ROADBLOCKS TO 'RAM

RAJYA' IN UTTAR PRADESH



VIJAYAWADA DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI **DEHRADUN HYDERABAD** *LATE CITY VOL. 4 ISSUE 104
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MALVIKA MOHANAN IN CHIRU'S NEXT?

Page 12

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'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 lat-

est budget **Imported** items earphones

Costlie

On the other hand, chargers and cameras for phones, wearable tech like smartwatches, hearing aids, gemstones and diamonds, farming tools and smart meters, steel scraps and chemi-

cals for petroleum refining will get cheaper. or phones Wearable tech like

Farming tools and smart meters Cocoa beans and

> The government has also provided for TDS on payment made in

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.



relation to transfer of virtual digital 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 crypto currencies 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

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.

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 Vauld, a crypto exchange platform based in Singapore.

Digital rupee from RBI coming

PNS NEW DELHI

Finance minister Nirmala

Sitharaman Tuesday presented

a budget that calls for a bigger

spend to fire up growth in Asia's third-largest economy, as it stages a world-beating recov-

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," Ms Sitharaman said today.

Income tax slabs unchanged

ncome 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, stanftaxatio sions 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 proposed

Facility for filing updated tax return: With an intent to encourage

voluntary compliance and reduced litigation, a new concept of Updated Return has been updated return to voluntarily disclose income which was either under reported or not reported at all in any tax return. The undated return can be filled 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.

Only the cost of acquisition of such asset 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 ture 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%.

later this month, there were expectations that the budget Winners **EV BATTERY MAKERS**

nificant Uttar

Pradesh, heading to the polls

ith five states, includ-

ing the politically sig-

clean transport technology, battery makers will gain from a new swapping policy for electric vehicles announced by Sitharaman, Beneficiaries will include Exide Industries Ltd.

Crucial for plans to expand

India's ambitions to promote

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

Here's a list of winners and losers from the budget announcements Infrastructure Ltd., KNR Constructions Ltd., IRB Infra Ltd., Container Corporation of India Ltd., Allcargo Logistics

Ltd. and Indian Railway Catering

would address issues of high

ment of Modi's popularity

unemployment. The state elec-

tions will be a mid-term assess-

ahead of national elections in

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

Winners and losers in the budget

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

CRYPTO PLAYERS

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

cryptocurrencies and nonfungible 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,

ery from the pandemic.

Sitharaman proposed

omy's annual spending to?

to support growth plans.

39.5 lakh crore (\$529 billion)

increasing the size of the econ-

Coinswitch Kuber. **COAL AND THERMAL POWER**

Zebpay, CoinDCX and

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-cr

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 Īspat Nigam Ltd) has also been selected.



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

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 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.

crore against the actual budget estimate of Rs 7,07,707 crore in he 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 sub-

sidy 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 docu-

During the current fiscal, the Centre has hiked subsidy of non-urea fertilisers several times due to a sharp rise in global



Budget disappointing, AP's Capex share just 4%: YSRCP

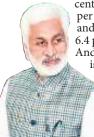
VIJAYAWADA

Terming the Union budget for the year 2022-23 disappointing, YSRCP has said that the party had expected a booster dose.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday, YSRC Parliamentary Party leader V Vijavasai Reddy said the allocation of Rs 1 lakh crore for capital expenditure seems huge but when it comes to the State share as per the set formula Andhra Pradesh gets just 4.047 per cent which works out to just Rs 4,000 crore.

In the case of FRBM, while the set norm is not more than 3 per cent of the GSDP for States, there is no parity with respect to the Centre on the borrowings. The State is still bearing the brunt of the previous government's mistakes,

Reeling out figures, he said while the fiscal deficit of the Union budget was 9.3 per



cent for 2020-21, 6.9 per cent for 2021-22 and is estimated at 6.4 per cent this year.

Andhra Pradesh registered a deficit of 5.48 per cent and 3.94 per cent during the past two years

and

strictures on FRBM.

He said the proposed budget for 2022-23 is nearly 40 lakh crore, with an increase of Rs 4.5 lakh crore more than that of the last fiscal and stated that the country's growth rate for 2021-22 is at 9.2 per cent, much better than any other country, especially while fighting Covid. Further, he appreciated the increase in capital expenditure by 35 per cent more than the previous allocations, where Rs 7.5 lakh crore has

been allocated in the current budget which is 20 per cent of the budgetary allocations.

Speaking on the interlinking of rivers Krishna-Godavari, Krishna-Penna, and Penna-Cauvery, he said that the State government had already interlinked Godavari-Krishna rivers with its own funds and thus appealed to compensate the State.





Railway Ministry allocated Rs

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 fis-

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.





New districts: Diverting people's attention from burning issues

he Andhra Pradesh government, caught in a cleft stick over the implementation of the Revision PIN Commission recommendations as modified, has **POINT** apparently diverted peo-

ple's attention from this and other burning issues by coming up with the idea of new dis-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 hav-

ing 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 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.

ernment is not inclined to tricts. It was taken up initially 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 disas 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



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. like Persons Alluri Seetaramaraju, NT Rama Rao, places like Manyam, Palnaadu, Gods like Sri Balaji & godmen like Satva Sai Baba are now the names of some of the new dis-

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 Marathispeaking districts and three Kannada-speaking districts, which were merged with Bombay & Mysore states as per the linguistic policy in vogue. Later Khammam district 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.

AP govt staff to continue stir as talks fail; fresh salary credited

Talks between the agitating employees and the Andhra Pradesh government on the pay revision issue ended in failure on Tuesday and later the Pay Revision Commission (PRC) $Struggle\ Committee\ announced$ it would go ahead with the proposed agitation programme, including the indefinite strike from February 7.

Vijayawada' programme, slated for February 3, would be organised in a massive way.

The government, on the other hand, said it was willing to constitute an 'Anomalies Committee' to sort out the employees' grievances and set right the wrongs if any.

There will be some anomalies after the PRC is implemented. The Anomalies Committee

The Struggle Committee will examine all issues and gov-leaders said the 'Chalo ernment will act on that," Chief ernment will act on that," Chief Secretary Sameer Sharma told a press conference.

"Please withdraw your idea of strike. It is self-destructive. It does not benefit anyone," the Chief Secretary said.

The government started crediting January salary to all employees as per the Revised Pay Scales-2022.

Meanwhile, a Division Bench of Andhra Pradesh High Court,

comprising Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra and Justice M Satyanarayana

> mentation of the PRC orders. The High Court directed the state government to file a counter-affidavit in the matter and posted the case for further

hearing to February 23. The Division Bench was hear-

Murthy, directed that there shall

be no recovery from the salary

of any employee of the state gov-

ernment in the course of imple-

ing public interest litigation filed by AP Gazetted Officers Association president K Krishnaiah challenging the pay revision orders issued on January 17 as that would lead to a reduction in emoluments like Dearness Allowance, House Rent Allowance besides complete withdrawal of City Compensatory Allowance.

Calling it a 'misconception', Advocate General Sriram Subramaniam maintained there would no recovery from the salary of any employee, and the gross/net pay would not be less than that drawn in December

After staying away for four days from the government committee of ministers and others, the PRC Struggle Committee leaders finally attended the talks in the state Secretariat on Tuesday and remained firm on their demands that the Government Orders (of January 17) related to pay revision be withdrawn forthwith and the salaries and pensions for January be paid as per the old PRC. They also demanded that the report of the 11th Pay Revision Commission, headed by retired IAS officer Ashutosh Mishra, be handed over to them for perusal.

Buggana Ministers Rajendranath, Satyanarayana and government advisor (public affairs) S R K Reddy, who led the talks, declined to concede the three main demands of the Struggle

'Since the salaries have been credited into the employees' accounts, the demand for withdrawal of GOs or payment of old salaries has no relevance," Reddy told reporters after the meeting with Struggle Committee leaders.

No decrease in salaries of govt staff: Chief Secretary VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Dr. Sameer Sharma, has said that the salaries of the employees will be credited to their bank accounts by Tuesday night. However, if some employees fail to get their salaries on Tuesday night, will receive the same on Wednesday.

The Chief Secretary said that the salaries of all employees will increase. He further said that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy had instructed not to decrease the salaries of the employees. The CS appealed to the PRC struggle committee leaders to understand the present financial situation of the

The CS appealed to the union leaders and the employees not to go on strike as they are an integral part of the State government. The HRA issues will be discussed and the Government has invited the No permission for staff rally

permission has not been granted for the 'Chalo Vijayawada' rally and protests by the government employees unions and associations led by PRC Struggle Committee. Vijayawada City Police Commissioner Kanti Rana Tata on Tuesday said that the PRC-SC proposed to conduct a rally on February 3 on the BRTS Road in Vijayawada and sought permission for the same. He said that the police, after carefully reviewing the situation denied permission to the protest programme. CP Kanti Rana said

permission to only 200 people in

that according to the Covid-19

guidelines of Central and State

governments, there is

the open area and to 100 people in indoor locations. He said that the PRCSC stated participation of 5,000 people but according to

the reports, masses in large

numbers will participate in the

protest programme. He

stated that restrictions under Section 30 of police act and section 144 CRPC were under force under which gatherings would not be allowed over five people. CP Kanti Rana said that there are chances of a swift spread of pandemic due to huge gatherings hence the police denied permission to the protest. He appealed to the government employees not to come to BRTS

union leaders for talks. "The CM is ready to do what best he can do for the employees," the

Road or Vijayawada city for the

Digital rupee

Continued from Page 1

"It is therefore proposed to introduce digital rupee using blockchain and other ogies - 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.

Month & Paksham

Magha & Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Pratipada: Feb 01 11:15 AM to Feb 02 08:31 AM Dwitiya: Feb 02 08:31 AM to Feb 03 06:15 AM Nakshatram: Dhanishta: Feb 01 07:44 PIM to Feb 02

05:53 PM Shafabhisha: Feb 02 05:53 PM to Feb 03 04:34 PM

Rahukalam: 12:29 PM to 1:54 PM Yamagandam: 8:16AMto9:40AM Varjyam: 12:41 AM to 02:12 AM Gulika: 11:05 AM to 12:29 PM Amritakalam: 08:17 AM to 09:46 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham:

WEATHER Forecast: SUNNY **Temp:** 33[∞] Humidity: 49% Sunrise: 6:40 AM Sunset: 6:08 PM Updated FEBRUARY 1, 2021 5:00 pm



Dressed/With Skin ₹215 Without Skin ₹235 Broiler at Farm

EGG

RATES ₹/100 VIJAYAWADA 430 VISAKHAPATNAM 425 **HYDERABAD** 405 **RETAIL PRICE**

Winners and losers... **DIGITAL FINANCE**

Continued from Page 1

Winners

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.

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 financial services providers in India are set to gain after Tuesday's budget focused on expanding such services. These 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.

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

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.

Ltd. and Tata Metaliks Ltd.

Disinvestment receipts...

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

So far the gov 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).

In the current fiscal, the bigticket initial public offering of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) is in the works, besides the

strategic sale of BPCL, Shipping Corp, Container Corp, RINL and Pawan Hans.

Briefing reporters after the Budget, Sitharaman said, "LIC in all probability is going this year cated clearly that it will happen. The final valuation of LIC is still being worked out.

Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said, "The emphasis is on completion of transactions and implementation. If we keep too high a target, sometimes it also distorts the market.'

Govt subsidies to fall steeply...

Continued from Page 1

The move was aimed to ensure that farmers continue to get Diammonium phosphate (DAP) and other nutrients under the Nutrient based subsidy (NBS) policy at a reasonable rate. For the next fiscal, the government said total subsidies are estimated to fur-

ther 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 estimat-

ed to fall by 28 per cent to Rs 2,06,831

crore against Rs 2,86,469 crore in the

Budget...

Continued from Page 1

The State government has been

pushing for three development projects which include a dedcated freight corridor from Kharagpur to Vijayawada, freight corridor connectivity to oorts in Andhra Pradesh and Bhogapuram National Highway, but no announcements were made in this regard, he said. Similarly, he said that no announcements were made towards the development in healthcare sectors and no attention was paid towards research and completely ignored health insurance for the middle-class people. In regard to agriculture, he said that the Centre had completely ignored increasing the allocations of PM Kisan and failed to include tenant farmers under the scheme and also ignored paddy procurement policy and MSP for crops. Also, he said that the shortfall in GST compensation of states was not addressed in the budget and ignored to extend the compensation period.

Income...

Continued from Page 1

Budget 2022 has proposed capping of surcharge rate all long-term capital gains. This will benefit taxpayers in higher income brackets who were earlier liable to surcharge at the rate of 25% or 37% on such gains. Relief to taxpayers for

maintenance of dependent with disability: The present law pro-

vides for deduction to a taxpayer for amount paid towards an insurance policy for the benefit of a disabled dependent only if the lumpsum payment or annuity is available to the disabled person on the death of the taxpayer. It is proposed to extend the deduction with respect to such scheme as well where the lumpsum or annuity is receivable by the taxpayer upon attaining age of sixty

Three members of a family found hanging

PNS VIJAYAWADA

sources said.

Three members of a family of weavers were found hanging in their house in Pedana Krishna district on Tuesday. They took the extreme step, unable to bear losses and repay loans,

The deceased have been identified as Padmanabham (52), his wife Naga Leelavathi (45) and their son Raja Nagendra (24). A case has been registered and the bodies have been shifted to a government hospital for autopsy. Pedana Sub Inspector T Murali reached the crime spot and started the investi-

According to preliminary information, Padmanabham had taken a loan of Rs 2.50 lakh in 2018 from M Jeevan Prasad (55) and his son M Vittal Lokesh. However, they could not repay the loan amount while the total amount has piled up to Rs 4.60 lakh. When the financier pressurised the family to repay the amount as it had been more than four years, the family took the extreme step.

AP HC asks Twitter why it should not be shut down

do so amounts to contempt of

court. If you have to continue

your services, you have to

necessarily respect the laws of

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

The Andhra Pradesh High Court has come down heavily on social media platform Twitter for disregarding its orders on deleting objectionable content and asked to show cause why it should not be shut down over the issue.

Stating that Twitter's (in)action is tantamount to contempt of court, a Division Bench, comprising Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra and Justice M Satyanarayana Murthy, on Monday asked why criminal proceedings could not be initiated against

The Court directed Twitter to file an affidavit in this regard by the next hearing and posted the case to February 7. Taking a strong view, the



High Court told Twitter it could not take cover behind technicalities.

"During the last hearing, we gave clear orders that the objectionable content be removed forthwith. Failure to

Court's ire during a regular hearing on Monday on a suo motu case related to objectionable and derogatory posts on various social media platforms against the judiciary allegedly by members and supporters of the ruling YSR Congress. The CBI is investigating the case at the behest of the High

Twitter faced the AP High

Court and so far arrested several persons in this connection. N Ashwini Kumar, advocate on behalf of the complainant the High Court Registrar General, brought to the court's notice that though Twitter

claimed to have removed the

objectionable content from its

platform, it could be accessed

through Virtual Private

the land. Otherwise, close your Networks. Additional Solicitor General shop down," the High Court S V Raju, on behalf of the CBI,

told the Court that the social media platform was not cooperating in deleting the derogatory content from its

The Division Bench asked Twitter why criminal contempt proceedings could not be initiated against it. Advocate for YouTube maintained that they had fully

complied with the court orders

but the content posted by some television media houses on their YouTube channels was still running. The media houses themselves should remove such

"We have deleted, within 36 hours, all the links listed out by the High Court Registrar General and the CBI," he

content, the YouTube advocate

Railway Ministry allocated...

Continued from Page 1

The rail sector will also develop One Station One Product, which will leverage local produce carried on the railways.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw wel-Minister comed the announcement and said that the integration of posts and railways will bring better logistics solutions for people living in remote

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. The allocation for the development of rolling stock, which will be instrumental in bringing in new modern coaches and technology to the national transporter, has been kept at Rs 7977

the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC), whose assets will be monetised by the Railways for operations and maintenance. It has also allocated Rs 13335.47 crore for track

The FM has also allo-

cated Rs 15710.44 crore to

renewal, Rs 2850 crore for gauge conversion and Rs 12108 crore for doubling. A sum of Rs 25243 crore has been allocated for new lines as well.

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It's a 'Zero Sum' budget, says Cong

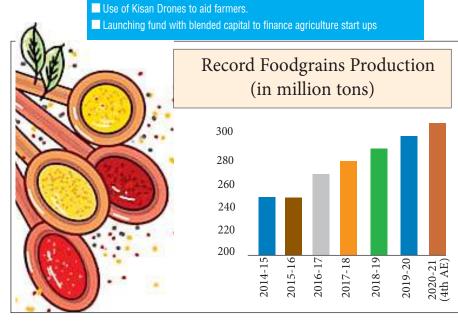
PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Dr. Sake Shailajanath has said that the Union budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman was not satisfactory. He said that there is no mention of special status to the State and did not mention other aspects like the railway zone. He said that since the demonetisation, the Central government had shattered the lives of the poor and has now come up with a new mantra of Digital India.

The Congress State president said that the budget introduced by the Center has caused severe frustration among the SC, ST, BCm Minorities, the farming community, the common man, the poor, the working class and

the employees. He commented that the Modi government had announced a 'Zero Sum' budget and had shown empty hands to the working class. He has done injustice to the middle class, the poor, the weaker class, the youth, the farmers, and even the micro, small and medium enterprises sector. He alleged that the

The central government has done nothing for the welfare of agriculture in the budget. In spite of supporting the weavers, no allocation was made in the budget for them. He said that it was a big disappointment to the petty vendors and working class. He said it was unfortunate that nothing had changed the slabs in the income tax. No steps were taken for improving the infrastructure in the medical and health sector.



Delivery of Digital and Hi-Tech services to farmers in PPP mode

Rs 5.25 lakh crore allocated for defence budget

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

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 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.

Budget will strengthen farm sector: Pawan

No mention about fulfilling AP Act assurances

No mention of the Polavaram project PM's Dynamics Plan to give vitality to economy

Digital Univ to churn out high quality techies

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Welcoming the Union budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman in the Parliament, Jana Sena Party (JSP) chief K Pawan Kalyan has said that the budget will take the country forward by strengthening the productive and agricultural sectors.

In a statement here on Tuesday, Pawan Kalyan regretted that there is no mention in the Union Budget about fulfilling the AP Reorganisation Act 2014 assurances. "No mention of the Polavaram project and major allocation of the two Telugu states", he said.

"It is no exaggeration to say, however, that this budget reflects a great vision of how our India can compete with developed countries", he stat-

The Jana Sena hopes that the intended efforts to introduce from time to time in the country would yield good results. The Prime Minister's Dynamics Multipurpose Plan is a way to give vitality to the country's economy. Especially with digital currency, digital banking is likely to increase transparency in business transactions and cash transactions and reduce fraud, he hoped.

The establishment of the Digital University will result in the creation of high-quality techies that will meet the technical requirements of the country. The intention to launch 200 TV channels for



al languages. Increasing the defense budget by 12% is essential for the security of our country. The first step is to make plans so that we can become self-sufficient in defense products", Pawan

He said, "We have been experiencing a lot of hardship due to the corona for the last couple of years. Janasena hopes that this budget will give priority to the agricultural sector, which has saved the economy from collapsing in these difficult conditions. It is perceived that the pace of steps towards modern agriculture has increased. The creation of infrastructure in the agricultural sector, the setting up of food processing units, the provision of farm implements and machinery to farmers on a rental basis, incentives for agricultural startups are likely to benefit the agricultural sec-

'Janasena welcomes the mention in the budget that 60 lakh new jobs will be created in five years. Similarly, a fund with lakhs of crores of rupees to the states, as well as the possibility of the states taking a lakhs of crore rupees without interest for up to 50 years would be good for the states. It is especially useful for states like Andhra Pradesh where the economic

situation is miserable", he said. Pawan Kalyan said that appreciate the BJP government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, especially Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, for drafting a new budget without imposing a new tax burden on the people. But employees who expected the income tax cap to be raised in the budget this time were disappointed.

pandemic.

Raw deal meted out to AP: Naidu

Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday expressed his disappointment on the Union Budget 2022-`23, saying that it has meted out a raw deal to the AP State. In his budget reaction, Chandrababu Naidu said the Centre had presented over four budgets since 2019 when the YSRCP came to power in AP. However, the State could not get any bene-

PNS VIJAYAWADA

the State's interests. Naidu said that the latest budget would not be able to extend any benefits to farmers. Favourable decisions were not made regarding support prices for crops. No announcements were made to

support the poorer sections

and the sectors that were

badly hit by the Coronavirus

fit. The YSRCP 's 28 MPs were

apparently putting their personal selfish agenda above

Infra status to Data Centres hailed VIJAYAWADA: V Atchut Rao, president of the Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FAPCCI), has said that the budget 2002-23, aimed at complementing macro growth with micro-all-inclusive-welfare, digital economy and fintech and techenabled development, focuses on the creation of a unified logistics platform. The development of 100 new cargo terminals in the next three years is a significant step in improving the supply chain ecosystem in the country, he opined. Atchut Rao welcomed the government's announcement that infrastructure status to Data Centres would provide

Budget will spur growth: CII-AP

a huge boost to the fast-evolving digital environment of the country. He

said that there were no significant changes in tax structure, except the

decision to tax income from digital asset transfers at 30 per cent and

one per cent TDS on transfer of virtual assets above the threshold.

VIJAYAWADA: Chairman of CII - Andhra Pradesh, D Tirupati Raiu, has said that the Union budget proposals will accelerate growth and development. He said that there is a need to look at t proposals in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The budget proposals would benefit youth, women, and farmers. The inclusive approach adopted by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman would be a boon to the economy, he said. He said that PM Gati Shakti which is a transformative approach to development adopted by the Government laid focus on seven engines, namely, Roads, Railways, Airports, Ports, Mass Transport, Waterways, and Logistics Infrastructure. The greater capital expenditure on infrastructure would give impetus to the recovery of the economy, he felt. Neeraj Sarda, Vice Chairman, CII Andhra Pradesh welcomed the Special Economic Zones Act which will be replaced with new legislation that will enable the states to become partners in 'Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs'. He also mentioned that emphasis on urban planning with courses would give the required impetus to urban development. In this regard, the constitution of a high-level committee of reputed urban planners, urban economists, and institutions to be formed to make recommendations on urban sector policies, capacity building, planning, implementation, and governance would create opportunities for industry, he said.

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 manage-



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. The DMRC network's current span is nearly 392

km with 286 stations (including the Noida–Greater Noida Metro

Corridor and Rapid Metro, Gurgaon).

Rs 9,259 cr for special purpose vehicle AIAHL

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

Jeevan Mission.

Jeevan Mission, a flagship pro-Modi government, aims to provide tap water connections to rural households by 2024. So far, tap water

The fund allocation to centrallysponsored schemes was increased from 5,688.49 crore to 12,605.12 crore. amount of Rs 1,400 crore has been set aside for the project of interlinking of rivers. The finance minister,

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

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.

> crore towards settlement to cover "cash losses during crore in cash and took" 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

In 2021-22, the

Covid period", the docu-

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

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 opera-



New Co-operation Ministry gets Rs 900 cr For the first time, a separate

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 Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACs), while Rs 274 crore for an umbrella scheme 'Prosperity through Cooperatives' which would have a number of subcomponents with the aim of allround development of cooperatives in the country.

budget of Rs 11 crore has been provided to Vaikunth Mehta Institute of National 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



Rs 86,189 cr allocated to Jal Shakti Ministry

PNS NEW DELHI

The Jal Shakti Ministry has

and Sanitation Department nections have been given to 8.7 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

Launched in 2019, the Jal

in her budget speech, said the implementation of Ken-Betwa rivers linking at an estimated cost of Rs 44,605

PNS NEW DELHI

The Centre has allocated Rs 9,259 crore to AIAHL, a governmentowned special purpose vehicle set up to handle Air India's debt and noncore 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 51,971

said. 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



Left parties take out rally in solidarity with govt staff

Left parties took out a huge rally here on Tuesday extending solidarity to the agitating government employees and teachers.

The rally began at Shankar Vilas Centre and concluded at Lodge Centre.

Addressing a meeting organised on the occasion, CPI (M) central committee member P Madhu demanded that the government concede the legitimate demands of the government employees. P Madhu said it was customary to increase wages of the government employees, teachers and pensioners for every five years in line with rising prices, but the Jagan Mohan Reddy-headed government had reduced wages.

The PRC has been set up to revise the wages of the government employees. After discussing the committee report the implementation of PRC recommendations would be taken up. But the Jagan Mohan Reddy-headed government did not release the Ashutosh Mishra Committee report and



fitment was given lesser than IR and HRA were also reduced. Without consulting the leaders of unions the government issued orders implementing the new PRC, he

The government even now should correct its mistake by discussing with the employees, he said and asked them to give a fair PRC. The CPM leader demanded that the attempt to invoke the ESMA on employees be withdrawn. "The state has no capital city and the Special Category Status has not been achieved. The establishment of a steel factory in Kadapa has not materialised so far. The assurance given to the outsourcing employees has not been fulfilled and their services were not regularised" Madhu

CPI district secretary Jangala Ajay Kumar said that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy assured the people of the state that he would not backtrack from the promises but he had done the same in respect of revoking CPS and implementing the legitimate PRC.

The government is threatening the government employees to accept the reduced salaries, he lashed out, alleging that the government had betrayed its employees regarding the PRC. CPM east district secretary P Rama Rao, CPI city secretary K Malyandri, MCPI (U) city secretary Kalva Sridhar, CPM district executive committee member N Bhavanarayana and other leaders among those who spoke.



SP promises to resolve problems of cops

PNS KADAPA

Superintendent of Police KKN Anburajan assured that he would resolve the problems of police personnel in the district.

The police welfare commit-

tee meeting was held here on Tuesday. Speaking on the occa-sion, the SP told them to bring to his notice the grievances whether they are personal and service-related and he would take steps to resolve them. He said that he would know their problems once every 15 days and take steps to resolve them. The SP asked the police personnel to take special care to protect themselves from the Coronavirus in the wake of the third wave threat. He advised them to spend time with their family. RIs Veeresh, Mohaboob Basha, police officers union district president Dulam Suresh, honorary resident Chandrasekhar Reddy and other leaders of the union were

'Follow NITI Aayog guidelines for sustainable development'

Prakasam District Collector Pravin Kumar has directed the officials to strive constantly to achieve sustainable development in the district following the guidelines set by the NITI

Aayog.
The Collector held a meeting on reaching the targets of sustainable development with the officials here on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector directed the officials to achieve 17 of the targets following the standards set by the NITI Ayog. The targets of development could be reached if the officials lay special focus on them, he said, and asked them to improve their working style in this regard.

He said that using 47.20% chemical fertilizer in raising crops is not advisable as against the set target of 8.20%. Oxygen is getting polluted by electrical emissions. The target for using LED bulbs is 43.87% but currently, only 42% of LED bulbs are used.

"With a target of providing 91.60 per cent quality education but the current rate for the same is 71 percent. The literacy rate should be increased. Steps

should be taken to provide education with quality stan-dards. While the dropout prevention target is 15.56 per cent, that is only 3.63 per cent in the district now. The target of providing higher education is 100% but that is only 40.64% in the district", the Collector said.

Pravin Kumar said that 16% of pregnant women are malnourished and should be provided quality foods. Steps should be taken to provide nutritional food to all through Anganwadi centres. He directed the officials to take steps to provide purified drinking water n the rural areas.

The Collector directed the officials to complete the process of providing jobs on compensation grounds to the kin of those who died of Coronavirus. He said that 28 people died of Coronavirus in various government departments in the district and six people working secretariat also died. The appointments on the compensation grounds should be completed at the earliest, the Collector asked the officials.

ZP CEO Jalai Reddy, CPO D Venkateswarulu, DRDA PD B Babu Rao, DEO Vijay Bhaskar and Animal Husbandry ID Babi Rani were among those

who attended the meeting.

Later the Collector held a meeting with the leaders of NGOs who are agitating against the PRC issue.

The Collector told them that they should register their protest in a peaceful manner. He assured them to take their demands to the notice of the government.

District NGO association president K Sharat Babu explained to the Collector that the Interim Relief was reduced from 27% to 23%. Injustice was also meted out to the government employees regarding fixing of house rent allowance as it was reduced to 8% from

APRS president RVS Krishna Mohan resented the implementation of the new PRC before giving the PRC report to the employees' unions.

Dy CM Alla Nani appreciates journalist for rescuing girl

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Health Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas has appreciated a journalist for rescuing a girl who jumped into a canal in a bid to end life.

Maha TV journalist Veerendra saw a girl jumping into the Tanuku-Attili agriculture canal last night. The girl jumped into the canal to commit suicide due to family disputes. Veerendra jumped into the canal, swam for 150 meters and brought her to shore. He saved her life.

After receipt of the information, the Deputy Chief Minister, along with district Collector Prasanna Venkatesh, appreciated the journalist in his camp office on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion,



the Deputy Chief Minister said that this kind of act of journalists would enhance respect for journalists. The media should be a liaison between the government and people, he said, and assured to extend needed help to journalist Veerendra.

ZP chairman Kavuru

Srinivas, Deputy Chief Minister's PRO Manikyala Rao, journalists Sanjay Kumar, Sakshi photographer Riaz, Maha TV Journalist Naresh, Nidadavole working journalists union president Katru Vasanta Raju and secretary A Shankar were among those who were present.

Jinnah Tower assumes new colours PNS GUNTUR

The Jinnah tower has assumed

new colours as it was painted with the three colours of National Flag and the national flag will be hoisted on February 3. The controversial Jinnah

tower has become a cynosure of all eyes on Tuesday as the tower was painted with green, saffron and white colours. The tower which had been intact for several decades assumed a new look today. Keeping in view the threat of

demolition by the BJP leaders, if the name of Jinnah was not removed, a strong iron fence was erected around the tower. The national flag would be hoisted at the tower on February 3. Mayor Kavati Manohar

Naidu, MLAs M Mustafa, Maddala Giridhar, MLC Lella National Flag to pull down the Appi Reddy initiated efforts to curtain on the controversy get the tower painted with



three colours and hoist the Hindu outfits. The Mayor announced that the national flag would be hoisted at the raised by the BJP and some tower on February 3.

Foot-over-bridge at Anaparthi station thrown open to public

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The newly-constructed footover-bridge (FOB) with a three-metre-wide gangway and a three-metre-wide stairway at Anaparthi railway station was thrown open to the public on Tuesday. It was a long-pending demand of the people of Anaparthi, which is an important business centre in East Godavari district.

The FOB connects platform nos. 1, 2 and 3 to the West Main Entrance of Anaparthi station. Passengers alighting at Anaparthi can now use the FOB for easily reaching the platforms from outside.

The new FOB was constructed at a cost Rs 1.33 crore in 10 months. The old rail type FOB which is currently in use will be dismantled shortly due to operational and safety reasons.



Now, the Vijayawada Division has commissioned four FOBs in the current financial year against an annual target of five. The other three FOBs are at Vijayawada, Tanuku and Nuzvid railway stations.

Divisional Railway Manager Shivendra Mohan congratulated E Santharam, Sr DEN, Coordination; J V Anoosha, Sr DEN, North; and Ramana Rao, DEN, Bridges and Engineering team.

SP launches lucky draw contest over Disha app

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Superintendent of Police Malika Garg has launched a special lucky draw contest to bring the Disha app, which is designed for the safety of women, closer to the people. As part of this, three of the

women who download the Disha app every day in the district are selected through a lucky draw and will be presented with prizes by the SP. As a result of this initiative,

1,255 women in Prakasam district, the highest in the State, downloaded and registered the Disha app on January 31. Among those who downloaded and registered the Disha app on Monday were Swathi of Palukur village in Kandukur mandal, P Jhansi of Pedda Uyyalawada village in Darsi mandal, S.Radhika of Ganjipalem village in Chirala mandal emerged as the winners of the lucky draw which was taken on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the SP exhorted all the women



to download the Disha app to get protection when in danger or distress, adding that Disha App enhances the safety and security of women by preventing domestic violence, eveteasing, harassment, assault, abuse, blackmail with obscene photos, videos and other forms of harassment.

The SP said that in case of an emergency, if the victim presses the SOS button in the app or even if shakes the phone hard, then the police will promptly reach out to her and rescue her within a few

JC dissatisfied with performance of officials

PNS BHIMAVARAM

District Joint Collector and Municipal Special Officer Himanshu Shukla warned the officials of taking action if they did not change their indifferent attitude in discharging duties. He paid surprise inspection to the town on Tuesday and visited some areas. Later he held a meeting with the municipal officials for which MLA Granthi Srinivas was present and reviewed the sanitation and other issues.

Speaking on the occasion, the JC cum Special Officer said that he had directed the engineering

Banned gutka,

seized in raids

PNS VIJAYAWADA

tobacco products

The Krishna district police

have booked 133 cases in con-

nection with the transporta-

tion and sale of banned gutka

and other tobacco products

following raids. As per the instructions of District

Superintendent of Police

Siddharth Kaushal, the police

conducted raids on shops,

godowns and other places.

authorities to immediately clear the pending files and bring the reports to him on Monday. He said that the performance

of the ME should be improved and that it was the responsibility of the officers under him to do the work.

Jagan's 'illfare policies'

triggering suicides: Lokesh

He clarified that only the Municipal Commissioner and

PNS AMARAVATI

TDP national general secretary

Nara Lokesh has expressed shock and grief over the suicide of Pedana

weaver Kachana Padmanabham

along with his family members fol-

lowing a stifling debt trap. Lokesh

said suicides of weavers were rising

in the State due to lack of support

from the government. All incentives,

subsidies and loans were stopped.

No assistance was provided even

during the difficult times like the

Covid-19 pandemic, he said.

the ME should give reports to him and it is the responsibility

of the Commissioner and ME to work with the other subordinate officers in a coordinated manner. The Special Officer asked him to complain to him in writing if the subordinate officers

did not follow his advice. Himanshu Shukla instructed

In a statement issued here on

Tuesday, Lokesh said the ruling YSRCP leaders were boasting of

massive welfare programmes.

'The ongoing suicides have

revealed the bitter truth that the

welfare benefits are not reaching

the deserving sections of people.

The handloom sector in AP has

collapsed completely on account

of the chaotic decisions taken by

CM Jagan Mohan Reddy. Absence

of timely support and lack of wel-

fare schemes have pushed weavers

into irretrievable debts."

the municipal officials to prepare the proposals for development works suggested by MLA Srinivas to send to him.

He warned Jyoti Lakshmi, who is in charge of the sanitation, of action stating that the sanitation condition was poor in

He assured to release funds for the ground levelling works in the house sites. He told them that as it was his first meeting being conducted as Special Officer, he was not taking action against the delinquent officials. Assistant Collector Rahul Kumar Reddy was among those who were present.



Ex-MLA Dhulipalla stages dharna

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) senior leader and former MLA Dhulipalla Narendra on Tuesday staged a dharna at AD office in Ponnur demanding to supply the required quantity of urea fertil-

izer to the farmers. He squatted in front of the office demanding the official to take steps to supply the required quantity of urea fertilizer to the farmers. The wrong policies of the YSRCP led government caused scarcity of fertilizer, he alleged.

HM hands over Rs 5 lakh to rape victim's father

Minister for Home Mekathoti Sucharita handed over Rs 5 lakh cheque to the father of Medikonduru rape victim in his camp office on Tuesday.

The Home Minister handed over the Rs 5 lakh cheque to Krian Chakravarti, father of the rape victim, belonging to

Medikonduru village. The Rs 5 lakh was released from the CM relief fund. Rs 25,000 was also given to him from the Women and Child Welfare department.

ICDSP PD Battula Manoranjani, Sakhi administrator Santhi and caseworker Rajyalakshmi brought Kiran Chakdravari to the Home Minister's camp office.

The Home Minister spoke to the father of the rape victim and knew the details. She assured him to take stringent action against those who were, directly and indirectly, involved in the case. The officials told the Home Minister that the Child Welfare committee is looking after the rape

Tourism Mobile app to be released on Ugadi day

PNS VIJAYAWADA

for Youth Minister Advancement, Culture, Tourism and Sports Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao has said that the Tourism Mobile App will be released on the Telugu New Year

day - Ugadi. The Minister held a review meeting with the officials at the Secretariat and discussed the progress of various investment projects of AP Tourism here on

Tuesday Speaking on the occasion, the minister informed that the

Tourism Mobile App would be released on Ugadi and organize the Tourism Investors Meet & Travel Mart by March 2022.

He said that steps would be taken to encourage and promote boating activities at potential tourism locations in the State by focusing Public-Private Partnership (PPP). Organizing recreational activities at APTDC Restaurants and at Harita Hotels located across the State would

also be encouraged. The minister further advised the officials to focus on the possibilities of introducing new

tour packages at places the airport is located. In Andhra Pradesh, there are 6 Airports located viz, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Rajamahendravaram, Kadapa and Kurnool. This will fillip tourism in the State.

"In order to enhance tourism in the State, Tourism Investors Meet is an important event which will provide an opportunity to interact with tourism stakeholders and investors at one platform and to discuss various tourism development aspects", he said

Srinivasa Rao instructed the tourism officers to organize Tourism Investors Meet & Travel Mart by March 2022, to open an AP Tourism Tourist Information Office (TIO) at prominent locations, at Chennai and Bhubaneswar cities to promote Andhra Pradesh Tourism. Dr.Rajat Bhargava, Special

Chief Secretary to Government YAT&C Department, S Satyanarayana, CEO APTA & MD APTDC, Dr. A Varaprasad Reddy, Chairman APTDC, and senior officers from APTA and APTDC were present.



COCKFIGHT DEN RAIDED, 54 SHARP-EDGED BLADES SEIZED

PNS GUNTUR

The police conducted a raid on a cockfight den and seized 54 sharp-edged knives and arrested five organisers at Sitanagaram on Tuesday.

Police said that on a tip a police team led by CI Sambashiva Rao and SI Vinod conducted a raid on a cockfight den and arrested five organisers. The police seized 54 sharp edge knives which were to be tied to one of the legs of the roosters, Rs 7,800 cash and 10 two-wheelers.



'BUDGET PEOPLE-FRIENDLY, PROGRESSIVE: PM

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Sitharaman

presented a

budget'

PNS NEW DELHI

truly futuristic

Union Minister Jitendra

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

Maharashtra deputy chief min-

ister 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 pay-

the pandemic.



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 . Budaet 2022-23 in Parliament, Gandhi dubbed it as a "zerosum budget", saving 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-

PNS AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Biplab

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

He also said the proposed

scheme - Prime Minister's

Development Initiative for North

East Region - will help boost

infrastructure and social develop-

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.

criticized various budget pro-

The senior NCP leader also

"It seems the Union govern-

ment has decided to continue

its tradition of neglecting

ment of all the states in NE.

of making a new India".

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 anv 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 criticism but not

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

'Union Budget embodiment

"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 devel-

opment projects in NE. It will fur-

ther develop the region & make

it the Ashtalakshmi of the coun-

try's economy," Deb said on

Nirmala Sitharaman said the

new PMDevINE scheme would

be implemented through the

North-Eastern Council and an

initial allocation of Rs 1,500 crore

Ajit Pawar: Nothing for Maharashtra in Budget

Maharashtra in its budgetary

provisions like the previous

ones. Maharashtra contributed

Union Finance Minister

of PM's promises to fulfil'

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

She also mentioned that it

Budget presented by the Hon

haramanl

would not be a substitute for exist-

ing central or state programmes.

embodiment of Hon PM Sh

@narendramodi Ji'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 sec-

tors of economy.... It has the

essence of #SabkaSathS

abkaVikas and will pave the

Aatmanirbhar Bharat," the CM

said on the microblogging site.

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 fis-

cal (2021-22). However,

Maharashtra has received only

Rs 5,000 crore in return," Pawar

has continued this year also. No

matter how much one would

search (in the budget), you will

not find anything that benefits

"Injustice to Maharashtra

forward for an

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

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'.

'Budget very depressing', relief to middle'

The Shiv Sena on Tuesday "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

fails to provide

PNS MUMBAI

schemes are presented as new.

Maharashtra," claimed the

He said the budget is silent

There is no mention of the

on states' demand for refund of

Goods and Services Tax (GST).

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.

finance minister.

Yogi terms Budget 'holistic'

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 worldbeating recovery from the pan-

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 empower-

Recognising the importance

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 affected due to pay cuts and high

dle 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

"India's salaried class and mid-

"This is a betrayal of India's



"Budget2022: The anti-farmer 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

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.

face of the Modi government has bling farmer's income by 2022 is 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

under PLI schemes.' There is nothing, he added, to increase spending and to promote small scale industry.

the new jobs would be created

"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 (to Rs 73000 Crore!," he said in

Guj CM hails budget as 'pro-people', Congress asks about past promises

PNS AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Tuesday called the Union budget as "pro-people", while opposition Congress said it lacked big announcements and was silent on past promises such as increasing farmers' income.

In a statement here, chief minister Patel said the "pro-people" budget will fulfill Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Atmanirbhar Bharat."

"Despite providing vaccines against coronavirus free to people and strengthening the healthcare infrastructure, the budget did not propose any hike in taxes," the chief minister said.



It reflected the Union government's resolve to uplift the economy as well as various sections of society such as farmers, traders, women, the youth, rural folks and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes communities, Patel added.

"This budget provides a blueprint and roadmap for the next

25 years. It focuses mainly on the PM Gati Shakti scheme, allinclusive growth, increase in productivity and new investment. Gujarat is already leading in the Gati Shakti project and we resolve to remain ahead of others in the future too," said the

He also welcomed the Kisan Drone scheme and announced that his government will use drones for crop assessment and digitization of land records.

The CM also welcomed finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement of establishing an international university and international arbitration centre at GIFT City in Gujarat.

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 convenor 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,

appeasing 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." Viiavan 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 'Lollipop Bugdet', 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".

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Work ahead

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

■ n 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 pover-



ty, 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.



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

Deliver equality

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

he 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 to save on maternity benefit costs. Some have prejudices against pregnant workers 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?

ndia 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 takeover of legendary Greece.

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' advo-

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 neighbour-



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.

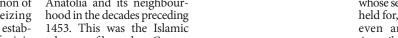
The League of Nations, after the end of World War I - when the Turks were amenable to listening after their defeat and collapse of the centuries-old Ottoman Empire proposed an exchange of Greeks who were to migrate to their original country while all the Turks were to immigrate to Turkey. A detailed 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

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 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 wellknown columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views



ERS 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

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 CB-CID. He also refused to accept that the girl, afflicted with leukoderma, was tortured by her stepmother which would

All fizz, no substance



inance 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

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. Tharcius 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

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

Whatsoever, a few important inclu-

sions/exclusions in the Budget are: Taxpavers 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 Aawas 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

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 yes-

teryear did effortlessly Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

> Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

expressed are personal.)

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.



— Lara Dutta Bhupathi



The BCCI has decided to conduct the Ranii 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 www.dailypioneer.com

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FIRST COLUMN

GANDHI IS REMEMBERED, BUT GANDHI-ISM?

The recent farmers' protest was based on his principles



NILOFAR SUHRAWARDY

ahatma 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.)

Roadblocks to 'Ram Rajya' in Uttar Pradesh



ARUN SINHA

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

f all the states going to polls next month Uttar Pradesh is where the BJP's stakes are highest. The party has been using the state as a laboratory for testing a 'Hindu model' of Government-a model that, in the words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, combines virasat (heritage) with vikas (development). Yogi Adityanath was seen by the party as the best person to execute the model, so he was made the Chief Minister. And, in the party's estimation, he has done exceptionally well. In all his speeches he proudly points to the Ram temple (virasat) with one hand and to the expressways and international airports (vikas) with another.

The stakes of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) are even greater in UP. The RSS is the driver of the Hindutva ideology. The BJP is only its vehicle. The 'Hindu model' of Government combining virasat with vikas is the RSS idea. Those who follow the speeches of RSS leaders know that the Sangh, after winning the battle for the Ram temple, has now set itself a target for establishing a 'Ram Rajya' in the next twenty-five years. 'Ram Rajya' is but another name for 'Hindu Rashtra'. In recent years the RSS seems to have discovered that the concept of 'Ram Rajya' is more saleable to the masses than 'Hindu Rashtra' and also safer from criticism by pluralists.

When Prime Minister Modi talks of virasat and vikas they might seen like two ideas to ordinary people. But to the RSS they are not separate. They flow from the single idea of Rambhakti or complete devotion to Ram. The ruler has to be a devotee of Ram (virasat) and bring prosperity (vikas) to all his people as Ram did to his subjects as the king of Ayodhya. Thus can the ruler establish a 'Ram Rajya'. That is the 'Hindu model' of government the BJP has been trying to construct in UP.

Modi and Yogi have been at pains to prove that the 'Hindu model' of development is far better at social inclusion than the 'social justice' model of government of the Samajwadi Party. The 'Hindu model', they say, has brought benefits to all castes and communities, unlike the Samajwadi Party Government that provided benefits only to a few castes. Social equality and social harmony have been truly established under their rule, they claim. To support their claim, they pointed to the massive support of the non-Yadav backward classes and dalits their party had amassed in the recent years. If you were to believe Modi and Yogi, UP was well on its way to becoming a 'Ram Rajya', with a Rambhakt ruler ruling as honestly, justly and non-discriminatingly as Ram and the people of all classes having absolute trust in his justice and fairness as the subjects of Ram had in Ram's.

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** were living. **DEEP SOCIAL** AND ECONOMIC

DIVISIONS

(The writer is an

independent journalist

and author. The views expressed are personal.)

Ground reports spoke of the lower classes in several villages being denied financial assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana to build pucca houses demanded. Such villages included Jayapur, one of the four villages in Varanasi district adopted by

going out to work in the fields or tend the cattle still faced serious and killed. In 2020, there were uted equitably. The Yogi 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, 59853 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 because they could not afford to the better-off classes. The poorpay the bribe the local officials er 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 distrib-

SUKANTA MAJUMDAR

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 selfillusion 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.



THE DISCONTENT

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 grassroots 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

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

risks of being molested, raped

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





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

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

very leader takes advantage of a crucial moment to settle down. The current UP Assembly elections will be a decisive momentfor the political future of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Once considered a trump card, she now faces a massive challenge in the present elections. The party has not been in power in UP since 1989, and the organization is almost extinct. So, it will be a Himalayan task for the 49-year-old Priyanka Gandhi, who formally entered the rough and tumble of politics

in January 2019. The party has not announced her as the chief ministerial candidate. But if Congress wins by a miracle, who else but Priyanka? She admitted last week that she is the face of the Congress, asking a reporter whether any other face is visible.



(The writer is a senior

journalist. The views

expressed are personal.)

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, crowdpulling, 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 greenhorn 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, Raiiv Gandhi; She was helping him in his campaign trail in Amethi



KUNAL GHOSH

and her mother's constituency Rae Bareili. 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 bet-

ter 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

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 selfesteem and self-reliance, employment and more opportunities to enter politics.

"LadkiHoon, Lad Sakti Hoon" is

share in 2017. Above all, the BJP 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 Prasada and four go a long way

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

'Budget to boost growth, generate jobs'

PNS NEW DELHI

The Budget proposals on capital expenditure, MSME sector, and digital banking will boost growth and promote

job creation, say experts.

Among other things,
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a bigger Rs 39.45 lakh crore Budget, with higher spending on highways to affordable hous-ing with a view to firing up the key engines of the econ-omy to sustain a world-beating recovery from the pan-

Commenting on the Budget announcements, Shyam Srinivasan, MD and CEO, Federal Bank, said 35 per cent increase in capex for infra development, 65 per cent defense capex for local companies, tax incentives for startups, new cargo terminals all indicate the refreshingly clear and well-structured aspiration of Atmanirbhar

Sanjeev Krishan, Chairman PwC in India was of the view that Budget 2022 23 continues to provide much-needed relief to the COVID-hit MSME sector. The revival of



growth and employment perspective, and these measures are geared towards building a vibrant MSME sector, he said.

Kapil Mehta, Co-founder, SecureNow Insurance Broker said the main benefit of the budget for insurtechs is the emphasis on MSMEs and future growth. There are a host of measures aimed at small business, ranging from credit guarantee schemes to improving the ease of doing business, that help MSMEs navigate economic uncertainty, he added. Founder and CEO Tushar Aggarwal, Stashfin was of the view that support announced for digi-MSMEs is critical both from tal payment and banking will

be welcomed by the sector. He said building awareness of digital payments and promoting financial literacy is critical to India achieving the vision of a USD 1-trillion digital economy.Dhanuka Agritech Group Chairman R G Agarwal said the government's focus on augmenting infrastructure via the Gati Shakti plan and focus on the promotion of usage of drones for various farm activities is a welcome step and would immensely help the agriculture sector."However, it would have been also apt had the

Finance Minister... reduced

GST and customs duty rates

on some of the agro-chemi-

Power, solar industry players welcome Budget

ower and solar industry players on Tuesday welcomed the Budget saying the announcements related to the sector will promote investments and boost local In her Budget Speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday made several solar sector-related announcements, including Rs 19,500-crore additional allocation under the PLI scheme, for manufacturing high-efficiency solar modules. Torrent Group Chairman Samir Mehta said the government's focus on energy transition and climate action is also commendable and reinforces a strong commitment towards

cals products, which would have reduced the overall cost for the farmers," he added.

On the government's proposals, Omkar Rai, Ex-DG, STPI said the Union Budget has all the ingredients needed to make India the world's biggest startup ecosystem. The extension of the incorporation period for eligible startups will certainly give a

sustainable development. "Measures proposed by the finance minister in the Union Budget, such as PLI scheme for manufacturing high-efficiency solar modules, are encouraging, he added. "We welcome the inclusion of climate action as one of the key pillars of the Budget. "Several

importantannouncements such as an additional allocation of Rs 19,500 crore for the PLI scheme for module manufacturing, sovereign green bonds for funding solar projects and a robust battery-swapping policy will pave the way for reaching the target of 500 gigawatts (GW) of non-fossil energy capacity by 2030," SunSource Energy CEO Adarsh Das said.

boost to this segment, he said. Rishad Manekia, Founder and MD, Kairos Capital said the taxation along with the introduction of an Indian CBDC in 2022 gives a much clearer idea about the way forward for the blockchain ecosystem in India and how the government is thinking about this

Budget focus on strategy to drive growth'

PNS MUMBAI

The Union Budget was hailed as growth-oriented by bankers, who said it follows the "familiar strategy" of focusing on driving capital expenditure to

help the economy.
"The budget focussed on a familiar strategy of driving capital expenditure to drive growth, with the intention of crowding in private invest-ment through higher public spending, the country's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank said in a note.

Micro-lending focused Bandhan Bank's chief executive CS Ghosh said the substantial rise in planned capital expenditure for the creation of infrastructure, focus on affordable housing, welfare and development of small enterprises, and the farm economy will prepare India for the next phase of growth.

State-owned Bank of India's Atanu Kumar Das said pumppriming private investment as laid out in the budget proposals will lead to multiplier effects across all segments of the real sector.

South-based private sector lender Federal Bank's chief executive Shyam Srinivasan said the document, with measures like a 35 per cent increase

Tourism sector allotted Rs 2,400 cr, relief for hospitality sector cover will be expanded by Rs

lakh crore.

The Ministry of Tourism has been allocated Rs 2,400 crore in the Union Budget which is 18.42 per cent higher than the allocation for the financial year 2021-22, bringing some relief to a sector ravaged by the Covid pandemic. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech extended the **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee** Scheme (ECLGS) up to March 2023 and said its guarantee

in capex for infra development, 65 per cent defence capex for local companies, tax incentives for startups and new cargo terminals, will benefit the banking sector.

It can be noted that with the GDP growth on a decline or the economy in contraction mode, credit growth has been impacted deeply and even as the economy revives now, the system is averaging 9 per cent credit growth. Bankers blame a lack of private capex amid low utilisation and slow growth, and the availability of cheaper alternatives of debt for

the slow credit growth.

LIC-owned IDBI Bank's chief executive Rakesh Sharma

related enterprises. Union Culture and Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy said, "I am grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat ka Budget'.

50,000 crore to a total of Rs 5

The additional will be earmarked

exclusively for hospitality and

said this is a growth-oriented budget that focuses on the infrastructure sector with measures on roads, railways and logistics sectors and also welcomed the measures to extend the emergency credit line guarantee scheme and expansion of the credit guarantee trust for micro and small enterprises.

State-run Indian Bank's chief executive Shanti Lal Jain lauded the focus on lean energy, infrastructure, agriculture, MSME, education, digital economy, hospitality, transportation and logistics sectors and stressed that the government has tried to address the issue of supply-side bottlenecks in the Budget.

















Ministry of Road

Animation task force will help progressive policies

PNS NEW DELHI

Setting up a task force for the animation, visual effects, gaming, and comic (AVGC) sector with participation from the industry will help establish uniform, progressive policies that will promote growth and investments in the sector, according to industry experts.

The government on Tuesday announced the setting up of a task force to recommend steps for the promotion of the animation, visual effects, gaming, and comic (AVGC) sector.

potential to employ youth, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

"An AVGC promotion task force with all stakeholders will be set up to recommend ways to realise this and build domestic capacity for serving our markets and the global demand," she said.

Commenting on announcement, Jehil Thakkar partner and media and entertainment sector leader --



will help India achieve its potential of 20 lakh jobs in the sector."These are critical skills for the growth of the metaverse and India is poised to take advantage of this ecosystem," he said.

Mobile Premier League (MPL) co-founder and CEO Sai Srinivas said the announcment highlights the need to build capacity to serve domestic and global markets and is a strong indicator of the impetus that the government is willing

"It is also heartening to see the government's commitment to work with the industry, allowing for a balanced approach that accommodates the needs of all stakeholders and strengthens the ecosystem holistically. A progressive tax regime, predictable regulatory framework and supportive funding policies will allow the industry to compete on the

world stage " he said. Echoing similar views, Nazara Technologies CEO

Manish Agarwal said India presently commands around 10 per cent of the global AVGC market and has the potential to reach 20-25 per cent by 2027.

This task force will facilitate employment for the youth, build domestic capacity to serve the Indian markets and also meet global demand," he said. He added that replacing the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Act with new legislation that would enable states to become partners in becoming development hubs is a crucial and well-timed move.

such partnership with states on SEZs would help strengthen the supply base of animation and production studios and encourage the development of the existing animation and gaming capacity, Agarwal noted.Pioneer Legal Partner Shoubhik Dasgupta said the recommendations of all stakeholders will hopefully pave the way for better laws on gaming in the country, provide the much-needed clarity and thereafter, invite investments.

'Disinvestment receipts pegged at Rs 65K cr

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 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 İspat Nigam Ltd) has also

"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).

ticket initial public offering of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) is in the works, besides the strategic sale of BPCL, Shipping Corp, Container Corp, RINL and Pawan Hans.

Briefing reporters after the Budget, Sitharaman said, "LIC in all probability is going through this year. I have indicated clearly that it will happen." The final valuation of

LIC is still being worked out. Department of Investment and Public Asset Management

(DIPAM) Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said, "The emphasis is on completion of transactions and implementation. If we keep too high a target, sometimes it also distorts he market.'

The government has missed the disinvestment target for three consecutive years.

In 2020-21, as against the budgeted disinvestment target of Rs 2.10 lakh crore, the gov-37,897 crore.

In 2019-20, the disinvestment receipts stood at Rs 50,298 crore, lower than the Revised Estimates of Rs 65,000 crore and Budget estimate of Rs 1.05 lakh crore.

In 2018-19 and 2017-18 fiscals, the government had exceeded the disinvestment targets set in the Budget. In 2018-19, the disinvestment mop-up stood at Rs 84,972 crore, as against the Budget target of Rs 80,000 crore.

Taxpayers can update their ITRs within two years

PNS NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday gave a one-time window to taxpayers to correct any discrepancy or omissions in their ITRs within two years of filing, subject to payment of taxes. An additional 25 per cent on the due tax and interest would have to paid if the updated ITR is filed within 12 months, while the rate will go up to 50 per cent if it is filed after 12 months, but before 24 months from end of

relevant Assessment Year. Currently, if the I-T Department finds out that some income has been missed out by the assessee, it goes through a lengthy process of adjudication, and the new proposal would repose trust in the taxpayer."To provide an opportunity to correct such errors, I am proposing a new provision permitting taxpayers to file an updated return on payment of additional tax.

Diesel to cost Rs 2 more from Oct 1

PNS NEW DELHI

Diesel in most parts of the country may cost Rs 2 per litre more from October 1 while petrol in a few places such as North East may see a price hike after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman levied additional excise duty on fuel sold without blending it with ethanol or biodiesel.Presently, 10 per cent ethanol, extracted from sugarcane or surplus foodgrain, is blended or mixed in petrol (meaning 10 per cent of ethanol mixed with 90 per cent of petrol) with a view to cutting oil import dependence and provide farmers with an additional source of

Ethanol-blended petrol is supplied in 75-80 per cent of the country as availability of ethanol and logistics hamper supply in remaining areas.On the other hand, there is only an experimental blending of biodiesel, extracted from non-edible oilseeds, in diesel - the most used fuel in the country. "Blending of fuel is

a priority of this Government. To encourage the efforts for blending of fuel, unblended fuel shall attract an additional differential excise duty of Rs 2 per litre from the 1st day of October 2022," Sitharaman said in her Budget speech in



Shares of infra, construction firms UP

Shares of companies related to infrastructure, construction, roads and highways on Tuesday jumped after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said national highways will be expanded by 25,000 kilometre during 2022-23.

The stock of Gayatri Projects zoomed 6.42 per cent, Hindustan Construction Company jumped 4.97 per cent, IL&FS Engineering and Construction Company (4.73 per cent), GPT Infraprojects (2.39 per cent), PNC Infratech (1.41 per cent), Ashoka Buildcon (1.32 per cent) and Dilip Buildcon (1.13 per cent)

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said national highways will be expanded by 25,000 km during 2022-23 and the national ropeway development programme will be taken up in the public-private partnership (PPP)

Sitharaman announced this while presenting Budget 2022-23 in Parliament.

She also said contracts for the implementation of multi-modal logistics parks at four locations through the PPP mode will be awarded in 2022-

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.

The national highways network will be expanded by 25,000 km in 2022-23," she added

The minister said that as a preferred ecologically sustainable alternative to conventional roads in difficult hilly areas, the National Ropeways Development Programme will be taken up on the PPP mode. She added that the aim is to

improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism. "The equity markets were

cheerful on announcement of huge outlay of capital expenditure in overall infrastructure development. This Union budget will also lay the foundation for economic growth through public investnents as India emerges from a pandemic induced slump.

Measures announced for manufacturing, infra building including roads, highways, railways, renewable energy, MSMEs, farm sectors etc, if executed with diligence will go a long way in attracting private capex and lead to accelerated economic growth and of course robust earnings growth for India Inc," according to Devang Mehta, Head Equity Advisory, Centrum Wealth on Budget 2022.

Yesha Shah, Head of Equity Research, Samco Securities said, to sum up, with a if it ain't broke, don't fix it approach, the government has built upon its previous years' budget with obvious winners being heavy industries, infrarelated sectors, hospitality, auto ancillary, defence equipment manufacturing companies and banks

Highlights of Budget for 2022-23

FISCAL POSITION India's growth estimated at

9.2 pc, to be highest among large economies Fiscal deficit in 2022-23 esti-

mated at 6.4 pc of GDP Total expenditure in 2022-23 pegged at Rs 39.45 lakh cr Total receipts other than borrowings estimated at Rs

'Effective Capital Expenditure' of Central Government estimated at Rs 10.68 lakh cr in 2022-23, which is about 4.1pc of GDP Fiscal deficit in current

22.84 lakh cr in FY23

year at 6.9 pc of GDP (against 6.8pc in Budget Estimates) 60 lakh new jobs to be created under productivity linked incentive scheme in 14

TAX PROPOSALS No change in personal income tax rates

Provision to file an updated return on payment of additional tax; can be filed within two years from the end of the relevant assessment year. Updated return provision to enable assessee to declare income missed out earlier □ Tax deduction limit

on employer's contribution to the NPS account of State Government employees ☐ Incentives for Start-ups: Period of incorporation extended by 1 year, up to

increased from 10% to 14%

March 31, 2023 for eligible start-ups to avail tax benefit Any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset to be taxed at the rate of 30 pc; gift of virtual digital asset also

Health and Education Cess Any surcharge or cess on income, profits not allowable as business expenditure

to be taxed in the hands of

recipient

No set off, of any loss to be allowed against undisclosed income detected during search, survey operations Alternate Minimum Tax paid by cooperatives brought down from 18.5 per cent to 15

Payment of annuity and lump sum amount from insurance scheme to be allowed to differently-abled dependent during the lifetime of parents/guardians, that is on parents/ guardian attaining

the age of 60 years □ Surcharge on long term capital gains arising on transfer of any type of assets

capped at 15 pc Gradual phasing out of concessional rates in capital goods and project imports; applying a tariff of 7.5 pc, conducive to the growth of domestic sector

Over 350 exemption entries proposed to be gradually phased out, like exemption on certain agri produce, blending of fuel.

chemicals, fabrics, medical devices, and drugs and medicines for which sufficient domestic capacity exists

 Customs rate, tariff structure simplified particularly for sectors like chemicals, textiles and metals Customs duty rates to be

calibrated for graded rate structure; to facilitate domestic manufacturing of wearable devices, hearable devices and electronic smart meters

Duty concessions to parts of transformer of mobile phone chargers, camera lens of mobile camera module and some other items to prom ote domestic manufacturing o f high growth electronic items Customs duty on cut, polished diamonds, gem-

stones cut to 5%; no duty on simply sawn diamond Ćustoms duty of at least Rs 400 per kg to be paid on

imitation jewellery import Customs duty on umbrellas raised to 20%; exemption to parts of umbrellas with-

drawn Customs duty exemption given to steel scrap last year extended for another year to offer relief to MSME secondary steel producers

 Unblended fuel to attract an additional differential excise duty of Rs 2/ litre from Oct 1, 2022, to encourage



what's brewing?

Cartoons to keep your child engaged

e 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.

Shiva is a young superhero with supernatural powers who lives with his grandparents in a fictional city named Vedas in India were 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!

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!

Nothing will fascinate your child 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 laughter and bring smiles to others' faces. Watch Golmaal Jr at 12.30 PM on Nickelodeon!

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!

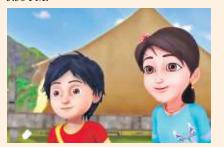
Dogs are man's best friend, and your child needs to know how important it is to take care of these furry little friends. Watch PAW Patrol on Nickelodeon Monday to Friday at 7.30 PM! and follow Ryder and his crew on their mission to search and res-

cue 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 themself. 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!



Rihanna is expecting first baby with A\$AP Rocky

ihanna has babies on the brain! The Diamonds singer and fashion mogul, 33, is pregnant, expecting her first baby with rapper A\$AP Rocky. The couple was photographed out in New York City over the weekend, where Rihanna debuted her baby bump while wearing a long pink jacket. Her oversized outerwear was unbuttoned at the bottom to reveal her growing bump adorned in a gold cross with colorful jewels.

In one of the sweet photos, which were snapped in Harlem, where A\$AP Rocky grew up, the rapper kisses the soon-to-be mom on her forehead as they enjoy a snowy walk outdoors.

Back in May, A\$AP Rocky told GQ about his romance with Rihanna, calling her the "love of my life". When asked what it felt like to be in a relationship, he said, "So much better. So much better when you got 'the One'. She amounts to probably, like, a million of the other ones. I think when you know, you know. She's the One."

In regards to fatherhood, A\$AP Rocky, 33, said starting a family is "in my destiny, absolutely." As he put it at the time, "I think I'd be an incredible, remarkably overall amazing dad. I would have a very fly child. Very."

A source confirmed to PEOPLE in November 2020 that Rihanna

and A\$AP Rocky were dating after years of friendship. The couple had sparked romance rumors since Rihanna split from her boyfriend of three years, billionaire Hassan Jameel, in January 2020. That July, she featured A\$AP Rocky in her Fenty Skin campaign, and the duo did several interviews together to promote the collab.

Rihanna previously opened up about family planning, telling British Vogue in March 2020 that she was "realizing life is really short" and found a new no-nonsense approach to living.
"You don't have a lot of time to

tolerate s----, you know? You put so much on your plate. When you're overwhelmed, you need to start cutting things out. And I'm overwhelmed too much," she said at the time. "What's happening now is that I'm going back to black and white. My gray area is shutting down. I know I will want to live differently," she added, saying that within the next 10 years she sees herself having "three or four" children, whether she has a partner or not. I feel like society makes me want to feel like, 'Oh, you got it wrong ...' They diminish you as a mother if there's not a dad in your kids' lives," said Rihanna. "But the only thing that matters is happiness; that's the only healthy relationship between a parent and a child. That's the only thing that can

raise a child truly, is love."

Ahan Shetty wants to star in the remake of Suniel Shetty's Dhadkan

ctor Ahan Shetty says he would like to star in a remake of his father Suniel Shetty's films such as Dhadkan and Border. Dhadkan, was a hit when it was released in 2000. The romantic drama

film also stars Shilpa Shetty and Akshay Kumar. The movie was inspired by the novel Wuthering Heights. Border, a mega hit, released in 1997, was set during the India-Pakistan War of 1971. It is an adaptation of real life events that happened during the Battle of Longewala in 1971. Talking about the remake culture and a film of his

father he would want to star in, Ahan in a conversation with IANS said, "I absolutely love border so I think *Border* would be a fantastic film to remake and be a part of. I think *Dhadkan* would also be an interesting film to be a part of."

Ahan made his Bollywood debut last year with Tadap, which follows the story of a guy hopelessly in love, who turns vindictive along the course of



the film after being abandoned. Asked what he has planned next, Ahan said: 'There are a few interesting things that we have planned. There should be an announcement within a month... Other than that I can say that I have a four-film contract with Sajid Nadjadwala. So I will be working with him again."

K-Drama Snowdrop to have **OTT** premiere on Feb 9

Snowdrop is all set for its OTT premiere on February 9. The 16-part period drama series stars Jung Hae-In, the star of Tune in for Love and While You Were Sleeping BLACKPINK's Jisoo. The series, which explores the forbidden love between a young couple trapped in a time of political turmoil, has been written by Yoo Hyun-mi and directed by Jo Hyun-tak, the duo behind the 2018 thriller Sky Castle. Commenting on the show's release, director Jo Hyun-tak said, "Snowdrop is a heart-warming fictional melodrama about a young couple in love, and as the story unfolds, find themselves enduring an unbearable pain that one rarely encounters in a life-time. I hope global audiences find

he Korean drama series

from February 9 and will drop in a new episode each week.

this heartfelt series also gripping and

suspenseful as the two come to face

their fate. Snowdrop, Jisoo's debut-

starring performance in a Korean

drama, will showcase excitement,

action, and romance as it follows

Yeong-ro, who goes against her family and her country to help the man

she loves, Jung Hae-In. Jung Hae-In

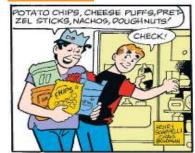
save his lady. Snowdrop will be avail-

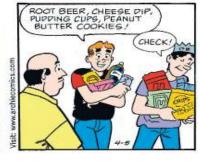
able to stream on Disney+ Hotstar

too puts everything on the line to

FUN

ARCHIE

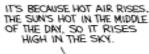


















GARFIELD

NANCY

LET ME SHOW YOU

HOW TO BAIT YOUR HOOK! STICK THE HOOK THROUGH

GINGER MEGGS





TO WHAT DO WE

-Y-YOU----WORM ??

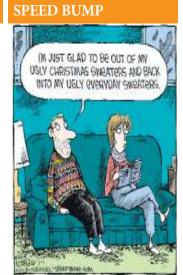
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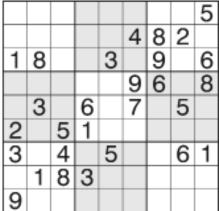
WORM

AURDERER!!!

REALITY CHECK NUMBER ! MUAM, ARE YOU'SURE THAT'S THE GUY WHO RUDNED YOUR SUMMER CAMP!



SUDOKU





· Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9)

2 Said "yes" with the head 4 These hold clothes on a line . The sum of all numbers in

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- The one who comes first in a race
- 3 Twirl around
- 7 Very impolite
- 8 A fire-breathing monster 10 A repairer of teeth
- 13 The head of an empire
- 16 Look very carefully for something
- 17 Jealousy
- 18 Moist 19 Centre

in soil

- DOWN
- A wriggly creature living

5 Two times forty-five

6 A painter uses these

9 A body organ

someone

wheel

11 Touched lips with

12 Connected together

15 A rubber cover for a

SOLUTION

14 Peaceful and still



Tiayawada

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Wednesday February 2, 2022

Jack of all snacks!

K RAMYA SREE

ne thing most of us want to include on our plates, especially mothers for their chil-dren, 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 — Radhieka Pandeya, a fitness baker, and Simer Dhall, a business school graduate, who start-ed 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 excit-

ing?
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. Radhieka'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 kids, 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 mar-ket, 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 snackin 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 Radhieka is a recognised healthy baking expert in the country, and her expertise

Snack-a-doodle currently sells eight products, including "bites",

sion

has helped us crack recipes that are truly and transparently healthy.

yourself baking kit. Their hottest seller is their vanilla milkshake cookie, which, as its name sug-

gests, 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

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-



Siddhant Chaturvedi: Gehraiyaan made me face my fears and casted him.

> iddhant Chaturvedi is all set to enthrall the audiences with his

acting prowess and siz-zling 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

Speaking about it, Siddhant shares with us, "Shooting for a film like Gehariyaan 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."

Batra saw his potential

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

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.



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**

n entrepreneur and Rattan Joneja's work mainly focusses on the application of creating shareholder value to corporates and mergers, divestitures and acquisi-

tions. 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 cre-

ate 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 reallife investment success stories that draw instances of how value can be a key determinant of investment decisions narrated by celebrated investors. The

stand-

ing the world

of investing, and is

designed for investors, analysts, stock market

researchers, business stu-

dents, or just anyone planning to enter into the field of stocks

and investing. It is divided into

quotes and concepts supported by the life story of a celebrated

exclusive interview with the

overview of Value It Up:

Value It Up is a book that sim-

plifies and elucidates the 'Art of

Valuation. The book focusses

Simplifying the Art of

Intrinsic Valuation.

Please give us an

Read on for excerpts from an

investor.

22 chapters where every chapter is aphoristically framed with

book can be used as a helpful ladder of

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.

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 thout healths inventing the parts of the text the leafer.

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 expecta-tions 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 invest-

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.



Dhawan, Shreyas, Ashwin in top bracket along with Cummin

op 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 auc-

tion.

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 wickettaker Harshal Patel, spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and fast bowler Shardul Thankur. 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 brack-

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 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 auc-

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 playng in the U-19 World Cup in the West Indies.

Among all U-19 players, medium Indian 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

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

India's preparations for the agegroup 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 right note, overthe 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

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 would li Bangladesh by five wickets in a tricky with bat

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

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 soild 82 against South Africa in their tournament opener.

Chennaiyin look to get mojo back

against wooden spooners SC East Bengal

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 it's 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.

of 80 crosses. "The confidence of a team is more relat-

you can play well and lose and vice-versa.

said on the eve of the match.

ed to the performance than the results. Sometimes

Our performance is much better than the results

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

"Marcelo and Perosevic's com-

bination is one to watch out for. It

is difficult because Marcelo cannot

speak English but they are starting

For Chennaiyin, placed seventh

to understand each other now."

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

so the players are in a good space mentally," Rivera

there from the start.



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 σ-on The 17-vear-old 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 Awais 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 sev-

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

he has other options to fill in his boots India beat China in back-to-back

Japan hand Saudis first defeat in WC qualifying group

Smarting from their heartbreaking derby defeat, SC East Bengal will have nothing to

lose when they take on Chennaiyin FC in the

Placed bottom of the table with just nine points

Indian Super League here on Wednesday.

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

SC East Bengal have conced-

Since Riviera's arrival, they've

row 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

ed 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.

been even more compact and nar-

Chennaiyin.

from 14 outings, the Mario Rivera-coached



first-half goal from Takumi Affirst-fiall goal from Land 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.

matches in women's FIH Pro League PTI ■ MUSCAT



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 compo-

a certain level of weariness seemed to beset the China Chinese team. women's team right from the opening whistle of their second FIH Hockey Pro League energy and an appetite for the first match on Monday.



match against India.

Lost possession, misplaced passes and a reluctance to get back and defend con-A lack of experience and tributed to a lacklustre first half performance by the

> India, by contrast, started the match with high levels of

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

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 Surong in China goal. In the second half, China

China were fortunate not

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

Commonwealth Australia, Barbados,

England, India, New Zealand, South Africa and Pakistan have have finalised the identity of the already qualified as women's teams participating in the to women than men.

India, Australia to open cricket competition in Birmingham CWG



PTI DUBAI

ricket will mark its return to Cthe Commonwealth Games after a gap of 24 years with India taking on Australia on July 29 in the 2022 Birmingham edi-

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 lineup for the Birmingĥam 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 jointly by the made International Cricket Council and the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) following Sri Lanka's victory in the Games Qualifier in Kuala Lumpur last week and the subsequent CGF ratification of the island nation'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

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 crickbeyond the traditional strongholds and give more people around the world the chance to enjoy the game."

CGF President Dame Louise Martin said: "Cricket is 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

Vijayawada I Wednesday February 2, 2022

tollywood

GHANI

Ghani arriving soon

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 post-poned due to the pandemic. The film's soundtrack was composed by S Thaman, and the cinematography was handled by George C. Williams.

Meanwhile, the makers came up with an update on Rama Rao On Duty gets release date Maharaia Ravi Teja's unique action thriller Rama Rao On Duty being directed by debutant Sarath Mandava under

the release date of the movie. They announced two dates for the same. The movie may release on previously slated late 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." Divvansha 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 Sathvan Soorvan ISC

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

Allari Naresh's next with Hasya Movies and Zee Studios

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 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-

producer Balaji Gutta on Tuesday announced the project and launched the film. Baluunnangi gave the clap for the muhurtham scene, while Naresh Abhishek Agarwal switched the camera on and Anil Sunkara directed has been synony-Vennela Kishore and Chammak Chandra, who are known for mous

comedy films

that engage audiences of all

Hasya Movies and Zee Studios. Zee Studios has embarked on the project

Republic, and

59th project.

movie.

lady.

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?**

egastar Chiranieevi conhear from a few sources that Chiranieevi and Venky Kudumula are tinues to astound everyone with his films. The reportedly in talks with Shruti director has Haasan to play one of the female collabo-Aside from that, insiders say with Venky Venky Kudumula is looking as the other heroine. Malavika's Tollywood

Kudumula for to cast Malavika Mohanan his next. However, debut will be a dream they are vet to finalise come true if she signs this project. The film is the leading produced by DVV dav in t Danayya under the DVV. Entertainments film. Earlier, rumours were that the label. Malavika Mohanan is rumoured to makers wanted to be in talks for Ram Charan's next film with rope in Anushka Shankar and Mahesh Babu's next film with Trivikram Srinivas.



Sudhakar Cherukuri's SLV Cinemas LLP



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.

