

ANALYSIS 7

ROADBLOCKS TO 'RAM
RAJYA' IN UTTAR PRADESH

NATION 5

'BUDGET PEOPLE-FRIENDLY,
PROGRESSIVE: PM

SPORTS 12

DHAWAN, SHREYAS, ASHWIN IN TOP
BRACKET ALONG WITH CUMMIN

HYDERABAD, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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SHRUTI HAASAN,
MALVIKA
MOHANAN IN
CHIRU'S NEXT?

Page 11

'ENCRYPTED' BUDGET

Crypto currency arrived? FM announces 30% tax on digital assets including 'crypto world'

What will be expensive? What is cheaper?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Imported items and parts will get expensive along with umbrellas and unblended fuel from April once Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's latest budget takes effect. On the



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

India, after dilly-dallying for years on adopting crypto currencies, has taken a gingerly step in that direction, going by the 'encrypted' Union Budget 2022-2023 that provides for the introduction of a new blockchain-powered digital rupee by the Reserve Bank of India starting 2022-23 and the taxing of any income from transfer of digital assets at a flat rate of 30 per cent.

Experts see the crypto-related provisions in the Budget as in line with the Centre's plans to have a fiat digital currency, while disallowing the use of private virtual coins as legal tender. The digital currency to be issued and regulated by RBI is a form of fiat currency that can be transacted using wallets backed by blockchain. This digital currency is different from decentralised virtual currencies and crypto assets, which are not issued by the state and lack the 'legal tender' status.

The proposal to tax any income from transfer of digital assets at 30 per cent rate will impact gains from crypto currency and non-fungible tokens, which have seen a boom even in India in recent times. For, no deductions and exemptions are allowed. Besides, loss from the transfer of such assets cannot be set off against any other income.

The government has also provided for TDS on payment made in relation to transfer of virtual digi-



tal asset at the rate of 1 per cent of such consideration above a monetary threshold. Gifting of virtual digital asset is also proposed to be taxed in the hands of the recipient.

The Centre's plans to introduce a Bill on crypto currencies that seeks to prohibit 'all private cryptocurrencies in India' with 'certain exceptions'. So, experts view the crypto aspects of the Budget as a definite sign that India has just unveiled its crypto tax regime.

The Union government, however, has taken a conservative stand on taxation of crypto assets by announcing a flat rate of 30% on income from such assets.

That the Budget has not tossed out crypto currencies is obvious from the fact that there was no negative impact on prices of most of the popular crypto tokens, including Bitcoin, ETH, WRX, SOL, ADA, DOGE, MATIC listed on Indian exchanges.

With 30% tax, India clears its stand on crypto

India took a step closer to adopting cryptocurrencies after years of wavering on its stance, as the country seeks to keep up with the global move toward the digital assets.

The Reserve Bank of India will launch its digital currency in the year starting April 1, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her budget speech on Tuesday. The nation also plans to tax the income from the transfer of virtual assets at 30%, she said, effectively removing uncertainties about the legal status of such transactions.

Cash-dependent India joins countries

including China in pushing forward with digital versions of their currencies as they look to harness new technologies to make transactions more efficient. At the same time, the steep tax rate on crypto could dissuade trades that have been soaring in India despite the central bank's warnings about the risks of money laundering, terrorist financing and price volatility.

"Imposing the tax rate makes crypto trading official now and any concern of a ban is off the table," said Darshan Bathija, co-founder and chief executive officer of Vault,



Digital rupee from RBI coming

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a big boost to the economy, digital rupee - using blockchain and other technologies - will be introduced by the central bank in 2022-23, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said today as she presented her fourth budget. The name will be

announced soon, she has said. "The introduction of central bank digital currency will give a big boost to the digital economy. Digital currency will also be a more cheaper and efficient currency management system," Sitharaman said today.

Income tax slabs unchanged

Income tax rates have been kept unchanged in Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget 2022.

Budget 2022 was announced amidst high expectations from all sides. The Budget focuses on trust-based governance, standardisation of taxation provisions and reduction of overlapping compliances under various laws. Let us look at the key Budget 2022 tax proposals which impact individual taxpayers.

Introduction of taxation scheme for virtual digital assets:

Transactions in virtual digital currencies and assets have seen an upswing in recent years and this was a step to provide a mechanism for taxing income from such transactions. Any income from the transfer of virtual digital assets is pro-

Facility for filing updated tax return:

With an intent to encourage voluntary compliance and reduced litigation, a new concept of Updated Return has been introduced. Taxpayers can file an updated return to voluntarily disclose income which was either under reported or not reported at all in any tax return. The updated return can be filed within two years from the end of relevant assessment year subject to certain conditions.

An additional tax of 25% or 50% of the tax and interest due on the additional income being reported would be payable on such income.

be taxed at 30%. Only the cost of acquisition of

such asset would be allowed as a deduction while calculating the taxable income. Further, any loss arising from transfer of such assets would not be allowed to be set off against any other source of income.

With a view toward having a transparent tax regime and capture details of such transactions, TDS at the rate of 1% on such transfers has also been proposed. Also, any gift of such assets will be taxed in the hands of recipient. This provides certainty to a large section of individual taxpayers who have invested in digital currency, though a lower rate of tax would have been welcome.

Capping of rate of surcharge on long term capital gains:

As per the existing provisions, long-term capital gains on listed equity shares, equity oriented mutual fund units, etc. are liable to maximum surcharge of 15%, while the other long term capital gains are subject to a graded surcharge which may go up to 37%.

Winners and losers in the budget

With five states, including the politically significant Uttar Pradesh, heading to the polls later this month, there were expectations that the budget

would address issues of high unemployment. The state elections will be a mid-term assessment of Modi's popularity ahead of national elections in 2024.

Here's a list of winners and losers from the budget announcements

Winners

EV BATTERY MAKERS

Crucial for plans to expand India's ambitions to promote clean transport technology, battery makers will gain from a new swapping policy for electric vehicles announced by Sitharaman. Beneficiaries will include Exide Industries Ltd. and Amara Raja Batteries Ltd.

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE

Plans for investments in remote roads, mass transit in cities and 400 new "Vande Bharat" trains in three years will benefit key infrastructure players including Larson & Toubro Ltd., GMR

Infrastructure Ltd., KNR Constructions Ltd., IRB Infra Ltd., Container Corporation of India Ltd., Alcatel Logistics Ltd. and Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corp.

METALS

The government's 600 billion rupee allocation for piped water to 38 million homes and spending on logistics will benefit India's metals producers, including Vedanta Ltd., Tata Steel Ltd. and JSW Steel Ltd. Jindal Stainless Ltd. Pipemakers Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd., KSB Ltd., Kirloskar Brothers Ltd. could also benefit.

Losers

STATE-RUN BANKS

India plans to start a digital currency, shifting the rules for traditional banking in the country as it tries to keep pace with the global move toward virtual financial instruments. The move will affect India's archaic lenders State Bank of India Ltd., Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, Union Bank of India, Bank of India and Punjab National Bank.

CRYPTO PLAYERS

The decision to levy 30% tax on profits from digital asset transactions, including

cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens, may rule out a blanket ban on such tokens for now but it will make trading in them less profitable. This will also affect crypto exchanges. Players affected include WazirX, Zebpay, CoinDCX and Coinswitch Kuber.

COAL AND THERMAL POWER

The companies to watch after India's incentives for solar power and plans to use biomass pellets in thermal power plants in a bid to rely less on coal include Coal India Ltd. Singareni Collieries Co., Adani Enterprises Ltd. These companies are suppliers of imported coal.

Disinvestment receipts pegged at Rs 65 K crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government's receipts from disinvestment proceeds in the next financial year beginning April have been pegged at Rs 65,000 crore, lower than the current year's estimated mobilisation of Rs 78,000 crore.

With budgeted disinvestment targets rarely being met, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's fourth Budget drastically reduced the receipts to an achievable Rs 78,000 crore in the current fiscal, from Rs 1.75 lakh crore budgeted earlier.

In her 2022-23 Budget, Sitharaman said towards implementation of the new Public Sector Enterprise policy, the strategic transfer of ownership of Air India has been completed. The strategic partner for NINL (Neelanchal Ispat Nigam Ltd) has also been selected.

Govt subsidies to fall steeply, pegged at Rs 3.18 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

In its revised budget (RE) estimate for the 2021-22 fiscal, the government has pegged total subsidies to be at Rs 4,33,108 crore against the actual budget estimate of Rs

However, fertiliser subsidy is estimated to increase to Rs 1,40,122 crore during the ongoing fiscal from Rs 1,27,922 crore in the previous fiscal, according to the Budget document.



7,07,707 crore in the previous financial year.

Out of which, the food subsidy is estimated to decline to Rs 2,86,469 crore in the current fiscal from Rs 5,41,330 crore in 2020-21, while petroleum subsidy is estimated to fall to Rs 6,517 crore from Rs 38,455 crore in the said period. However, fertiliser subsidy is estimated to increase to Rs 1,40,122 crore during the ongoing fiscal from Rs 1,27,922

crore in the previous fiscal, according to the Budget document.

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

'KCR proposes new Constitution for the country'

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Tuesday declared that he was not a Prime Minister candidate and proposed a new Constitution for the country. He said: "We need to draft a new Constitution of India. So many nations, wherever they felt necessary, have rewritten their Constitution. Now, there is a need to pursue a new Constitution for

this country. "Naya soch, Naya disha and Naya Smavidhan. Until and unless we fight, we will never be able to change. Within two years, we will bring shining India.

indicating what he was up to. The Telangana CM mentioned that he had started talking to other leaders and would soon make an announcement on fighting for the country. He said he would meet Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray soon. However, he made it clear that he was not a PM candidate.

KCR said that he would host a conference involving retired IAS and IPS officers and that he had already spoken to eminent people, including economists Govind Rao, Khelkar,



Railway Ministry allocated Rs 1,40,367.13 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Railway Ministry has been allocated Rs 140367.13 crore in the Union Budget on Tuesday - Rs 20,311 crore more than the revised figures of the previous fiscal. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech for 2022-23 said that India will manufacture 400 new,

New districts: Diverting people’s attention from burning issues

The Andhra Pradesh government, caught in a cleft stick over the implementation of the Pay Revision Commission recommendations as modified, has apparently diverted people’s attention from this and other burning issues by coming up with the idea of new districts.

The idea of forming new districts is not new. It could have been addressed leisurely. Yet, it has suddenly become an urgent issue as the state government does not want to be seen as having capitulated to its employees.

The YSR Congress party, when it was in the Opposition, had given assurances that it would, if voted to power, implement PRC recommendations. After attaining power, upon assessing the state’s fiscal health, the ruling party conceded that it had given assurances to



employees in a different situation without realizing the precarious financial situation.

The state government then came forward with amendments that ultimately whittled down financial benefits that would go to the government staff upon full implementation of the PRC recommendations. Unable to stomach this, the government staff launched a stir against the ‘ill treatment’ given to them. The employees’ unions, apart from issuing notice of an indefinite strike to the government, are unitedly preparing the stage for a long-drawn agitation.

The government therefore moved forward with a strategy to divert the attention of people from the long-pending main issue concerning implementation of PRC recommendations with the ‘desired’ level of fitment. While the state gov-

The state government then came forward with amendments that ultimately whittled down financial benefits that would go to the government staff upon full implementation of the PRC recommendations. Unable to stomach this, the government staff launched a stir against the ‘ill treatment’ given to them.

ernment is not inclined to implement the PRC recommendations as per the report of Ashutosh Mishra, employees say the PRC report as ‘amended’ by the government is the first of its kind in the country since employees would get lesser salaries if it is implemented as modified.

This unseemly development prompted the state government to take up the reorganization of the existing 13 dis-

tricts. It was taken up initially as part of the idea of reconstituting each Lok Sabha constituency as one district. Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy agreed for the creation of two districts for Araku(ST) Lok Sabha constituency as requested by his cabinet colleague. So, the number of districts will be 26, though the number of Lok Sabha constituencies in Andhra Pradesh is 25.



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

The reorganization of districts, regardless of the basis, would tantamount to opening the Pandora’s Box as new demands are bound to emerge for more districts in the names of prominent figures.

The principal opposition party is accusing that the reorganization of districts has been

taken up without consistency and that it does not reflect the real sentiments and feelings of people in various places. Some say emotional bonding of people with their respective native districts has been neglected. For example, Dwaraka Tirumala (Chinna Tirupati) of West Godavari district has been attached to the new district of Rajamahendravaram.

In the whole exercise, the names of persons, places, Gods and godmen can be found. Persons like Alluri Seetaramaraju, NT Rama Rao, places like Manyam, Palnaadu, Gods like Sri Balaji & godmen like Satya Sai Baba are now the names of some of the new districts.

Other demands for naming new districts have been raised. Sir Arthur Cotton (who was the architect of Godavari& Krishna Deltas), legendary poet Gurram Joshua, first Dalit chief minis-

ter in the country and former AICC president Damodaram Sanjeevaiah are among the other prominent names. Sir Arthur Cotton settled in England after retiring in India in the last quarter of the 19th Century and named his home ‘Godavari’. Can’t the present government of Andhra Pradesh reciprocate it by giving his name to the new district of Rajamahendravaram?

Following the integration of the erstwhile Hyderabad State (Princely State of Nizams) with the Indian Union in 1948, eight districts remained with the Hyderabad region, out of the previous 16 districts, that included five of Marathi-speaking districts and three Kannada-speaking districts, which were merged with Bombay & Mysore states as per the linguistic policy in vogue. Later Khammam dis-

trict was created from then Warangal district in 1953. After the formation of the integrated state for Telugu people Andhra Pradesh in 1956, Prakasam (1972), Rangareddy & Vizianagaram (1979) were created. One was created in honour of the royal family of Vizianagaram and the other in the name of prominent politician of Hyderabad state K. V. Ranga Reddy, whose son-in-Law Dr.Marri Channa Reddy was chief minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh in those days. After bifurcation of AP in 2014, the Telangana government reorganized its 10 districts into 33.

Even if the AP government resolves the PRC issues with an amicable formula tomorrow, the demands for creation of new districts will continue to be raised now and in the years to come.



Social media is kshudra vidya:KCR
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao said that social media was akin to kshudra vidya (black magic) and vowed that he would expose its misuse by BJP. He said social media was being misused by BJP to divide society by propagating and amplifying half-truths and plain lies. He criticized YouTube commentary in the name of journalism.

Irrked by posts on TS schemes, KCR said, “Dalit Bandhu is a spirit; it is not merely a program. Medical shops, bar and wine shops. Will you keep in ur BJP states?”.

He urged youth not to fall prey to the propaganda and said ‘India Reacts’. He said on social media they are propagating about Center’s contribution to schemes. He said, ‘From Center, TS gets 0. They enjoy on our money. As CM I am telling, centrally-sponsored schemes cost Rs 42,000 crore since 2014. We spend Rythu Bandhu Rs 50,600crore. What they give is not even equal to one scheme. You shamelessly tell same thing”.

Tax sops to start-ups welcomed

Welcoming the encouragement given to start-ups in the Union Budget for their contributions to innovations in healthcare and other sectors during the pandemic, Dr Prathap C. Reddy said the budget “keeps us on track on enabling universal healthcare accessibility with the proposed National Digital Health Ecosystem.”

TODAY	
ALMANAC	
Month & Paksnam: Magha & Sukla Paksha	
Tithi : Pratipada: Feb 01 11:15 AM to Feb 02 08:31 AM	
Dwitya : Feb 02 08:31 AM to Feb 03 06:15 AM	
Ekadashi : Dwadshita: Feb 03 06:15 AM to Feb 04 03:54 PM	
Shukla : Feb 04 03:54 PM to Feb 05 03:44 PM	
Rahukalam : 12:29 PM to 1:54 PM	
Yagyamgandam : 8:16 AM to 9:40 AM	
Variyam : 12:41 AM to 02:12 AM	
Gulika : 11:05 AM to 12:29 PM	
Amritakalam : 08:17 AM to 09:46 AM	
Ahijit Muhurtham : Nil	

HYDRABAD WEATHER	
Forecast: SUNNY	
Temp: 31°	
Humidity: 31%	
Sunrise: 6:51 AM	
Sunset: 6:07 PM	
Updated FEBRUARY 01, 2021 5:00 PM	

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹180
Without Skin	₹192
Broiler at Farm	₹120

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	411
VIJAYAWADA	420
VISAKHAPATNAM	425
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹4.11

KCR speaks like Modi 2013, promotes Telangana model

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

It was a dejavu. But this time it is Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao speaking like Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2013.

KCR described the Union Budget as “empty vessels make much noise.” This is exactly what Modi had said in 2013. “It is an empty Budget. It is said empty vessels make the maximum noise.”

KCR even said about his foray into national politics. What’s wrong in going to the people with the “Telangana



model of governance” like the “Gujarat Model of Governance?”

While reacting to a question on going to people with the Telangana model of governance,

KCR said, “Why not? People in Maharashtra are demanding merger with Telangana. In one case the BJP MLA of Raichur demanded merger with Telangana in front of their minister. The country is demanding election.”

KCR said that Modi is using social media to tell lies. He repeats the same lies 100 times.

With false propaganda about the Gujarat model which discriminates against the poor he came to power. But the Gujarat model is nothing but the ‘Upar sherwani under pareshani’ model. Eight years later he is

Disinvestment receipts...

Continued from page 1

“The public issue of the LIC is expected shortly. Others too are in the process for 2022-23,” Sitharaman said.

So far, the government has mopped up Rs 12,030 crore from PSU disinvestment and strategic sale. This includes Rs 2,700 crore from Air India privatisation and another Rs 9,330 crore through minority stake sale in various Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).

Govt subsidies...

Continued from page 1

For the next fiscal, the government said total subsidies are estimated to further decline to Rs 3,17,866 crore from Rs 4,33,108 crore in the current fiscal.

Out of which, fertiliser subsidy is estimated to decline by 25 per cent to Rs 1,05,222 crore during 2022-23 from Rs 1,40,122 crore this fiscal, while food subsidy is estimated to fall by 28 per cent to Rs 2,06,831 crore against Rs 2,86,469 crore in the said period.

Petroleum subsidies are estimated to decline by 11 per cent to Rs 5,813 crore during 2022-23 from Rs 6,517 crore in the current fiscal.

‘KCR proposes new constitution for the country’

Continued from page 1

KCR remarked: “They have badly neglected the poor citizens of the country. The entire world has awoken, except the Government of India. I appeal to youth to rise and fight for your own future. We will tell the country in a fitting manner. India reacts whenever needed. It is time for the country to react. There is a requirement for revolution in the country. Until and unless we fight, we will never be able to change. Within two years, we will bring shining India. Until when will we sit calm? We will not tolerate these useless parties and politicians”.

KCR asked: With tricks of PM like growing beard to look like Rabindranath Tagore during Bengal elections; changing clothes like wearing lungi during Tamil Nadu elections, and changing caps, will India get electricity?”

He said, “I am not competitor for PM post. I am part of Indian development administration agenda. If needed, I will contest for Parliament. As for those who did not come along with TRS, didn’t I make CBN, BJP, CPM say Jai Telangana?”

Referring to UP elections, KCR said: “People who don’t have knowledge of political scene say this is semfinal to next election. This is not cor-

rect. In UP elections, anybody can win; BJP will reduce its level. I can guarantee that BJP will lose seats; for, it doesn’t have the attraction; which is the foundation for downfall of BJP in 2024.”

Speaking about AIMIM in UP, KCR said: “Owaisi wants to project himself as Indian Muslim fake. He is successful. He is a sepy. They are fighting; if they are shining, let them. If Telangana beta is shining, what’s wrong?”

He said, “What is sad is that central govt and BJP do not even have shame. This party should be removed and thrown into Bay of Bengal. We will agitate, if needed; we will not sit

calm. All said and done, this is democracy”.

KCR said, “The central government is useless. I am calling the youth of people, this is your country. The future is yours. The government is spoiling the nation. I am alleging, you are dividing the country and polluting it. Will anyone go and keep industry in Afghan? People are coming to our state”.

Speaking about BJP, CM said, “You are barking dogs; you are mad dogs and we don’t care about you. Will we let this society to ruin it? We won’t wait and see if dogs and foxes like you come. Hyderabad will continue to attract”.

Telangana Inc welcomes Union Budget

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Confederation of Indian industry Telangana welcomed the Union Budget, saying it strongly emphasises on developing a strong India through strengthening the infrastructure sector, reinvigorating the education sector through PM e-Vidya and establishment of digital university.

Sameer Goel, Chairman, CII Telangana in a statement said Kisan drones for crop assessment, digitization of

land records, promotion of Chemical-free natural farming, Rs 2.37 lakh crore worth of MSP related payments to wheat and paddy farmers will enhance efficiency of the operations in Agriculture sector.

CII welcomes the move to manufacture and develop 400 new-generation Vande Bharat trains in next three years as it will help in expanding the capacity of the railway network. Local businesses are expected to get a



worth Rs 30 lakh crore.

He said the government has rightly prioritized sectors like PM Gati Shakti, inclusive development, productivity enhancement and investment, sunrise opportunities, energy transition, climate action, and

the financing of investments.

Gudur said the Union Government has recognized seven engines that drive PM Gati Shakti, that is, roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways and logistics infrastructure.

The scope of PM’s Gati Shakti National Master Plan will encompass the seven engines for economic transformation, seamless multimodal connectivity and logistics efficiency, he said.

He said that National Highways Network would be expanded by 25,000 km in 2022-23. Rs 20,000 crore would be mobilized for National Highways Network expansion.

Digital rupee from RBI coming up

Continued from page 1

“It is therefore proposed to introduce digital rupee - using blockchain and other technologies - to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India, starting 2022-23,” she underlined. The move is seen as a big push for the government’s ‘Digital India’ programme.

It also comes amid deliberation over the regulation of cryptocurrency.

Winners and losers in the budget

Winners

SOLAR

Production-linked incentives worth ₹ 19,500 crore for solar modules to boost local manufacturing will turn the focus on growth at leading panel manufacturers, including Tata Power Ltd., Suzlon Energy Ltd., Adani Enterprises Ltd. and Reliance Industries Ltd.

CEMENT, CONSTRUCTION

The government’s plan to build more homes for low-income earners across cities will mean more contracts for cement and construction majors UltraTech Cement Ltd., Ambuja Cements Ltd., Birla Corp. and ACC Ltd..

TELCOS, DATA CENTERS

The launch of 5G auctions in 2022 will help boost telco sector and the classification of data storage as infrastructure spending will benefit companies including Bharti Airtel Ltd., Reliance Industries Ltd., Vodafone Idea Ltd., Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd., HFCL Ltd., Tejas Networks Ltd., Sterlite Technologies Ltd..

DIGITAL FINANCE

Digital financial services providers in India are set to gain after Tuesday’s budget focused on expanding such services. These include PB Fintech Ltd., the parent of PolicyBazaar, newly listed Paytm’s owner One 97 Communications Ltd., eClerx Services Ltd. and Paisalo Digital

Ltd., which provides smaller loans through its app.

DEFENCE MANUFACTURERS

Companies manufacturing defense equipment look to benefit from Sitharaman’s plan to earmark 68% of the sector capex for local companies in the annual budget. Gainers include Larsen & Toubro Ltd., Bharat Forge Ltd. and Paras Defence and Space Technologies Ltd. The drone start ups that could benefit include Zeus Numerix, New Space India Ltd., and BotLab Dynamics.

Losers

STAINLESS STEEL

India has made plans to revoke some anti-dumping and

countervailing duties on stainless steel, coated steel flat products, bars of alloy steel and high-speed steel, given the rise in metal prices. This is expected to affect the biggest producer Jindal Stainless Ltd. and Tata Metaliks Ltd.

Automobile Makers Car manufacturers, which received little attention from the finance minister, continue to reel under a global semiconductor crunch. The S&P BSE Auto Index was the worst performer among 19 sectoral gauges after Tuesday’s budget announcement. Companies to watch include Maruti Suzuki India Ltd., Tata Motors Ltd, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.

Railway Ministry...

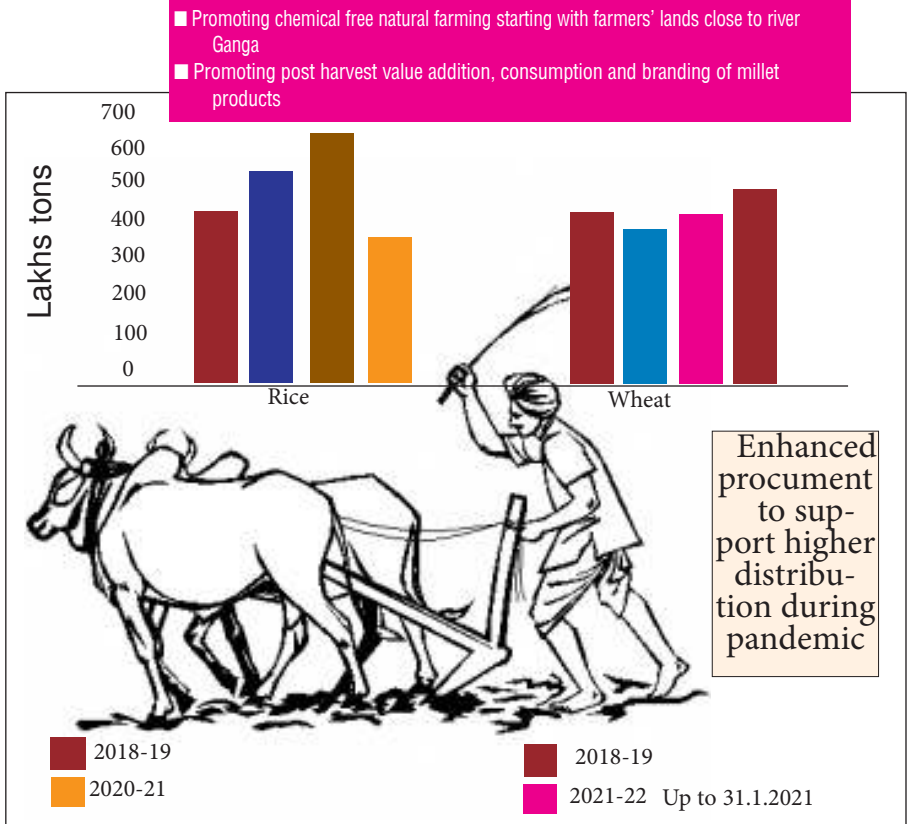
Continued from page 1

energy-efficient Vande Bharat trains in the next three years. The rail sector will also develop One Station One Product, which will leverage local produce carried on the railways.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw welcomed the announcement and said that the integration of posts and railways will bring better logistics solutions for people living in remote areas. He also said that the Railways will introduce new products and services for small farmers and enterprises. The Budget has also earmarked Rs 38686.59 crore for investment in PSUs, joint ventures and special purpose vehicles.

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Cong slams Centre for poor funding for minorities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir has strongly condemned the BJP government for not increasing allocations for minority welfare in the Union Budget.

In his reaction to the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Tuesday, Shabbir said that the allocation for minority affairs has been reduced to the 2020-21 level.

He said an amount of Rs 5,020.50 crore has been allocated for 2022-23. While this is Rs 674.50 crore more than the revised figure of Rs 4,346.45 crore for 2021-22, it is less than the allocation of Rs 5,029 crore made in 2020-21.

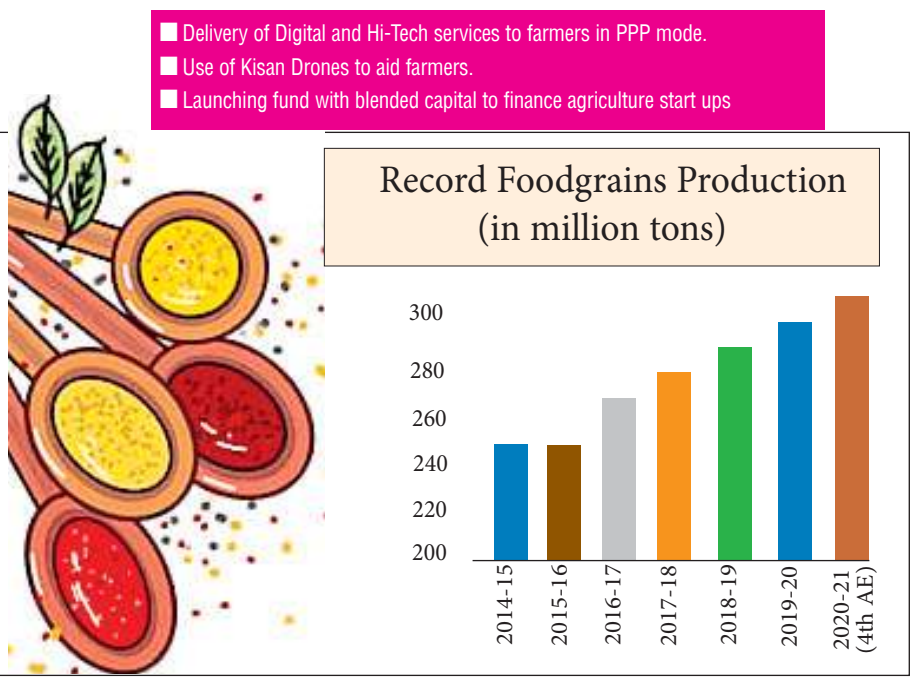
Prime Minister Modi's 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas aur Sabka Vishwas' slogan has been

proved hollow once again, he said.

Shabbir said the Centre had spent Rs 37.70 lakh crore in 2021-22 and proposes to spend Rs 39.45 lakh crore in the next financial year.

Instead of increasing allocations for minorities on par with the expenditure on other schemes, the BJP government has completely neglected minorities in the Union Budget, he said. "The Modi government wants to implement welfare schemes for nearly 26 crore people across the country with just Rs 5,029 crore. This will come to an average spending of about Rs 193 per person per year belonging to minorities," he said.

Shabbir said that the allocation for Skill Development Initiatives has been reduced from Rs 276 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 235.41 crore in 2022-23.



KCR 'angered', 'upset' by 'golmal' budget

Sitharaman told shanti mantra and bluntly lied

Being a Telugu daughter-in-law how can you go about with Gift City?

Who gave you right for interlinking rivers?

NAVEENA GHANATE

■ HYDERABAD

Upset about the Budget 2022-2023, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao said: "I am angered by the Budget. This is a bankrupt thinking. This is eighth year budget and the BJP party's intelligence has been exposed clearly. 80% time is gone; today's Budget is a worst budget". He said that everything is zero in the Budget and is 'Golmal govinidham'.

Describing all things presented in the Budget as 'lie and fraud', KCR came down heavily on Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for reciting Mahabharata shanti shloka and resorting to spreading lies in the Budget. Pointing out that there was no 'Vikas' in the Budget, KCR said: "Aren't you ashamed to quote Mahabharata Shanti parvam for the lies you spoke?" He said that instead of increasing the health budget, they did nothing. He said that the Budget gave subsidy to people who loot.

Terming Modi as very short-sighted Prime Minister, KCR said, "We wanted to improve the profile of Hyderabad by starting International Arbitration Center. PM is pressurising them to put in Gujarat and not in Hyderabad. He is PM of Gujarat, not of country. They want to keep a Shikandi to this Hyderabad in Gujarat in terms of Gift



City. Nirmala Sitharaman, you are Telugu daughter-in-law doing, you consciously did not question while doing this. If the central government and the Finance Minister had magnanimity, they should appreciate TS govt for IAMC. This is the short-sightedness of the central government".

KCR termed river interlinking as a big joke of millennium. KCR said, "How will you do Godavari and Krishna interlinking. Under what power did you say that? There is tribunal award, once Godavari enters TS and AP, every drop is to that state as per Bachawat tribunal. It is equal to SC judgment. Nobody has right to violate. Without our interference, how will you go and link it to Cauveri.

Isn't this joke, senseless? Is there excess water? If there is water, why are you not accepting Telangana's requests to give clearance to use water? On what basis are you telling TS, AP needs are fulfilled? Without taking consent, how will you tell in Budget? Under what authority did you tell? Intelligent regions are going 1000s of km to lift water. Even though your co-operation is zero, we lifted water. You can't even buy the produce we are cultivating".

He said that water wars in India were happening due to your bad water policy, because of which country suffers for water. "For an economy like India, our budget is just about Rs 37 lakh crore, did not even cross Rs 40 lakh crore".

One Nation One registration	One Nation One registration is a conspiracy against states. There should be abundant clarity. Center shouldn't interfere, it is stealing away
Agriculture and Fertilisers	Danger bells rang for agriculture as the subsidy of 35000 crore on fertilizers reduced. Is this Modi government's gift to farmers. There is Nothing about msp, nothing on power reforms for farmers. Whom did they put the crown on, in this budget.
NREGA	Already country is reeling under unemployment is high, even for NREGA the budget has been reduced from 73000 crore from 97000 crore. What kind of intelligence is this? This is horrible.
Health Budget	They didn't increase health budget. We need to develop health infra. We expected of goi to come forwrsd to increase health budget. They didn't even increase 1rupee
Education	There is Nothing in education for budget Where is the income going then.
Food Subsidy	Modi government's success is we are at 101 position in Hunger index. They reduced food subsidy by 65000 crore
Minorities	There is nothing for minorities because their gothram doesn't match with BJP
Privatisation LIC	Why are you selling LIC Modi garu if it is in profits. My brain is small, I don't understand this. My heart is bleeding. Are you being broken to the international insurance companies in America?
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana	Housing for all is bogus. Where did it happen?
Gujarat Gift City	It is shikandi to the International Arbitration Center we are setting up in Hyderabad
30% tax on digital assets	Did you even accept crypto currency, is it official? As a responsible CM I am asking, is the country officialising crypto currency. Whom are you trying to confuse, where are you taking the country.
Interlinking of Rivers	River interlinking is big joke of millenium. What power do you have for Godavari and Krishna interlinking. Under what power did you say? Everydrop is to that state as per bachawat tribunal. It is equal to sc judgement. Nobody has the right to violate. Without our interference how will you go and link it to kaveri?
Jal Shakti Mission	Jal Shakti mission is all bogus and Fraud. They allocated 65k crore. For 4cr population of Telangana, for mission bhagiratha it costed us 40k crore, these people are pitching 65000crore for 140crore population. This is fraud
1lakh crore interest free loans for 50years under Gati Shakti	Is that even a grant to celebrate. It is a rubbish loan, third class. It will be 100lakh crores if things happen the way i suggest. If we do it, it is bigger economy than US. the only thing that is not there here is brain as we have economy
SC, ST budget of 12800crore	In our state SC-ST sub plan, we spent 33612crore. It is not even equal to the budget given by state



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The defence budget was on Tuesday increased to Rs 5.25 lakh crore for 2022-23 from last year's allocation of Rs 4.78 lakh crore with a major push on procurement of weapons and military platforms from domestic players as well as to involve them in defence research and development.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, presenting the Union Budget in Parliament, said 68 per cent of the outlay for defence procurement will be set aside for buying from domestic industry and that 25 per cent of the allocation for

defence research and development (R&D) will be kept for collaboration with the private sector.

In another announcement, she said an independent nodal umbrella body will be set up for private players to meet their requirements for testing and new technologies and to get the certification.

The overall defence budget of 5,25,166 crore including Rs 1,19,696 crore for defence pensions is an increase of 9.8 per cent compared to last year's total outlay. The defence budget excluding the pension component stands at Rs 4,05,470 crore. In the defence budget,

Sitharaman allocated Rs 1,52,369 crore for capital expenditure in 2022-23 that includes purchasing new weapons, aircraft, warships and other military hardware.

The capital outlay is an increase of around 10 per cent compared to the revised estimate of Rs 1,38,850 crore for 2021-22. The figure at the budget estimate stage was Rs 1,35,060 crore.

According to the budget documents, an allocation of Rs 2,33,000 crore has been made for revenue expenditure that includes expenses on payment of salaries and maintenance of establishments.

RSS, its affiliate term budget 'well-balanced'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The RSS on Tuesday hailed the budget as "well-balanced" which was needed for post-Covid recovery while its affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch suggested that after taxing cryptocurrency, the government should move towards banning it.

Senior RSS functionary Ram Madhav said a 'Digital Budget' has been announced by rolling out of 5G and taxing digital assets.

He also praised Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for overcoming naysayers and announcing the Reserve Bank India will introduce a digital rupee to boost the digital economy and for better currency management.



Metro projects get Rs19,130 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has allocated Rs 19,130 crore in the Union Budget 2022-23 for various metro projects in the country.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget on Tuesday.

An outlay of Rs 19,130 cr has been made in the Budget for metro projects across the country. In November last year, Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri had said

that 723 km of metro network was operational in 18 cities, and additional over 1,000 km of network under construction in various cities.

Separately, six new proposals were also being evaluated, he had said.

Meanwhile, Delhi Metro officials said in recent years, the Union Ministry of Finance is providing Budget for all metro projects in India, instead of DMRC alone.

Accordingly, in Budget 2022-23, allocation made for all metro projects in India is Rs 19,130 cr. The budgetary allocation in the last fiscal for metro projects was Rs 18,978 cr.

New Co-operation Ministry gets Rs 900 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday announced Rs 900-crore allocation in the Budget for the newly set up Ministry of Cooperation for the 2022-23 fiscal, besides slashing Alternate Mini mum Tax (AMT) on cooperative societies to 15 per cent and surcharge to 7 per cent, which nodal minister Amit Shah hailed saying it will boost the sector.

Of the total allocation for the next fiscal, a significant amount of Rs 350 crore has been provided for digitisation of Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS), while Rs 274 crore for an umbrella scheme 'Prosperity through Cooperatives' which would have a number of sub-components with the aim of all-round development of cooperatives in the country.

For the first time, a separate budget of Rs 11 crore has been provided to Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAMNICON). About Rs 55 crore has been set aside for education and training. A new Ministry of Cooperation was formed in July 2021 to strengthen the cooperative movement.

Presenting the Union Budget in the Lok Sabha, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, "To provide a level-playing field between cooperative societies and companies, I propose to reduce this rate (AMT) for the cooperative societies also to 15 per cent."

Currently, the cooperative societies are required to pay AMT at the rate of 18.5 per cent, while the companies paid at the rate of 15 per cent, she added.

Rs 86,189 cr allocated to Jal Shakti Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

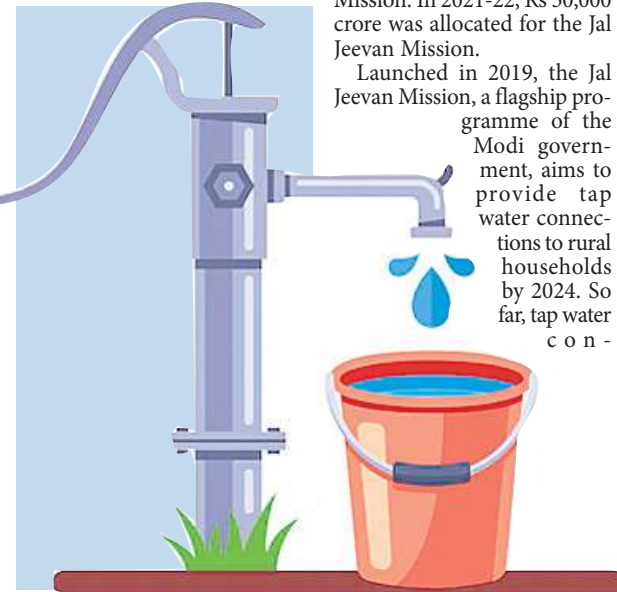
The Jal Shakti Ministry has been allocated Rs 86,189 crore in the Union Budget 2022-23, an increase of 24 per cent from Rs 69,052 crore given in 2021-22. In the Union Budget, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday, the Drinking Water

and Sanitation Department under the ministry has been allocated Rs 67,221 crore, while 18,967.88 crore has been earmarked for the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. Sitharaman said, Rs 60,000 crore has been allocated to provide tap water connections to 3.8 crore households in 2022-23 under the Jal Jeevan Mission. In 2021-22, Rs 50,000 crore was allocated for the Jal Jeevan Mission.

Launched in 2019, the Jal Jeevan Mission, a flagship programme of the Modi government, aims to provide tap water connections to rural households by 2024. So far, tap water c o n -

nections have been given to 8.7 crore rural households. In total, the budget for central sector schemes saw a rise from Rs 2,456 crore to Rs 5,220 crore in 2022-23.

The fund allocation to centrally sponsored schemes was increased from 5,688.49 crore to 12,605.12 crore. An amount of Rs 1,400 crore has been set aside for the project of interlinking of rivers. The finance minister, in her budget speech, said the implementation of Ken-Betwa rivers linking at an estimated cost of Rs 44,605 crore will be taken up and the draft detailed project report of five river links, namely Damanganga-Pinjal, Par-Tapi-Narmada, Godavari-Krishna, Krishna-Pennar, and Pennar-Cauvery have been finalized.



Rs 9,259 cr for special purpose vehicle AIAHL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has allocated Rs 9,259 crore to AIAHL, a government-owned special purpose vehicle set up to handle Air India's debt and non-core assets, for the next financial year starting from April 1, according to a budget document.

In the budget speech on Tuesday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the revised estimate of capital expenditure for this fiscal is Rs 6.03 lakh crore. This includes an amount of Rs 51,971

crore towards settlement of outstanding guaranteed liabilities of Air India and its other sundry commitments, she added.

Air India Assets Holding Limited (AIAHL) was set up in 2019. "The provision (of Rs 9,259 crore) is kept for servicing of loan transferred to special purpose vehicle as a result of financial restructuring of Air India," the document said.

In 2021-22, the Centre infused an equity of Rs 62,057 crore in AIAHL in order to clear Air India's pending dues before its disinvestment. Moreover, Air India was given a grant-in-aid of Rs 1,944 crore and loans of Rs 4,500 crore in 2021-22

to cover "cash losses during Covid period", the document said.

Air India was taken over by Tata Group firm Talace Pvt Ltd on January 27. Through a competitive bidding process, the government sold loss-making Air India to Talace for Rs 18,000 crore. As part of the deal, Talace paid Rs 2,700

crore in cash and took over Rs 15,300 crore debt of the airline. The remaining debt and borrowings of Air India were transferred to AIAHL.

As on August 31, 2021, Air India had a total debt of Rs 61,562 crore. The airline also had about Rs 15,000 crore excess liabilities towards unpaid fuel bills and other operational creditors.



Allied farm, food processing sectors get further push

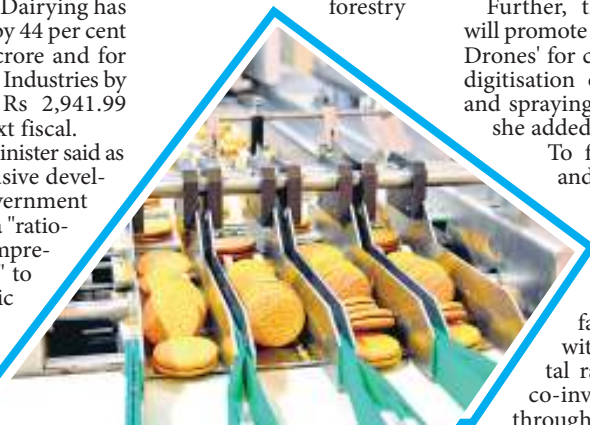
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to tap the allied farm and food processing sectors to boost farmers' income, the government on Tuesday proposed higher budget allocation for these two sectors for the next fiscal, besides announcing finance support for startups, promotion of Kisan drones and PPP mode for delivery of high tech agri-services to farmers. Presenting the Union Budget in the Lok Sabha, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said inclusive development is one of the four priorities of the government moving forward. The Budget allocation for the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has been

raised marginally by 4.5 per cent to Rs 1,32,513 crore for 2022-23 fiscal. However, the Budget allocation for the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has been increased by 44 per cent to Rs 6,407.31 crore and for Food Processing Industries by 2.25 times to Rs 2,941.99 crore for the next fiscal. The finance minister said as part of the inclusive development, the government will implement a "rationalised and comprehensive scheme" to increase domestic oilseed production, thereby reducing the coun-try's

dependence on the import of edible oils. The government will also bring in legislative and policy changes to promote agro-forestry

and implement a comprehensive package, with states to adopt suitable varieties of fruits and vegetables that can be processed. Further, the government will promote the use of 'Kisan Drones' for crop assessment, digitisation of land records and spraying of insecticides, she added. To finance startups and rural enterprises working in agri-space, the minister said the government will facilitate a fund with blended capital raised under the co-investment model through Nabard.



Women & Child Development Dept gets Rs 25,172 cr, rise of just 3 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The budget allocated to the Women and Child Development Ministry stood at Rs 25,172.28 crore in 2022-23, a slight increase of 3 per cent from Rs 24,435 crore that was given in 2021-22. Presenting the Budget for 2022-23, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said recognising the importance of 'Nari Shakti' as the harbinger of India's bright future and for women-led development during the 'Amrit Kaal', the government has comprehensively revamped the schemes of the Ministry of Women & Child Development. Accordingly, Mission Shakti, Mission Vatsalya, Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 were launched recently to provide integrated benefits to women and children. The budget allocated for Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0 (Umbrella ICDS - Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan, Scheme for Adolescent



Girls) was Rs 20,263 crore, a small increase from Rs 20,105 crore in 2021-22. The budget allocated for Mission Shakti (Mission for Protection and Empowerment for Women) was Rs 3,184 crore in 2022-23, increased from Rs 3,109 crore in 2021-22. For Mission VAT-SALYA (Child Protection Services and Child Welfare Services), the budget allocated was Rs 1,472 crore, an increase from Rs 900 crore in 2021-22. The budget allocation for autonomous bodies dropped from Rs 188 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 152 crore in 2022-23.

Environment Ministry gets increased budget

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday increased the budgetary allocation for the Union Environment Ministry from the last fiscal by 5.6 per cent but shrunk the allocation to control pollution by Rs 10 crore. The government, however, increased the Budget for National Mission for Green India from Rs 290 crore in the last financial year to Rs 361.69 crore this year with the national afforestation programme alone being allotted Rs 300 crore, more than last year's amount of Rs 235 crore.



NHs to be expanded by 25,000 km

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said national highways will be expanded by 25,000 kilometres (km) during 2022-23 and the national ropeway development programme will be taken up in the public-private partnership (PPP) mode. Sitharaman announced this while presenting the Budget 2022-23 in Parliament. She also said contracts for the implementation of multimodal logistics parks at four locations through the PPP mode will be awarded in 2022-23. The finance minister said Rs 20,000 crore will be mobilised through innovative ways of financing to complement the public resources. "PM Gati Shakti Master Plan for Expressways will be formulated in 2022-23 to facilitate the faster movement of people and goods.



Railways given Rs 1,40,367.13 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Railway Ministry has been allocated Rs 140367.13 crore in the Union Budget on Tuesday - Rs 20,311 crore more than the revised figures of the previous fiscal. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech for 2022-23 said that India will manufacture 400 new, energy-efficient Vande Bharat trains in the next three years. The rail sector will also develop "One Station One Product", which will leverage local produce carried on the railways. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw welcomed the announcement.



Rs 3,980 cr allocated for Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced a Rs 3,980.77 crore outlay for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in the 2022-23 fiscal, a decrease of Rs 90 crore from last year. The allocation to the government's autonomous body Prasar Bharati has been reduced to Rs 2,555.29 crore from Rs 2,640.11 crore allotted to it in the last fiscal. Among other autonomous bodies, the budget for only the Press Council of India was increased from Rs 20 crore in the last fiscal to Rs 27 crore this time. The Films and Television Institute of India (FTII), Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Children's Film Society of India and the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute saw reductions in their budget allocation.



400 new Vande Bharat trains; new products for farmers, MSMEs to be introduced

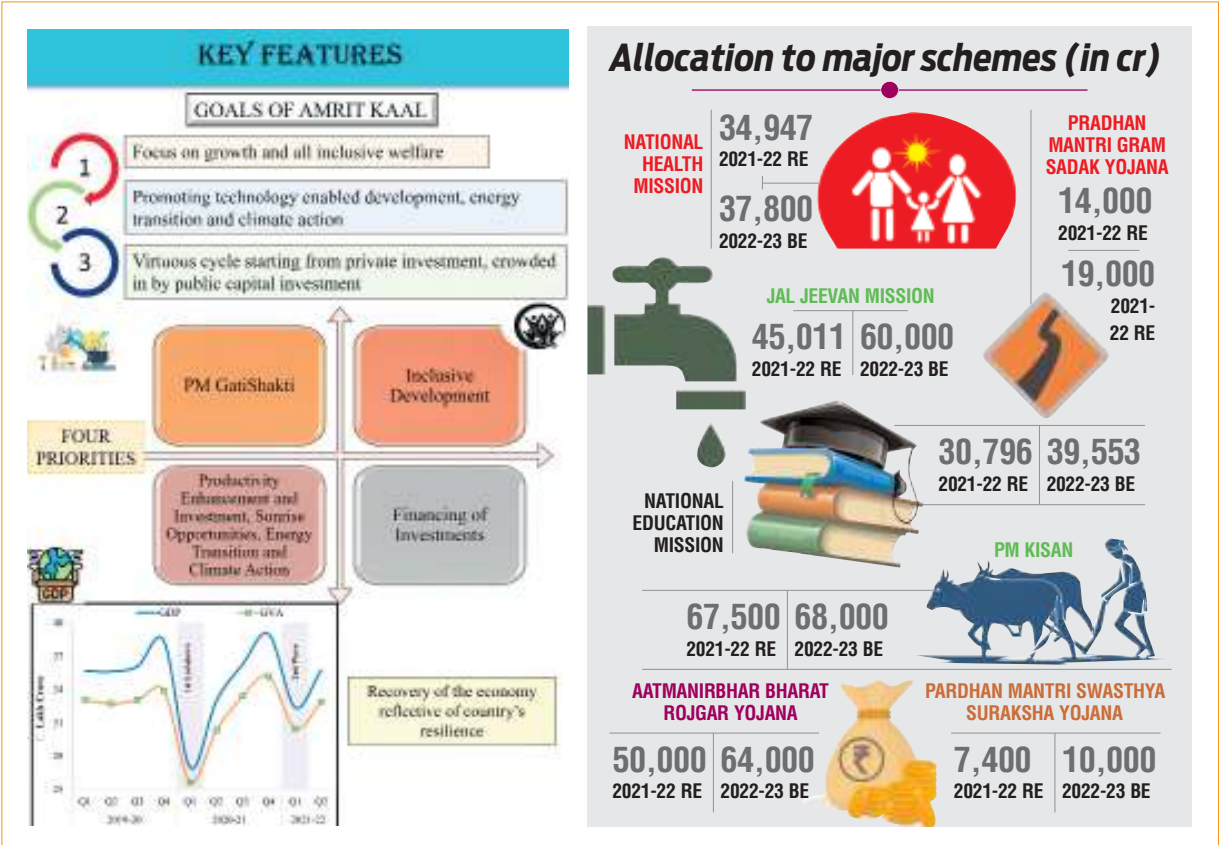
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced that 400 new Vande Bharat trains will be developed and manufactured over the next three years and new products will be introduced by the Railways for the benefit of small farmers and MSMEs. The Railways has received an allocation of Rs 140367.13 crore in the 2022-23 Union Budget on Tuesday which is Rs 20,311 crore more than the revised figures of the previous fiscal.

Presenting the Union Budget for 2022-23, she said contracts for multimodal parks at four locations will be awarded during the next fiscal. "400 new-generation Vande Bharat trains with better energy efficiency and passenger riding experience will be developed and manufactured during the next three years," she said. These new trainsets are going to be made of light-

weight aluminium, as opposed to steel, making each around

50 tonnes lighter in weight, consuming much less energy than their steel counterparts, she said. While the finance minister said that the trains will be manufactured and developed over the next three years, it is not clear when they will be operational. "Railways will develop new products and efficient logis-



Govt lowers revenue target from Telecom to Rs 52,806 cr

The government has lowered its estimates of revenue from the telecom segment to Rs 52,806 crore for the next financial year, according to the budget document released on Tuesday. The receipt budget, however, expects to beat the budget estimates of Rs 53,986.72 crore for the current financial year and collect Rs 71,959.24 crore. The receipt from communication services includes licence fees from telecom operators and receipts on account of spectrum usage charges which are charged at the rate of 8 per cent of their adjusted gross revenue. The government has received Rs 45,500 crore from the telecom services till date, according to the budget document.



CIC and Public Enterprises Selection Board given Rs 32.70 cr

The Central Information Commission and the Public Enterprises Selection Board have been given Rs 32.70 crore to manage their affairs in the Union Budget presented on Tuesday, a nominal increment of Rs 1.50 crore from the Rs 31.20 crore provided according to the revised estimates for 2021-22. The transparency panel has got another allocation of Rs 3 crore under the head of 'Central Information Commission and Right to Information', a dip from the Rs 3.50 crore allocated in the revised estimates for FY 22. According to the Budget document presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, a provision of Rs 32.70 crore to the Central Information Commission and Public Enterprises Selection Board is for their establishment related expenditure. The allocation of Rs 3 crore is for the Department of Personnel and Training's propagation of the RTI Act.

Centre allocates Rs 73,000 cr to MGNREGA, 25.51 pc lower than 2021-22

The Centre has allocated Rs 73,000 crore for the rural jobs guarantee programme MGNREGA for 2022-23 in the Union Budget presented on Tuesday. This is 25.51 per cent less than the revised estimate for the current financial year. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had allocated Rs 73,000 crore for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme in last year's budget too.



However, this was later revised to Rs 98,000 crore on account of higher demand for the work. MGNREGA is aimed at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. In the first phase, the scheme was implemented in 200 most backward districts with effect from February 2, 2006. This was subsequently extended to additional districts, 113 with effect from April 1, 2007 and 17 from May 15, 2007. The remaining districts were included under the Act with effect from April 1, 2008. The Act now covers all rural districts of the country.

With 9.2 pc growth in FY22, economy to recover 101.3 pc of FY20-21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With India's real GDP estimated to grow 9.2 per cent in 2021-22, the economy stands to recover 101.3 per cent of the pre-pandemic output of 2019-20, the Budget documents said on Tuesday. It further said India's economic growth is supported by a strong rebound seen in several high-frequency indicators in the third quarter of 2021-22 and rapid progress in vaccination coverage. "As per the first Advance Estimates of annual national income released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), India's real GDP is estimated to grow by 9.2 per cent in 2021-22, as compared to a contraction of 7.3 per cent in 2020-21.



Rs 1.85 lakh cr allocation to MHA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reflecting the Modi government's priority to internal security, the Union Budget on Tuesday allocated Rs 1.85 lakh crore to the Ministry of Home Affairs, with the majority of spending on central police organisations like the CRPF, BSF and for improving the infrastructure along the international borders. The 2022-23 budget allocation to the MHA, helmed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, is Rs 1,85,776.55 crore, nearly Rs

20,000 crore or about 11.5 per cent more than the current fiscal when it was allocated Rs 1,66,546.94 crore. Modernisation of police forces, intelligence gathering apparatus, women safety, cyber security and the decennial census also got priority in the budget.



Health sector allocation sees 16 pc hike, new programmes to be launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The health sector has been allocated Rs 86200.65 crore in the Union Budget, a hike of 16 per cent over Rs 73,931 crore in 2021-22, with the government also announcing a National Tele Mental Health Programme and roll out of an

open platform for the National Digital Health Ecosystem. Out of Rs 86200.65 crore, Rs 83,000 crore have been allocated to the Department of Health and Family Welfare while Rs 3200 crore have been allocated to the Department of Health Research.



Budget growth-oriented, says FTCCI prez

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The expected growth rate of 9.2 per cent for the current year indicates the buoyancy of the economy and the projected growth of 8 to 8.5 per cent for FY-23 makes India one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, K. Bhasker Reddy, the president of FTCCI said on Tuesday.

'BUDGET PEOPLE-FRIENDLY, PROGRESSIVE: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was people-friendly, progressive and full of possibilities for infrastructure, investment, growth and jobs.

In a televised statement, Modi said an important aspect of the Union Budget was the welfare of the poor.

It seeks to solve contemporary problems and create new opportunities for the common people, he said.

"The Budget aims to ensure pucca house, toilet, tap water and gas connection for every poor household. At the same time, the focus is on modern Internet connectivity also," the prime minister said.

The Budget this year has come with new confidence of development amidst the once-in-a-century calamity, Modi said, adding that it will create new opportunities for the common people along with providing strength to the economy.

The prime minister said the Budget is "full of opportunities for more Infrastructure, more Investment, more growth, and more jobs".

"This will further open the green job sector. This Budget not only solves contemporary problems but also ensures a bright future for the youth."

Modi said the Parvatmla scheme will create a modern system of transportation in hilly areas such as Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast.

"The quest for modernity and technology in every sphere of life through steps such as drones for farmers, Vande Bharat trains, digital currency, 5 G services, national digital health ecosystem will hugely benefit our youth, middle class, poor, Dalit and backward classes," he said.



People should desist from making uninformed comments: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday took a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for what she called as making uninformed comment on the budget and said he should first implement what he preaches in states governed by his party. Following the presentation of Budget 2022-23 in Parliament, Gandhi dubbed it as a "zero-sum budget", saying it has nothing for the salaried, middle class, and the poor.

"That's not right. I wish as a leader of the oldest party, please understand what has been said."

I pity people who come up with quick responses. Quick understanding response I am ready to answer but just because you want to put something on Twitter, it does not help," she said in an interaction with media. She lamented that the Congress-led UPA government had left the

country as part of the fragile five.

In 2013, India was classified as among the 'fragile five' economies that heavily depended on foreign capital to finance growth. "Whatever he is preaching to us, he should go and implement in the Congress-ruled states," she said. She wondered if the employment situation in

Punjab or Chhattisgarh was any better.

"Has he been able to stop suicides of cotton farmers in Maharashtra?" she wondered and said that before speaking he should do what he preaches. "I take criticism but not from somebody

who has not done his homework," she added. Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary, who was also present at the briefing, quipped that it is correct to assume that Rahul Gandhi could not understand the budget which will have far reaching implications



Oppn slams it as 'Pegasus spin budget', 'zero-sum budget'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Tuesday slammed the Union Budget, calling it a "Pegasus spin budget" and a "zero-sum budget" that has nothing for the salaried class and the poor, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP leaders hailed it as "people-friendly" with a focus on a building a self-reliant India.

Shortly after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented a bigger Rs 39.45 lakh crore Budget 2022-23 in Lok Sabha, the opposition parties reacted sharply against the government's economic blueprint while BJP leaders, including Union ministers, welcomed the document as "visionary".

Several Congress leaders, including former party president Rahul Gandhi, criticised Sitharaman for presenting a "Lollypop budget" and alleged that it has exposed the government's "anti-farmer

and anti-poor" face. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee termed it a "Pegasus spin budget" that provided nothing to the common people who have been "crushed" by unemployment and inflation.

BJP chief J P Nadda said the Budget realises the concept of social justice, equality, respect and equal opportunity, he said.

Echoing similar sentiments, Union Minister Amit Shah said this "visionary" Budget will prove to be a budget to change the scale of India's economy.

The budget will be helpful in making India the world's leading economy under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi by exploiting the opportunities that have arisen in the global economic world after the Covid pandemic, Shah said in a series of tweets in Hindi with the hashtag '#Aatmanirbhar Bharat Ka Budget'.

'Sitharaman presented a truly futuristic budget'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Tuesday said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has presented a futuristic budget for 2022-23 with "huge emphasis" on every sector. Sitharaman unveiled a Rs 39.45 lakh crore Budget, with higher spending on highways to affordable housing with a view to fire up key engines of the economy to sustain a world-beating recovery from the pandemic.

'Union Budget embodiment of PM's promises to fulfil'

PNS ■ AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Tuesday hailed the Union Budget for the 2022-23 fiscal, asserting that it is an embodiment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promises to fulfil the aspiration of people and has been drafted with the "vision of making a new India".

He also said the proposed scheme - Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region - will help boost infrastructure and social development of all the states in NE.

"Gratitude to Hon PM Shri @narendramodiji & Hon FM @nsitharamanji for the Development Initiative for the NE, a scheme in the spirit of PM Gati Shakti to fund social development projects in NE. It will further develop the region & make it the Ashtalakshmi of the country's economy," Deb said on Twitter.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the new PMDevINE scheme would be implemented through the North-Eastern Council and an initial allocation of Rs 1,500 crore would be made.

She also mentioned that it would not be a substitute for existing central or state programmes.

"Budget presented by the Hon FM @nsitharamanji is an embodiment of Hon PM Sh @narendramodiji's promises of fulfilling the aspiration of all Indians & has been drafted with the vision of making a New India. A pro-farmer & pro-poor budget that will benefit all sectors of economy.... It has the essence of #SabkaSathS abkaVikas and will pave the way forward for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat," the CM said on the microblogging site.

'Budget very depressing', fails to provide relief to middle'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena on Tuesday dubbed the Union Budget as "very depressing", saying it has neither given any relief to the middle class nor it has any reference to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India a "USD 5 trillion" economy. After the budget, Shiv Sena MP Vinayak Raut said the Union Budget 2022-23 only has jugglery of words like the PM-Gati Shakti, Atmanirbhar Bharat, while old schemes are presented as new.

Yogi terms Budget 'holistic'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday welcomed the Union Budget 2022-23 as "progressive" and "holistic", even as president of main opposition Samajwadi Party Akhilesh Yadav said it will cut into the pockets of the general public.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a bigger Rs 39.45 lakh crore Budget in Parliament on Tuesday, with higher spending in areas like highways and affordable housing with a view to fire up the key engines of the economy to sustain a world-beating recovery from the pandemic.

"This is a budget which fulfils the vision of AatmaNirbhar Bharat. It is holistic and progressive, and it pushes the economy on the path to be the biggest economy in the world. We welcome the Union Budget. We thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Sitharaman for a budget which is progressive for



farmers, women and the youth," Adityanath said here.

"The budget has important provisions for MSP and also to achieve the target of doubling the income of farmers. This will fulfil the long-pending demands of the farmers," he added.

There is a provision for 60 lakh jobs to the youth, and the youth of Uttar Pradesh will get an opportunity to move ahead, the chief minister said. "This will also help in achieving the target of women empowerment."

Recognising the importance of 'Nari Shakti', Finance

Minister Sitharaman said three schemes will be launched to provide integrated development for women and children.

Samajwadi Party chief Yadav, however, said the budget will bite into the savings of the people.

"All work and businesses have come to a standstill... There is a historical recession, lakhs of jobs have been lost... Incomes of the general public have decreased... All savings lost due to unemployment and (treatment of) disease... Now another budget by the BJP has come to bite into the savings of the people," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

Reacting to the budget, Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma termed the announcement to expand digital education "a revolutionary step".

"Digitalisation will make the life of the common public easy and smooth. The announcement to expand digital education will take education to remote and inaccessible places, and is a revolutionary step in this regard," he added.

Budget is betrayal of salaried, middle classes: Rahul Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Labelling Budget 2022-23 a Nothing Budget with no provisions for farmers, youth or the poor, the Congress on Tuesday also accused the government of betraying the salaried and middle classes by not announcing any relief measures for them.

Several Congress leaders, including former president Rahul Gandhi, hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for presenting a "Lollypop budget". The opposition party alleged that the government's "anti-farmer and anti-poor" face is exposed as it has cut fertiliser subsidy and also reduced food subsidy and MGNREGA funds.

"Modi Government's Zero Sum Budget! Nothing for - Salaried class, Middle class, the poor and deprived, Youth, Farmers and MSMEs," Gandhi said on Twitter.

Congress general secretary and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the salaried and the middle classes have been affected due to pay cuts and high inflation.

"India's salaried class and middle class were hoping for relief in times of pandemic, all round pay cuts and back breaking inflation. FM and PM have again deeply disappointed them in Direct Tax measures," Surjewala said on Twitter.

"This is a betrayal of India's



Salaried Class and Middle Class. #Budget2022," he said.

Terming the document a "Nothing budget", he said in a Twitter post in Hindi that it has nothing for the poor, the salaried and the middle classes as well as farmers and the youth whose pockets are empty.

"Budget2022: The anti-farmer face of the Modi government has come out. The promise of doubling farmer's income by 2022 is now in the waste basket. Fertilizer

subsidy cut by Rs 35,000 Crore! No mention of MSP guarantee! Inflation at 7 percent and agriculture budget raised by only 2.7 percent, Kisan Nidhi by only 0.74 percent," Surjewala said.

He also alleged that the promise of two crore jobs every year under the 'Make in India' scheme has been proved to be a 'jumla' with the government now proposing it will create 60 lakh jobs through PLI (production linked incentive) schemes. "There is no account of how many jobs were created earlier under 'Make in India' and no plan either on how and by when the new jobs would be created under PLI schemes."

There is nothing, he added, to increase spending and to promote small scale industry.

"Budget2022 motto - Cut Subsidy, hit the poor and farmer! FY 2021-22(RE) & FY 2022-23 - Food Subsidy slashed from Rs 2.86 Lakh Crore to Rs 2.06 Lakh Crore! Fertiliser Subsidy slashed from Rs 1.40 Lakh Crore to Rs 1.05 Lakh Crore! NAREGA budget slashed from Rs 98000 Crore to Rs 73000 Crore!" he said in another tweet.

Ajit Pawar: Nothing for Maharashtra in Budget

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar on Tuesday claimed the state contributed Rs 48,000 crore to the central kitty in the form of GST, but it got only Rs 5,000 crore in the Union Budget for 2022-23, which he said, reads like an election manifesto with no relief for middle class tax payers.

In a statement issued after the budget was presented in Parliament, Pawar, who is also the state's finance minister, said injustice has been done to Maharashtra, ruled by the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress alliance.

The senior NCP leader also criticized various budget proposals.

"It seems the Union government has decided to continue its tradition of neglecting



Maharashtra in its budgetary provisions like the previous ones. Maharashtra contributed

to the tune of Rs 48,000 crore to the Union government's total collection of Rs 2.20 lakh crore (so far) in the current fiscal (2021-22). However, Maharashtra has received only Rs 5,000 crore in return," Pawar said.

"Injustice to Maharashtra has continued this year also. No matter how much one would search (in the budget), you will not find anything that benefits

Maharashtra," claimed the finance minister.

He said the budget is silent on states' demand for refund of Goods and Services Tax (GST).

"There is no mention of the Union government's decision to continue GST refund to state governments for the next five years. All the states have made this demand, still the issue finds no mention in the budget," said Pawar.

Budget is forward-looking and growth-oriented: Bommai



BENGALURU: Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday described the Union Budget as forward looking, growth oriented and progressive and said it has covered all sections and sectors. "This is the budget amid COVID pandemic. This is the forward looking budget as far as the growth of the economy is concerned and through this budget investments in infrastructure will increase and it will boost the further growth of the economy," Bommai said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, it will also help in creation of jobs and will help all classes of people. "The budget has taken care of all sectors.... Common man, the working class and the business class will benefit from this budget," he said. Noting that the budget has taken care of all sectors including urban and rural, the Chief Minister said, MSME sector has also been taken care of as the guarantee cover for them under ECLGS (Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme) has been expanded by Rs 50,000 Crore to total cover of Rs 5 lakh Crore. "Revival of MSMEs is important for the economy," he said, adding that the budget has also given thrust to railways, highways, healthcare, also reforms in the education sector among others.

Budget disappointing, nothing in it for common people: Kejriwal



NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday dubbed the Union Budget 2022-23 as "disappointing" and said it has nothing for the common people. In a tweet in Hindi, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener noted that people had "high expectations" from the Union Budget during the corona period but there is nothing in it either for the common people or to reduce price rise. "People had high expectations from the Budget during the corona period. The Budget has disappointed the people. There is nothing in the Budget for

the general public. Nothing to reduce price rise," Kejriwal said. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh slammed the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament, pointing out that it gave tax exemption to the industrialists but provide no tax relief to the people. It did not also guarantee minimum support price (MSP) for the farmers' produce, he said. Singh reacted sharply on the finance minister's announcement that about 400 new generation trains will be developed and manufactured over the next three years, saying the Narendra Modi government has done "Dhandhe Bharat" in the name of "Vande Bharat" with this proposal. "No relief to the general public suffering from Corona. Tax exemption to industrialists, not to the public. No MSP guarantee to farmers.

Budget weakening states instead of empowering them financially



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Expressing disappointment over the Union Budget, the LDF government in Kerala on Tuesday alleged it lacked vision or preparation to face the challenges posed by COVID-19 and instead of empowering the states financially, the budget was weakening them in the backdrop of the pandemic. In a hard-hitting statement, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan alleged that the budget, presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, would lead to rising inflation, widening of gap between the haves and have-nots, squeezing up of states financially,

appealing the interests of big corporates and hurting the interests of the country and its people in general. The basic perception that the economic crisis created by COVID can be resolved only by financially empowering the states could be seen nowhere in the budget, he said. "It is a matter of concern that the allocation for the areas like agriculture, food subsidy, rural employment and COVID management have been decreased compared to the last year's budget," Vijayan said, adding that it does not seem to have considered the demands of the states including the extension of the GST compensation for another five years. The union budget also gave enough hints that the globalisation policies, that have caused misery to common people, would be further strengthened and taken forward, he said.

Directionless, says Chhattisgarh CM; BJP leader Raman Singh



RAIPUR: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said the Union Budget presented in Parliament on Tuesday for fiscal 2022-23 was directionless and had no provision or relief for farmers. Speaking to reporters here, he said everybody believed there would be some measures for farmers and labourers but the budget is silent on them and also on promises of doubling farmers' income by 2022. Baghel said the

budget did not have any provision for completing items mentioned in the previous budgets, and cited the example of the Centre's plan to build 100 smart cities, a project that is still incomplete. "Overall it is a directionless budget that has nothing for youth, unemployed, women and farmers," Baghel, who tweeted his views with the hashtag 'Lollypop Budget', said. However, former chief minister and BJP national vice president Raman Singh said the budget fulfilled the aspirations of every section of the society, adding that "farmers, youth, women, entrepreneurs, employment, rural development, education and health have been taken care of".

Work ahead

Budgets in an election year are populist but there's no tax relief for the middle class

In her fourth Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that Indian growth has been remarkable and comparable to the world's best economies. Indeed, it has been a difficult time for the country. The disparities grew, with the rich growing richer and the poor becoming poorer. The worst ever economic situation pushed millions into abject poverty. The Minister said this Budget seeks to lay the foundation of the economy for the next 25 years — 'Amrit Kaal' — India at 100. She claimed that her Budget will benefit youth, women, farmers, SCs, STs, the sections badly hit in recent years. Moreover, the Government's announcements like doubling the farmers' income and generating jobs must be fulfilled by the Budget. It also must ensure that we move towards the Prime Minister's cherished goal of making the Indian economy a \$5 trillion economy. She had the daunting task of balancing the country's growth with the prospects of her party in the five State elections that commence in less than 10 days. Generally, Budgets in an election year are populist by political compulsions and this Budget was no different. It was high on rhetoric and addressed people's concerns in a rather kneejerk fashion than with a comprehensive plan to tackle the rising mass poverty, galloping inflation and unemployment. For instance, the Finance Minister talked about seven engines of growth clubbed under PM Gati Shakti — Roads, Railways, Airports, Ports, Mass transport, Waterways and Logistics infra. To appease farmers, she announced ₹2.37 lakh crore worth of MSP direct payments to wheat and paddy farmers but no concrete steps towards doubling their income.



She talked about Inclusive development, productivity enhancement, energy transition and climate action as four pillars of development but failed to suggest the action she would take to achieve these goals. The Budget has the noble aim of achieving Inclusive Development, Productivity Enhancement, Sunrise Opportunities, Energy Transition, Climate Action and Financing of investments. But the framework to achieve it is conspicuous by its absence. The country is in dire need of private investments and to boost that, big private investment in infra would be guided by Gati Shakti. The National Highway network will be expanded by 25,000 km in 2022-23. To boost small businesses, ECLGS cover has been expanded by ₹50,000 crore to ₹ 5 lakh crore and the ECLGS extended till March 2023 to create 60 lakh jobs in the next five years. However, there is no tax relief for the middle class. ₹48,000 crore have been allotted for PM Awas Yojana, ₹60,000 crore for providing access to tap water to 3.8 crore households. To support small businesses, a Rs6,000-crore programme to rate MSMEs would be rolled out over the next five years. The Government is also planning to roll out Digital Rupee by the RBI using the blockchain technology. Whether all these measures successfully take place and help boost the economy, we need to wait for yet another financial year to find out.

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PICTALK



A demo at Marina beach as part of the Indian Coast Guard Raising Day celebrations, in Chennai

PTI

Deliver equality

A public sector bank recently floated a rule that's discriminatory to pregnant employees

The State Bank of India introduced a provocative and discriminatory rule a few days ago that a woman candidate over three months pregnant is "temporarily unfit" for employment. The rule came with a relief that such candidates could join the bank within four months after delivery. The bank perhaps did not want to employ women who were sure to go on maternity leave a short while after joining. The bank did not say if the attempt was to save on maternity benefits costs. Political parties and women's organisations flayed the rule. It was discriminatory, prejudicial and treated pregnancy as a kind of disability. It forced a woman to choose between having a child or working in the bank and interfered with the women candidates' reproductive rights and the right to employment. The SBI backtracked on its order. However, it did not revoke the circular but kept it "in abeyance". The SBI was trying to push an amendment it had originally introduced in 2009 but had to withdraw it following public outcry. The Union Government must use this opportunity to see that the human resources policies of the public sector institutions, including banks, are not discriminatory. The recent fiasco cannot be repeated.

The Indian Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, and the Code on Social Security, 2020, protect a woman's rights related to pregnancy and privacy. The SBI incident must encourage all employers to strike all discriminatory employment rules concerning women. In fact, in this time and age, no law can mandate a woman candidate to disclose her pregnancy status. Jobs that demand intense physical or stressful work can have exceptions that cannot kick in so long as the pregnant employee can successfully discharge her duties. The exceptions prove that the candidate's pregnancy status is of no consideration when deciding to give her the job. The employer cannot also revoke her appointment if the candidate's pregnancy is discovered after she gets the job. Unfortunately, some employers overtly or covertly refuse to employ pregnant women and refuse to hire them. Yet others cleverly tell pregnant candidates to try their luck after having the baby. The laws must have severe punitive clauses to stop illegal rejection of jobs of women candidates on account of their pregnancy.

What's civic versus cultural nationalism?

A former Vice-President told an international forum that cultural nationalism was taking over civic nationalism. Now, how true is that?



PRAFULLA GORADIA

India is being taken over by a "new and imaginary practice of cultural nationalism" as against the "well-established principle of civic nationalism, which seeks to present electoral majority in the guise of a religious majority, and monopolise political power". Thus spoke former Vice-President Hamid Ansari while addressing a conference on protecting the Constitution. The fact that the former Vice-President chose to make these comments while speaking at an international forum, the Indian American Muslim Council, sharing space with foreign elements, some of whom are known to be hostile to our country and its interests, is also not lost on many Indians.

However, the thrust of Ansari's speech must now bear closer scrutiny. His allegation is that a civic life laid down by the Constitution is sufficient in a pluralistic country. This is far from a welcome assertion. The culture and the history of one community might be distasteful to another. Those not proud of the post-Independence history of theirs because they have stayed back in a Dar-ul-Harb (place of conflict) instead of migrating to their new homeland now prefer their origin to be the Constitution of 1950. This is a conflict between culture and civic existence. In the views of a significant segment, the culture of the rest of the country is something that harks back to jahalia or darkness.

The former Vice-President's outburst must also, therefore, provoke another very serious question, one which the country has so far chosen to put off, but with rather unhealthy outcomes for its body politic. What is so permanent about a country's civic life? The Constitution can be amended; it can be replaced by another document. Our own Constitution has been amended more than 100 times already since 1950, whereas the history of Indian culture would go back to at least the Vedic Age. What probably the former Vice-President referred to was this conflict when he talked of the phenomenon of cultural nationalism seizing power from those who established the principle of civic



nationalism, possibly operative since 1006 AD and Qutubuddin Aibak, or perhaps 1526 AD when Babur won the first Battle of Panipat, or any other date.

Those citizens who are desirous of civic nationalism would have to abandon their imaginary preferences and identify with the pristine culture of the country. This, ie, the Partition of the nation, was effected in 1947 as Messrs Jinnah, Mohd Iqbal and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan believed in and wanted it at any cost. It was a settlement made for all time to come, as it appears now. An undoing of that Partition means a 60/40 population ratio between the 'cultural nationalists' and the potential 'civic nation' advocates.

Three prominent personalities had envisioned this clash of nationalism; namely MA Jinnah, BR Ambedkar and Dr Rajendra Prasad, our first President. All of them proposed what the League of Nations, the predecessor of the United Nations, had done with respect to Greece and Turkey in 1923. Going back into history, the Turks had conquered Anatolia and its neighbourhood in the decades preceding 1453. This was the Islamic takeover of legendary Greece.



THE FACT THAT THE FORMER VEEP WAS SHARING SPACE WITH FOREIGN ELEMENTS, SOME OF WHOM ARE KNOWN TO BE HOSTILE TO OUR COUNTRY AND ITS INTERESTS, IS ALSO NOT LOST ON MANY INDIANS

Istanbul was Constantinople until then; the headquarters of the Eastern Christian Church are still situated in this historic city. Through the centuries, there used to be clashes between the Turks and the Greeks; in fact, they were rather like what we nowadays call communal riots.

The League of Nations, after the end of World War I — when the Turks were amenable to listening after their defeat and collapse of the centuries-old Ottoman Empire — proposed an exchange of Greeks who were to migrate to their original country while all the Turks were to immigrate to Turkey. A detailed procedure of what was to be done, who would do what and by when was documented. The exchange was conducted smoothly and methodically; there has not been a single riot since.

Returning to what former Vice-President Ansari has chosen to articulate, many questions spring to the minds of many concerned countrymen. Why did a former Vice-President choose an international forum to make remarks against one's own country, whose second-highest office he held for, say, 10 years? Is there even an iota of merit in Ansari's claim that India is

being "torn apart by a new cultural nationalism?" It is also very difficult to ignore the record in public life of the country's former Vice-President. Also, the fact that Ansari chose the platform of the Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC), a sectarian lobbying group with a long history of anti-India activities, certainly is a poor advocacy for any civic nationalism. Cultural nationalism is nothing but the nation waking up to its fundamental ethos.

The historical track record of this supposed civic nationalism in promoting tolerance, togetherness, peace and any sense of national security can at best be called a disappointing one. The substance of the former Vice-President's remarks, if one were to ignore his diatribe, is also lacking in any specific content as to the exact nature of the threat he has talked about. The country, despite no dearth of serious challenges since Independence, has steadfastly stood by democracy and the very freedom that allowed Hamid Ansari to become the country's Vice-President.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LET'S GROOM OUR KIDS FOR FUTURE

Sir — This refers to 'Postcards from our future to India's future' (January 31). This competition involving more than 10 million schoolchildren under CBSE, State Boards, Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalayas was largely ignored by the mainstream media. The initiative conceived by our PM and organised by the Departments of Posts and School Education is first-of-its-kind in the history of independent India. Thanks for giving coverage to this event where the schoolchildren wrote their postcards directly to the PM. The evolving leaders of tomorrow's India not only clamoured for recognition of India's unsung heroes but also brought out their vision of India in 2047.

India's aspirational youth need to be groomed for tomorrow's India. Though our NEP 2021 makes all the right noises, it needs effective dovetailing with our education system which is woefully inadequate to prepare tomorrow's leaders in nation building. India's large pool of talent can bring about school-centric, cost-effective innovations to transform education. We have the wherewithal. Now we appear to have a political will, too. Given these two, a prosperous, equitable and India of our dreams in 2047 is not a far cry.

SK Prabhakar | Gurugram

A CONTROVERSIAL PRECEDENCE

Sir — One is really shocked to go through the comments and observations made by Justice GR Swaminathan while ordering a CBI probe into the death by apparent suicide of a girl in Thanjavur district. He has based his order on his observation that the police, Government and even the Education Department have already formed an opinion that the death is not due to any coercion by the school warden for the girl to convert to Christianity and this thinking would set the course of inquiry and the final decision if the case was handled by the CBI. He also refused to accept that the girl, afflicted with leukoderma, was tortured by her stepmother which would

All fizz, no substance



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman spoke for an hour and 30 minutes delivering Budget 2022-23, making it one of the shortest Budget speeches. As usual, Prime Minister Narendra Modi went gaga over the Budget while Congress MP Manish Tewari termed it "unrealistic and unimplementable". CPM's Sitaram Yechury asked why the super rich weren't being taxed more? As usual, the salaried class expected the Finance Minister to provide some income tax relief to boost consumption amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but sadly

there was no change. Similarly, nearly 65 lakh pensioners, under the EPS-95 scheme of the EPFO who have worked their entire life, got only a paltry minimum pension of ₹1000.

Whatsoever, a few important inclusions/exclusions in the Budget are: Taxpayers can file updated returns within two years; 'Make in India' can create 6 million jobs (though more than 6 crore lost their jobs during COVID); ; Saksham Anganwadis, or two lakh next-generation anganwadis to be powered by clean energy; 80 lakh homes to be completed under the PM Awas Yojna; digital university in different Indian languages to be established; one channel PM e-Vidya to be expanded to include 200 channels (scope for more Modi publicity) and, in a country where even after 'development' it still remains on top in the world's hunger list, in Sitharaman's Budget custom duty on cut, polished gemstones reduced to five per cent to help the rich.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

have led the girl to such a drastic step.

The judge could have simply ordered the case transferred to the CBI. But his comments appear to be a direction to the CBI as to how their course of inquiry should be. Or, he could have simply convicted those accused of the conversion attempt. Just as he quoted a Bible verse, there is at least one quote in the Bhagvad Gita that can be misconstrued if quoted out of context. With due respect to Justice Swaminathan, one sincerely feels that he could have avoided setting up such a controversial precedent which has hurt the sentiments of the entire Christian community.

Tharcus S Fernando | Chennai

A HOCKEY LEGEND PASSES AWAY

Sir — It is saddening to hear about the demise of hockey legend Padma Shri Charanjit Singh on Thursday in Himachal Pradesh, a glittering star of yesteryears who belonged to an era when

hockey was associated with national pride. It also reminds us of the golden era of nearly two decades of supremacy when Indian hockey ruled the roost in the international arena. The skillful midfielder played a seminal role in the 1960 Rome Olympics as well as in the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo, and led the Indian team to a historic gold in the latter by beating Pakistan.

He will always be remembered for his skills, humility and grace on and off the field. To preserve the legacy of that golden period of Indian hockey, which recently found echo in India winning the bronze medal at the recent Tokyo Olympics, a lot needs to be done to continue this trend until India reaches the summit of its revival, as the stars of yesteryear did effortlessly.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

The training I got in NCC and the things I learnt there have provided me immense strength in delivering upon my responsibilities.

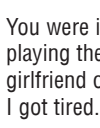


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



There won't be a war as far as it depends on the Russian Federation.

Russian Foreign Minister — Sergey Lavrov



You were invariably playing the hero's girlfriend or wife. I got tired.

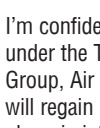


Actor — Lara Dutta Bhupathi



The BCCI has decided to conduct the Ranji Trophy this season in two phases.

BCCI secretary — Jay Shah




I'm confident that under the Tata Group, Air India will regain its lost place in international skies as well.

Union Minister — Jyotiraditya Scindia

FIRST COLUMN

GANDHI IS REMEMBERED, BUT GANDHI-ISM?

The recent farmers' protest was based on his principles



NILOFAR SUHRAWARDY


Mahatma Gandhi is certainly revered even today, in India and abroad. Described as “half-naked fakir” by former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the frail-looking, bespectacled, dhoti-clad Gandhi succeeded in uniting Indians against the colonial powers to achieve India’s freedom. His strategy rested on people joining him in a non-violent struggle for independence from colonialism. The crux of his movement drew strength from people and subsequently forced the British government to acknowledge its power marked by India gaining freedom. With a law degree from London (1891) and roughly two decades’ experience in South Africa (1893-1914) as a lawyer and civil rights’ activist when he donned western attire, he returned to India in 1915. As he joined politics and familiarized himself with Indian issues back home, he opted for the Indian dress, the then popular dhoti. He began using the loin cloth from 1921 to identify himself with poor Indians. Of course, apart from being a key part of his communication strategy, this was opted for probably to bridge any communication gap between him and poor Indians. Undeniably, Gandhi did not only identify himself with the majority but also reached out to them -as one of them- and won their support. The seeds of people’s power he sowed then find resonance even today. For instance, the recent farmers’ protest is a classic example of people’s participation in a non-violent agitation compelled the authorities to take note of their grievances. The three anti-farm laws, against which farmers protested, may be viewed as representing the obvious apathy, lack of concern and perhaps ignorance of the powers that be about issues concerning farmers. If state elections in Punjab were not around the corner, the Indian government may not have withdrawn anti-farm bills.

Farmers from Punjab were most strongly represented in their protest. There is an apprehension that after elections the central government may impose similar bills again. Not surprisingly, farmers have asserted that their fight is not over yet. The chain binding people to protest together and/or support a leader may be viewed as symbolic of genuine democracy. Gandhi moved with his walking stick with the masses walking with him. The farmers’ protest would not have probably gained attention and hit national as well as international headlines if it had not lasted for a long period with thousands participating in it. Gandhi is still remembered but hardly any importance seems to be given to Gandhism. Exercise of power appears more strongly guided by what the “moneyed” minority desires, even at the cost of economic crisis for the majority. Besides, leaders appear more concerned about their “success” being marked by their own images spread around extensively on boards, posters, photographs, even their masks donned by others and so forth. For how long will the masses allow themselves to be guided by their leaders who continue to nurture their egos, serve personal interest, and their quest for their own prosperity outweighs their concern for the people? Yes, money can be and is used to purchase necessary political support. But when money strikes through inflation, etc., the aggrieved may be expected to give greater importance primarily to those united with them in their grievances. Here is where masked leadership bears little relevance against people’s voice. And when democracy echoes through people’s protests and movements, chances of it leading to an impactful conclusion exist. Sadly, even elected leaders tend to notice these grievances only when they sense the need of electoral support of the aggrieved. It is time democratically elected leaders threw away their masks, stepped out of their ivory towers, moved beyond their own shadows and gave a little more importance to Gandhism.

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

Testing time for Priyanka’s political future

The party had favoured her over brother Rahul and appreciated her people-management skills, language proficiency and repartee



KALYANI SHANKAR

The party believed her entry could be a game-changer. Congress President Sonia Gandhi often said Priyanka, a mother of two children, would take the political plunge when she was ready. In January 2019 she became the General Secretary in charge of Eastern UP. A leader should have three qualities: charisma, crowd-pulling, ability to convert the masses into votes. It is only the third, converting the crowds into votes, Priyanka is yet to achieve.


However, she is no green-horn in politics. For close to two decades she played politics with backroom decisions. Her role was confined to Uttar Pradesh. Priyanka’s involvement in UP goes back to her father, Rajiv Gandhi; She was helping him in his campaign trail in Amethi

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)




Roadblocks to ‘Ram Rajya’ in Uttar Pradesh

The lower castes want security, dignity and upward mobility and are not going to give up these concerns for the sake of Hindu unity




THE DISCONTENT AMONG THE LOWER CASTES HAS BUSTED THE SELF-ILLUSION OF THE BJP THAT IT CAN BIND ALL CASTES SECURELY WITH THE HINDUTVA GLUE. HINDU UNITY TO THEM HAS PROVEN TO BE A CHIMERA WHICH ONLY PERPETUATES DEEP SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIVISIONS

(The writer is an independent journalist and author. The views expressed are personal.)



ARUN SINHA



That it was not exactly so became clear soon after the elections were announced, when a number of MLAs of the BJP whose political careers depended on the support of non-Yadav backward classes resigned from the party. The indication from their resignations was that their constituencies were dissatisfied with the BJP’s performance. And reports from grass-roots corroborated that perception. There was a large gap between the government’s propaganda of what it had given to the lower classes and the realities of the life they were living.

Ground reports spoke of the lower classes in several villages being denied financial assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana to build pucca houses because they could not afford to pay the bribe the local officials demanded. Such villages included Jayapur, one of the four villages in Varanasi district adopted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the MP of the constituency. In villages declared ODF (open defecation free) several poorer people still had no toilets. In other villages the toilets constructed had turned dysfunctional.

Yogi claimed he had made women’s life secure, but in the villages girls from poorer classes going out to work in the fields or tend the cattle still faced serious risks of being molested, raped

and killed. In 2020, there were 9,864 cases of assaults on women with intent to outrage their modesty in the state, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. The total number of crimes against women in the State were 59,445 in 2018, 59,853 in 2019 and 49,385 in 2020, the highest among all states.

In every case of injustice against the lower classes the perpetrators of the injustice happened to be from the better-off classes. The pradhans (panchayat heads) who demanded 20 per cent cut from the financial assistance under the PM Awaas Yojana, the men who molested and raped girls in villages and the policemen who acted on the side of the perpetrators were all from the better-off classes. The poorer classes of UP had always seen themselves as ‘chhote log’ (small people) oppressed and exploited by ‘bade log’ (big people). That did not change under the Yogi rule. That is why there is disappointment among the lower classes with the BJP.

What has added to their disappointment is the opposition of the BJP to a socio-economic caste census. The poorer communities among the backward classes have come to the conclusion that unless a caste census is done the benefits of public sector jobs and college admissions would never be distributed equitably. The Yogi Government has even refused to implement the recommendation of its own Social Justice Committee for the division of 27 per cent reservations for OBCs into three categories of backward class (7 per cent), more backward class (11 per cent) and most backward class (9 per cent).

The discontent among the lower castes has busted the self-illusion of the BJP that it can bind all castes securely with the Hindutva glue. The lower castes want security, dignity and upward mobility and are not going to give up those concerns for the sake of Hindu unity. Hindu unity to them has proven to be a chimera which only perpetuates deep social and economic divisions.

Today Hindutva lies buried in the ruins of the social coalition the BJP built. The big lesson for the party is: It has to address the fundamental issues of social inequality, social injustice, economic oppression and administrative discrimination and corruption the ‘chhote log’ face in their life before it can hope to bind all castes with the Hindu glue. But as the ‘bade log’ make the core constituency of the BJP it could be the last thing the party might ever be tempted to do. And that is sure to leave the party in a state of perpetual dilemma. We will see how it resolves the dilemma in the coming years.

POINT COUNTER POINT

WHY WAS BHATTACHARJEE SUDDENLY CHOSEN BY THE BJP? THE MOVE WAS AIMED AT SECURING LEFT VOTES IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS. — TMC SPOKESPERSON KUNAL GHOSH



BHATTACHARJEE HAS CONTRIBUTED TO SOCIETY AND POLITICAL MOVEMENTS. THE DECISION WAS OBVIOUSLY TAKEN WITHOUT ANY POLITICAL MOTIVE. —BENGAL BJP PRESIDENT SUKANTA MAJUMDAR





and her mother’s constituency Rae Bareilly. She also took care of her brother’s Amethi he lost in 2019. There are many pluses and minuses for Priyanka’s political career. A Gandhi family member is an added advantage. She has taken charge of the party when the congress support base is lowest in UP and the country. The party had favored her better than her brother Rahul Gandhi and appreciated her

people skills, language proficiency, and repartees.

With no base, the party has been floundering since 1989. The upper castes have moved to the BJP, the backward classes to SP, and the Dalits to BSP. Minority voters are split among SP, BSP, and Congress. Before Priyanka, the biggest challenge is to recover the party’s social base or create a new one. The party had a bare 7 per cent vote

share in 2017. Above all, the BJP has the upper hand with a divided opposition. The party’s alliance experiments with the BSP in 1996 and the Samajwadi Party in the 2017 Assembly elections failed miserably. Congress has adopted the ‘eklachalo’ strategy in 2022 UP assembly elections and thus isolated while other parties like TMC and NCP have aligned with the SP. Any anti-incumbency against the BJP seems to be going to the SP-RLD combine.

While the other parties depend on caste and religious cards, Priyanka has chosen the gender card and brought out a special women’s manifesto promising to restore their self-esteem and self-reliance, employment and more opportunities to enter politics. “Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon” is

her poll slogan.

Priyanka has made some politically correct moves to improve the Congress profile, like consoling the family of the Hathras rape victim, arranging transport for the migrants from Uttar Pradesh, etc. Yet, Congress remains out of reckoning due to lack of organization, absence of second-rung leaders, factionalism, and indiscipline.

Her minuses are also many. Some complain she is inaccessible and arrogant. She has not been able to strengthen the party in the past two years. It is indeed a gamble that the party has decided against alliances. Priyanka’s revamp of the party organization has upset many seniors and old-timers who feel side-lined. Under her watch, senior leaders like RPN Singh and Jitin Prasad and four

declared candidates left recently. Many think that she should have checked the erosion when the party is weak.

Interestingly, Priyanka is expanding her role beyond Uttar Pradesh, going to Punjab and Goa and perhaps acquiring a national profile. The mess in Punjab resulted in the exit of chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh and the appointment of Navjot Singh Sidhu as the new PCC chief due to her influence. The UP polls will decide what works, Priyanka’s chemistry or the poll arithmetic. Her success would depend on her appeal to women and youth. It is nobody’s case that Priyanka could bring back the Congress rule in the state, but even if she could ensure an improvement for the party, it will go a long way.

Jack of all snacks!

K RAMYA SREE

One thing most of us want to include on our plates, especially mothers for their children, is healthy food in everyday meals. Because of the easy availability of junk foods in the market, it becomes difficult for parents to alter their children's unhealthy eating habits.

We bring to you the story of two accomplished moms — Radhika Pandeya, a fitness baker, and Simer Dhall, a business school graduate, who started a premium snack brand called Snack-A-Doodle during the lockdown for kids and adults.

What caught our attention about this brand is that all their products are gluten-free, with no eggs, no processed sugar, and no preservatives. From cookies to bites to crunchies, they have healthier versions of whatever snack you need. They also offer DIY kits for kids to enjoy and explore their food. Isn't it exciting?

Taking us through their journey, Simer shares with us, "Snack-A-Doodle is the brainchild of two accomplished moms. Radhika Pandeya is a force to reckon with in the health food industry. She started a fitness bakery to serve her own sweet tooth with grain-free, gluten-free, and sugar-free desserts that didn't pack on the pounds. Eight years in, she is a favourite among many — serving beautiful, healthy, and guilt-free experiences to celebrities and health-conscious folks alike. Radhika's expertise in healthy baking, her business understanding thanks to an MBA at ISB, and her instincts as a mom to two boys, are the driving force behind Snack-A-Doodle."

On the other hand, Simer Dhall is the in-house expert on all things motherhood. She has a strong network of moms and has spent

the last two years understanding how to fill the gap between healthy and delicious snacks that mothers are always looking for for their little ones.

Of all the things nice, DIY kits for kids are something thought-provoking. When asked what made them come up with these DIY kits, they share, "Baking is a great way to teach motor skills and practical math. We often bake with our sons, and thought it was something we wanted to share with our customers. The DIY Bake with Dood Kid is healthy like the rest of our range and can bake up to 12 cookies!"

We are living in an era where each day a new entrepreneur rises. In this cut-throat competition, these ladies are successfully running a food business all by themselves. Well, it is because their brand, unlike everything else on the market, can truly stand the test of healthy, wholesome ingredients!

Simer says, "For snacking today, we compete with everything from popcorn to regular chocolate cookies on the market. And like we always tell our clients, it's not about binary choices. Kids will continue to enjoy all kinds of snacks as long as you begin to introduce healthy snacking early. The benefits of

introducing kids to non-processed sugar or alternative flours early will be long-term for them. We stand apart from the competition because our co-founder Radhika is a recognised healthy baking expert in the country, and her expertise has helped us crack recipes that are truly and transparently healthy."

Snack-a-doodle currently sells eight products, including "bites", their version of bars



Baking is a great way to teach motor skills and practical math. We often bake with our sons, and thought it was something we wanted to share with our customers. The DIY Bake with Dood Kid is healthy like the rest of our range and can bake up to 12 cookies!

for kids, cookies, and a do-it-yourself baking kit. Their hottest seller is their vanilla milkshake cookie, which, as its name suggests, replicates the flavour of a milkshake in a cookie!

Despite no preservatives, their products last for six months for cookies and nine months for bites and DIY. So what are you waiting for? Go grab your bites now!



Value It Up

Business analyst Rattan Joneja believes that the quintessence of a successful investment is to understand the worth of a company and urges everyone to learn the importance of creating value to excel in the world of investing.
By The Pioneer

on the key growth drivers of any given stock to explain the concepts of Intrinsic Valuation with real-world examples and computations.

What was the inspiration behind the book?

Primarily, most investors are investing based on price and momentum without understanding any concept of value. The subject is not as difficult as people think it is. It is a simple subject that people need to understand while making investments. I wanted to bring this concept forward in a very straightforward and lucid manner, particularly, since the number of investors across the world are increasing.

Your book is a fast-track programme for learning business valuation. Give us a brief as to how it will benefit this era of entrepreneurs.

In today's start-up world, entrepreneurship is all about Capital, Capital, and Capital. It is difficult to build and survive without significant capital. Be it an old economy company or a new age start-up, an entrepreneur needs to understand the value of what he/she is building.

The quintessence of successful investment is to understand if the market is ignoring anything and how the market is valuing, thus, making it essential to understand the worth of a company before investing. At the end of the day, you may be more valuable than you think. So many entrepreneurs today end up diluting so much equity even after having a successful venture. Thus, it is very important to determine how much capital is required during the journey of a company and what will the existing founders/shareholders left with at the end of each stage of the company.

For existing companies, there are many decisions and value-creating strategies that need to be taken such as divestitures, mergers and acquisitions, going public share repurchases, business model changes, and so on, for maximising value where valuation is the key decision-maker. Fortunately, the current generation is trying to be more informed about healthy investing. However, due to the lack of prior knowledge, there's not much to start with.

What will you suggest to an aspiring investor to begin with? Should they read books or just track the market mindfully, or both?

Both, actually! Every investor needs to do a lot of reading. Even celebrated investors like Warren Buffet today spend most of their time reading and learning. Reading is a must, and they have to read books, news, companies and annual reports simultaneously and give equal importance to all. They need to track the market too, to analyse what signals the market is giving, or if the market is behaving irrationally.

When does the stock market become harmful, if at all?

The stock market in the long term is not going to be harmful and will continue to grow. It becomes harmful when people start building expectations more than what the company can achieve.

Forming of bubbles in a sector, for instance, valuation of companies without meaningful earnings built on narratives, which when it does meet expectations, which can lead to stock prices crashing. We have seen what happened during the dot com bubble and you may see it in some new-age companies in this era. When markets start pricing stocks for high growth rates, value growth duration and improvement in margins that are not achievable or not sustainable, it may all lead to a bust. In bull markets, the stock markets start valuing stories. When stories fall short, the markets will punish them.

Why, in your opinion, do schools not talk about real-life stuff like mental health, taxes, or investing?

Very few business schools cover business/investment valuation in depth. There needs to be a significant time and depth required to teach and promote the understanding of the subject. It is very briefly touched upon and not explained in greater depth. Similarly, teaching taxes requires a lot of time and schools can't cover them all in their course. And, so, specific courses and books play an integral part in enhancing knowledge in these subjects for people who really want to understand them.

An entrepreneur and venture capitalist, Rattan Joneja's work mainly focusses on the application of creating shareholder value to corporates and mergers, divestitures and acquisitions. He is also the founder and CEO of CoValue Technologies Pvt Ltd. Co Value is an application with an aim to empower investors and businesses, to create wealth.

His recent book, *Value It Up: Simplifying the Art of Intrinsic Valuation*, takes the reader on a journey of learning about intrinsic valuation. With real-life investment success stories that draw instances of how value can be a key determinant of investment decisions narrated by celebrated investors. The book can be used as a helpful ladder of understanding the world of investing, and is designed for investors, analysts, stock market researchers, business students, or just anyone planning to enter into the field of stocks and investing. It is divided into 22 chapters where every chapter is aphoristically framed with quotes and concepts supported by the life story of a celebrated investor.

Read on for excerpts from an exclusive interview with the author:

Please give us an overview of *Value It Up: Simplifying the Art of Intrinsic Valuation*.

Value It Up is a book that simplifies and elucidates the 'Art of Valuation'. The book focusses

Siddhant Chaturvedi: Gehraiyaan made me face my fears



Batra saw his potential and casted him. Speaking about it, Siddhant shares with us,

"Shooting for a film like *Gehraiyaan* has made me face my fears, which in turn has helped me grow as a performer and a person. It made me look beyond my hydrophobia, and expand my horizons, and explore an untapped version of myself."

He further adds, "I remember telling Shakun that I want to grow up with this film, and that's what has happened. I am grateful to him for making me look beyond the conventional norms and dig deeper into reality."

Siddhant will soon be seen sharing screen space with Deepika Padukone, Ananya Panday and Dhairya Karwa in Shakun Batra's *Gehraiyaan*. Film will be released on Amazon Prime Video on February 11.

Siddhant Chaturvedi is all set to enthrall the audiences with his acting prowess and sizzling looks with his upcoming release *Gehraiyaan*. The actor as 'Zain', who has already created a huge impact in the minds of the audiences, now opens up how the film helped him face his fears. When Chaturvedi first got details about his role, he freaked out. The character had layers that required immense maturity — Shakun



● Neetu Kiran



● Dr Pravin Shinde and Dr Sailata Reddy



● Lavanya



● Sujatha Reddy

JOY OF PARENTHOOD

Nezamabad Mayor Neetu Kiran inaugurated Sree Fertility Centre along with corporator P Lavanya Lingam. It was a cheerful evening with guests having a great time at the venue.



● Gayatri and Krantimai



● Snigdha

PARTY


Cartoons to keep your child engaged

We all know how a child's day starts with cartoon and ends on it. Add on the prolonged hiatus, and these characters like Shiva, Dora, Rudra, Ninja Hattori etc. have now become their best friend and only source of entertainment! Which is why it becomes even more important to monitor what they watch these days! If you are in a dilemma of what your child should watch, here are top 10 showsthat your child should be watching: Shiva, Pinaki & Happy - The BhootBandhus, Dora, Rudra, Golmaal Jr., ChikooAur Bunty, Ninja Hattori, Paw Patrol, Ting Tong and Motu Patlu.

more than the idea of learning magic and using it to save their near and dear ones! Join Rudra and his friends as they open the doors of imagination for your child and introduce your little one to the enchanted world of Sun City every Monday to Friday at 4.30 PM, on Nickelodeon!


Golmaal Jr.

Introduce your little pranksters to Gopal and Madhav, two mischievous rivals, who with their gangs play pranks on each other which often result in fun, drama, and chaos. Show how small pranks can result in gags of



Paw Patrol

Dogs are man's best friend, and your child needs to know how important it is to take care of these furry little friends. Watch PAW Patrol on Nickelodeon Monday to Friday at 7.30 PM! and follow Ryder and his crew on their mission to search and rescue dogs.



Ting Tong

Children should be motivated to believe that they can be whatever they desire to be. Ting Tong is one such show that will make your child believe in themselves. Follow the adventurous journey of Mr. Ting Tong who has temporary memory loss issues and when he loses his memory, he takes over the characteristics of the last character he sees as a result of which he becomes the accidental hero of the town who comically catches bad guys. Watch Ting Tong on Sonic every Monday to Friday at 9 AM!

Motu Patlu

Meet the characters from the show Motu and Patlu who land themselves in trouble and comical situations, later get rescued only by sheer luck. They give us the lesson that one may face several difficulties daily but when they have the support of their best friend, they can overcome any situation. Do watch Motu and Patlu on Nickelodeon every Monday to Friday at 3.30 PM!

Shiva

Shiva is a young superhero with supernatural powers who lives with his grandparents in a fictional city named Vedas in India where fights villains who try to harm his town and the people there. Watch Shiva every Monday to Friday at 5.30 PM on Nickelodeon! and let your child get inspired to be their own superhero.

Pinaki & Happy – The Bhoot Bandhus

Family is a blessing for all of us, but our little friend Pinaki is blessed with a family that is far from normal! Growing up with his BhootBandhus, Pinaki teaches your child how one needs to adapt to the environment of the family and find the key to a happy life. Join Pinaki and Happy Monday to Friday at 1.30 PM on Sonic!

Dora

Just Like you, your child will surely be a fan of adventure meet Dora a little Hispanic girl who will take your child on various adventures with her friend, Boots. Follow Dora and Boots on their adventure from Monday to Friday at 7.30 AM on Nick Jr!

Rudra


Nothing will fascinate your child

Chikoo aur Bunty

Chikoo aur Bunty brings the sweet-sour and inseparable relationship between siblings that happens in every family. Let your child experience all the emotions from competing against each other to endless fights and the never-ending love that every sibling duo enjoys growing up together every Monday to Friday at 10 AM on Nickelodeon!

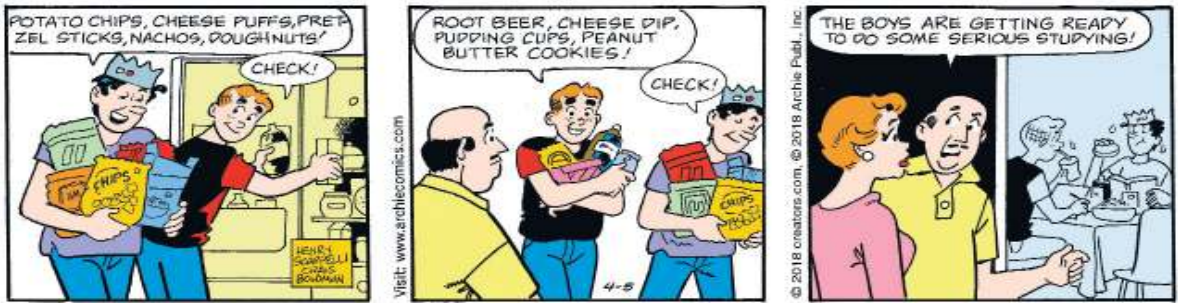
Ninja Hattori

Isn't it fun to have a friend who always keeps an eye on you to make sure no one troubles you, someone who has always got your back, such as this is the friendship of the 10-year-old Kenichi and his Ninja friend Kanzo Hattori. Let your child know the importance of good friends as they enjoy watching Ninja Hattori every Monday to Friday at 5 PM on Sonic!




laughter and bring smiles to others' faces. Watch Golmaal Jr at 12.30 PM on Nickelodeon!


ARCHIE




CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



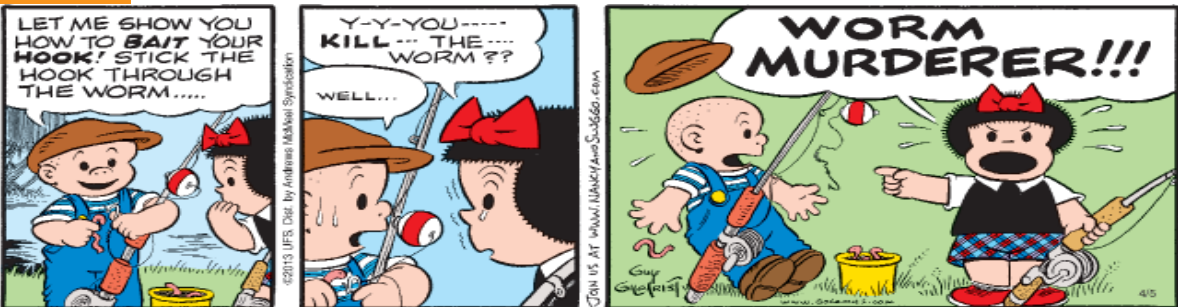
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

1		2				3	4	5
						6		
7					8			
					9			
	10							
11							12	
			13					
			14					15
16							17	
18							19	

NANCY



SUDOKU

								5
				4	8	2		
1	8		3		9		6	
					9	6		8
	3		6		7		5	
2		5	1					
3		4		5			6	1
	1	8	3					
9								


Yesterday's solution

4	3	8	2	1	6	7	5	9
9	2	5	7	4	3	8	1	6
6	1	7	8	5	9	2	3	4
3	5	4	6	7	1	9	8	2
8	6	2	3	9	5	4	7	1
1	7	9	4	8	2	3	6	5
2	9	6	1	3	8	5	4	7
7	8	1	5	2	4	6	9	3
5	4	3	9	6	7	1	2	8

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

GINGER MEGGS



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

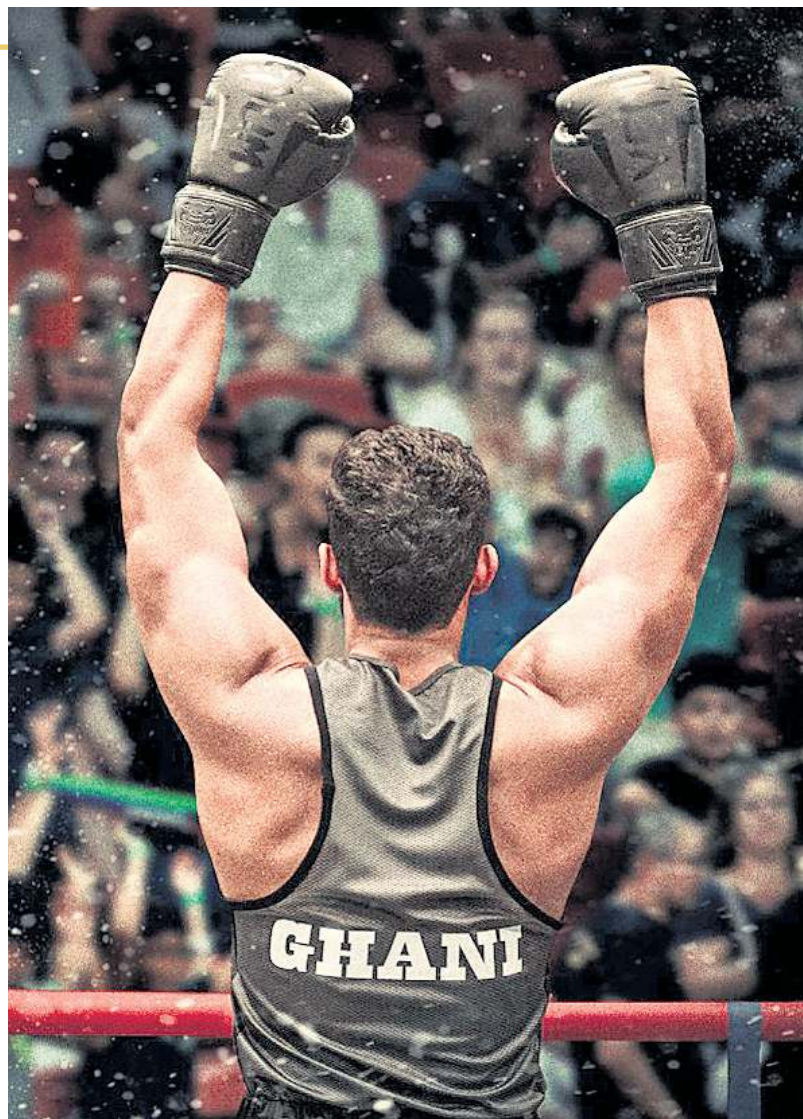
- The one who comes first in a race
- Twirl around
- Very impolite
- A fire-breathing monster
- A repairer of teeth
- The head of an empire
- Look very carefully for something
- Jealousy
- Moist
- Centre

DOWN

- A winged creature living in soil
- Said "yes" with the head
- These hold clothes on a line
- Two times forty-five
- A painter uses these
- A body organ
- Touched lips with someone
- Connected together
- Peaceful and still
- A rubber cover for a wheel

SOLUTION

P	A	R	A	C	H	U	T	E
B	O	D	I	E	S			
S	O	U	T	H	N	I	G	H
T	L	E	G	E	I			
R	O	T	S	W	A	L	R	U
E	T	I	R	S				
T	A	S	T	E	D	P	E	R
C	A	A	T	E	R			
H	O	M	E	S	W	O	R	D
S	A	L	I	O				
G	A	R	D	E	N	E	R	S



Ghani arriving soon

A day after RRR, Bheemla Nayak, Sarkaru Vari Pata, Acharya announced their arrival, the makers of Ghani, on Tuesday, made an interesting announcement about their release. Ghani, starring Varun Tej, a sports drama, will be released on February 25 or March 4, according to the producers. Due to the present COVID-19 scenario, this decision was made. "After careful deliberation and considering the prevailing situations, #Ghani will be released on February 25th or March 4th! See you all in theaters soon! (sic)," tweeted the makers of the film. Several filmmakers are in a pickle since they don't know about the forthcoming circumstances and theatre attendance. SS Rajamouli's RRR, which

came out before Ghani, took the same strategy. To avoid being impacted by the COVID-19 situation, they also set two release dates for the picture.

Directed by Kiran Korrapati, the film will see Varun Tej as a kickboxer. The actor has put in a lot of effort to prepare for the role. Former England boxer Tony Jeffries helped the actor prepare for his role as a boxer. While Saiee Manjrekar is the leading lady, Jagapathi Babu, Upendra, Suniel Shetty, and Naveen Chandra will be seen essaying key roles in the film. The picture, which is produced by Renaissance Pictures and Allu Bobby Company, had already been postponed due to the pandemic. The film's soundtrack was composed by S Thaman, and the cinematography was handled by George C. Williams.

Allari Naresh's next with Hasya Movies and Zee Studios

A ctress Priyamani is all set to make her Telugu OTT debut with the upcoming web original titled Bhamakalapam. Tollywood sensational hero Vijay Deverakonda unveiled the trailer of Bhamakalapam on Monday. The tagline for the thriller Bhamakalapam reads 'A delicious home-cooked thriller', while the trailer hints at an intriguing story. Launching Priyamani as Anupama, the trailer opens on a high note. Anupama senses something fishy

miere on aha on February 11. Dear Comrade filmmaker Bharat Kamma is the showrunner. Talking at the launch, the Arjun Reddy actor Vijay Deverakonda said, "I'm thrilled to be a part of the Bhamakalapam trailer launch." "Bharat Kamma, produc-

A llari Naresh has been synonymous with comedy films that engage audiences of all age groups. Besides doing entertainers, Naresh has also charted a different path at times by doing films like Visakha Express, Gamyam and Naandhi. The talented actor will now be seen in a promising film to be produced by Hasya Movies and Zee Studios. Zee Studios has embarked on the project after delivering back-to-back successful movies — Solo Brathuke So Better, Republic, and Bangaraju. The new movie is Naresh's 59th project. AR Mohan will be directing the movie. Anandhi is the leading lady. Producer Rajesh Danda and co-

producer Balaji Gutta on Tuesday announced the project and launched the film. Baluunnangi gave the clap for the muhurtham scene, while Abhishek Agarwal switched the camera on and Anil Sunkara directed the first shot.

Vennela Kishore and Chammak Chandra, who are known for immense comic talent, have prominent roles. Abburi Ravi is writing the dialogues. Sricharan Pakala is the film's music director. Raam Reddy is cranking the camera. Chota K Prasad is editing the movie. Brahma Kadali is the production designer. Venkat R is the stunt master. More details about the project will be revealed soon.



Bhamakalapam trailer opens on a high note!



about an incident in her apartment, while the focus shifts on the egg, which is established to be valued at over Rs 200 crore, and being stolen from a museum in Kolkata. The trailer hints at the deep mystery revolving around the lives of the people living in the apartment.

Though the trailer doesn't unleash the main point, Anupama's over-curious attitude launches her into trouble, as she is seen having differences with her husband regarding the same. Written and directed by Abhimanyu Tadimeti, the web original will pre-

er Bapineedu, and director Abhimanyu Tadimeti together make a brilliant team and I'm excited to see what they bring to the table. I'm thrilled to see Priyamani making her Telugu OTT debut."

The Liger actor signed off, as he wished the entire team of Bhamakalapam a super hit success for their web original. John Vijay, Sharanya Pradeep, Pammi Sai, and Shanti Rao essay crucial roles in the thriller comedy.

Bhamakalapam is produced by Sudheer Edara and Bogavalli Bapineedu under SVCC Digital.

Shruti Haasan, Malvika Mohanan in Chiru's next?

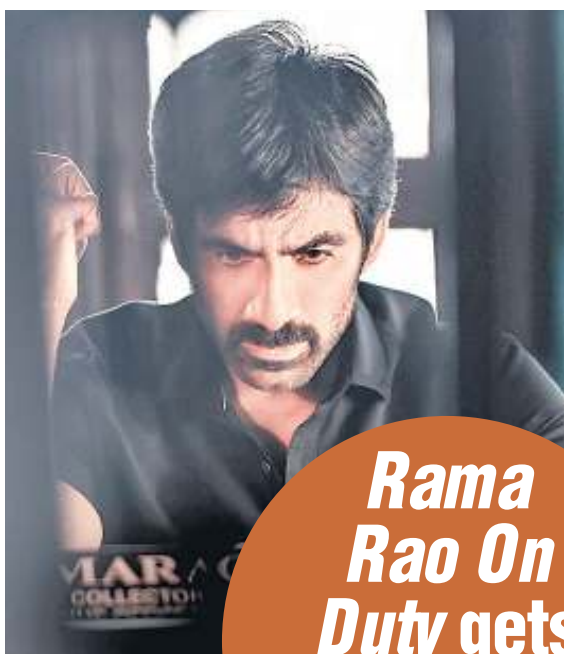
M egastar Chiranjeevi continues to astound everyone with his films. The director has collaborated

with Venky Kudumula for his next. However, they are yet to finalise the leading day in the film. Earlier, rumours were that the makers wanted to rope in Anushka Shetty. Now, we

hear from a few sources that Chiranjeevi and Venky Kudumula are reportedly in talks with Shruti Haasan to play one of the female leads.

Aside from that, insiders say Venky Kudumula is looking to cast Malavika Mohanan as the other heroine.

Malavika's Tollywood debut will be a dream come true if she signs this project. The film is produced by DVV. Danayya under the DVV. Entertainments label. Malavika Mohanan is rumoured to be in talks for Ram Charan's next film with Shankar and Mahesh Babu's next film with Trivikram Srinivas.



Rama Rao On Duty gets release date

shooting.

Meanwhile, the makers came up with an update on the release date of the movie. They announced two dates for the same. The movie may release on previously slated date of March 25 or else it would arrive on April 15.

The official statement reads: "We love our film. At the same time, we have immense respect for other films. We slated Ramarao On Duty for release on 25th March 2022. But due to latest developments, we intend to release our film either on 25th March 2022 or 15th April 2022."

Divyansha Koushik and Rajisha Vijayan are the heroines opposite Ravi Teja in the film where Venu Thottempudi will be seen in a vital role. The film also features some noted actors in important roles.

Music for the flick is by Sam CS, while Sathyan Sooryan ISC cranks the camera. Praveen

KL is the editor. Story is inspired from true incidents, the film's promotional content got terrific response.

M ass Maharaja Ravi Teja's unique action thriller Rama Rao On Duty being directed by debutant Sarath Mandava under Sudhakar Cherukuri's SLV Cinemas LLP and RT Teamworks is in the last leg of



Actress Radhika Sarath Kumar and actor Sai Kumar planted saplings at Maulana Azad National Urdu University in Gachibowli on Tuesday, as part of the Green India Challenge launched by Rajya Sabha member Joginipalli Santosh Kumar. Speaking on the occasion, Radhika Sarath Kumar and Sai Kumar said that the Green India Challenge would go a long way in protecting the environment.



As the much-anticipated film KGF: Chapter 2 approaches its release date, the cast and crew, including actor Yash and director Prashanth Neel, were sighted at a Mangaluru temple seeking blessings ahead of the film's release. Given that the team has completed the shot and that the film

will be released in April, sources indicate that the team is ready to begin public promotions. The action-drama, which is a sequel to the 2018 film KGF: Chapter 1, will open in theatres on April 14. It stars Yash, Srinidhi Shetty, and Sanjay Dutt, among others.

Dhawan, Shreyas, Ashwin in top bracket along with Cummin

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Top Indian players, including senior opener Shikhar Dhawan and Shreyas Iyer, along with overseas stars such as Pat Cummins and Kagiso Rabada have been bracketed in the Rs 2 crore highest base price category for the upcoming IPL auction.

The mega auction is scheduled to be held in Bengaluru on February 12 and 13 and will see 590 players go under the hammer.

The IPL announced the final auction list on Tuesday, which was pruned from the original list of 1,214 players released last month, after the franchises reverted with the players they are interested in.

Among the 590 cricketers, a total of 228 are capped players while 355 are uncapped and seven belong to associate nations.

Senior Indian players Mohammad Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Umesh Yadav, Ashwin, Ishant Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane have also registered with a base price of Rs 2 crore.

While Iyer and Dhawan are the top draws, the 10 teams are also likely to be involved in a bidding war for youngsters Ishan Kishan, Devdutt Padikal,



Washington Sundar, Deepak Chahar, last season's top wicket-taker Harshal Patel, spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and fast bowler Shardul Thakur. All of them are in the top bracket.

A total of 370 Indian players and 220 overseas cricketers will be up for grabs, with as many as 48 players having chosen to place themselves in the Rs 2 crore bracket.

Among the foreign players the franchises are expected to go after pacers Trent Boult, Cummins, Rabada, the Australian duo of all-rounder Mitchell Marsh and Steve Smith, former Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan and big-hitting South African Faf du Plessis, who have all registered themselves in the top bracket.

Indian veterans such as Suresh Raina and Robin Uthappa, with a steep base price of Rs 2 crore, may not have many takers.

There are 20 players in the auction list with a reserve price of Rs 1.5 crore while 34 are in the list of cricketers with a reserve price of Rs 1 crore.

India's U-19 stars, skipper Yash Dhull, Vicky Ostwal and Rajvardhan Hangargekar, besides the likes of Shahrukh Khan,

Deepak Hooda and Avesh Khan, will also be looking to cash in and make their mark during the auction.

South Africa's 42-year-old spinner Imran Tahir is oldest in the auction while 17-year-old Noor Ahmed of Afghanistan is the youngest. Noor is currently playing in the U-19 World Cup in the West Indies.

Among all U-19 players, Indian medium pacer Hangargekar has a better auction base price of Rs 30 lakh, compared to Rs 20 lakh for others.

Punjab Kings have the highest number of 23 slots available while Chennai Super Kings, Delhi Capitals, Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians have 21 vacancies.

The rest of the teams have 22 slots each.

Punjab Kings also head into the auction with the highest purse -- Rs 72 crore -- while the Delhi Capitals have the lowest -- Rs 47.5 crore.

Australia topped the overseas list with 47 players while 34 cricketers from the West Indies will also go under the hammer.

South Africa have 33 players, Sri Lanka 23, England 24, New Zealand 24 and Afghanistan 17.

Full-strength India, Australia face off in blockbuster semifinal

PTI ■ COOLIDGE (ANTIGUA)

Heavyweights India and Australia will face off in a blockbuster Super League semifinal of the Under-19 World Cup here on Wednesday, having beaten their opponents on the field and COVID-19 off it, on way to the last four stage.

India's preparations for the age-group showpiece were impacted heavily by the virus, with hardly any national camps or tournaments in the last two years except the recent Asia Cup.

The four-time champions started the tournament on the right note, overcoming a good South Africa side by 45 runs, but soon ran into a situation where they were struggling to field a playing XI after multiple players were found to have contracted COVID-19 hours before their match against Ireland.

Five members of the squad were unavailable for their second group clash, against Ireland on January 19 after a COVID outbreak.

Captain Yash Dhull, his deputy Shaik Rasheed, Aaradhya Yadav, Manav Parakh and Siddarth Yadav were part



of that group and missed both the Ireland and Uganda fixtures, forcing the BCCI to fly in reinforcements.

India were without many players for their match with Uganda and had to call in six reserves to play with the non-infected members of their squad.

But a spirited India got the better of all the challenges thrown at them and soundly defeated Ireland and Uganda before prevailing over Bangladesh by five wickets in a tricky

chase in their quarterfinal match on a surface that was not conducive for playing strokes.

India are now back to full strength and in another good news, Nishant Sindhu has recovered from COVID-19 and will be available for selection for the all-important semifinal.

But if the match against Bangladesh was any indication, India would like to improve their finishing with bat.

However, before that, despite missing many first XI players, India put up huge totals against Ireland (307/5) and Uganda (405/), and registered their biggest ever victory terms of runs against the African team.

Now up against a formidable Australian side, India will take confidence from the fact that they made the semifinals with wins on the trot despite the challenges posed the virus.

This is the fourth time in a row that India will be appearing in the last-four stage of the competition.

India have a strong batting presence with the likes of Harnoor Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Raj Bawa, who broke Shikhar Dhawan's record for the highest individual score by an Indian batter at the U-19 World Cup with his 162 not out against Uganda, shouldering the responsibility, besides skipper Dhull and Rasheed.

In fact, it was Dhull who set the tone for the team with his solid 82 against South Africa in their tournament opener.

India-West Indies ODI series to be played behind closed doors: GCA



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The three-match ODI series between India and West Indies, scheduled here from February 6 to

11, will be played behind closed doors owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) said on Tuesday. The matches will be played at the Narendra Modi Stadium. "We are all set to host West Indies Tour of India ODI Series 2022. 1st ODI on 6th of Feb will be a very special and historic match as India will be playing its 1000th ODI. Indian team will be the first cricket team in the world to achieve this feat. @BCCI #INDvsWI #teamindia," the GCA tweeted. "Considering the current situation, all the matches will be played behind the closed doors," the state cricket body said in another tweet.

After the ODIs, the two teams are scheduled to play a three-match T20 International series in Kolkata.



Pakistan through to 5th place play-off

PTI ■ COOLIDGE (ANTIGUA)

Haseebullah Khan struck a half-century as Pakistan sealed their place in the fifth place play-off with a six-wicket victory over Bangladesh despite a fine hundred from Ariful Islam in the U-19 World Cup here.

Bangladesh's innings was dominated by Islam, who arrived at the crease in the 12th over with his side on 23 for three and set about guiding them to a competitive total.

Islam had fallen for single figure scores in his two previous innings in this tournament but quickly found his groove here and brought up his half-century with a glorious six over long-on. The 17-year-old continued to lose partners -- Mehran Mumtaz proving particularly potent with three for 16 from his 10 overs -- but kept his composure and accelerated at the death, striking three sixes in one Awaiz Ali over to move into the nineties.

His century, from 118 balls, arrived midway through the 49th over but Islam fell to the next delivery -- the ninth wicket to fall in an innings which was ended on 175 with four balls remaining.

Muhammad Shehzad and Haseebullah started confidently in reply, adding 76 in 19 overs before the former fell for 36.

Khan struck four fours and four sixes before picking out the deep square leg fielder on 78, by which time his side needed just 36 more for victory.

Irfan Khan (24) was unfortunate to be run out backing up and Qasim Akram fell for a single but Abdul Faseeh's unbeaten 22 saw Pakistan home with 21 balls to spare.

Pakistan will take on Sri Lanka in the fifth place play-off on Thursday, with Bangladesh to play South Africa for the right to finish seventh.

The United Arab Emirates concluded their best-ever U-19 World Cup campaign with a comfortable eight-wicket win over Ireland in the Plate final.

India, Australia to open cricket competition in Birmingham CWG



PTI ■ DUBAI

Cricket will mark its return to the Commonwealth Games after a gap of 24 years with India taking on Australia on July 29 in the 2022 Birmingham edition.

The league-cum-knockout women's tournament kicks off with a match between women's 2020 T20 World Cup finalists Australia and India on July 29, with the bronze and gold medal matches scheduled for August 7.

Cricket is the first discipline to announce its complete line-up for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games after Sri Lanka was confirmed as the eighth team in the women's T20 tournament, the ICC said on Tuesday.

The announcement was made jointly by the International Cricket Council and the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) following Sri Lanka's victory in the Commonwealth Games Qualifier in Kuala Lumpur last week and the subsequent CGF ratification of the island nation's entry.

Australia, Barbados, England, India, New Zealand, South Africa and Pakistan have already qualified as women's

cricket makes its first entry into the Commonwealth Games.

It will only be the second time that cricket features in the multi-discipline event after a men's competition was part of the Games in Kuala Lumpur in 1998 and is considered a massive opportunity to bring the game to new audiences.

A Shaun Pollock-led South Africa had won the gold on that occasion, beating Steve Waugh's Australian side by four wickets in the final.

ICC Hall of Famers Sachin Tendulkar of India, Jacques Kallis of South Africa and Mahela Jayawardene of Sri Lanka were among the many stars featuring in the 1998 Games.

Barbados and Pakistan are in Group A along with Australia and India while England, New Zealand, South Africa and Sri Lanka form Group B.

The ICC, CGF and Commonwealth Games Sri Lanka congratulated Sri Lanka for their qualification and looked forward to an exciting tournament.

ICC Chief Executive Geoff Allardice said: "It's good to have finalised the identity of the teams participating in the

Commonwealth Games.

We will have eight of the best teams competing for the gold and I am sure we will get to watch a highly competitive tournament.

"The Commonwealth Games are an important part of the women's cricket calendar over the next year. It is a huge opportunity for us to take cricket beyond the traditional strongholds and give more people around the world the chance to enjoy the game."

CGF President Dame Louise Martin said: "Cricket is a sport synonymous with the Commonwealth. We are so excited to have it back in the Games for the first time since the men's 50 over competition at Kuala Lumpur in 1998.

"The debut of women's T20 cricket will be a historic moment and a wonderful showcase of women's sport across the world."

The Birmingham Commonwealth Games, being held from July 28 to August 8, will see 4,500 athletes from 72 nations and territories compete across 11 days.

Birmingham 2022 will be the first major multi-sport event in history to award more medals to women than men.

Chennaiyin look to get mojo back against wooden spooners SC East Bengal

PTI ■ VASCO

Smarting from their heartbreaking derby defeat, SC East Bengal will have nothing to lose when they take on Chennaiyin FC in the Indian Super League here on Wednesday.

Placed bottom of the table with just nine points from 14 outings, the Mario Rivera-coached side have all but lost their chance to stake a claim for the semifinals but will still look to improve their tally with their second win of the campaign against Chennaiyin.

SC East Bengal have conceded 28 goals in their 14 matches so far, the second-most by a team this season. They are coming off a 1-3 loss to ATK Mohun Bagan.

Since Riviera's arrival, they've been even more compact and narrow and forced teams to play from out wide. The number of crosses put in by the opposition in the last three matches highlights this playing style. In his three games in charge, the opposition have put in a total



of 80 crosses. "The confidence of a team is more related to the performance than the results. Sometimes you can play well and lose and vice-versa.

Our performance is much better than the results so the players are in a good space mentally," Rivera said on the eve of the match.

Brazilian striker Marcelo Ribeiro started for the first time for SC East Bengal in the last game, and Rivera opined his link-up play with Antonio Perosevic is one to look out for and it would have helped had he been there from the start.

"Marcelo and Perosevic's combination is one to watch out for. It is difficult because Marcelo cannot speak English but they are starting to understand each other now."

For Chennaiyin, placed seventh in the table with 18 points from 13 games, a win will catapult them back to the top-four. Lallianzuala Chhangte joined Mumbai City FC on loan on transfer deadline day but head coach Bozidar Bandovic would like to believe he has other options to fill in his boots

Japan hand Saudis first defeat in WC qualifying group



AP ■ SEOUL

A first-half goal from Takumi Minamino set Japan on the way to beating Saudi Arabia 2-0 at Saitama Stadium on Tuesday and keeping the host on course for a seventh successive World Cup appearance.

Minamino's goal from close range after 31 minutes was created by Junya Ito. The Belgian-based winger then added the second soon after the restart with a fierce shot from the edge of the area to seal a first defeat for the Saudis in Asia Group B qualifying.

Saudi Arabia, which would have qualified for a sixth World Cup with a victory, still led the group with 19 points, one more than Japan.

India beat China in back-to-back matches in women's FIH Pro League

PTI ■ MUSCAT

Indian women's team continued to make waves in the FIH Pro League as it dished out yet another masterclass to beat China 2-1 and move to the top of the standings here on Tuesday.

After defeating China 7-1 in their debut match on Monday, the Indians emerged 2-1 victorious against the same opponents at the Sultan Qaboos Complex on Tuesday.

While the win was not as goal-heavy as the previous day, what India showed was an ability to play swift, attacking hockey without losing composure.

A lack of experience and a certain level of weariness seemed to beset the China women's team right from the opening whistle of their second FIH Hockey Pro League



match against India.

Lost possession, misplaced passes and a reluctance to get back and defend contributed to a lacklustre first half performance by the Chinese team.

India, by contrast, started the match with high levels of energy and an appetite for

attacking play that rocked their opponents even further.

Pressure exerted by the Indians on the Chinese defence paid off quickly. A penalty corner in the third minute was converted with precision by Gurjit Kaur -- to add to the goal she scored in the first match on Monday.

China were fortunate not to be further behind at the end of the first 15 minutes. India created several scoring opportunities but these either flew wide of the opposition goal or were dealt with by Wu Shurong in China goal.

In the second half, China seemed to rally. They defended with more conviction and India were finding it difficult to contain Chinese attack.

As India struggled to regain the free-flowing play of the first half, China began to make their own incursions into the Indian circle.

A lovely pass that split the Indian defence left Wang Shumin with just Savita to beat. The Indian goalkeeper rushed forward but Wang was able to place the ball in the corner and restore both parity and her team's confidence levels.