62,480, it said. The Congress and other parties have been criticising the Modi government over lack of job creation, especially after demonetisation of high-value currency notes in November 2016. The budget documents give a break-up of the jobs likely to be created in central government departments between 2019 and March 2021. The highest 79,353 jobs are estimated to be created in policing. As many as 22,046 new jobs are likely to be created in the Defence Ministry (civil). Its strength was 70,978 in March 2019 and it will increase to 93,024 by the same month in 2021. The

workforce of Home Ministry (excluding cabinet, police forces, union territories) is likely to be increased by 8,200 to take its strength to 26,564 by March 2021. As many as 3,886 jobs are estimated to be created in the Culture Ministry. 3,903 in Department of Space, 3,243 in the Department of Revenue, 2,581 in Ministry of Earth Sciences, 2,167 in External Affairs Ministry, 2,136 in Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and 1,347 in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology by that time. Over 2,300 more personnel will be added in the workforce of Atomic Energy Department over the two-year period. A total of 1,766 new jobs are estimated to be created by March next year in the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare. There will be an addition of over 1,600 personnel in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting between March 2019 and March 2021. —PTI

# Archaeological sites to be developed into iconic sites

Sangeetha, G I DC  
 Chennai, FEB. 1

The government has identified five archaeological sites to be developed into iconic sites and it has proposed to set an institute for training manpower in museology and archeology. Hundred airports under Udaan scheme too will promote travel and tourism. "Growth of tourism directly relates to growth and employment," said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman referring to the foreign exchange earnings growth in the sector. In this context, the Budget proposed to develop five

● In this context, the Budget proposed to develop five archaeological sites as iconic sites with onsite museums. These include Rakhigarhi in Haryana, Hastinapur in Uttar Pradesh, Shivsagar in Assam, Dholavira in Gujarat and Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu. The minister also recognized the fact that lack of trained man-power is a handicap affecting tourism. Hence, the Budget proposed to establish an Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation under Ministry of Culture. The government shall also support setting up of a Tribal Museum in Ranchi and a maritime museum would be set up at Lothal, near Ahmedabad.

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Gujarat and Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu. The minister also recognized the fact that lack of trained man-power is a handicap affecting tourism. Hence, the Budget proposed

to establish an Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation under Ministry of Culture. "It shall have the status of a deemed University to start with. Acquisition of knowl-

edge in disciplines such as museology and archaeology are essential for collecting and analysing scientific evidence of such findings and for dissemination through high quality museums. In the historic Old Mint building Kolkata a museum on Numismatics and Trade will be located. Apart from the Kolkata museum, which was proposed to undergo re-creation earlier, four more museums from across the country shall be taken up for renovation and re-creation so that a world class experience can be offered to visitors, she said. Further, the government

shall also support setting up of a Tribal Museum in Ranchi and a maritime museum would be set up at Lothal- the Harappan age maritime site near Ahmedabad by Ministry of Shipping. She also expects states state governments to develop a roadmap for identified destinations and formulate financial plans during 2021 against which specified grants will be made available to them. The government has proposed to provide ₹3,150 crore for Ministry of Culture for 2020-21 and for tourism promotion, an allocation of ₹2,500 crore has been made.

# ECONOMY



## Union Budget 2020-21

Amidst global turbulence... the FM has crafted a granular long term strategy to focus on vital issues. India was requesting kuch 'caro na' to her, however she had little room to manoeuvre!

— HARSH GOENKA, CHAIRMAN, RPG GROUP

### BRIEF

#### 49% dip in steel ministry budget

New Delhi: The Budget allocation for the steel ministry has registered a decline of 49 per cent to ₹100 crore in 2020-21, from ₹196.08 crore in 2019-20. This decline has been over the revised estimates of the 2019-20 Budget, according to Budget documents. While the Budget estimate was at ₹241.29 crore for 2019-20, in case of 2018-19 (actual) it was ₹154.54 crore, it added. The expenditure budget of Rs 100 crore in the 2020-21, includes ₹38.58 crore on secretariat-economic services, ₹44.24 crore on medical and public health and ₹17.18 crore on industries. — PTI



#### Market borrowing pegged at ₹5.36L-cr

New Delhi: The government will borrow ₹5.36 lakh crore from the market in 2020-21, marginally higher than the ₹4.99 lakh crore estimated for the current financial year ending March 2020.

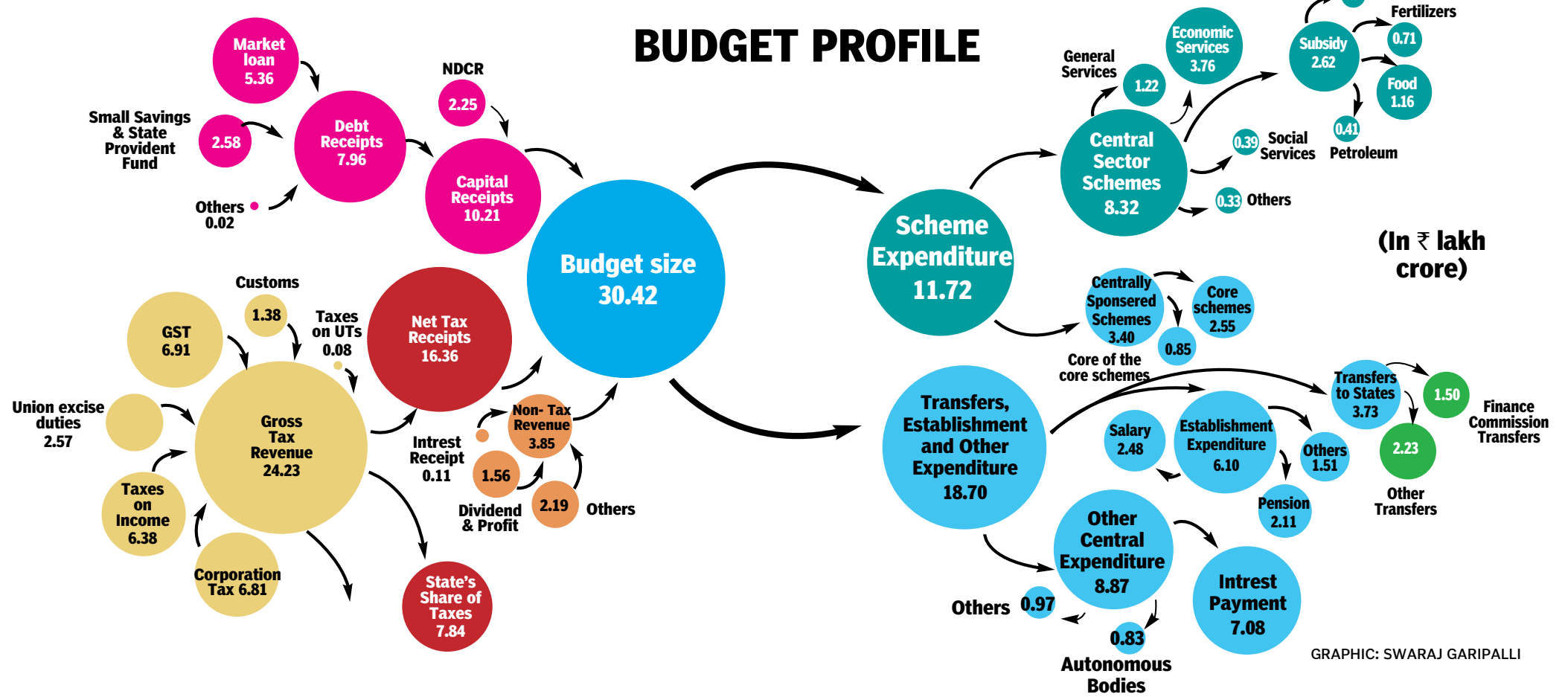
According to the Revised Estimate, the net borrowing for the current financial year was raised to ₹4.99 lakh crore as against the Budget Estimate of ₹4.48 lakh crore. The gross borrowing would be ₹7.8 lakh crore for the next financial year as compared to ₹7.1 lakh crore estimated for the current financial year. Gross borrowing includes repayments of past loans. Repayment for past loans in the next financial year has been pegged at ₹2.35 lakh crore. "Net market borrowings for the year 2019-20 would be ₹4.99 lakh crore and for the year 2020-21, it would be ₹5.36 lakh crore," the FM said. — PTI

#### FM: CBDT to adopt a taxpayer charter

New Delhi: Direct tax body CBDT will adopt a "taxpayer charter" which will ensure trust between a taxpayer and the administration and reduce harassment, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday. "Wealth creators will be respected in this country," Ms Sitharaman said in her 2020-21 Budget speech. She said an important aspect of both ease of living and ease of doing business is fairness and efficiency of tax administration. "We wish to enshrine in the statutes a 'taxpayer charter' through this Budget. Our government would like to reassure taxpayers that we remain committed to taking measures so that our citizens are free from harassment of any kind," the finance minister said. She further said that any tax system requires trust between taxpayers and the administration, which will be possible only when taxpayer's rights are clearly enumerated. — PTI

#### 'Infra push to help in demand revival'

New Delhi: Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's major announcements on infrastructure as well as logistics sector will create rural demand and boost employment opportunities, Cement Manufacturers' Association (CMA) said on Saturday. Priorities given to household, roads, railways, economic corridors, solar power, accelerated development of highways should help boost development and wealth creation besides reviving cement demand, CMA said in a release. "The emphasis on highways and roads development is well placed. This captures the priorities of economic development and an aspirational India. We would hope that rural demand gets revived and it assists in job creation," said Cement Manufacturers' Association President Mahendra Singhi. — PTI



## Stiff divestment target of ₹2.10L-cr to finance govt

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, FEB. 1

Stiffer divestment target of ₹2.10 lakh crore, double of current fiscal year target of ₹1.05 lakh crore and higher than even last five years' divestment receipts surprised everyone. The government has not been able to achieve the target this year so far with just ₹18,095 crore collected so far and only 60 more days to go. "A tall divestment target will be keenly monitored but signifies a big intent towards fiscal prudence," said Sailesh Raj Bhan, deputy CIO — Equity Investments, Nippon India Mutual Fund. But divestment department is confident with strategic sales of BPCL, Concor, Shipping Corporation of India, Air India, IDBI and LIC IPO coming. The ground work has already been done this year to reap rewards in the next fiscal year, Tuhin Kanta Pandey, secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management said.



During the Current Financial Year 2019-20 so far ₹18,094.59 crore has been obtained through disinvestment transactions. As on March 31, 2019, the Government had realised ₹84,972.16 crore as disinvestment proceeds against the budget estimate of ₹80,000 crore during the financial year 2018-19. Government is targeting ₹90,000 crore divestment receipt from financial entities including the initial public offering from LIC and sale of

## LIC to get listed on bourse

■ Continued from Page 1 complete independence in putting the governance framework including independent directors, nominee directors. Also considering the quality of assets of IDBI Bank, it remains to be seen how much an investor will be expected to pay for the troubled bank," added Parekh. "Discussion with respect to law ministry for legislative changes for LIC IPO has already begun," said finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman at a press conference after presenting the Budget. "Between LIC and IDBI Bank and other disinvestment as per estimates, Rs 90,000 crore could be raised. We will have to go back to parliament to get the nod for LIC stake

to be robust. However, there is a need for greater private capital. Accordingly, it is proposed to sell the balance holding of Government of India IDBI Bank to private, retail and institutional investors through the stock exchange." Under Section 37 of The LIC Act, the government has guaranteed the sum assured with bonus in all LIC policies to ensure the availability of financial security to the family of the deceased. For the April to December 2019 period, LIC collected new premiums of ₹1.37 lakh crore, showing a 45.5 per cent year-on-year (YoY) rise, its market share was 71 per cent. LIC Annual Report 2018-19 showed that the income from investments stood at ₹2.21

## Exporters all set to get tax refunds

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, FEB. 1

The Budget has proposed to refund exporters duties and taxes levied by Central, state and local governments. The Budget also assured to review Rules of Origin requirements in imports from countries enjoying Free Trade Agreement benefits.

The Budget also proposed to digitally refund exporters, duties and taxes levied at the Central, state and local levels, such as electricity duties and VAT on fuel used for transportation, which are not getting exempted or refunded under any other existing mechanism. This Scheme for Reversion of duties and taxes on exported products will be launched this year.

In order to achieve higher export credit disbursement a new scheme, NIRVIK is being launched, which provides for higher insurance coverage, reduction in premium for small exporters and simplified procedure for claim settlements. "Under the NIRVIK scheme, the insurance guaranteed could cover up to 90 per cent of the principal and interest. This announcement by the government is expected to address and mitigate both export finance and trade risk issues, the key challenges for MSME exporters," said Pawan Gupta, founder of Connect2India.

Further, the government has observed that imports under Free Trade Agreements are on the rise. Undue claims of FTA benefits have posed threat to domestic industry.

## Fiscal deficit target 3.8%

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

Missing the deficit goal for this financial year, the government on Saturday pushed the fiscal deficit target to 3.8 per cent of the gross domestic product or GDP from 3.3 per cent pegged earlier for 2019-20 due to revenue shortage.

While announcing Budget 2020 in Parliament, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, "The government will miss its deficit goals for a third year, pushing the shortfall to 3.8 per cent of GDP from a planned 3.3 per cent in the year ending March. The deficit target for the coming fiscal year starting April 1 was widened to 3.5

per cent." "We estimate a fiscal deficit of 3.8 per cent in revised estimate (RE) 2019-20 and 3.5 per cent for budget estimate (BE) 2020-21. This estimation is consistent with government's abiding commitment to macroeconomic stability," Ms Sitharaman said.

The government has utilised "escape clause" under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, which provides it leeway for relaxation of fiscal deficit roadmap during time of stress.

The "escape clause" allows the government to breach its fiscal deficit target by 0.5 percentage points at times of severe stress in the economy, including periods of structural change and

those when growth falls sharply. "Accordingly, the return path is being laid before Parliament as a part of Medium Term Fiscal Policy cum Strategy Statement. This fiscal path commits us to the path of fiscal consolidation without compromising the needs of investment out of public funds," she said.

"Section 4 (2) of the FRBM Act provides for a trigger mechanism for a deviation from the estimated fiscal deficit on account of structural reforms in the economy with unanticipated fiscal implications. Therefore, I have taken a deviation of 0.5 per cent, consistent with Section 4(3) of FRBM Act, both for RE 2019-20 and BE 2020-21," she added.

## Budget welcomed

■ Continued from Page 1 With the finance minister's announcements, India Inc welcomed the Budget, while at the same time economists and opposition were muted in their reactions. On the other hand, the benchmark S&P BSE Sensex stocks index extended its decline to as much as 1.9 per cent on Saturday. Nosediving nearly 1,275 points from the day's high, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 987.96 points, after the Union Budget failed to live up to market expectations of growth-boosting measures and fiscal discipline. Besides, investors' wealth of about ₹3.46 lakh crore has been wiped off from the system as well.

As far as personal tax cut of individuals is concerned, Ms Sitharaman wanted more money should come in individual's hand, and thereby slashed the income tax, which would help save about ₹31,000 a year in tax for persons with annual income of up to ₹17 lakh.

It was, however, conditioned on current exemptions and deductions including standard deduction for ₹50,000 as well as the waiver earned on payment of up to ₹1.5 lakh in tuition fee of children, and contribution towards insurance premi-

um and provident fund, being given up.

However, the finance minister also clarified that the new tax regime would be optional for taxpayers. Under the proposed I-T slab, annual income up to ₹2.5 lakh is exempt from tax. Those individuals earning between ₹2.5 lakh and ₹5 lakh will pay 5 per cent tax. A 10 per cent tax will be charged on income between ₹5 and ₹7.5 lakh, 15 per cent, 20 per cent and 25 per cent on next ₹2.5 lakh each and 30 per cent on income above ₹15 lakh.

Alongside, the limit of insurance cover in case of bank failure on deposits was increased to ₹5 lakh from ₹1 lakh and a sale of government stake in the country's largest insurer LIC also announced as well.

For farm and rural sectors, she also allocated ₹2.83 lakh crore and fixed ₹15 lakh crore target for financing agriculture credit. Another ₹1.7 lakh crore spending was planned for transport infrastructure and ₹40,740 crore allocation was made for the energy sector.

Ms Sitharaman proposed new tax slabs of 15 per cent and 25 per cent in addition to the existing 10 per cent, 20 per cent and 30 per cent.

## Affordable housing gets tax holiday

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, FEB. 1

The Budget on Feb 1 has extended Rs 1.50 lakh benefit on interest paid on affordable housing loans by a year to March 2021 and also given tax holiday for another year to affordable housing developers to boost housing in the country.

"For realisation of the goal of 'Housing for All' and affordable housing, in the last Budget I had announced an additional deduction of up to Rs 1.50 lakh for interest paid on loans taken for purchase of an affordable house... In order to ensure that more persons avail this benefit and to further incentivise the affordable housing, I propose to extend the date of loan sanction for availing this additional deduction by one more year," Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

# A balanced Budget despite several constraints



By Invitation  
**Renu Sud Karnad**

Public expectation towards the Union Budget 2020 has been extraordinary especially at a time when the Indian economy is performing below its true potential. This is reflected in the fiscal deficit target pegged at 3.8% for FY20 and 3.5% for FY21.

The finance minister has tried her best to present a balanced Budget in spite of facing many constraints and challenges — both local and global.

To encourage consumption, she has tried to leave more income in the hands of middle class tax payers, especially the ones who

were not able to get all the tax benefits.

In order to promote affordable housing, the finance minister has extended the tax benefit on affordable housing loans by a year. Besides, tax holiday under Section 80BBA of the Income Tax Act for developers for affordable housing has been extended by a year.

As far as the funding constraint for the real estate sector, the finance minister spoke about enhancing the partial credit guarantee scheme for NBFCs,

which is a good move, but the ailing real estate sector needs much more. Real estate sector requires a huge push like the one-time restructuring of loans.

The finance minister has

**In order to promote affordable housing, the finance minister has extended the tax benefit on affordable housing loans by a year. Besides, tax holiday under Section 80BBA of the Income-Tax Act for developers for affordable housing has been extended by a year.**

to remove the irritant in secondary market transactions.

The listing of LIC is a good move which will bring focus on the life insurance sector. The insurance industry will be watchful of the implications of the direct tax changes in the new tax regime.

The Budget has focused on the generation of employment and inclusive growth through increased expenditure on the rural economy and MSME. The finance minister has

been more realistic by assuming nominal GDP growth of 10% for FY 21.

The Budget provided tax benefit to the common man and focused on farmers' incomes.

Focus on aviation, infrastructure, logistics, health, data centre park, renewable energy sectors and domestic manufacturing of network products should support the government to achieve expected GDP of 6.5% in FY 21.

— The author is managing director, HDFC Ltd

# POLITICS

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 gov't's ideas ...  
— AHMED PATEL, SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

## Union Budget 2021

### 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.

## Govt's move to sell off 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.

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."

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

Describing the Budget speech as "filibuster", CPM 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 daughter Parakala Vangmayi at Parliament on Saturday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

## FM peppers Budget with Kashmiri poem

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

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

As questions abound 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 jaisa, nau jawanon ke garam khoon jaisa, 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 (UTs). Following the abro-

## 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.

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.

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## 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, the growing unemployment, rural wage crash, farmers' distress suicides and galloping prices," he tweeted.



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. — PTI

ment, rural wage crash, farmers' distress suicides and galloping prices," he tweeted.

CPI general secretary, D. Raja said the Union Budget exposed how the govern-

ment 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-

## PM praises vision, action in schemes

YOJNA GUSAI and SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday praised the budget for having "vision" as well as "action" and for its focus on boosting economic growth, as BJP leaders highlighted finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's key announcements to assert that they will help India become a five trillion-dollar economy by 2024.

BJP leaders, ranging from PM Modi to Union ministers and organisational leaders, and their allies showered praises on the Budget which, however, drew mixed reactions from economists and sharp criticism from the Opposition.

BJP national president J.P. Nadda said that the document is the "testimony of the vision of PM Narendra Modi for the 'New India.'" Union home minister Amit Shah said that the Modi government has taken effective steps to rationalise tax system, boost basic infrastructure, strengthen banking system, promote investment and ease of doing business, which will further the government's resolve to make India a US\$ 5 trillion economy.

## Bihar has been ignored: Yadav

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA, FEB. 1

The grand alliance leaders in Bihar called the Union Budget "disappointing" and said that "there was nothing for states like Bihar in the it". They even reiterated their demand for special status to the state and allocation of central funds.

"In this Budget, there are no words of special package, any new initiatives or projects for Bihar. The Budget 2020 is a reflection of discriminatory intent of the Modi government towards Bihar", RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said.

income groups with focus on home for all by giving subsidy to first time buyers and announcing relaxation in income tax, Mr Nadda noted that it also has emphasised on the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Union defence minister Rajnath Singh said that the Budget is "promising, proactive and progressive" and it will make India healthy and wealthy in coming years.

## BUDGET DIARY

BY GAUTAM LAHIRI

### FINANCE MINISTER SITHARAMAN'S ASPIRATIONAL COLOUR

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 believe 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 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.

# Modi govt chooses to consolidate on past reforms



Opinion  
Navneet Munot

This was amongst the toughest backdrops in recent years for the finance minister to present her budget against. With a severe growth slowdown arguably requiring a strong fiscal response on one hand and with sluggish revenue collections constraining government's fiscal on the other, the challenge was evident. Consequently, the

finance minister ended up using the FRBM deviation of 50bps on fiscal deficit for both the current and the next year. The divestment target at ₹2.1 trillion will need support from strategic sales including the proposed LIC of India IPO.

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.



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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.

The writer is ED and CIO of SBI Mutual Fund



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

# BUSINESS

## 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, LAKSHMI VILAS BANK**



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 agricultural infrastructure.

**RAJEEV CHABA,**  
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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.

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Direct tax dispute resolution, e-invoices & refunds, taxpayer 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 Nirmala

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.

## Relax, if your bank goes bust you get ₹5 lakh

**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.

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. 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 up to 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.

"GIFT City would set up an international bullion exchange(s) in GIFT-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.

GIFT 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 GIFT 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 fineness of jewellery produced in India, said Somasundaram PR, managing director, India, World Gold Council.

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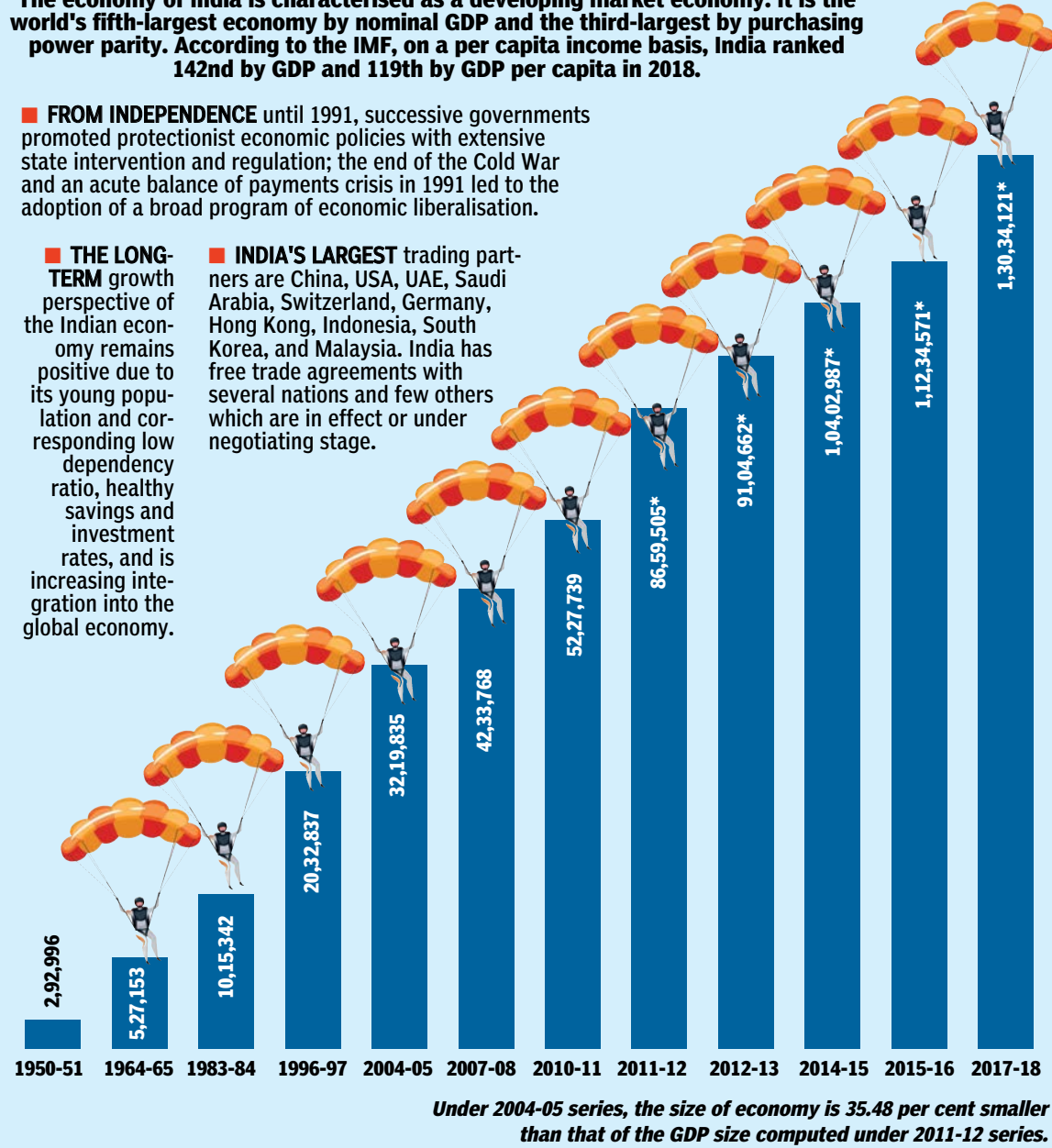
## TRANSFORMATION OF ECONOMIC SIZE

The economy of India is characterised as a developing market economy. It is the world's fifth-largest economy by nominal GDP and the third-largest by purchasing power parity. According to the IMF, on a per capita income basis, India ranked 142nd by GDP and 119th by GDP per capita in 2018.

■ **FROM INDEPENDENCE** until 1991, successive governments promoted protectionist economic policies with extensive state intervention and regulation; the end of the Cold War and an acute balance of payments crisis in 1991 led to the adoption of a broad program of economic liberalisation.

■ **THE LONG-TERM** growth perspective of the Indian economy remains positive due to its young population and corresponding low dependency ratio, healthy savings and investment rates, and is increasing integration into the global economy.

■ **INDIA'S LARGEST** trading partners are China, USA, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea, and Malaysia. India has free trade agreements with several nations and few others which are in effect or under negotiating stage.



## 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

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.

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## 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 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.

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Debut film  
Director Melina Matsoukas says *Queen & Slim* debut tells story of 'my people'

**IN BRIEF**

**Dia Mirza slams trolls who criticised her**

**Mumbai:** After actress Dia had broken down mid-speech at the Jaipur Literature Festival during a discussion on climate change, and her video went viral, she was the subject of incessant trolling. From *Desi Sasti Greta Thunberg*, to *Dramebaaz*, she was called all sorts of names. Now, as per a report in Pinkvilla, the actress has decided to not take it lying down, and has sent out a series of responses on twitter slamming her trolls. "Its called having a heart. Try it sometime. It makes you a part of the solution (sic)," Dia replied to one user. "We must never hide the true extent of our feelings. Ever," she said in reply to another. To another user who came out in her support, Dia wrote, "Our tears our own. But our actions can continue to bring more people together and its such a privilege (sic)."

**Sandler to make 4 new films for Netflix**

**Los Angeles:** Actor Adam Sandler has extended his partnership with Netflix to make four more films for the streamer. Netflix shared the news on Friday that Sandler and his Happy Madison Productions have locked a new deal with the streaming platform. Sandler first signed a deal with Netflix to produce and star in four films exclusively for the streaming service back in 2014. Netflix re-upped that deal for another four films in 2017. So far, the actor has made *The Ridiculous 6*, *The Do-Over*, *Sandy Wexler*, *The Week Of*, and *Murder Mystery* as well as stand-up special *100% Fresh with the streamer*. Sandler's next film for the streamer is *Hubie Halloween*, which also features his co-stars from *Grown Ups* series. — PTI



**Spike Lee to helm American Utopia**

**Washington:** Theatrical concert *American Utopia* by David Byrne is all set to be recreated through the reel. And Cannes jury Spike Lee is all set to helm the project. According to the *Hollywood Reporter*, the project features Byrne of the band *Talking Heads*. "Pinch me. This couldn't have worked out better for this project," musician Byrne said. The film will include live performances from the Broadway show and makers have planned for a release in by this year itself. — ANI

**STYLES CONCERT CALLED OFF IN STORM-HIT MIAMI**

**Washington:** As heavy rains hit Miami, singer Harry Styles called off his scheduled concert just minutes before the show at the Miami Beach on Saturday, reported Fox News. The performance was to be held at Meridian on Watson Island which is along the MacArthur Causeway. The singer took to Twitter on Saturday to announce, "The fire department would not let us do the show under any circumstances. Please stay safe."



Harry Styles

Soon after the show was called off, videos of fans moving out of the concert venue surfaced on social media. Pepsi also issued a statement on Twitter: 'As ordered by the Miami Fire Dept, Planet Pepsi Zero Sugar had to unfortunately be cancelled due to extreme weather'. According to *Fox News*, scores of fans were seen walking out of the concert in ankle-deep water. The concert management did not give out any immediate word about the refunds for the Styles concert. The local weather department had warned that severe thunderstorms may hit the area with the possibility of tornadoes, wind gusts, and hailstorms. — ANI

## Jessica says Harvey yelled, 'You owe me!' before rape

Weinstein was charming but often showed frightening anger, says Mann

**New York:** An actress accusing disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein of rape told a court Friday she had only stayed in contact with him out of fear. Jessica Mann said she had been naive when she first met Weinstein and then so scared of him that she would agree to massage him, fake an orgasm or stay in contact with him even after he allegedly raped her. Dozens of women have accused Weinstein of sexual abuse but only the cases of Mann and fellow actress Mimi Haley have led to criminal charges in a New York court. Three other women — Annabella Sciorra, Dawn Dunning and Tarale Wulff — have testified that Weinstein sexually assaulted them, but their cases are not the subject of the trial, which was sitting for the eighth day of testimony. Weinstein denies the predatory assault charges and maintains that all his relationships were consensual. Mann, 34, grew up on a farm in Washington state



Jessica Mann



Harvey Weinstein

Jessica Mann said that she had been naive when she met Weinstein and then so scared of him that she would agree to massage him or stay in contact with him even after he raped her. Weinstein denies the predatory assault charges and maintains that all his relationships were consensual.

and was on the streets for a while before becoming an actress. She was the only Weinstein accuser who had not heard of him before they met, seven years ago. She began weeping Friday even before prosecutor Joan Illuzzi-Orbon's questioning started and, at times, was so emotional she had trouble speaking. She described her first encounters with the producer as a mixture of seduction, humiliation and manipulation. Then, in a hotel in Los Angeles, she said she

agreed to give him a massage. "He'd make me feel stupid, saying it was not a big deal," she said. Later, when she was with one of Weinstein's assistants, he called her into a room and tried to kiss her. She said she tried to resist but he succeeded in performing oral sex on her. "I started to fake an orgasm to get out of it," she said, adding that she escaped as soon as she could. I was confused about it," she said when asked about her later relations with Weinstein. "I made the decision to be in a relationship with him," she added. "It was extremely degrading." Mann said that eight months later, while she was working at a hairdresser at a Los Angeles hotel, she told Weinstein she was in a relationship with an actor. She said Weinstein screamed at her "You owe me one more time!" before dragging her into a bedroom and raping her a second time. She did not tell anyone about the encounter. "I was scared of Harvey," she told the court. "I was pretty concerned about protecting the actor I was dating." She likened Weinstein to *Jekyll and Hyde*, saying he could be charming in public but often showed frightening anger when they were alone. Before the trial began, Weinstein's defense team produced a number of emails sent by Mann long after her alleged rape, which Weinstein's lawyers insisted showed the relationship was consensual. Mann said Friday the messages were written out of fear of the powerful producer. — AFP

## Oscars to go 'almost' green with plant-based menus

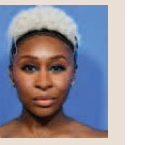
**Los Angeles:** Organizers have touted plans to go mostly vegan at this year's Oscars party but celebrities still need not fear — there will still be plenty of caviar, smoked salmon and wagyu, the event's main chef assured Friday. "We work with everything because a lot of people like vegan but still, the big majority eats meat and fish," said celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck who will be feeding Hollywood's elite after the Academy Awards on February 9. The 70-year-old has catered the extravagant post-Oscars party — the Governors Ball — for 26 years, preparing thousands of dishes for the 1,500 guests, including the night's winners, who attend the bash. He said the menu will be 70 percent plant-based this year, in line with what appears to be a trend this awards season. Among the vegan dishes will be roasted cauliflower, sweet potato tempura, wild mushroom bolognese and avocado toast. Puck, who worked in some of France's top restaurants before relocating to the United States at age 24, said while he himself is not vegan, he still enjoys concocting vegan dishes at his many restaurants. — AFP



Wolfgang Puck

**'Sad to be only woman of colour in Oscar race'**

**Los Angeles:** Cynthia Erivo is excited about her best role Academy Awards nomination, but the singer-actor says being the only woman of colour competing for the trophy is "saddening". Erivo, who is nominated for biographical drama *Harriet*, said while she is happy about her nod, it also highlights the lack of diversity in Hollywood. "It is a moment for celebration, but it also is a real eye-opener. It can't just be me alone. There's just such good work going on and this may sound fatalistic, but I would hate for people's work to have gone by and then for us to have looked back and go, 'Oh, I wish we would've given roses,'" the 33-year-old actor said. — PTI



Cynthia Erivo

## 2 charged over £50m robbery at Tamara Ecclestone's home

**London:** A mother and son have been charged over a burglary at the home of Tamara Ecclestone. Jewellery believed to be valued at £50m was stolen from the heiress's home next to London's Hyde Park in December. Maria Mester, 47, of no fixed abode, and 29-year-old Emil-Bogdan Savastru, of Bethnal Green, have been charged with conspiracy to commit burglary. The cleaner and her bar worker son both appeared at Westminster Magistrates' Court on Saturday. They will next appear in custody at Isleworth Crown Court on 28 February. Rings, earrings and an £80,000 Cartier bangle were all stolen in the burglary, according to the Sun. The court heard the majority of the items taken have not been recovered. Two men, aged 21 and 31, who were also arrested have been released under investigation, police said.



Tamara Ecclestone

The burglary on 13 December occurred just after Ecclestone, the daughter of ex-Formula 1 boss Bernie Ecclestone, left the country with her husband Jay Rutland and their daughter Sophia. The raiders are believed to have entered through a garden before breaking into safes hidden in the bedroom of the 55-room house in Palace Green, Kensington. The raid came after documents showing drawings of each room were said to have been made available to view online when the couple submitted a planning application to renovate their mansion. — Agencies



A model presents a creation during the Simof 2020 in Seville on Friday. — AFP



A model presents a creation during the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Madrid on Friday. — AFP



Rapper Cardi B and Jordana Brewster at The Road to F9 Global Fan Extravaganza in Miami on Friday. — AP, AFP



**Bestselling author Mary Clark dies at age 92**

**New York:** Mary Higgins Clark, the tireless and long-reigning *Queen of Suspense* whose tales of women beating the odds made her one of the world's most popular writers, died Friday at age 92. Her publisher, Simon & Schuster, announced that she died in Naples, Florida, of natural causes. "Nobody ever bonded more completely with her readers than Mary did," her longtime editor Michael Korda said in statement. "She understood them as if they were members of her own family. She was always absolutely sure of what they wanted to read — and, perhaps more important, what they didn't want to read — and yet she managed to surprise them with every book." A widow with five children in her late 30s, she became a perennial best-seller over the second half of her life, writing or co-writing *A Stranger Is Watching*, *Daddy's Little Girl* and more than 50 other favourites. Sales topped 100 million copies and honours came from all over, whether a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters in France or a *Grand Master* statuette back home from the Mystery Writers of America. — AP

## Suntory to sell super-expensive Yamazaki whisky for \$27,000

**Tokyo:** Japan's Suntory Holdings on Thursday unveiled a limited edition 55-year-old Yamazaki single malt whisky, which it will sell for 3 million yen (\$27,347.31) a bottle, aiming to bolster its credentials as a premium whisky maker. Only 100 bottles will be sold from June 30, and buyers will be chosen by lottery, the company said. Suntory and other premium whisky makers have been faced with depleted stocks of aged whiskies turned to blends without age statements to manage supply. — Reuters



Suntory chief blender Shinji Fukuyo (left) stands behind the bottle of a 55-year-old Yamazaki. — Reuters

**NEWS INUGGETS**

**Eating disorder used to sell diets on Instagram**

**London:** Instagram accounts are using images of a person recovering from an eating disorder to advertise weight loss. The BBC has seen more than 30 accounts using the photos and some of them have more than a million followers. The photos were taken by Kara Henry to document her journey of recovery from an eating disorder when she weighed just over four stone. Her images have been uploaded without her permission alongside claims that this shows successful weight loss. — Agencies

**Rose incense sticks may improve learning during sleep, says study**

**London:** Researchers have demonstrated that some smells, such as those from rose-scented incense sticks, may facilitate better learning during sleep, a finding that could lead to better ways of improving memory retention. In the study, students

**Lift less weights to become stronger: Study**

**London:** According to new research, weightlifters can get stronger by lifting less but changing the amount of weights that they lift in each session. Scientists from the University of Lincoln conducted the study by comparing average weights, that two groups of weightlifters for six weeks. One of the groups lifted with the traditional training method if 'one-rep max' and the other one being through load velocity profile where weights were tailored in a way that they lifted less or more in every session. — ANI



Laura Dern at the Academy Nominees Reception in central London on Friday. — AP

## Relative of extinct tortoise found

**Quito:** A scientific expedition to the Galapagos Islands has discovered a tortoise with a "strong" genetic link to a presumed-extinct subspecies made famous by the popular Lonesome George, national park officials said Friday. George, the last known member of the *Chelonoidis nigra abingdonii* Pinta tortoise species, died in 2012 in captivity aged over 100 after refusing to provide any offspring. The Galapagos National Parks (PNG) said the expedition had discovered a young, female specimen deemed "a high-importance find because it has a strong genetic component of the species 'Chelonoidis abingdonii.'" She "could be a direct descendant of a pure individual, which could still be alive somewhere," the park said. Park rangers and scientists from PNG and the Galapagos Conservancy found an additional 29 tortoises that share part of their genetic makeup with the *Chelonoidis nigra* Floreana subspecies. — AFP



Park workers inspecting a tortoise near Wolf Volcano on Galapagos Islands in Ecuador.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM**  
Tender Notice No. 27/2019-2020 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.irps.gov.in All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. 335/20  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE**  
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)  
N.I.T. No. : 32/19-20 dated 29.01.2020. 1. Name of work with its location : Outsourcing of maintenance activities to provide habitable conditions at Delhi Kishanganj and Delhi Kishanganj-II Railway colonies in the section SSE/WDKZ-I & DKZ-II under ADEME-IV 2. Approx. Cost of work: 12367476.74. 3. Earnest Money: (It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway Only Note: FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Boards letter No. 2015/CE-ICT/51 dated 31.08.2016) 5900/- 6. Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender: Upto 15:00 hrs on 24.02.2020 Opening of tender at 15:00 hrs On 24.02.2020. 7. Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.: Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.irps.gov.in. 128-W/269/OET/19-20/WE/NIT32 Dated: 29.01.2020. 346/2020  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



**SPORT | Tennis**  
**Surprise package Sofia stuns Muguruza to win Oz Open**

16



**SPORT | Cricket**  
**Insatiable India eye rare 5-0 whitewash in final T20I**

16



**GUIDE TO FORTUNE**

Tick the answer and check them below.

**1** "Swasthya Raksha Programme" has been launched by which Union ministry?

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- Ministry of AYUSH
- Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

**2** Meera Sahib Fathima Beevi is distinguished as the first lady....

- Prime minister of Bangladesh
- Judge of Supreme Court
- Governor of a state

**3** The Prakrit text Gaudavaho describes the deeds of?

- Bhaskaravarman
- Isanavarman
- Yasovarman

**SHORT TAKES**

**₹1.34 cr foreign currency seized**

**New Delhi:** In three different cases, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) recovered foreign currency worth ₹1.34 crore at the IGI Airport. Two Afghan nationals and two Indians were arrested with the currencies. The CISF said in the first case, \$31,000 (₹22 lakh) was recovered on January 30. The accused were identified as Afghan nationals — Abdul Saboor Amiri and Zafar Mohammad Nazari. "During behaviour detection, CISF surveillance and intelligence staff of IGI Airport noticed suspicious activities of two foreign nationals. On physical checking of their bags, \$31,000 worth approximately 22 lakh was found which were concealed inside the layer of clothes kept in their bags," read an official CISF release.

In another case, CISF detected Euro-119,200 and \$2,000 worth ₹96 lakh concealed in the turban of a suspect identified as Surinder Singh Seehra bound for Bangkok. In the third case on January 31, CISF recovered \$8,050 worth ₹16 lakh from an Indian national identified as Habibullah. — ANI

**2 men drown in Bawana canal**

**New Delhi:** Two men in their 20s drowned in a canal in outer Delhi's Bawana area, officials said on Saturday. The victims have been identified as Raj Kumar (24) and Shiv Kumar (21). According to a senior fire official, they received information about the incident near Khera Pul in Bawana canal on Friday night. The fire department, accompanied by the Department Of Delhi Disaster Management Authority and Boat Club, started the rescue operation around 12.40 am on Saturday but the bodies could not be traced. It was resumed around 10.30 am. The bodies were fished out in the noon and handed over to the police, the department said.

**No casualty in fire at AIIMS**

**New Delhi:** A fire broke out in a building at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here following which ten fire tenders were rushed to the spot, Delhi Fire Service officials said on Saturday. "A fire in the electric panel situated at the ground floor of the AIIMS cardio-neuro centre was reported. The blaze is under control," a DFS official said. No injuries or casualties have been reported, the official added.

**THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE**

- Yasovarman
- Judge of Supreme Court
- Ministry of AYUSH

■ Step-motherly treatment to city, says CM Arvind Kejriwal

## Delhi's share in Central taxes remain unchanged

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

**COOL RESPONSE**

► The Delhi government was given ₹325 crore as share in Central taxes in the 2020-21 Budget. For paying enhanced compensation to the 1984 Sikh riot victims, ₹10 crore has also been given to it. The same amount had been given in 2019-20.

► The Centre allocated ₹626 crore as Central assistance against ₹472 crore in the last Budget. Apart from this, the grant for the Delhi Disaster Response Fund remained unchanged with an allocation of ₹5 crore.

**₹8242.46 cr for city police**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

The Delhi Police has been allocated ₹8242.46 crore in Budget 2020-21. Of the total amount allotted in the Budget, ₹8019.83 has been earmarked for the revenue section, which comprises the administrative section, the road safety cell and the development and communication network.

The amount saw an increase from the last Budget outlay which was ₹7866.5 crore.

For police infrastructure, ₹365.62 crore has been allocated, seeing a decline from last year's amount of ₹468.86 crore. In Delhi Police Nirbhaya fund, ₹11.23 crore have been allocated.

The Centre on Saturday proposed to allocate ₹1,116 crore to Delhi in the Union Budget, keeping the national capital's share in central taxes unchanged and prompting chief minister Arvind Kejriwal to term it a "step-motherly" treatment to the city. The Delhi government was given ₹325 crore as share in Central taxes in the 2020-21 Budget. For paying enhanced compensation to the 1984 Sikh riot victims, ₹10 crore has also been given to it. The same amount had been given in the 2019-20 Budget.

The Centre allocated ₹626 crore as Central assistance against ₹472 crore in the last Budget. Apart from this, the grant for the Delhi Disaster Response Fund remained unchanged with an allocation of ₹5 crore.

The AAP dispensation has been demanding that the share in central taxes and duties for Delhi be

increased. Taking to Twitter, Mr Kejriwal said a "step-motherly" treatment has been meted out to Delhi in the Union Budget. "When Delhi doesn't figure in BJP's priorities, why should people vote for it?" Mr Kejriwal said.

"Delhi had high expectations from the Budget, but step-motherly treatment has been meted out to it again," he tweeted in Hindi. The AAP national convener asked when the BJP was "disappointing"

Delhi before the Assembly elections, scheduled on February 8, "will it fulfil its promises after the polls?"

Earlier in the day, deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia alleged the BJP-led central government has done the "biggest injustice" to the people of Delhi. He said the central government has allotted ₹325 crore to the Delhi government as Central taxes share in the Budget, which is the same since 2001.

## ₹2,487 cr allocated for NCR's rapid transit

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

► The Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor will be beneficial in curbing pollution. The high-speed rail will cover the distance in less than 60 minutes

the last budget. According to a senior NCRCT official, at present the construction of the first RRTS corridor, that is Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor is in full swing

and piling and pier works are being done on the 17 km priority section between Sahibabad to Duhai including stations Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Guldahar and Duhai.

"Out of the eight identified RRTS corridors to connect various NCR towns with high-speed rail, three have been prioritised for implementation in Phase-1, these are Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut, Delhi-Gurugram-SNB-Alwar and Delhi-Panipat," said the official. "The Delhi-Ghaziabad-

Meerut RRTS corridor will be immensely beneficial in curbing pollution in the region. The high-speed rail will promise to cover the distance between Meerut and New Delhi in less than 60 minutes," said the official.

NCRCT is a joint venture of the Government of India (50 per cent) and state governments of Haryana (12.5 per cent), NCT Delhi (12.5 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (12.5 per cent) and Rajasthan (12.5 per cent).

## 1 killed after ammonia gas leak at Haldiram's, 300 evacuated

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NOIDA, FEB. 1

► 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

ing 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 had got mixed in the air in and around the building. Ammonia solution was also used on the condensers to check the leak. The main gas pipeline has been closed since," said the 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," said a police official. "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.

## 2 workers die in factory blaze, kin demand owner's arrest

**Ghaziabad, Feb. 1:** The family members of two workers, who were charred to death in a blaze at a factory unit in Tronica City industrial area two days ago, staged a sit-in with the bodies at Sabhapur checkpoint here on Saturday demanding the arrest of the factory unit owner.

The enraged family kept the bodies of both Sunder Pal (35) and Akash Kumar (19) in a stationary mini-truck on the roadside of Ram Park Colony main gate and staged a protest

demanding the owner's arrest.

On Thursday night, a fire had broken out due to a short circuit at the vehicle filter manufacturing unit that caused a blast in the boiler. The resin chemical drums, which are used as adhesive to manufacture the vehicle filters also caught fire and spread on the floor.

Sunder Pal and Akash Kumar could not escape as their feet got stuck on the floor and got charred to death, superintendent of

police (Rural) Neeraj Kumar Jadaun said. The burnt body of Sunder Pal was recovered by firefighters later that night while Akash's charred body was recovered from the smouldering debris the following morning, the SP said.

However, police assured them of taking legal action against Ahuja following which the bodies were taken for cremation. An FIR has been registered against the factory owner and the unit supervisor, Jadaun said.

## Jamia bans protests by students

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

To ensure smooth functioning and to avoid any untoward incident on its campus, the Jamia Millia Islamia on Saturday prohibited students from holding any protest meeting or agitation inside the university campus and warned students of strict action. "Any kind of protest meeting, agitation, speeches, and mass gathering or any unlawful activities causing inconvenience and disruption in the day to day academic functioning are not allowed around the central canteen or anywhere in the campus," stated a notice issued by the registrar.

## One more Nirbhaya convict files mercy plea after 2nd plea rejected by President

**AGE 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 approached the Delhi high court challenging a trial court's order staying 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



Yogi Adityanath

## Supporters of J&K ultras protesting at Shaheen Bagh: Yogi

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday alleged that the Arvind Kejriwal government supplies "biryani" to protesters at Shaheen Bagh.

Addressing a public meeting in the Rohini Assembly constituency in support of BJP candidate Vijender Gupta, Mr Adityanath further alleged that those who support terrorists in Kashmir are staging protest at Shaheen Bagh and raising slogans of "azadi".

Earlier in the day, the UP chief minister, in a meeting in support of BJP Karawal Nagar and Mustafabad candidates Mohan Singh Bisht and Jagdish Pradhan respectively, alleged that AAP and Mr Kejriwal wanted protests like Shaheen Bagh. "They (the AAP) don't want good quality roads, water, or the expansion of the Metro; all they want is Shaheen Bagh. You have to decide whether you want all-round development or Shaheen Bagh. He will waste tax payers' money in feeding biryani to protesters," he said.

Referring to Pakistani minister Fawad Hussain Chaudhry's tweet, Mr

Adityanath said: "When Kejriwal is not getting support from the people of Delhi, he is getting support from a minister from Pakistan."

The firebrand BJP leader lashed out at anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protesters, saying their ancestors divided India so they have a grouse against the emerging "Ek Bharat, Shreshta Bharat."

The UP chief minister appealed to the people to vote for BJP to show their disapproval for the ongoing anti-CAA protest at Shaheen Bagh. Mr Adityanath pointed out that Mr Kejriwal had not only failed to deliver on his promise of a corruption free administration, but his own ministers were facing corruption charges.

Mr 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 peaceful protests 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, he said.

Mr Azad was addressing the Raj Bhavan march organised by SDPI (Social Democratic Party of India) in Thiruvananthapuram.

He said the anti-CAA agitation will continue till the BJP-led Central government scraps the "divisive" law.

## 'Beware of attempts to derail our movement'

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
T' PURAM, FEB. 1

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

Mr 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 peaceful protests 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.

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Mr Azad was addressing the Raj Bhavan march organised by SDPI (Social Democratic Party of India) in Thiruvananthapuram.

He said the anti-CAA agitation will continue till the BJP-led Central government scraps the "divisive" law.

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 February 1 at 6.00 am.



India is not merely a piece of geographical land, but is a swabhav, says RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat

BRIEF

Stones thrown at Kanhaiya's parade

Chapra/Muzaffarpur: Stones were thrown at CPI leader Kanhaiya Kumar's cavalcade in Bihar's Saran district on Saturday afternoon, police said. The incident took place when the cavalcade was passing through the Chapra-Sivan main road at Kopa bazaar, they said. Sources said 20-25 youths attacked the cavalcade with stones. Kanhaiya Kumar was not injured in the incident. The window panes of one vehicle of Kumar's cavalcade were damaged, SHO, Kopa, Shivnath Ram, said. Those behind the attack are yet to be identified, he said, adding that the miscreants managed to escape from the spot. Kumar was going to Chapra from Sivan to participate in his "Jan Gan Man Yatra", police said. The former JNU students leader's car was redirected to the Kopa police station by his supporters to save him from the miscreants, sources said. On January 31, Kumar had to face stiff opposition from supporters of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha in Gopalganj where his posters were blackened and slogans of "go back" raised.

Army jawan, wife killed in accident

Shimla: An Army jawan and his wife were killed after their motorcycle was hit by a tractor-trolley in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district, police said on Saturday. Anil Kumar (42) and his wife Suman (41) of Bai Indoria village were on their way to Murthal in Haryana from Pathankot in Punjab when the accident occurred at Chhani Bailey area on National Highway-1, they added. The couple sustained critical injuries and were taken to a hospital in Pathankot where they succumbed to injuries, they said. The driver of the tractor-trolley fled from the spot, police said, adding that a case had been registered at Damtal Police Station. — PTI

2 held in Maha for child pornography

Aurangabad: Two men have been arrested for uploading child pornography videos on social media in Aurangabad city of Maharashtra, the police said on Saturday. The accused were identified as Vijay V. Sarode and Syed Akbar, both 36 years old. Inspector Venkatesh Kendre of Jinsi police station said the duo were arrested earlier this week after the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) informed the Maharashtra cyber police about their activities. — PTI

IAS OFFICER CHARGED FOR DRUNK DRIVING

The Kerala police on Saturday filed a chargesheet against IAS officer Sriram Venkataraman, whose alleged drunk driving caused the death of journalist K.P.M. Basheer six months ago. The chargesheet, filed in the local chief judicial magistrate court with the IAS officer as first accused, stated that it was a clear case of drunken driving. Wafa Firoz the owner of the car and co-driver, is the second accused. She has been charged with abetment to crime. The chargesheet was filed before Chief Judicial Magistrate Court III, Thiruvananthapuram. Sources said the 66-page chargesheet has 84 documents and referred to 100 witnesses. It states that the 33-year-old officer, now under suspension, was drunk and was behind the wheels in the over speeding car while returning from a private party on August 3 last year past midnight. The cases in connection with the gruesome incident were charged under section 304, 201, MV Act section 184, 185 and 188. The chargesheet comes close on the heels of the chief secretary's recommendation to reinstate the IAS officer. While arguing for the reinstatement of the officer, the chief secretary headed panel had cited the delay by police in filing the chargesheet. Venkataraman has been under suspension since the day of the accident.

AGE CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB. 1

Kafeel Khan, who was accused of making an inflammatory speech at AMU, was remanded to 14 days' judicial custody and later transferred to Mathura jail, officials said on Saturday. Circle Officer (Civil Lines) Anil Samania said Khan was brought here late Friday evening and was produced before the remand magistrate who remanded him to judicial custody. The doctor was sent to the Aligarh jail, but within an hour, he was transferred to Mathura jail, the official said. The Uttar Pradesh police had on Thursday obtained transit remand for Khan, arrested in Mumbai for allegedly making inflammatory remarks at an anti-CAA protest at Aligarh Muslim University last month. A UP special task force arrested him in a joint operation with Mumbai Police on Wednesday, when he reached the city to attend a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act. The STF said Khan was arrested in connection

2nd AI flight departs for Wuhan

Five doctors from Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital are onboard the plane

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

India Saturday sent its second Air India aircraft to evacuate more Indians stranded at Wuhan in China, following the outbreak of the novel coronavirus that has left more than 250 dead and over 12,000 infected globally. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Friday declared coronavirus a "global emergency". Five doctors from the Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital — who

were onboard the first flight — are also onboard the second flight. Three-hundred-and-twenty-four Indians returned on the first Air India flight sent by the Indian government Friday. The plane carrying 211 students, 110 working professionals and three minors, reached Delhi around 7.30 am. The evacuees have been put up in a quarantine facility of the Indian Army and ITBP for observation. Officials said that they will be monitored for any signs of the infection for two weeks.

324 Indians returned on the first Air India flight sent by the Indian government Friday

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 the seat pockets. As there will be no service, there will be no interaction (between the cabin crew and 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 in 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 had visited Chengsa and returned to India on January 18. Six people were already under observation at the isolation ward. The samples of the eight people, 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 Thursday and the patient, a female student, has been kept in an isolation ward in the state.

Kamra notice to IndiGo seeks apology, ₹25 lakh

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, Mr Kamra's lawyer stated that his client has suffered "mental pain and agony" due to "illegal, arbitrary and high-handed decision" of the airline. Mr Kamra was banned by IndiGo for six months on Tuesday for allegedly harassing the Republic TV Editor on its Mumbai-Lucknow flight. As Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri advised other airlines to impose similar restrictions on the comedian, SpiceJet, GoAir and Air India imposed a similar ban on him without specifying any period. However, two airlines of the Tata group — Vistara and AirAsia India — have stated that they are "reviewing" the matter. An IndiGo statement on Saturday said, "The company will duly respond to any legal notice that it receives in relation to this matter." Mr Kamra has given IndiGo one week's time to respond to the legal notice. While aviation regulator DGCA had on Wednesday stated that the action by the four carriers is in



“complete consonance” with its regulations, the pilot-in-command of the Mumbai-Lucknow flight had told IndiGo management on Thursday that Kamra's actions were “unsavoury” but not “unruly” and this incident was not “reportable in any way”. Hours after the captain's letter to his management became public on Thursday, the Aviation minister justified IndiGo's action, stating that airlines must ensure “zero tolerance” for any activity that has the potential to jeopardize passengers' safety. In the legal notice to IndiGo's CEO Ronojoy Dutta, Kamra's lawyer Prashant Sivarajan said that Goswami — against whom Kamra's “exchanges” were directed — neither made any complaint nor requested the intervention of the cabin crew at any point of time during the flight. Kamra first came to know about his ban through the airline's post on Twitter on Tuesday night, Sivarajan said. — PTI



Protesters raise slogans during a rally against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in Thane on Saturday. — PTI

Azad vows to fight until CAA repealed

AGE CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB. 1

Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad Saturday cautioned people agitating against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) across the country against attempts being made by right-wing extremists to disrupt the peaceful protests. Mr Azad called upon protesters to maintain peace even in the face of grave provocation. “Our biggest victory is our peaceful protest. They are scared of our peaceful protest and want to create trouble to weaken us,” he said, referring to the incidents of shooting that took place at Jamia Milia Islamia and near Shaheen Bagh. Radicalised youths are being sent to such places

to terrorise the agitators, he said. Mr Azad was addressing the Raj Bhavan march organised by SDPI in Thiruvananthapuram. He said that the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act agitation would continue till such time the BJP-led central government scrapped the divisive law. The Bhim Army leader lauded the valiant fight of the women in Shaheen Bagh. “Hundreds of Shaheen Baghs have come up across the country where our mothers and sisters are leading the agitation from the front. We salute them,” he said. Mr Azad said that people cutting across caste, creed, religion and language were joining the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests in large numbers all over the country.

Govt ready to talk to Delhi protesters

New Delhi, Feb. 1: Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Saturday said the government is ready to talk to the protesters at Shaheen Bagh to clear their doubts over the amended Citizenship law, but it should be in a “structured form”. This is perhaps for the first time a Union minister has expressed willingness to communicate with the Shaheen Bagh protesters who have been staging a sit-in since last 40 days to protest the Citizenship Amendment Act. “Government is ready to talk to protestors of Shaheen Bagh but then it should be in a structured form and the @narendramodi govt is ready to communicate with them and clear all their doubts they have against CAA,” he wrote on Twitter. — PTI

College bans mobiles to help students concentrate

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. Speaking to PTI, 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.” With more than 3,000 students, the women's college offers undergraduate

and postgraduate courses. The ban, which was imposed 15 days ago, has not only helped students focus better in classrooms, but also improved their interaction with their peers, Dr Farooqui said. Although students are not allowed to carry their own phones on campus, a couple of handsets are kept in the reading room for emergencies, he added. “Initially, the decision was taken as a punishment for overuse of cell-phones, but now students

and staff are cooperating in the effort to enhance the learning and teaching process.” Students, who travel to the college from far away places, have to deposit their phones once they enter the campus and collect them on their way home, he added. Head of the Political Science department Prof Dr T.A. Patthankar said, “Initially, we also found the decision to be restrictive, but now students are concentrating on their studies and I am sure that this will reflect in their exam results.” A student on the condition of anonymity said, “We are getting to know the world around us, as now have plenty of time to read newspapers and magazines in the library.” — PTI

Kafeel Khan sent to judicial custody

Aligarh (UP), Feb. 1: Child specialist Kafeel Khan, who was accused of making an inflammatory speech at AMU, was remanded to 14 days' judicial custody and later transferred to Mathura jail, officials said on Saturday. Circle Officer (Civil Lines) Anil Samania said Khan was brought here late Friday evening and was produced before the remand magistrate who remanded him to judicial custody. The doctor was sent to the Aligarh jail, but within an hour, he was transferred to Mathura jail, the official said. The Uttar Pradesh police had on Thursday obtained transit remand for Khan, arrested in Mumbai for allegedly making inflammatory remarks at an anti-CAA protest at Aligarh Muslim University last month. A UP special task force arrested him in a joint operation with Mumbai Police on Wednesday, when he reached the city to attend a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act. The STF said Khan was arrested in connection



with a case registered at the Civil Lines police station in Aligarh, police said. He was booked under section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code for promoting enmity between groups. Khan is accused of making inflammatory remarks on December 12 during a protest near Bab-e-Syed Gate outside the Aligarh Muslim University in front of over 600 students protesting against the new citizenship law. An official also alleged that the Gorakhpur doctor had made objectionable comments against Union home minister Amit Shah. Following the arrest, Dr Khan was taken to Mumbai's Sahar police station. — PTI



Hindu priests and other devotees perform Sandhya Maha Aarti on the occasion of Narmada Jayanti at Gwarighat in Jabalpur on Saturday. — PTI

India wishes Maldives on return to Commonwealth

New Delhi, Feb. 1: New Delhi played a key role over the past several months for the return of the Maldives to the Commonwealth. In October 2016, the Maldives — under the then President Abdulla Yameen — decided to quit the Commonwealth after the tiny nation faced intense pressure due to alleged human rights' abuses. Two years later, in September 2018, Mr Yameen was defeated in the presidential elections by Mr Solih.

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Villagers dress up as bears to shoo away monkeys

Shahjahanpur (UP), Feb. 1: Locals in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district have devised a novel way to drive away monkeys, with some of them dressing up as bears. The problem of monkeys at Sikandarpur Afghan village under Jalalabad tehsil became so rampant that it figured during a recent tehsil diwas programme, which is organised by the district administration to resolve griev-

ances of the people. The affected villagers have complained that monkeys have damaged crops, taken away edible items from their homes and even bitten some children. To solve the issue, two youth have been tasked with wearing bear costumes to go around the village and shoo away the simians. Locals also claimed that monkeys are fearful of bears and more than half

of the primate population in the village has fled the place, as a result. Ashok Kushwaha, a resident of the village said, “Almost an year ago, a complaint was registered with officials. At the time, a team of forest department officials came and talks were held with a Mathura-based firm to catch the monkeys at the rate of ₹300 per monkey.” Yet, the plan could not materialise as the number of monkeys was quite

high, he added. The forest department, however, has a different view. District Forest Officer Adarsh Kumar told PTI, “Nobody is catching the monkeys. They are only driving them away by dressing as bears. So far, no complaint has been registered to catch monkeys.” He added that permission to catch the monkeys will be issued if any complaint is made. — PTI

► The affected villagers have complained that monkeys have damaged crops and even bitten some children. ► Locals also claimed that monkeys are fearful of bears and more than half of the primate population in the village has fled the place.



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

IN 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...

Israeli warplanes hit Hamas in Gaza

Jerusalem: Israeli warplanes hit the Gaza Strip's Islamist rulers Hamas on Saturday after cross-border mortar fire by Palestinian militants...

Pak emergency to battle locusts

Islamabad: Pakistan, which is facing its worst locust attack in decades, has declared national emergency to tackle the insects destroying crops on a large scale in Punjab province...

US RELAXES PAK TRAVEL ADVISORY

SHAFQAT ALI 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...

Virus toll soars to 259 in China

Several countries, including India, 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...

THE NUMBER of confirmed cases in China rose to 11,791, surpassing the number in the 2002-03 outbreak of SARS, or Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

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.

Separately, border-guarding force ITBP has set up a 600-bedded facility in southwest Delhi's Chhawal area to quarantine and provide basic medical care to those suspected to have been affected by the virus. The World Health Organisation has declared the outbreak a global emergency on Thursday but did not advise international trade or travel restrictions.



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 on Saturday

Study: Thousands more hit than official claim

Beijing: 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.

size of the epidemic, and its pandemic potential remain unclear. "Not everyone who is infected with 2019-nCoV would require or seek medical attention. During the urgent demands of a rapidly expanding epidemic of a completely new virus, especially when system capacity is getting overwhelmed, some of those infected may be undercounted in the official register," explained study senior author Gabriel Leung from the University of Hong Kong.

WHO says prepare for local outbreaks

Beijing: A World Health Organisation official said other governments need to prepare for "domestic outbreak control" if the disease spreads in their countries. WHO's declaration of the outbreak as a global emergency "flipped the switch" from a cautious attitude earlier to recommending governments prepare for the possibility the virus might spread, said the WHO representative in Beijing, Gauden Galea.

Most cases reported so far have been people who visited China or their family members. The agency acted out of concern for poorer countries that might not be equipped to respond, said Galea. Such a declaration calls for a coordinated international response and can bring more money and resources. WHO said it was especially concerned that some cases abroad involved human-to-human transmission.

CHINA URGES NO WEDDINGS, SHORT FUNERALS

Beijing, Feb. 1: China has asked couples to delay their nuptials from a popular wedding date and families to scale down funeral services to help slow the spread of the country's viral outbreak.

"Where marriage registrations have been announced or promised for February 2 this year, you are advised to cancel it and explain the situation to others," a civil affairs ministry statement said. February 2 this year is being considered a lucky date for wedding ceremonies because the sequence of numbers '02022020' reads the same backwards as forwards.

THE AUSTRALIAN government said it would bar non-citizens arriving from mainland China from entering the country under new measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus epidemic.

VIETNAM HAS suspended all China flights as part of "strengthening measures" against the coronavirus outbreak, its civil aviation authority said.

Senate clears way for Trump acquittal

Rejects motion on new witnesses in impeachment

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.



Demonstrators hold signs outside the Capitol in Washington, during the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump.

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, wherein the Democrats enjoy a majori-

ty 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 on two counts of misuse of power and obstruction to the Congress.

US expands travel ban, targets six countries

Washington, Feb. 1: The Trump administration has announced that it is curbing legal immigration from six additional countries that officials said did not meet security standards, as part of an election-year push to further restrict immigration. Officials said immigrants from Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Eritrea, Nigeria, Sudan and Tanzania will face new restrictions in obtaining certain visas to come to the United States.

generated outrage around the world for unfairly targeting Muslims. Trump was expected to sign a proclamation on the restrictions. The announcement comes as Trump tries to promote his administration's crackdown on immigration, highlighting a signature issue that motivated his supporters in 2016 and hoping it has the same effect this November. The administration recently announced a crackdown on birth tourism and is noting the sharp decline in crossings at the US-Mexico border.

US LIFTS CURBS ON LANDMINES

Washington, Feb. 1: US administration on Friday lifted US restrictions on landmines, saying new technology made them safer, outraging campaigners for the abolition of the explosives that maim thousands of civilians each year. In the latest reversal of a policy of his predecessor Barack Obama, Trump gave the green light to a new generation of "non-persistent" landmines.



A countdown to Brexit timer and the colors of the British Union flag illuminate the exterior of 10 Downing street, the residence of the British Prime Minister, in London on Friday midnight

Brexit came into force at 2300 GMT on Friday Goodbye, ciao mark UK exit

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.

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

The Conservative Party leader took charge at Downing Street last year with a "no ifs, no buts" pledge to leave the EU. His General Election campaign pegged around the 'Get Brexit Done' message last December won him a thumping majority, after which Britain's exit from the bloc became a certainty as his Brexit bill easily crossed the parliamentary hurdle.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed the historic moment as the dawn of a new era for the UK in his address to the nation just before Brexit. 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 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. Brexit parties were also held in pubs and social clubs across the UK as the country counted down to the official departure, with lower key anti-Brexit events in some parts of the country which had voted to remain in the referendum. Parts of Scotland, which had voted to remain in the EU in the June 2016 referendum, held candlelight vigils to express its opposition to being dragged out of the bloc along with the rest of the UK. It has revived calls for another independence referendum to be able to vote on its union with Britain. Police in London arrested four men and also charged one man with criminal damage and being drunk and disorderly, while one arrest was

made in Glasgow. While there will be little change instantly as the UK and the EU enter into a pre-agreed period of transition from Saturday until the end of December, the process of complete extrication from the now 27-member economic bloc will begin right away. Celebrating the UK's "recaptured sovereignty" to deliver the changes the June 2016 referendum signified, he noted: "Whether that is by controlling immigration or creating freeports or liberating our fishing industry or doing free trade deals... is the right and healthy and democratic thing to do." On a critical note on the EU's evolution over the period of the UK's membership, he added: "Because for all its strengths and for all its admirable qualities, the

EU has evolved over 50 years in a direction that no longer suits this country." "And that is a judgment that you, the people, have now confirmed at the polls," he said. Acknowledging the long-drawn divorce process and the deep Remain versus Brexit divide within the UK, Johnson said: "Tonight we are leaving the European Union. For many people this is an astonishing moment of hope, a moment they thought would never come and there are many of course who feel a sense of anxiety and loss. I understand all those feelings, and our job as the government - my job - is to bring this country together now and take us forward."





### Last show

Legendary Leander Paes gets wild card in doubles at Tata Open Maharashtra, to play his last tournament in India

## SHORT TAKES Deepa elected new PCI president

**New Delhi:** Decorated para-athlete and India's lone woman Paralympic medallist Deepa Malik has been elected as president of Paralympic Committee of India though the results of the elections are subject to a pending case in the Delhi High Court. The 49-year-old Deepa, who won a silver in shot put F53 event in the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games, was elected unopposed as president in the PCI polls held in Bengaluru on Friday. "My heartiest congratulations on the commencement of new innings of a fresh tenure in @ParalympicIndia. Expressing my gratitude on being trusted with the Presidency and welcoming an athlete centric approach in para sports in India," Deepa wrote on her twitter handle. "A huge transition for me, personally, for which I hope for continued support. I look forward to disposing my duty with full honesty and integrity." — PTI

## Gokulam thrash Odisha Police

**Bengaluru:** Gokulam Kerala registered a resounding 7-0 victory over Odisha Police in the Indian Women's League football here on Saturday. Sabitra Bhandari's five-goal effort made all the headlines, with Agbo Esperence and Grace Lalhauhnar also scoring two late goals. The two halves were quite contrasting in nature. While the first was quite closely contested, the second was a one-way traffic. Bhandari opened the scoring in the seventh minute, with a volley from the edge of the box which left the keeper with no chance. Odisha Police were still in the game going into half-time but the second half erupted like a volcano. Bhandari made it 2-0 in the 52nd minute after chasing down a loose clearance and heading it past the onrushing Odisha Police keeper Tikina Samal. The Nepal international completed her hat-trick just a minute later through a brilliant solo effort, going past three defenders and slotting it home. — PTI

## Kohli & co. fined for slow over-rate

**Wellington:** The Indian team were on Saturday docked 40 per cent of its match fee for slow over-rate in the fourth T20 International against New Zealand at the Westpac Stadium here. ICC match referee Chris Broad imposed the sanctions after Virat Kohli's side was ruled to be two overs short of the target on Friday after time allowances were taken into consideration. "In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined 20 per cent of their match fees for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time," the ICC said in a statement. On-field umpires Chris Brown and Shaun Haig, and third umpire Ashley Mehrotra had levelled the charges. Skipper Kohli pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing. — PTI

## PANDYA RULED OUT OF NZ TEST SERIES

**New Delhi, Feb. 1:** Flamboyant India all-rounder Hardik Pandya was on Saturday ruled out of the upcoming Test series against New Zealand after failing to regain full match fitness, the BCCI said. The decision was taken after the 26-year-old consulted spinal surgeon James Allibone in the United Kingdom. "Team India all-rounder Hardik Pandya has been ruled out of the upcoming Test series against New Zealand. He travelled to London and was accompanied by NCA Head Physio Ashish Kaushik for a review by spinal surgeon Dr James Allibone," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a statement. "Hardik will be under rehab at the National Cricket Academy until he regains full match fitness," he added. Pandya underwent a successful surgery in October last year to treat an acute lower-back injury and has remained out of action since. He last played for India during the T20 International series against South Africa, taking part in the third match in Bengaluru. He has not played Test cricket since the Southampton match against England in September 2018. — PTI

# KEN-IN ELITE LEAGUE

## Surprise package Sofia stuns Muguruza to win Oz Open

**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 shellsheathed Spaniard. The 14th seed, who will now jump as high as seventh in the world and usurp Serena Williams as America's number one, 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 semi-finals. "My dream officially

**THE RESULTS**

**WOMEN'S SINGLES FINAL**  
 ▶ Sofia Kenin (USA x14) bt Garbine Muguruza (ESP) 4-6, 6-2, 6-2.

**MIXED DOUBLES FINAL**  
 ▶ Barbora Krejckikova/Nikola Pietrangeli (CZE/CRO x5) bt Bethanie Mattek-Sands/Jamie Murray (USA/GBR) 5-7, 6-4, 10-1.

came true, I can't describe this feeling," said Moscow-born Kenin. "It's amazing, dreams come true. If you have dreams, go for it, it's going to come true." Spain's Muguruza, 26, was unseeded for the first time at a Slam since 2014 having suffered a marked loss of form in the last 18 months. 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.

**KENIN FIGHTS BACK** Muguruza drew first blood at Rod Laver Arena, where the roof was closed for rain in Melbourne, getting the first break of serve. Moscow-born Kenin, who ended the fairytale run of 15-year-old Coco Gauff on her way to the final, bounced her American stars-and-stripes racquet on the hardcourt in irritation. The 2016 French Open and 2017 Wimbledon winner Muguruza took the first set in 52 minutes when the young American planted her forehead out. But the aggressive Kenin upped the ante in the second set, breaking her more experienced opponent in

the fourth game and easily holding to sprint into a 4-1 lead. Kenin, who won their only previous encounter in three sets, grabbed the second set in an emphatic 32 minutes. A rattled Muguruza was seen briefly by a physio for what appeared to be a lower-back problem. Into the deciding set and the gutsy Kenin saved three game points in a pivotal fifth game, tossing the ball back over her head by way of celebration. Kenin, who was overshadowed in the build-up to Melbourne by the likes of Williams, Osaka and Barty, adds by far the biggest title of her fast-rising career to the three WTA crowns she won last year. "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 better life — filmed her victory speech on his phone. — AFP

## Thiem looks for chinks in Djokovic's armour

**Melbourne, Feb. 1:** "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, but Thiem has won four of the last five. Three of those were on his favoured clay, but he also came from a set down to beat the Serb on hardcourts at the ATP Finals in November. Djokovic is the first to admit that the slick 26-year-old has successfully refined his game over the past 12 months to compete on all surfaces. And he acknowledges it is just a matter of time before Thiem wins a Slam. "I don't think he's really anymore 'next generation'. He's been around for many years. Now already he's an established top-five, top-10 player," said Djokovic. "It's just a matter of one match here and there that can potentially give him a

Grand Slam title, that he can actually get in the mix of top three in the world," he added. Despite the platitudes, Djokovic, 32, is banking on adding yet another chapter to his storied Melbourne Park career, and heads into the match with an extra day's rest after dispatching an injured Roger Federer in his semi-final on Thursday. The world number two has been firing ever since arriving in Australia a month ago, and was unbeaten over six ATP Cup singles matches as he led Serbia to the inaugural title ahead of the Australian Open. "Yes, I'm pleased with the way I've been feeling and playing. I thought ATP Cup went really well for me, got a lot of hours spent on the court, singles and doubles," said the 16-time Grand Slam winner. — AFP



Sofia Kenin of the US celebrates after defeating Spain's Garbine Muguruza in the women's singles final at the Australian Open in Melbourne on Saturday. — AP

# Sunday feast

### Insatiable India eye rare 5-0 whitewash in final T20I

**Mt. Maunganui (New Zealand), Feb. 1:** Invincible so far, India will eye a rare 5-0 whitewash 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 promoted up the order in his



Team India would be looking to make it 5-0 when they take on New Zealand on Sunday. — Twitter 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. While he has been in great form, the team management could afford to rest him and bring in Rishabh Pant. There is incentive to do so, for this fifth and final game of this series is the last T20I India will play in the current 2019-2020 format. In the shortest season, there is only the Indian Premier League to look forward to in two months'

**LIVE on TV**  
 India vs New Zealand on STAR Sports 1, HD @ 12:30 PM

## Warriors, Superstarz book semifinals berths in PBL

**Hyderabad, Feb. 1:** World No. 10 Michelle Li staved off a spirited challenge from Rituparna Das as snatched up a commanding 5-0 win over Pune 7 Aces to seal their semi-final spot at the fifth Premier Badminton League here on Saturday. The Guwahati-based franchise bagged their third victory in five ties with a fabulous performance that saw them win four of the five matches, while the loss snapped Pune's three-match winning streak. Later, Chennai Superstarz notched up a thrilling 4-3 win over Awadhe Warriors to seal their semi-final spot. The enthralling tie went down to the wire and was decided only in the fifth rubber when Chennai's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and his mixed doubles partner Jessica Pugh beat Awadhe's Christinna Pedersen and Ko Sung Hyun 15-11, 13-15, 15-14. Earlier, World No. 32 Lakshya Sen bounced back to winning ways as he beat Subhankar Dey of the Awadhe Warriors 15-7, 15-8 in the first match. This was the former Asian Junior champion's fourth win in five appearances. In Warriors' Trump match, Li was expected to cruise against Das but the World No. 100 displayed remarkable courage under pressure despite losing the



Hendra Setiawan (left) and Chirag Shetty won 15-12, 15-8 against Bodin and Krishna Prasad of North Eastern warriors in Hyderabad on Saturday. first game 8-15. With the 15-8, 13-15, 15-13 win against the resilient Das, Li has remained unbeaten in four ties. In a spectacular turnaround, Das put the former Commonwealth Games gold medallist under pressure with her smart placement of the shuttle before grinding out the second game. A visible injury on her right hand could not deter the 23-year-old whose composure left the crowd in awe. In the tight decider, Das even moved ahead to 11-10 as the match headed to a close finish. Li then dug deep to level the score at 12-12 and then inched ahead to 14-12 to have a couple of match points in hand. Das, who made it to the semi-finals of the Syed Modi International in November, even saved a match point before Li wrapped up the match to take Warriors to win.