ANALYSIS 7

A NEW GREAT GAME

BEGINS IN AFGHANISTAN

RS 1,150.38 CRORE

SENSATIONAL GILL SEALS T20I SERIES



BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA *LATE CITY VOL. 5 ISSUE 113 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable SAMANTHA TO BEGIN SHOOTING FOR

HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW

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FM unveils income tax relief, small saving sops a year before elections

'Saptarishi': Development, reaching the last mile, infrastructure and investment, unleashing the potential, green growth, youth power and

> - NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, Finance minister

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday raised the personal income tax rebate limit, doled out sops on small savings and announced one of the biggest hikes in capital spending in the past decade as she did a tight rope walk in the Budget between staying fiscally prudent and meeting public expectations in the year before general elections.

The personal income tax rebate limit has been increased to Rs 7 lakh from the fiscal year starting April 1 under the new tax regime from the previous Rs 5 lakh. Tax slabs has been cut to five from seven earlier. Also, the maximum income tax rate has been reduced to about 39% from 42.7% after a reduction

in the highest surcharge to

The first budget of the "Amrit Kaal" provides foundation to fulfil the resolve for a developed India while giving priority to deprived sections of the society as well

- NARENDRA MODI,

Taxed at 30%

If deduction, exemption claims

less than Rs 3.75 lakh,

OPT NEW TAX REGIME

NEW DELHI: A taxpayer whose deductions and

exemption claims are less than Rs 3.75 lakh

annually would be advised to opt for the new

income tax regime and pay less tax than they

officer said Wednesday. The Income Tax

Department has arrived at the figure after

free and less tax rate" filing regime for the

assessees, he said. Union Finance Minister

Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting the Budget for 2023-24, said the government has

made the new income tax regime more attractive for taxpayers bringing "substantial

middle class. According to the changes

changes" in its structure for the benefit of the

proposed in the Budget, no tax would be levied

on people with an annual income of up to Rs 7

lakh under the new tax regime but it made no

changes for those who continue in the old

regime that provides for tax exemptions and

gave in the old regime, a senior finance ministry

making due calculations for ensuring a "hassle-

WHAT'S COSTLIER? WHAT'S CHEAPER

Articles made from gold bars Cigarettes Imitation Jewellery □ Silver □ Electric kitchen chimney Imported bicycles and toys Electronic vehicle imnorts

Parts for mobile phones Parts for TV panels Machinery for lithium ion batteries 📮 Raw materials for EV industry

NEW Rebate limit increased from



INCOME TAX TABLE Rs 5 lakh to Rs 7 lakh a year No tax Taxed at 5% Taxed at 10% Taxed at 15% Taxed at 20%

Union Budget drives digital agenda

NEW DELHI: Three centres of excellence for artificial intelligence in top educational institutions and 100 labs in engineering institutions for developing applications using 5G services will be set up, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Wednesday. The finance minister made the announcer her budget speech in Lok Sabha. "Three centres of excellence for artificial intelligence will be set up in top educational institutions. Leading

Sensex jumps over 1,200 points

MUMBAI: Benchmark BSE Sensex zoomed over 1,200 points in the afternoon trade on Wednesday as market investors cheered the Union budget proposals presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha. The 30-share BSE barometer zoomed 1.223.54 points or 2 per cent to its intra-day high of 60,773.44.

Over Rs 946 crore allocated to CBI

NEW DELHI: The Centre has allocated Rs 946 crore to the Central Bureau of Investigation in the Union Budget 2023-24 announced on Wednesday, a slight increase of over 4.4 per cent from FY 2023. The country's premier probe agency is over-stretched in terms of human resources to tackle emerging crime scenes

Rs 15,000 crore for implementation of Pradhan Mantri PVTG **Development Mission** over the next three years under the Development **Action Plan for** Scheduled Tribes.

returned to

investors

seller report.

conducting interdisciplinary research, developing cutting edge applications and scalable problem solutions in the areas of agriculture, health, sustainable cities," she said. Sitharaman said that a

engineering institutions in collaboration with various authorities, regulators, banks and other business for developing applications using 5G

Resources transferred to States and UTs



IIMR in Hyd becomes 'Centre of Excellence'

HYDERABAD: The Indian Institute of Millet Research here will soon get a facelift as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday announced that it will be supported as 'Centre of Excellence' for sharing best practices, research and technologies at the international level. In her Union Budget speech, she noted that India is the largest producer and second largest exporter of Shree Anna' (millets) in the world, which has numerous health benefits and also an integral part of food for centuries. "Now to make India a global hub for 'Shree Anna', the Indian Institute of Millet Research, Hyderabad will be supported as the Centre of Excellence for sharing best practices, research and technologies at the international level," she said. Reacting to the proposal, Krishna Ella, Founder and Executive Chairman Bharat Biotech International Ltd in a statement said the upgradation of the Millet Research Institute is a clear indication of the government's commitment to rural development and food

Rs 10 lakh crore capital investment, a steep increase of 33 per cent for third year in a row, to enhance growth potential and job creation; crowd-in private investments, and provide a cushion against global headwinds.



which is the highest ever and about nine times the outlay made in 2013-14. PAN will be used as the common identifier for all digital systems of specified government agencies to bring in Ease of Doing

enhance opportunities for pvt

investment in infrastructure

The maximum deposit limit for Senior Citizen Savings Scheme to be enhanced from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 30 lakh.

Fiscal Deficit targeted to be

Investment of Rs 75,000 cr,

including Rs 15,000 cr from pvt

sources, for 100 critical transport

Outlay for PM Awas Yojana

is being enhanced by 66%

to over Rs 79,000 crore.

Capital outlay of Rs 2.40

lakh crore has been provided for the Railways,

infrastructure projects, for last

and first mile connectivity for

food grains sectors.

below 4.5% by 2025-26.

Business. 30 Skill India International Centres to be set up across different states to skill youth for international opportunities

Revamped credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs to take effect from 1st April 2023 through infusion of Rs 9,000 crore in the corpus. This scheme would enable additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of Rs 2 lakh crore and also reduce the cost of the credit by about 1 per



16,2 Expenditure

Taxes comprise 58 paise of every rupee

NEW DELHI: For every rupee in the government coffer, 58 paise will come from direct and indirect taxes, 34 paise from borrowings and other liabilities, 6 paise from non-tax revenue like disinvestment and 2 paise from non-debt capital receipts, according to the Budget documents for 2023-24. Goods and Services Tax (GST) will contribute 17 paise in every rupee of revenue, while corporation tax will account for 15 paise. The government is also looking to earn 7 paise out of every rupee from excise duty and 4 paise from customs duty. Income tax will yield 15 paise. The collection from 'borrowings and other liabilities' will be 34 paise, according to the Budget 2023-24

deductions on investments and expenses such Fully imported cars,

EVs, to cost more **NEW DELHI:** Fully imported cars, including electric vehicles will cost more with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announcing hike in customs duty. Customs duty on vehicles in completely built units (CBUs) costing less than USD 40,000 or with engine capacity less than 3,000 cc for petrolrun vehicles and less than 2,500 cc for diesel-run vehicles has been raised from 60 per cent to 70%. Similarly, customs duty on electrically operated vehicles in CBU form, other than with cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value of more than USD 40,000, has also been raised to 70% from 60%. The Budget also outlined that customs duty on vehicles, including electric vehicles, in semi-Knocked down (SKD) form will rise to 35% from 30% earlier. Already, cars imported as CBUs with CIF more than USD 40,000 or with engine capacity more than 3,000 cc for petrol-run vehicles and more than 2,500 cc for diesel-run vehicles attract 100%

I'gana draws a BENGALURU: As it's stocks plunged with flagship Adani Enterprises dropped by Adani group 28%, Adani Group late Wednesday night decided to call off its 20,000 crore Follow on Public Offer (FPO) in a rare move amidst the growing impact of the Hindenburg calls off FPO, blank report raising allegations of "stock manipulation and accounting fraud." The company in a statement issued said that it will return money to its investors. It said that the money to be decision to cancel the offer was taken in the interests of its subscribers. Gautam Adani, Chairman, Adani Enterprises said that the decision was taken amid the fluctuations the

group's stocks saw during the day's trading. Billionaire Gautam Adani lost his title as Asia's

richest person on Wednesday as his conglomerate plunged again in the wake of a US short-

NAVEENA GHANATE

■ HYDERABAD

Once again, it has been a disappointing budget for Telangana as a state. Although the state government had put out a wish list in keeping with federal norms, none of its proposals and suggestions was addressed in the Union Budget. Most importantly, there was no mention of the promises

made under the AP

Reorganisation Act. The ninth

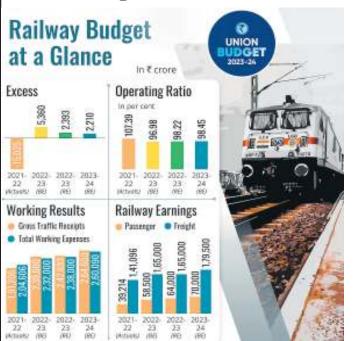
budget is no different, as Telangana, like in the previous eight Union Budgets introduced by the BJP-led Union government, did not receive sufficient

customs duty.

funds. There is no word about the railway coach factory that Telangana has been asking for nine years. The funds given to the tribal university are bare minimum. Kaleshwaram has not been given status of a national project. Telangana was supposed to get Rs 1,350 crore as a fund for backward areas as included in the Reorganisation Act. Telangana

did not get anything in the current budget, but Rs 5,300 crore has been allocated for the development of drought and backward areas in poll-bound Karnataka. The Centre had offered to increase the FRMB limit to raise loans for states by 0.5 per cent of GSDP if states install meters for agriculture pump sets in five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. Telangana has been against implementing some of the power reforms, including installation of meters on farm pump sets.

Railways gets highest-ever capital outlay of Rs 2.40 lakh crore



The capital outlay for the railways has been increased to the highestever Rs 2.40 lakh crore in the Union Budget for 2023-24, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday.

Presenting the budget in Lok Sabha, Sitharaman said the outlay for the railways is nine times the amount provided in 2013-2014.

She said 100 critical transport infrastructure projects for last- and first-mile connectivity for coal, fertiliser and food grain sectors have been identified and will be taken up on a priority basis with investment

including Rs 15,000 crore from private sources, she said.

Budget papers showed that the net revenue expenditure of the railways is placed at Rs 2,65,000 crore in the Budget Estimate (BE) 2023-24 as against Rs 2,42,892.77 crore in Revised Estimate (RE) 2022-23.

 $Re imbursement\ of$ losses on operation of strategic lines has been kept at Rs 487.51 crore in BE 2023-24 as against Rs 2,461.90 crore in RE 2022-23. An amount of Rs 780 crore has been provided in BE 2023-24 towards debt servicing of market borrowings for national projects.

The total outlay provided for capital expen-diture in the Budget Estimate 2023-24 of Rs 2,60,200 crore includes Rs 2,40,000 crore from general revenues, Rs 200 crore from Nirbhaya Fund, Rs 3,000 crore from internal resource and Rs 17,000 crore from internal and extra budgetary resources.

The total receipt of the railways comprising revenues from passenger, goods, other coaching, sundry other heads and Railway Recruitment Boards have been placed at Rs 2,65,000 crore in BE 2023-24 as against Rs 2,42,892.77 crore of RE 2022-23.

GOVT DOUBLES DEPOSIT LIMIT FOR SENIOR CITIZEN SAVINGS SCHEME TO RS 30 LAKH

PNS NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday proposed to double the deposit limit for Senior Citizen Savings Scheme to Rs 30 lakh and Monthly Income Account Scheme to Rs 9 lakh.

In her Budget Speech, the minister also



announced a new small savings scheme for women. "The maximum deposit limit for Senior Citizen Savings Scheme will be enhanced from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 30 lakh," the minister said in her 87-minute long speech.

She also proposed that the maximum deposit limit for Monthly Income Account Scheme will be enhanced from Rs 4.5 lakh to Rs 9 lakh for a single account and from Rs 9 lakh to Rs 15 lakh for a joint account.

Announcing a new 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Mahila Samman Bachat Patra', Sitharaman said a one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, will be made available for a two-year period up to March 2025. This will offer deposit facility up to Rs 2 lakh in the name of women or girls for a tenor of 2 years at fixed interest rate of 7.5 per cent with partial withdrawal option,

The minister also announced to that an integrated IT portal will be established for investors to reclaim unclaimed shares and unpaid dividends from the Investor

Education and Protection Fund



Rs 1.96 lakh crore for Home Ministry

PNS NEW DELHI

Sending a clear message about its internal security priorities, the Modi government on Wednesday allocated Rs 1.96 lakh crore to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) with a majority of the spending on Central Armed Police Forces such as CRPF and intelligence gath-

ering. The 2023-24 budget allocation to the MHA, helmed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, is Rs 1,96,034.94 crore. The budget 2022-23 had earmarked Rs

1,85,776.55 crore. A substantial amount has also been allocated for improving infrastructure along the international border, police infrastructure and modernisation of police

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for 2023-24 in Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

The bulk of the amount of the MHA, Rs 1,27,756.74 crore, has been allocated to the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in comparison to Rs 1,19,070.36 crore in 2022-23.

CORP AFFAIRS MINISTRY GETS RS 756 CR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Corporate Affairs Ministry will get a budgetary allocation of Rs 756.19 crore in the next financial year, higher than the amount earmarked for the ongoing fiscal ending March 31.

In 2022-23, the total allocation was initially at Rs 733.02 crore, and the same was sharply revised to Rs 630.36 crore, according to the Union Budget 2023-24 presented in Parliament on Wednesday. The Budget documents showed that out of the total amount of Rs 756.19 crore for the next fiscal, Rs 714.19 crore will be from the revenue side and Rs 42 crore from the capital side for

The funds towards regional directors, official liquidators and other expenditures with reference to various bodies under the reference to various bodies under the Companies Act have been hiked to Rs 330 crore for the next financial year over the current fiscal. Another expenditure pertains to expenses of the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), National Financial Reporting Appellate Authority (NFRAA) and Investors Education and

Food, fertiliser, petroleum subsidies up 17% to Rs 5.21 lakh cr

PNS NEW DELHI

Protection Fund

(IEPF) Authority,

The Competition Commission of

The government's subsidies on food, fertilisers and petroleum are estimated to rise 17 per cent this fiscal year to Rs 5.21 lakh crore and have been pegged lower by 28 per cent to nearly Rs 3.75 lakh crore in FY24.

According to the Budget document, the

India (CCI) has been allocated Rs 51 crore, which is higher than Rs 46 crore given in 2022-

23. As per the document, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBBI) will receive Rs 41.85 crore next fiscal. The amount is less than Rs

58.02 crore initially allocated for this financial

year but the figure was lowered to Rs 32.06

pegged total subsidies on food, fertilisers and petroleum at Rs 5,21,584.71 crore in its revised estimate (RE) for 2022-23, as against the actual budget of Rs 4,46,149.24 crore in last fiscal

Of the total subsidies on these three items, the food subsidy is estimated to decline marginally to Rs 2,87,194.05 crore in current fiscal year from Rs 2,88,968.54 crore in 2021-22.

However, the fertiliser subsidy is estimated to increase to Rs 2,25,220.16 crore during this fiscal from Rs 1,53,758.10 crore in the last financial year as subsidies on both urea as well as

non-urea nutrients like DAP (diammonium phosphate) surged. Subsidy on urea is set to rise

to Rs 1,54,097.93 crore from Rs 1,00,988.13 crore, while that on phosphatic & potassic (P&K) fertilisers to Rs 71,122.23 crore from Rs 52,769.97 crore.

Petroleum subsidy, too, is estimated to rise to Rs 9,170.50 crore from Rs 3,422.60 crore in the said





Rs 5.94 lakh crore for Defence

PNS NEW DELHI

The defence budget was increased to Rs 5.94 lakh crore for 2023-24 from last vear's allocation of Rs 5.25 lakh crore. In the Union Budget pre-

sented in Parlimament by Finance Minister Nirala Sitharaman on Wednesday, a total of Rs 1.62 lakh crore has been set aside for capital expenditure that includes purchasing new weapons, aircraft, warships and other military hardware. For 2022-23, the budgetary allocation for capital outlay was Rs 1.52 lakh crore but the revised

estimate showed the expendi-

According to 2023-24 budget documents, an allocation of Rs 2,70,120 crore has been made for revenue expenditure that includes expenses on payment of salaries and maintenance of establishments. The budgetary allocation of revenue expenditure in 2022-23 was Rs 2,39,000

In the budget for 2023-24, the capital outlay for the Ministry of Defence (Civil) has been pegged at Rs 8,774 crore while an amount of Rs 13,837 crore has been set aside under capital outlay.

Boost to EVMs: Nearly Rs 1,900 cr allocated

Nearly Rs 1,900 crore has been allocated in the Union Budget to the Union Law Ministry to buy electronic voting machines ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

According to the budget document, Rs 1,891.78 crore has been allocated for purchase of EVMs by the poll panel.

The provision is meant for providing funds to the Election Commission for procurement of ballot units, control units and



voter verifiable paper audit trial units (papertrail machines) and ancillary expenditure on EVMs and destruction of obsolete

One control unit and at least one ballot unit makes

Sabha elections in 2024,

EVMs," it said.

for an EVM. Ahead of several assem-

bly polls this year and Lok

the Union Cabinet had last month approved a law ministry proposal for funds to procure additional electronic voting machines for the Election Commission.

Sources had then said that more of the same type of electronic voting machines, which are in use at present, will be procured from Bharat Electronics Ltd and Electronics Corporation of India Ltd, the two PSUs which had been manufacturing the machines since they were introduced.

Infrastructure development

Capex hiked to Rs 10 lakh crore

PNS NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday announced hiking the capital expenditure by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore for infrastructure development for 2023-24 and will be at 3.3 per cent of the GDP. Presenting the Budget for 2023-24, she said the newly established infrastructure finance secretariat will assist

in attracting more private

investment. "Capital investment outlay is being increased steeply for the third year in a row by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore, which would be 3.3 per cent

"This will be almost three times the outlay in 2019-20,"

Sitharaman said. According to the minister, the Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure will be reviewed by an expert com-

mittee for recommending

the classification and financing framework suitable for Amrit Kaal.

She said one hundred critical transport infrastructure projects for the last and firstmile connectivity for ports, coal, steel, fertiliser and foodgrains sectors have been

identified. "They will be taken up on priority with an investment of Rs 75,000 crore, including Rs 15,000 crore from private

sources," she said.

Union Budget drives digital agenda

Continued from page 1 "To realise the new range of opportunities, business models and employment potential, the labs will cover, among others, applications such as smart classrooms, precision farming, intelligent transport systems and healthcare appli-

cations," she said. The finance minister announced that to address learning loss incurred during the pandemic years, a national digital library for children and adolescents will be set up for facilitating availability of quality books across geographies, languages and genres.

As many as 38,000 teachers and support staff to be recruited in the next three years for 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools serving 3.5 lakh tribal students, she said.

'Amrit Kaal Budget'

Continued from page 1
Besides, the deposit limit for senior citizen savings schemes has been doubled to Rs 30 lakh and for Monthly Income Account Scheme to Rs 9 lakh. A new small savings scheme for women, offering 7.5 per cent interest rate on deposits of up to Rs 2 lakh for a tenor of 2 years, has been announced.

Sitharaman's fifth straight budget comes at a time when the economy is slowing due to global headwinds and there is a need for increased spending on social sectors as well as ramping up incentives for local manufacturing.

She also announced customs duty relief on mobile phone components, as well as on capital goods for lithium batteries and other such items to boost green energy and exports. This is the final full budget before the general elections in April/May next year. An interim budget, called vote on account, is to

be presented in February next year and the new government will present the full budget

sometime in July 2024 For 2023-24, capital investment outlay has been increased steeply for the third year in a row by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore, which would be 3.3 per cent of the GDP. This will be almost three times the outlay in 2019-20.

Since coming to power in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has ramped up capital spending, including on roads and energy, while wooing investors through lower tax rates and labour reforms, and offering subsidies to poor households to clinch their political support.

"This Budget hopes to build on the foundation laid in the previous Budget, and the blueprint drawn for India@100," Sitharaman said in her budget speech in Lok

Sensex jumps over 1,200 points

Continued from page 1
The broader NSE Nifty jumped 310.05 points or 1.75 per cent to 17,972.20.

"The market had mixed expectations on the budget presuming it to be populist and low elbowroom for the government ahead of the slowing economy, high inflation and interest rates. However, the government has taken it to a new zone with a well-tuned perfection between growth and stabil-

"The rise in capital expenditure by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore is the shot in the arm heading a multiplier effect on the economy. While high amount of schemes and tax benefit to rural economy and taxpayers will enhance consumption growth in India. Much beyond expectations, a win-win for households and corporates. It is a 10 on 10 budget," said Vinod Nair, head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Over Rs 946 crore allocated to CBI

Continued from page 1 dominated by artificial

intelligence, cryptocurrency, darknet, and conventional crimes like bank fraud cases and ongoing high-profile extradition cases in courts abroad, in addition to criminal cases handed over by various states, High Courts and the Supreme Court.

The agency received Rs 841.96 crore to manage its affairs in the Budget Estimates

for 2022-23, which was later increased to Rs 906.59 crore in the Revised Estimates.

The Government has allocated Rs 946.51 crore to the agency for 2023-24, the Budget document presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday.

"The provision is for the establishment-related expenditure of the Central Bureau of Investigation, which is entrusted with investigation

and prosecution in corruption cases against public servants, private persons, firms and other cases of serious crimes, the Budget document said.

It also includes provision for various projects such as the modernization of CBI's training centres, establishment of technical and forensic support units, comprehensive modernization and purchase of land/construction of office/residence, it said.

Adani group...

Continued from page 1 It comes just a day after the group managed to muster support from investors for a \$2.5 billion share sale for flagship firm Adani Enterprises on Tuesday, in what many saw as a stamp of investor confidence.

The report by Hindenburg Research last week alleged improper use by the Adani Group of offshore tax havens and stock manipulation.

TELANGANA DRAWS A BLANK

Continued from page 1 As per the Budget, 0.5 per cent FRBM will be allowed only if power reforms are implemented. Telangana had categorically stated that it would not install meters. This means that the state

will have to forgo raising

ter deal than most states.

despite giving farmers a bet-

another Rs 6,000 crore,

demanding certain GST concessions and special incentives for performing states. No such concessions or incentives have been granted. Telangana did not get anything new in relation to industry. Telangana wanted support for NIMZ, Industrial Corridor, and Pharma City, among others.

Telangana has been

Telangana has been demanding the Centre to implement the recommendations of the Central Finance Commission. Telangana has been raising its voice to reduce burden of cesses, but there is no relief.

The total Central tax collection is estimated at 33,68,858 crore in 2022-23.

Of this, the share of states has been estimated at Rs 10,21,488 crore. The Center gives only 30.4 per cent of the total tax revenue collected by the Center to the states. According to the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission, 41 per cent of the taxes collected by the Center should be given to the states.

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India's skilling ecosystem to be expanded; stipend support

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's digital ecosystem for skilling will be further expanded with the launch of a unified Skill India Digital platform, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Wednesday, with the Budget laying the roadmap to train lakhs of youth in the next three years.

Presenting the Union Budget for 2023-24, Sitharaman said stipend support will be provided to 47 lakh youth in three years via direct benefit transfer through roll out of a pan-India National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme.

"Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 will be launched to skill lakhs of youth within the next three vears. On-job training, industry partnership, and alignment of courses with needs of industry will be emphasized," the Finance Minister stated.

She shared that the scheme will also cover new age

courses for Industry 4.0 like coding, AI, robotics, mechatronics, IOT, 3D printing, drones, and soft skills.

Moreover, to skill youth for international opportunities, 30 Skill India International Centres will be set up across different states, Sitharaman said.

The digital ecosystem for skilling will be further expanded with the launch of a unified Skill India Digital platform for enabling demand-based formal skilling, linking with employ-

improve value

chain efficiencies

Customs duty on

manufa.cturing of shrimp feed will

also be reduced to

promote export of

marine products,

natural farming,

government will

facilitate 1 crore

farmers for this

the FM said the

For adoption of

and expand the

fishery market.

key inputs for

domestic

she said

ers including MSMEs, and facilitating access to entrepreneurship schemes, the Finance Minister informed.

This is the last full Budget of the second term of the BJP-led NDA government ahead of the general elections in 2024.

Sitharaman presented her fifth full Budget after she took over as Finance Minister in July 2019 from late Arun Jaitley, who opted out due to health reasons.

38,800 teachers will be hired for Ekalavya Model

PNS NEW DELHI

As many as 38,800 teachers will be hired for Ekalavya Model Residential Schools, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on

Wednesday.
Presenting the last last full
Budget of the second term of the BJP-led NDA govern ment ahead of the general elections in 2024, she said a national digital library for children and adolescents will be set up for facilitating quality books. She also said the Centre will provide Rs 5,300 crore assistance to drought-prone central region of Karnataka.

National Digital Library for children, adolescents to be set up

PNS NEW DELHI

A National Digital Library for children and adolescents will be set up for facilitating the availability of quality books across geographies, languages, genres and levels, and device agnostic accessi-bility, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced Wednesday.

In her Budget speech, she said states will be encouraged to set up physical libraries for them at panchayat and ward levels and provide infrastructure for accessing the National Digital Library resources.

To build a culture of reading and to make up for pandemic-time learning loss, the National Book Trust,

Children's Book Trust and other sources will be encouraged to provide and replenish noncurricular titles in regional languages and English to these physical libraries. "Collaboration

with

NGOs that work in literacy will also be a part of this initiative. To inculcate financial literacy, financial sector regulators and organizations will be encouraged to provide age-appropriate reading material to these libraries,"

Sitharaman said. The proposal has been welcomed by stakeholders in the education sector.

According to Tanvi Miglani, spokesperson of the HLM Group of Institutions,

setting up a National Digital Library is a great policy measure to make learning resources available in various subjects for children and adolescents on a consolidated digital platform.

Union Budget: Lokpal gets Rs 92 cr

The government has allocated Rs 92 crore to anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal in the Union Budget for 2023-24 to meet its establishment and construction related expenditures, a dip of over Rs 105 crore from the

revised estimates of the current fiscal. The Lokpal was given Rs 34 crore in 2022 23 which was revised to Rs 197.50 crore, according to the Union

Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday. A total of Rs 92 crore has been allocated for the next fiscal to meet its establishment and

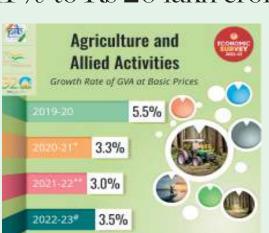
construction expenditures PNS NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday announced an 11 per cent hike in agriculture credit target to Rs 20 lakh crore for the next fiscal with focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries, a move aimed at providing higher farm loans at a subsidised rates to the

farming community.

Among other big ticket announcements for agriculture and allied sector, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman -in her budget speech -- said the government will launch a new sub-scheme of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana with an investment of Rs 6,000 crore to

Govt raises farm credit target by 11 % to Rs 20 lakh crore



purpose and will also set up 10,000 Bio-Input Resource Centres for creating a national-level distributed micro-fertilizer and pesticide manufacturing network.

Further, the government will incentivise state governments and Union Territories under the Pradhan Mantri Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of

Mother Earth (PM-

Rs 27,150 cr allocations for Telangana

PNS HYDERABAD

PRANAM) to promote alternative fertilizers and balanced use of chemical fertilizers.

That apart, the govern-ment will launch an Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Program to boost availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high value horticultural crops with an outlay of Rs 2,200 crore, she said. To encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas, the FM said the government will set up an Agriculture Accelerator Fund (AAF). A digital public infrastructure for agriculture will also be built to enable inclusive, farmer-centric solutions.

Rs 1,11,169 crore was spent on the

100 days of wage employment in a

financial year to at least one

member of every household

whose adult members vol-

unteer to do unskilled

manual work. It also

earmarks at least

one-third of jobs

for women.

Primary Deficit

7,79,022

7,20,545

ments.

scheme as per previous budget docu-

The scheme provides guaranteed

As per the latest available data, the allocations for Telangana under the Union Budget add up to Rs 27,150 crore. This includes Rs 1,650 crore for Singareni, Rs 300 crore for IIT Hyd and Rs 1,473 crore for the Heavy Water Plant, Telangana will draw money from the combined

allocations. This includes Rs 6,835 crore for 22 All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), including the ones in Mangalagiri of Andhra Pradesh and Bibi Nagar of Telangana. A sum of Rs 37 crore has been allocated for Tribal Universities and Rs 357 crore for all muse-ums, including the Salar Jung Museum.

Andhra Pradesh is estimated to have got Rs 41,338 crore, including the combined allocations. This includes Rs 47 crore for AP Central University, Rs 168 crore for Petroleum University, and Rs 683 crore for the Vizag Steel

'Replacing old political...', when Sitharaman's budget speech

Whether it was just a slip of tongue or a tongue-in-cheek swipe at opposition parties, Finance Minister Nirmala before correcting it with "old polluting vehicles" triggered moments of mirth all round during her budget speech in Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

important continuing pol-

icy. Replacing the old political..." Treasury

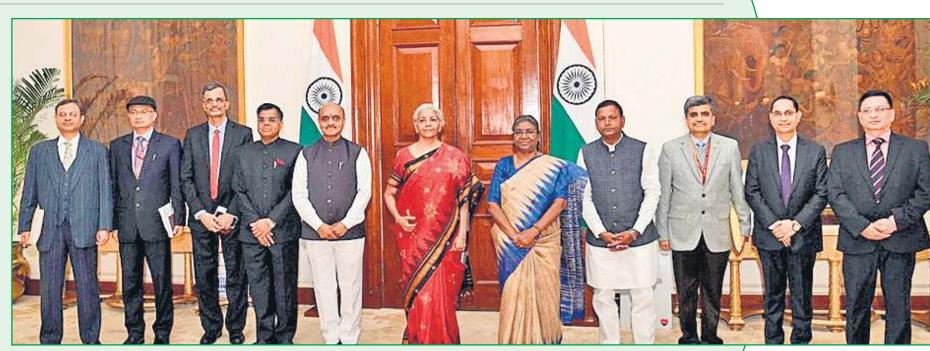
benches had a good

Sitharaman's mention of replacing "old political" speaking on the vehi replacement measures to curb pollution, she said, "Vehicle replacement is an

laugh as the slip, deliberate or not, appeared to be aimed at the opposition Congress, India's oldest political party which has been replaced by the BJP as the country's most powerful party. Smiling, she quickly fol-

lowed up with a sorry and continued. "Replacing old polluting vehicles, may be applicable, right... Replacing old polluting vehicles is an our economy. In furtherance of the vehicle scrapping policy mentioned in the Budget 22-23, I have allocated ade-

quate funds to scrap old vehicles of the central gov-



Rural Ministry, MGNREGS witness cut in allocations



PNS NEW DELHI

The Rural Development Ministry has been allocated Rs 1,57,545 crore in the Union Budget for 2023-24, around 13 per cent less than the estimated expenditure made by the ministry in the current fiscal.

The allocation for the flagship Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS) too has been cut by almost one-third.

According to Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday, Rs 1,35,944.29 crore was allocated to the Rural Development Ministry initially

However, according to the revised estimates, which is a mid-year review of possible

expendi-

ture, it has gone higher to Rs 1,81,121 crore. The actual expenditure for the Ministry in 2021-22 was Rs 1,60,433.4 crore. MGNREGS has been allocated Rs 60,000

crore for 2023-24, almost 32 per cent lesser than revised estimates for last fiscal. In 2022-23, the government had allocated Rs

73,000 crore for MGNREGS in the Budget, while the expenditure as per the revised estimates was Rs 89,400 crore. The Economic Survey released on Tuesday stated that the number of persons demanding

work under MGNREGS is back to the pre-pandemic levels from July to November 2022.

The survey attributed it to the "normalisation of the rural economy" and "swift recovery from Covid induced slowdown"

In 2021-22, Rs 73,000 crore was allocated to the Ministry, while Rs 98,467.85 crore was actually spent on MGNREGS, while in

2020-21,

FUEL SUBSIDIES ARE BACK

Oil cos to get Rs 30,000 cr for holding petrol, diesel prices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Budget for 2023-24 will dole out Rs 30,000 crore to state-owned fuel retailers to make up for the massive losses they ran because of holding petrol and diesel prices despite rise in cost in a bid to help the government contain inflation.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has allocated the money under the head "capital support to oil marketing companies". It offered no explanation why the blue chip, cash rich oil PSUs should need capital support.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) haven't changed petrol and diesel prices since April 6, 2022, despite input crude oil prices rising from USD 102.97 per barrel that month to UŠD 116.01 per barrel in June and falling to USD 80.92 per barrel this month.

No capital gains tax if physical gold converted

PNS NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Feb 1 (PTI) The government on Wednesday said there won't be any capital gain tax if physical gold is converted to an Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) and vice versa.

Announcing this in her Budget speech for the 2023-24 fiscal, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said: "The conversion of physical gold to Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) and vice versa is proposed not to be treated as a transfer and not to attract any capital gains."

This would promote investments in electronic equivalent of gold,

EGRs are depository gold receipts traded on the stock exchanges.
Under this form, investors buy the gold in dematerialised form and are given gold receipts instead of physical gold. The BSE was the first stock exchange to launch EGRs on its platform.

7,06,845

8,14,668

UNION **Key Numbers** UDGET 2023-24 In ₹ crore 2022-23 2022-23 2023-24 2021-22 (Budget (Revised (Budget Estimates) Estimates) (Actuals) Revenue Receipts 21,69,905 26,32,281 22,04,422 23,48,413 Capital Receipts 16,23,896 17,40,487 18,38,819 1,870,816 Total Receipts 37,93,801 45,03,097 Total Expenditure 37,93,801 39,44,909 41,87,232 45,03,097 Revenue Deficit 10,31,021 9,90,241 11,10,546 8,69,855 Effective Revenue Deficit 7,88,375 6,72,598 7,84,958 4,99,867 Fiscal Deficit 16,61,196 17,55,319 17,86,816

■ National Data Governance Policy to be brought out to unleash innovation and research by start-ups and

■ 'Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes', MISHTI, to be taken up for mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands, through convergence MGNREGS, between CAMPA Fund and other

sources. To commemorate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, to be launched. It will offer deposit facility of up to Rs 2 lakh in the name of women or girls for tenure of 2 years (up to March 2025) at fixed interest rate of 7.5 per cent with partial

withdrawal option.

Fiscal Deficit of 3.5 per cent of GSDP allowed for states of which 0.5 per cent is tied to power sector reforms. ■ The fiscal deficit is 6.4 per

cent of GDP for the current fiscal, adhering to the Budget Estimate. ■ The gross market borrow-

ings for 2023-24 are estimated at Rs 15.4 lakh crore.

 To further improve tax payer services, proposal to roll out a next-generation Common IT Return Form for tax payer convenience, along with plans to strengthen the grievance redressal mecha-

Rebate limit of Personal Income Tax to be increased to Rs 7 lakh from the current Rs 5 lakh in the new tax regime. Thus, persons in the new tax regime with

income up to Rs 7 lakh not to pay any tax.

■ Tax structure in new personal income tax regime, introduced in 2020 with six income slabs, to change by reducing the number of slabs to five and increasing the tax exemption limit to Rs 3

■ Highest surcharge rate reduced from 37 per cent to 25 per cent in the new tax regime. This to further result in reduction of the maximum personal income tax rate to 39 per cent.

The limit for tax exemption

on leave encashment on retirement of non-govern-

reduced to 13 from 21

ment salaried employees to increase to Rs 25 lakh. Number of basic customs duty rates on goods, other than textiles and agriculture,



SHORT TAKES

Budget 2023-24 has vision for 'New India': UP CM Adityanath

PNS LUCKNOW

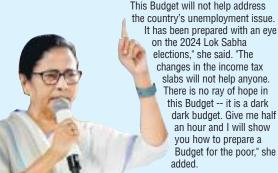
Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said the Union Budget 2023-24 has a vision for 'New India'. "The budget talks about the vision for New India, the country's prosperity and aims to serve 130 crore Indians," he said in a series of tweets in Hindi. "The budget will fulfil the expectations and aspirations of all sections of society, including the poor, farmers, youth and women. Undoubtedly, this budget will prove to be a milestone in making India an economic

superpower," he added.

Budget 'anti-people', 'opportunistic', says Mamata Banerjee

PNS ■ BOLPUR

Terming the Union Budget "anti-people", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said it will deprive the poor. Addressing a government function at Bolpur in Birbhum district, she claimed that the changes in the income tax slabs will not help anyone. "This Union Budget is not futuristic, totally opportunistic, anti-people and anti-poor. It will benefit only one class of people.



Sitharaman's daughter, relatives watch from LS gallery as she presents Budget

PNS NFW DFI HI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's daughter and relatives watched from the visitor gallery in Lok Sabha as she presented the Union Budget for 2023-24 on Wednesday. The visitor gallery was full as the last full-fledged budget of the second Narendra Modi government was presented. Among those present were Sitharaman's daughter Vangmayi Parakala and many of her relatives. Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and several Rajya Sabha members were also present and were seen taking notes as various proposals were announced. In her budget speech, Sitharaman said the world has recognised India as a bright star as the country is recording healthy economic growth despite global uncertainties. India's growth at 7 per cent in the current fiscal is the highest among major economies and the Indian economy is on the right track, she said. In the 75th year of Independence, the world has recognised India as a bright star, the minister said, adding the world appreciates the country's achievements

It's 'Amrit Kaal' for PM Modi, not for common people: AAP hits out at Budget

PNS NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday questioned Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's claim about doubling of per capita income since 2014, saying it is 'Amrit Kaal' for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, not for the common people of the country. Highlighting the achievements of the Modi dispensation so far, the finance minister in her budget speech said the government's efforts since 2014 have ensured for all citizens a better quality of living and a life of dignity. The per capita income has more than doubled to Rs 1.97 lakh, she added, "Neither did the MSP of

crops increase nor did the youth get employment. But this is Amrit Kaal for Modi ji. Nirmala ji is saying per capita income has doubled," AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, who is also the party's national spokesperson, said in a series of tweets in Hindi, wondering "whose income" doubled. The AAP leaders said the Union Budget for 2023-24.

TAX RELIEF TO COOPERATIVE SECTOR

Budget outlay at Rs 1,150.38cr

PNS NEW DELHI

To promote the cooperative sector, the government on Wednesday announced a slew of measures, including a concessional tax of 15 per cent to promote new societies focusing on manufac-turing and a higher limit of Rs 3 crore for TDS on cash withdrawal.

For the cooperation ministry, the government made a total budget outlay of Rs 1,150.38 crore for 2023-24, lower than the revised estimate of Rs 1,624.74 crore for 2022-23.

In her budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman announced a higher limit of Rs 2 lakh per member for cash deposits and loans in cash by Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies (PACS) and Primary Co-operative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (PCARDBs).

The government also provided an opportunity to sugar cooperatives to claim payments made to cane growers for the period prior to the assessment year 2016-17 as expenditure. This is expected to provide them with a relief of almost Rs 10,000 crore.

These measures come

amid the government promoting a cooperative-based economic development model, especially for small and marginal farmers, and other marginalised sections.

To realise the vision of Sahakar Se Samriddhi', Sitharaman said the government has already initiated computerisation of 63,000 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) with an investment of Rs 2,516 crore. In consultation with all stakeholders and states, model bye-laws for PACS were formulated enabling them to become multipurpose PACS. A national cooperative database is

being prepared for countrywide mapping of cooperative societies. "With this backdrop, we

will implement a plan to set up massive decentralised storage capacity," Sitharaman said, adding that this will help farmers store their produce and realize remunerative prices through

sale at appropriate times.

The government will also facilitate setting up of a large number of multipurpose cooperative societies, primary fishery societies and dairy cooperative societies in uncovered panchayats and villages in the next five years, she said.

Budget reduces

surcharge

on HNIs

The Budget 2023-24 proposes

to lower India's highest rate of

42.74 per cent at present, by reducing the surcharge applica-

ble on high net-worth individ-

uals. Finance minister Nirmala

income tax regime, which was

originally introduced in 2020-

21 fiscal but had not received

much traction, by raising the

plifying the tax slabs.

basic exemption limit and sim-

The highest surcharge rate of

ble on those individuals with

income above Rs 5 crore, has

been brought down to 25 per

cent. This means that, with

effect from April 1, 2023, all

be subject to 25 per cent sur-

In her 2023-24 budget

speech, Sitharaman said the

highest tax rate in the country

income above Rs 2 crore would

37 per cent, which was applica-

Sitharaman on Wednesday

proposed to tweak the new

income tax to 39 per cent, from

PNS NEW DELHI

Inflation 13.0 Combined 2021-2022-23

Sitharaman, sixth FM to present budget 5 times in a row

PNS NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is the sixth minister in independent India to present five consecutive budget, joining a select league of legends likes of Manmohan Singh, Arun Jaitley and P Chidambaram.

Sitharaman's budget for the fiscal year starting April 2023 is her fifth straight since 2019. Other ministers who have presented five straight annual financial statements include Arun Jaitley, P Chidambaram, Yashwant Sinha, Manmohan Singh and Morarji Desai.

After taking charge of the Finance Ministry in the Modi Government in 2014, Jaitley presented five budgets in a row from 2014-15 to 2018-19. It was in 2017, that Jaitley departed from the colonialera tradition of presenting Budget on the last working day of February to 1st of the month.

Piyush Goyal, who was holding the additional charge of the Ministry due to ill health of Jaitley, presented the interim budget or vote on account for 2019-20. After the 2019 general

elections, in the Modi 2.0 Government, Sitharaman

was given the Finance portfolio. Under Sitharaman, India has weathered the Covid pandemic with an array of policy measures announced for the poor and continued its tag of the fastest growing major economy and a 'bright spot' in world economy.

COVETED CLUB OF FIVE BUDGETS IN A ROW

Jaitley's predecessor and Congress' P Chidambaram in the UPA government had presented five budgets in a row from 2004-05 to 2008-09. In the BJP-led Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government, Yashwant Sinha as finance minister presented the interim and final budgets for 1998-99. After the general elections in 1999, Sinha presented four budgets -- 1999-2000 to 2002-03.

It was under Sinha that the time for presentation of the Budget was changed to 11am from 5 pm. During Narasimha Rao Government, Manmohan Singh was given charge of the Finance portfolio and he presented budgets from 1991-92 to 1995-96. Singh's 1991-92 Budget with a host of economic reforms to liberalise the economy, gave a new direction to Índia.

UPPER BHADRA PROJECT

Poll-bound K'taka gets Rs 5,300 cr

PNS HAVERI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the Centre would provide Rs 5,300 crore assistance for the Upper Bhadra project in Karnataka, an announcement cheered by the Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

Several BJP leaders, including National General Secretary C T Ravi and state party chief Nalin Kumar Kateel praised the budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha, calling it "farsighted and pro poor". "Rs 5,300 crore has been announced for the Upper Bhadra Project, which is a major irrigation project from Karnataka and ĥas a status of national project. I welcome this, as the project is important, aimed at providing irrigation and drinking water to vast areas of drought affected central districts of the state," Bommai



Speaking to reporters in Haveri, he said this is the first project with a status 'national project' in the state, and large funding to it has made us happy. "Earlier too funds had come to this project under Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP), now as it is a national project, such a large fund is coming," he added. In her budget speech, Sitharaman, a Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka, said: "In the drought prone central regions of Karnataka, a central

assistance of Rs 5,300 crore will be given for the Upper Bhadra Project."

Welcoming the announcement, Health Minister K Sudhakar said: "This will immensely benefit the people of Chikkamagaluru, Chitradurga, Tumkur and Davangere districts by providing irrigation facility to farmers and recharging the groundwater table to provide drinking water in droughtprone taluks of these districts".

Tribals below 40 to get sickle le cell anaemia status and given pre-marital counselling about the risk of their child getting the disease if they marry another affected person. Health Minister Marital Counselling about the risk of their child getting the disease if they marry another affected person. Health Minister Marital Counselling about the risk of their child getting the disease if they marry another affected person. Health Minister Marital Counselling about the risk of their child getting the disease if they marry another affected person. cell anaemia ease if they marry another affected person, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Wednesday.

PNS NEW DELHI

Tribals aged below 40 will be pro-

The government will take up the eradication of sickle cell anaemia in a mission mode and conduct massive screening in

affected tribal areas for early detection of cases, Mandaviya said after the presentation of the Union

is 42.74 per cent.

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD), a genetic condition, is widespread among the tribal population in India and in other vulnerable populations, Mandaviya said.

ment will also issue cards after screening to tribal persons below 40 years affected by the disease mentioning their sickle cell

anaemia status and also provide pre-marital counselling to make the patients aware of the detrimental effects of the disease if they marry another sickle cell anaemia patient and give birth," he said.

The screening is aimed at reducing the prevalence of the dis-

The Union health ministry in collaboration with the tribal ministry and states has prepared a

roadmap to screen around 7 crore

people under the age of 40 in 200 districts with the most affected

The screening will be done using the rapid "point of care" histological test for which a person will just have to give blood.

Another major highlight of the

Budget on the health front, a said is that 157 nursing colleges will be established in co-location with the existing 157 medical colleges established since 2014.

'Nirasha' instead of 'asha' to

PNS LUCKNOW

people of India: Akhilesh

Samajwadi Party chief

Akhilesh Yadav on

Wednesday said the

Union Budget for 2023-

24 has given "nirasha" (despair) instead of

"asha" (hope) to

country. He also

budget further increases inflation

claimed that the

people of the

'Big on announcements, short on delivery'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday termed the Union budget for 2023-24 "big on announcements and short on delivery" as he accused the BJP government of making the common man's life dif-

Alleging the Narendra Modi government has "looted" the country by increasing prices of flour, pulses, milk and cooking gas, he claimed that the budget is proof that people are "continuously losing faith in the BJP".

"Overall, the Modi government has made life difficult for the people. The country's economy has been deeply hurt. The Modi government has done nothing except loot the country's wealth. This budget will be called 'Naam Bade Aur

Darshan Čhhote Budget' (big on announcements and short on delivery)," Kharge said after the presentation of the Union Budget.

The Congress president alleged that the budget has been made with elections and not the country in mind. "No effort has been made in this budget to find a solution to massive unemployment. Inflation is hurting every household and the common man is in trouble. There is nothing in the budget that would reduce prices of items of daily use," he said. Kharge claimed that there is nothing

in this budget for the welfare of Dalits, tribals and backward classes or to protect their rights.
"MNREGA budget reduced by Rs

38,468 crore. So what will

happen to the poor? There is no boost

to the education and health budgets, in fact, they have been reduced. 'The antifarmer

Narendra Modi government has given nothing in the budget for farmers! It was promised to double the income of farmers in 2022. Why was it not fulfilled? Where is the MSP guarantee?

The neglect of the farmers continues," he alleged. The Leader of Opposition in Kajya Sabha accused the Modi government has ruined the banking sector. The fugitives looted the country and fled, he said, alleging that wilful defaulters are to the tune of Rs 3 lakh crores. There is a slippage of Rs 36 lakh crores

more than Rs 1.75 lakh crore income tax last year.

STEP-MOTHERLY TREATMENT AGAIN

Delhi got only Rs 325 cr despite paying

PNS NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said despite paying more than Rs 1.75 lakh crore income tax last year, the city was allocated only Rs 325 crore in the Union Budget 2023-24. Accusing the Centre of meting out stepmotherly treatment to the national capital, he said the budget has offered no respite from the twin problems of inflation and unemployment. "Step-motherly treatment again with the people

of Delhi. The people of Delhi paid

more than Rs 1.75L cr income tax: Kejriwal Rs 325 crore was given for the devel-

> This is a gross injustice to the people of Delhi," Kejriwal said in a series of tweets. "There is no relief from inflation in this budget. On the contrary, this budget will increase inflation. There is no concrete

plan to remove unemployment. Unfortunate to reduce education budget from 2.64 per cent to 2.5 per cent. Reducing health budget from 2.2 per cent to 1.98 per cent is harm-

ful," he said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for 2023-24 in the Lok Sabha on

Wednesday.

and unemployment Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 in Lok Sabha on Wednesday

and said it hopes to build on the foundation of the previous budget and blue print for India@100. "The BJP is completing a decade of its budgets, but when it did not give anything to the public earlier, what will it give now?" Yadav tweeted

Budget puts India on path to become world champion: India Inc

PNS NEW DELHI

India Inc on Wednesday described Union Budget 2023-24 as a road map for nation building, growth-centric and fiscally pru-dent with continued focus on capex and inclusion.

With vision, structure and discipline it puts India on the path to become "the world champion", industry leaders said.

Industry body CII Director General

Chandrajit Banerjee said the Budget is growth-oriented and fiscally prudent with continued focus on capex and inclusion.

The Finance Minister delivered a growth-centric budget building further on the strategy of high capex. The first Budget of India's Amrit Kaal also lays strong foundations for a Viksit Bharat by 2047," he

The continued thrust on capital expenditure will



boost overall economic productivity, crowd in private investment, and drive growth through a multiplier effect, Banerjee added.

FICCI President Subhrakant Panda said the announcements captured the pulse of the economy while retaining credibility both in terms of projections as well as committing to the fiscal consolidation glide path.

Most importantly, he said a "historic outlay" for public capex is a continuation of the heavy-lifting since the time of the pandemic and will have a multiplier effect across

myriad sectors of the economy besides crowding in private investment. A push to investment

and consumption was required to keep the growth cycle in motion. We are happy to note that the government has continued the thrust on capital expenditure with a 33 per cent increase in the capital outlay to Rs 10 lakh crore representing 3.3 per cent of GDP," Panda said, adding it was a step

in the right direction amid a global economic situation which is still not at

Another industry cham-

ber ASSOCHAM said the Budget for 2023-24 is a road map for nation building with continued focus on massive public expenditure on infrastructure, sustainable economic growth, encouraging consumption demand while staying on course of strict fiscal prudence.



REDUCED OUTLAY FOR EDUCATION

Experts pin hopes on State Budget

The Budget for education sector decreased to 6.25 per cent for 2022-2023

as against 6.69 per cent in 2020-21 and 6.7 per cent in 2021-22. Experts consisting of teachers, principals and edtech founders pin point conditions of schools and welcomed the other initiatives.

One of the experienced teachers said the progress of a system mainly depends on how much priority govern-ments give to the education and health sectors. All the experts know how important these fields are in Telangana and Union must acknowledge to distribute funds to this sector, he added.

The experts look up to State for more funds to the education sector in the budget that will be introduced soon and provides all facilities to the government schools.

Many parents have enrolled their children in government schools due to financial difficulties. Government figures with the National Digital

students in government schools has increased. "In order to retain the increased enrollment, we request that more funds be allocated to the government education sector, which is suffering from the lack of minimum facilities, on a war footing and appropriate steps should be taken to increase the confidence of the people and parents towards the government schools.

Gusti Noria, President, the Hyderabad Public School Society said, "This is overall a good consolidated budget. It is a good step by the FM to increase allocation for school increase allocation for school education by 8 per cent i.e. from Rs 63,449 crore (budget estimate) in 2022-23 to Rs 68,804 crore in 2023-24. The emphasis on establishing CoEs for artificial intelligence and also teachers' training being revisited for better pedagogy and raising quality education, is a welcome step. The establishment of District Training Centres for educators along



Peedhi.

Library is yet another initiative that will be a boost for both public and private school education. The Skill India International Centres that are going to be set up across states will provide the right digital ecosystem for skilling and help

foster national apprenticeship. They applauded the initiative of the Centre to recruit 38,800 teachers and support staff for the 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools that will end up serving 3.5 lakh tribal students. Together, these steps would surely pave an effective path to implement the National

tunities making them career-ready. Establishing a National Digital Library will enhance the culture of eLearning across the country, which will be a positive step towards a futuristic approach.

Sumeet Mehta, Cofounder of LEAD, School Edtech company said "The first Amrit Kaal Budget's focus on quality of education for all is progressive and encouraging. I welcome the focus on teacher training and upskilling students with Industry 4.0 skills. However, while initiatives such as a National Digital Library and support for Eklavya Model Residential Schools are steps in the right direction to address the massive learning loss from the pandemic, well-designed PPPs are the need of the hour to create innovation at scale for millions of school going stu-

IOT, 3D printing, drones, and

soft skills under Pradhan

Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana;

4.0 % will help in skilling the students for global job oppor-

CENTRE TO SUPPORT HYD'S IIMR

Budget to address gap between youth & industry

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman on Wednesday said that the Centre will support the Indian Institute of Millet Research (IIMR) in Hyderabad as a Centre of Excellence.

The IIMR is an off-shoot of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research which emphasises on research on millets. The core areas of research include pathology, research and value addition of millets across India.

As per the Union government, a Center of Excellence is an organisation emphasising on enhancing research, training and skill training for specific fields. The CoE collaborates with various organistations to understand the labour requirements and provide training accordingly.

Reacting to the Union budget, President of The Federation of Telangana



Chambers Of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) Anil Agarwal said, "The budget emphasises on seven pillars namely inclusive development, last-mile connectivity, infrastructure and investment and unleashing potential.

The Budget will also address the gap between youth and the industry requirements through skill development programme. The government will set up 30 international skill centres across states." "The exemption of tax for those who earn up

to Rs 7 lakh annually is a substantial take away from this year's Budget," he added. Sharing his insights on the Budget, Chairman of GST and Customs Committee of FTCCI, Sudheer VS said, "This budget is favourable to everyone. It will benefit the salaried employees, government employees or the MSMEs. It is truly an inclusive

budget."
"When it comes to the business community, there is a product incentive scheme if the Budget would have taken it into consideration; the budget would have been a complete package. The emphasis has been laid on skilling and education," he added.

"Green energy is another area that the Budget focuses on, most of our money that is goes into foreign exchange is used for purchasing fuel, to curb the flow the Centre is looking for alternatives such as hydro and bio fuels.

Hyderabad among 1,275 more stations to be redeveloped

PNS HYDERABAD

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that the longpending investment with which Railways potential was not able to be achieved will reach its targets in the current

The railways has been allocated Rs 2.40 lakh crore. "This will be the medium to crores of passengers as we contribute to various revenues of tourism. The selected railway stations will be upgraded as they are core part of passengers. As part of this, Undee Amrit Bharat station and 1,275 more stations will be redeveloped. New Delhi, Hyderabad, Khanpur, Lucknow and many form more are part of this ini-

The welcoming response for Vande Bharat Train which

has world-class amenities has become the topic of the year 2022 and this train will also be haulted at three more places.

Speaking about another development for Railways, the Minister said that Hydrogen Train, part of Green growth will be launched by December

Later, addressing media, General Manager Anil Kumar, South Central Railway, said

table on the allocation for Telangana, but more share is expected this year. Another announcement was made that Bharat Gaurav is that trains will begin from South Central Railway. The date is March18 and they are known as Punyakshetra Yatra and they will be passing from Kashi and Puri. These will start

TSRTC special discounts for advance quota

Education Policy for the Amrit

Karun Tadepalli, Founder and CEO, byteXL, said, "The

education sector has witnessed

some of the announcements

from a longer-term perspec-

tive. The increase of 8 per cent

allocation to higher education

to Rs 44,094 crore is a welcome

move from the point of raising

the employability quotient of

students. This will be a key

component in transforming

the institutes to provide better

education compatible with

industry needs. New age cours-

es for industry, 4.0 like coding,

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has announced special discounts for travellers who make advance reservations. The corporation said 5 per cent discount on the ticket if the reservation is made 31 days to 45 days in advance and 10 per cent discount if the ticket is booked 46 days to 60 days in advance.

The Online Passenger Reservation System (OPRS) software has been updated accordingly. TSRTC has clarified that this discount is applicable for all services with advance reservation

On the occasion of Sankranti festival, the company has increased the advance reservation from 30 days to 60 days. This facility is being provided till June this year and has received good response from the passengers. They booked their tickets online without any hassle. TSRTC has announced these concessions to be more accessible to passengers.

T-Hub CEO terms budget 'extremely encouraging'

PNS HYDERABAD

T-Hub CEO Mahankali Srinivas Rao (MSR), commenting on the Union Budget, termed it as "extremely encouraging". He said, "The Union Budget's elaborate focus on building a digital economy and technology-enabled development is extremely encouraging. As mentioned during the Budget, start-ups have emerged as growth drivers for our economy showcasing the immense potential of India's start-up ecosystem. It's evident from the government's decision to extend the date of incorporation for income tax benefits from 31March 2023 to 31March 2024, will empower the start-up sector, foster entrepreneurship significantly, and give rise to a new generation of founders. We thank the government for extending the benefit of carrying forward losses on change of shareholding to 10 years of incorporation from 7 years. This will help start-ups adjust initial



decision to set up Agriculture Accelerator Fund will encourage agri-tech start-ups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas. This will bring innovative and affordable solutions for challenges faced by farmstart-up ecosystem", MSR said. ers and transform the traditional agricultural sector.

"Initiatives like National Data Governance Policy, Skill India Digital Platform, and upskilling policies will address the industry-academia widening gap and nurture entrepreneurship at the grassroots level. We are also happy to note that the government had allocated Furthermore, government's India Seed Fund Scheme and business cycle of start-ups.

the budgetary allocations for the Fund of Funds for Startups stood at Rs 1,000 crore. This will help in nurturing innovation and encouraging private investments in the

The government has taken a series of steps to promote start-ups in the country. The Budget highlights special incentives under the Startup India initiative, Fund of Funds for Start-ups (FFS) scheme, Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS), and Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS) encouraging cap-

Mass cheating during TOEFL tests detected

PNS HYDERABAD

Hyderabad cybercrime police has registered a case against a gang for accommodating mass copying in TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam room through Whatsapp, on Wednesday.

Police revealed that the gang has been charging Rs 25,000 from TOEFL applicants to leak answers to them and score high in the exam. The gang has been leaking answers through Whatsapp to students in the exam centers.

ETS (Educational Testing Service India) registered a complaint against the incident with evidence. Investigations are under-

TOEFL is conducted as a qualifying exam for international universities. Amidst trends of International education, many students have been taking Qualifying English and foreign language exams

ALL-TIME RECORD BROKEN

Singareni CCL transports 68.4 lakn tonnes of coal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) recorded an all-time high coal shipment in January by transporting 68.4 lakh tonnes of coal in January. The SCCL also recorded 16.67 lakh cubic meters overburden (OB) extraction on January 31, which is another all-time record according to the management.

SCCL Chairman and MD N. Sridhar said, "In the month of January, Singareni transported 68.4 lakh tonnes of coal, an all-time record in its history. The previous record of 64.7 lakh tonnes of coal shipment in the month of March 2016 was recorded till now."

He further added, "I am happy for achieving many alltime records in the background of progressing towards the specified targets in the month of January. I hope that if the same trend continues in the remaining 60 days, if all the areas go ahead in a planned manner to achieve the targets assigned to them on a daily basis, they will be able to cross

the specified annual production target of 700 lakh tonnes." In January, a total of 1,216

pallets of coal were transported from 11 areas at an average rate of 39 railcars per day, surpassing the highest coal shipment of 1,186 pallets in December 2022. Majority of the coal was transported to thermal power stations in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh along with Telangana GenCo."

Along with coal transportation, Singareni has also achieved a new record in the removal of overburden in open cast mines.

On January 31, from the morning shift to the night shift, the highest overburden of 16.67 lakh cubic meters was removed. On January 15, OB of 15.75 lakh cubic meters was removed.

The overburden is crucial to produce coal in 18 surface mines across Singareni. . It is removed with the help of company machines and off-loading machines. This new record was set when 14.83 lakh cubic meters of overburden was

Govt schools under Mana Ooru Mana Badi opened

PNS HYDERABAD

from Secunderabad.

The first phase of inauguration of schools under Mana Ooru Mana Badi has rolled out in the

State Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy said that the government's aim is to strengthen the education sys-

On Wednesday, Sabitha Indra Reddy, Chief Secretary to Government Shanti Kumari, ZP Chairperson Thigala Anita Haranath Reddy and Education Department Secretary Vakati Karuna inaugurated the infrastructure facilities established under the Mana Ooru-Mana Badi programme at Mandal Parishad Primary School in Rachaluru Village, Kandukuru Mandal, Ranga Reddy district.

On this occasion, the Minister said that the Mana Ooru Mana Badi programme was undertaken by Chief Minister for the development of education and with the intention of providing 26,000 schools in the state, 9,000 schools were selected in the first release, and as part of that, 464 schools in Rangareddy district were provided with all facilities and this is historic.

2,814 child labourers rescued through Operation Smile-IX

PNS HYDERABAD

In an initiative to rescue child labourers and missing children, a total of 2,814 children have been rescued under Operation Smile- IX, conducted by the Child Welfare Committee throughout Telangana from January 1 to January 31. Over 450 of them were rescued in five zones of Hyderabad. Among the rescued children, 2,421 were boys and 393 were girls. Around 2,467 children have been returned to their parents. Remaining 347 children were admitted to rescue homes and

child care homes. According to the police, 872 children, who belong to neighbouring states or countries, have been rescued. The report revealed that 161 children were rescued from streets,

1,401 children were rescued from bonded child labour, 203 children from brick kilns, 930 children from other industrial sites and 119 children who were begging, were rescued in the operation.

Around 352 children were enrolled in DARPAN Application and 802 children were compared with the missing children database during Operation Smile-IX. In total, 391 FIRs were registered under various sections of laws and involving 403 accused persons. Out of them, 390 accused persons were arrested on the same day. The mission also rescued a child who had been missing for the last six years in

Nalgonda. The Labour Department has also imposed a fine of Rs 21,54,371, collectively, on the employers for working with

child labourers. A total of six cases have been registered in different police stations against employers for putting children at work.

Specific daily situation reports for collecting data were framed and such collated data was further used to know potential "Black Spots" where most of the children were found under vulnerable conditions.

During this operation, a total of 2,814 children were rescued. Out of them, 760 children were rescued by Cyberabad police teams.

Operation Smile is conducted every year in the month of January to trace and rescue missing children, children involved in child labour, bonded labour, micro industries, begging and trafficking chil-

Gang of four arrested for cheating; Rs 72 lakh seized

PNS HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force in coordination with the Nampally police on Wednesday arrested four persons in connection with cheat-

The four accused were identified as 30-year-old carpenter Kanhaia Lal AKA Jatin, 24year-old Ramavathar Sharma AKA Muniram, 26-year-old, Bharat Kumar and 25-year-old Ram Kishan Sharma. All the accused are natives of Rajasthan.

The gang has been booked under two cases of cheating by the Nampally police under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code. The police seized cash worth Rs 72, 50,000 from the accused. Kanhaia was involved in sliding window business in Kolkata. He took loans from his acquaintances for business transactions.

Kanahia planned to dupe

people on the pretext of taking loans. He prepared fake currency notes along with Sharma, Kishan and Kumar. Kanhaiah then took loans from his customers in Hyderabad. He handed them fake notes while retuning the amount. On December 24 2022, Kanhaia and Sharma took a loan of Rs 30, 00,000 from the victim Mohammed Younus, the co-owner of Hotel Majestic. The accused then prepared fake notes worth Rs 30, 00,000 with the help of Kishan and Kumar and handed them to the victim on

January 1, 2023. On December 26, 2022. Kanhaia and Sharma took a loan of Rs 50, 00,000 from Ikon Technologies Private Limited at Madhapur. The accused promised to return the amount on December 28.

The police arrested the gang from Bhaskar Lodge, in

Traffic curbs ahead of TS Budget session

The Hyderabad traffic police on Wednesday released traffic restrictions ahead of the Telangana Assembly's Budget session on January 3.

The traffic restrictions will remain in place from 9 am to 3 pm (except on Sunday) until the completion of the session. In view of the restrictions, traffic moving from Telugu Thalli Flyover will be diverted towards Iqbal Minar and Ravindra Bharathi. Commuters moving from VV Statue towards Shadaan will be directed towards Nirankari and Old Saifabad police station and will have to go through

Similarly, commuters moving from Masab Tank towards the PTI building will be diverted at Ayodhya X roads and will have to go through Nirankari. Traffic coming from new MLA Quarters towards Basheerbagh junction will be diverted to Old PCR junction. Likewise, commuters moving from BJR stat-ue towards AR Petrol pump will be diverted to Old PCR Junction.

The traffic moving from Moazzam Jahi Market towards Taj Island will be diverted towards Nampally railway station and will have to go through AR petrol pump and Old PCR Junction. Similarly,



commuters moving from BRK Bhavan towards Adarsh Nagar will be diverted to Old PCR Junction. The commuters moving from Ministers Residence Complex, Road No. 12, Banjara Hills towards Virinchi Hospitals will be diverted to Masab Tank.

Traffic coming from Jubilee Hills Check Post towards KBR Park will be diverted at LV Prasad Eye Hospital and will have to go through Srinagar Colony, T Junction and Sagar Society T Junction towards

NFCL, Vengal Rao Park , GVK Mall , Taj Krishna , KCP Junction and VV Statue.

The commuters moving from ESI Hospital towards SR Nagar Metro station will be diverted at Ameerpet Metro station, Panjagutta Junction, NIMS and VV Statue.

Traffic moving from CTO Junction towards Paradise will be diverted to Ranigunj and will go through Karbala, Children's Park ,Tankbund , Ambedkar Statue,Telugu Talli flyover, Iqbal Minar and Ravindra Bharathi. Similarly, the commuters moving from Plaza Junction towards Patny will be diverted at Bata, Bible House and Karbala

Amrit Kaal Budget without Amrit Arogya: Health experts

PNS HYDERABAD

In the view the Union Budget for 2023 being called the first Budget of "Amrit Kaal", healthcare experts say that there can be no Amrit Kaal without Amrit Arogya, implying that the Union Budget does not favour a viable healthcare sector. Healthcare experts said that the new Health Budget is for-

ward looking. Ranga Reddy Burri, Professor University of Hyderabad, said, "Amrit Kaal is not tenable without Amrit Arogya. The holistic

health without significant rise in investment is just lip service. The road to Universal Health Coverage is through allocation of upwards of 2.5 of GDP to health without diluting under various expense heads. Though the Finance Minister started with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and G20 presidency, I didn't see anything allocated for One Health, AMR and pandemic preparedness. New nursing colleges and medical Colleges is a good step but poor infrastructure will produce poor quality HCW in the future.

Satish Reddy, Chairman, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, said, "An inclusive Budget from the Finance Minister will boost the critical areas such as education, agriculture, healthcare, environment, digital, start-ups, skilling and others. For pharma, announcements on a new programme to promote research and innovation through Centres of Excellence, collaboration with the ICMR laboratories, encouragement to investment in R&D point helps much-anticipated support for innovation in

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Good Budget

Budget 2023-24 has something for everyone, and yet there has been no fiscal profligacy

here is a term often used for pre-poll budgets, mostly by the Opposition to disparage the government of the day — 'political budget.' Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget 2023-24 certainly doesn't fall under this category. One of the biggest political budgets was the one that the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government made in 2008. It announced a Rs 60,000-crore farm loan waiver, which went up to almost Rs 72,000 crore. The waiver helped the UPA's return to power next year. There was a strong correlation between the amount spent in states and the UPA's electoral fortunes in it. Thankfully, Sitharaman has steered clear of the reprehensible populism the UPA exhibited 15 years ago. Yes, she can be accused of



trying to placate income-tax payers by giving them relief, but the fact is that it was long overdue. The point to be stressed here is that the biggest beneficiaries are those who are in the lowest brackets. This means more money in the pockets of common people which they will either invest or spend — and thus boost demand and savings, both of which are desirable. Micro, small and medium enterprises have also been extended income-tax benefits. What is conspicuous about personal income-tax cuts is the fact that the people in the highest tax slab have also been given relief. The highest tax rate in our country is 42.74 per cent, which is among the highest in the world. She has proposed to bring this down to 39 per cent.

This is a very courageous step in a country where it is fashionable to slam the rich — and especially when her party is gearing up for the general elections in 2024.

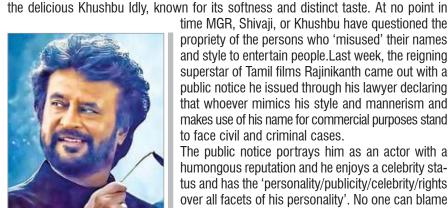
In line with the Narendra Modi Government's emphasis on infrastructure, the Finance Minister has steeply increased, third time in a row, the capital investment outlay by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore. This is around 3.3 per cent of the gross domestic product or GDP. This will be almost three times the outlay in 2019-20. She went on to point out that the direct capital investment by the Centre is complemented by the provision made for creation of capital assets through grants-in-aid to states, thus making the 'effective capital expenditure' to Rs 13.7 lakh crore. She rightly emphasised upon her Government's focus on capital expenditure to enhance growth potential, generate jobs, crowd in private investment, and provide a cushion against global headwinds. A good thing about the Budget is that, even though it has something for everyone — from the middle classes to the rich, from MSMEs to big corportations — fiscal prudence has been maintained. While pegging the fiscal deficit for 2023-24 at 5.9 per cent of GDP, she pledged to tread "the path of fiscal consolidation, reaching a fiscal deficit below 4.5 per cent by 2025-26." The fiscal deficit already came down from 6.7 per cent in 2021-22 to 6.4 per cent in 2022-23 (revised estimates). In a nutshell, Budget 2023-24 is good.



Preparations are underway for the G20 meeting, in Agra

Not in good humour

Rajinikanth's public notice stopping mimicry artists from mimicking him is rather harsh and uncalled for ■ imicry and stand-up comedy are 'national' pastimes of people in the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Specialists in mimicry eke out a living caricaturing their favourite film stars and politicians and these programs are the most wanted ones in star-studded stage shows in India and abroad. Earlier there were only one or two comedy artists to mimic film stars and their mannerisms. In South India where film stars are adored like demiGods, their fans go berserk when the comedy artists dish out the mannerisms and style of their superstars. In yesteryears, there were fashion stores and hairdressing saloons named after M G Ramachandran, Shivaji Ganesan, and Jaishankar, the Tamil matinee icons. Not long ago, we had Khusbu Wines in Chennai named after the diva of Tamil films. Many restaurants in Tamil Nadu serve



time MGR, Shivaji, or Khushbu have questioned the propriety of the persons who 'misused' their names and style to entertain people. Last week, the reigning superstar of Tamil films Rajinikanth came out with a public notice he issued through his lawyer declaring that whoever mimics his style and mannerism and makes use of his name for commercial purposes stand to face civil and criminal cases.

The public notice portrays him as an actor with a humongous reputation and he enjoys a celebrity status and has the 'personality/publicity/celebrity/rights over all facets of his personality'. No one can blame Rajinikanth for questioning the propriety of businessmen and entrepreneurs exploiting his name in com-

mercial ventures. But his decision to say no to poor mimicry artists would rob them of a chance to earn a livelihood and this is certain to cast a shadow over the goodwill enjoyed by the superstar. There was a lot of heart burning when superstar Amitabh Bachchan, music maestro llayaraja, and playback singer K J Yesudas demanded that they be paid royalty by performers who make use of their acting and singing talents. The Indian Copyright Act has indeed put restrictions on the wanton misuse of such works by vested interests. But the truth remains that a true artist should not be greedy and ask the wannabe artists for royalties because it would be like robbing from begaina bowls. The mimicry artists should show restraint and stay away from spoofing the maestros and superstars. One should not set the house on fire to kill a rat.

Economic reality check on China



China though making strides in the economic field is on a slippery slope. Its economic model exploits countries and is hegemonistic in approach

hina has been hog-ging the bright limelight for the last two decades, almost since the beginning of the current century for a growing economic powerhouse status and a country destined to overtake the US in economic and geopolitical might. The way it was developing its infrastructure and creating a most cost-competitive global manufacturing base was, to say the least, mind-boggling. But what was being projected and envisaged in 2003 is not being reiterated today, twenty years later. What is the reason?

The last two years have shaken the economic pillars of China. The real estate sector which accounts for nearly 30 percent of the Chinese economy has slipped into deep recessionary doldrums. Evidenced by the collapse of the Evergrande, the real estate busiess entity stricken by high debts and its serviceability crisis, the overall picture of the country's economy and its short and medium-term outlook is anything but bright. The writer happened to visit China in 2014 and is privy to scores of high-rise multistoried residential buildings on the outskirts of its IT hub city Cheng Du and all the buildings are vacant-looking like deserted ghost houses.

The situation is, regrettably the same, nay worse, nine years later in 2023. The flats remain unsold in large numbers with the allottee- buyers unable to pay their housing loan installments due to shrinking or unsteady incomes. The writer also saw that at that time, the average cost of goods and services in China was 3 times that of India, which today is more than 4 times. Let me cite a few figures in regard to China's economy vis- a -vis India. Central Govt. debt (percentage of GDP) is 76.89 for China and 83.4 for India. While the GDP growth rate for China is three percent, for India, it is 6.84. The Debt per capita (in USD) in China is 7164 and or India, it is 1724. The inflation rate (percent) for China is 2 percent and for India, it is 6.89.

The above is 2022 figures extracted from www.statista.com. What do the above figures con- Covid-19 and now the pro-



analytical inferences.

quite comparable, with important parameters tilted heavily in India's favor. The reason? China has grown too fast too much and its growth is unsustainable. The figures speak for themselves. China's model of economic growth is undemocratic, with capitalist processes foisted on a communist, totalitarian base. This provides an unstable, unsustainable model of economic growth. China has kept the inflation rate low by artificially tight fiscal means through restricted resort to printing more currency, even during the Covid-19 period when GDP and income growth sharply declined. This, seen along with the Communist regime's restriction on citizens' savings and withdrawals from their bank accounts, is already causing grave social distress leading to protests and uprisings. With the growth rate declining to 3 percent and the country now in the grip of a most serious Covid-19 pandemic, the short-term economic outlook of the country looks extremely grim.

China's past grow been fuelled by exports rather than domestic consumption but with the recent global economic downturn caused by



CHINA HAS KEPT THE INFLATION RATE LOW BY **ARTIFICIALLY** TIGHT FISCAL MEANS THROUGH RESTRICTED RESORT TO PRINTING MORE CURRENCY, EVEN DURING THE COVID-19 PERIOD WHEN GDP AND INCOME GROWTH SHARPLY DECLINED

tracted Russia-Ukraine war, global demand has heavily declined and China's huge factories are idling to the extent of 40-50 percent on an average. This is exacerbating the already burgeoning domestic debt crisis, with many banks going bust.

It is relevant to observe that China is also present in the midst of an energy crisis with its huge thermal power electricity generating plants starving of coal whose imports from Australia have declined in the recent past due to the worsening of its political relations with that country. The shortage of electricity has put that much additional strain on its manufacturing industry.

The worst thing that could have happened to China is its much-touted BRI running into a quandary. Thanks to China's opaque policies and systems and unabashedly hegemonic designs, its BRI investments in many countries have run into logjams and the BRI project is turning out to be an unqualified failure. Taking over ports and establishing military bases in the BRI host countries has sullied China's image and shown it as a businessunfriendly hegemonic power with predatory designs

It is also important to note India's advantageous position over China under the present economic circumstances. India's cost of production is less

than one-fourth of China's and with a much younger labor workforce; it sits on a much better pedestal for manufacturing sector growth. It can easily wrest from China the position of the global manufacturing hub. The most important factor in India's favor is its present geopolitical goodwill and China's worsening relations with major countries owing to its dubious role in the Covid-19 pandemic. In the present situation of political, economic, and social turmoil all over the world in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war with overt or covert military involvement of many other countries, India is poised well to take the big economic

leap forward ahead of China. China's economic model has shown now beyond a semblance of doubt that the economic progress of a country is long-term sustainable only with a fair model delivering equitable benefits to collaborating countries. It can never provide long-term, stable economic progress with an exploitative model and undemocratic systems behind it, which are not compatible with the natural development patterns of humans on this planet.

> (The writer is a Management Consultant based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AMBIGUOUS STAND

- When US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Tel Aviv this Monday, it appeared that he might have planned to visit, given the heightened tensions between Palestinians and Israelis. But no, it was decided three months back. But the purpose of his coming, which must have been at that time, completely changed after his arrival. West Bank and went to Ramallah.

When he met Benjamin Netanyahu, appealed to him to maintain peace. When he met Mahmud Abbas, he expressed concern over the settlement of Israelis. Also repeated the same old tune that every US representative has been repeating since 1974. That is the matter of adopting a 'two state' policy is the only solution to the problem. The United Nations had described this policy as the

only solution to the problem. But Israel rejected it outright. Because to obey it would mean that the Israelis would have to free the Arab lands captured in the brief Arab-Israeli war of June 1967. In the present situation, Israel would like to shift the entire Palestinian population to Antarctica and hand over the entire land to the Jews. On September 13, 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization negotiator Mahmoud Abbas signed a Declaration of Principles

on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, commonly referred to as the "Oslo Accords", at the White House. When Netanyahu took power for the first time in 1996, he immediately threw that agreement in the wastebasket. Well, now the world's most fanatical religious government is in power in Israel, in such a situation only blood will be shed there. The solution has now gone further than even a dream.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

CANDLEMAS DAY

Sir — February 2, is the Feast of the Mystery of the Holy Rosary. The their domestic manufacturing apart from

Unstoppable Novak



winning a record-extending tenth title. By winning a record-extending tenth title, Novak Djokovic has renewed his affinity with the Australian Open. The Serb's straight sets win over Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas has tied him with Rafael Nadal for the all-time Grand Slam men's record of 22 titles

Djokovic even sported a jacket with "22" emblazoned on the front while celebrating his victory. With the Australian Open win, Djokovic also jumps back to world No.1.

He already holds the record for the most weeks atop the world rankings at 374, and this number will continue to swell. The win at Melbourne Park serves as yet another feather in Djokovic's cap and is solid proof that the Serbian great still has in him what it takes to win a Major. With an astonishing 64 collective Grand Slam titles, the triumvirate of Djokovic, Nadal, and Federer have created incredible metrics that in many

ways redefined tennis greatness. Ranganathan Sivakumar I Chennai

Presentation is when the Blessed Mother Mary and Joseph brought the Child Jesus to the Temple to be dedicated to God.

On Candlemas Day, followers of Jesus Christ celebrate His Presentation at the Temple and the Virgin Mary being purified, with many of the faithful bringing candles to their churches to be blessed. Thereafter, where they're lit and placed on window sills to ward off evil. The candles represent Jesus and the day of His induction into Judaism, and they go toward explaining the name of the holy day, Candlemas.

This act of humility can inspire each of us to strive to be more obedient to God's will in our lives. When Mary and Joseph met Simeon in the Temple, Simeon thanked God for revealing the Messiah to him. He called the Child "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles" (Luke 2:25-32). These words are the basis for the custom of blessing candles representing the light of Christ.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

A GOOD SCHEME

Sir — The PLI is an innovative scheme Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in that provides incentives in terms of cash the Temple, which is also the fourth Joyful to various companies for enhancing

focusing on reducing import bills and improving the cost competitiveness of

local goods. PLI scheme offers incentives on incremental sales for products manufactured in India. PLI Scheme, as the Production Linked Incentive Scheme is commonly abbreviated, is an initiative started by the Government of India to not only encourage foreign companies to find a workforce in the country and thereby generate employment but also encourage domestic local production to create micro-iobs.

The PLI scheme for large-scale electronics manufacturing has attracted investments of Rs 4,784 crore as of September 2022, and led to a total production of Rs 2,03,952 crore, including exports of Rs 80,769 crore. It may be noted that the PLI scheme has seen significant participation from the private sector. It would be great if the scheme succeeds as in India today we need jobs than anything else. A jobless growth would be meaningless. PLI rightly address this very major issue.

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Prachi Bagoriya | Ujjain

Hindenburg posed 88 questions to the Adani Group which responded with a 413-page rant. Why hide behind

'an attack on me is an attack on India' nonsense? It isn't!

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesl



Worshippers weren't killed during pravers even in India or Israel but it happened in

Pakistan Defence Minister – Khwaja Asif



can say whatever as long as we are entertaining them

— Alia Bhatt



guess a lot of domestic cricket which I played before making the international

debut has helped me a lot. Indian batter

— Suryakumar Yadav

The downside risk is higher because currently industrial production, credit growth, private sector investment.



rate and the trend will continue. Chief Economic Advisor

— V Anantha Nageswaran

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FIRST COLUMN

YES BANK AT1 BONDS **AFTER THE HC VERDICT**

Investors have lost their life savings in bonds of Yes Bank



S KALYANASUNDARAM

our institutional and three individual investors challenged the decision of Yes Bank Limited to write off AT1 bonds from their books in the Bombay High Court. The decision to write off was quashed. Apparently, Yes Bank Limited had sold these bonds to individual investors (apart from institutional investors), terming it as Super Fixed Deposits.

Commenting on the judgment of Bombay High Court, Yes Bank MD & CEO Prashant Kumar said that there was no compulsion on the bank to pay interest on or redeem its additional tier-1 (AT1) bonds, which are the subject of litigation with investors. While commenting on the possible impact on the balance sheet of the bank, he said that "the worst case scenario for the bank was that the common equity tier-1 capital - consisting of pure equity without any subordinate debt - would come down. However the capital adequacy would be maintained as the AT1 capital increases."

He has also claimed that it is the discretion of the bank to pay coupon (interest) on the bonds and there is no cumulative nature of coupon payment and in a financial year when the bank is in losses, the bank cannot pay the coupon.



It is true that the information memorandum submitted to SEBI at the time of AT1 bond issue contains the following terms and conditions: (Section 3.f) "Non-Payment due to Bank's weak capital position: Potential investors should be aware that in case the Bank's capital falls below the regulatory requirements, it may not make the payment of the coupon due on the Debentures. The Bank can exercise the said right at an early stage of risk detection."

The following was also there under Clause 54 of the Information memorandum: "Coupon Discretion (i) The Bank shall have full discretion at all times to cancel Coupon either in part or full. On cancellation of payment of Coupon, these payments shall be extinguished and the Bank shall have no obligation to make any distribution/Coupon payment in cash or kind. (ii) The Bonds do not carry a 'dividend pusher' feature i.e. if the Bank makes any payment (coupon/dividend) on any other capital instrument or share, the Bank shall not be obligated to make Coupon payment on the Bonds....

Hence, the above statement from the bank's spokesperson is perfectly right. But there is another dimension to the cancellation of writeoff. At the time of writing off AT1 bond from the books, the bank could have taken the amount to its Profit and Loss Account. Now when the court has disallowed the write off, the reversal entry will be to debit the Profit and Loss Account and bring back the AT1 bond outstand-

Hence, the bottom line in the balance sheet will take a hit. The spokesman from the bank has not clarified how the bank will account for it now and what will be its impact.

It is clear from the terms of the AT1 bonds that the bank can decide not to pay any coupon (interest) on the bonds for any number of years. It can also decide to write off the bonds, of course subject to conditions of wiping out equity capital also. Which individual investor could have subscribed for the bond, if she knew that the bank might not pay any interest or even might not pay the principal at all?

It is understood that the bank will approach the Supreme Court against the High Court verdict. It may take any number of years to get the final verdict. Both the regulators, SEBI and RBI, may at least direct the bank for payment of coupon on the debentures to individual investors. Most of these individuals are senior citizens above the age of 70 years and they had given their entire life savings because they were mis-sold these bonds.

(The author is a retired banker)

A new Great Game begins in Afghanistan KAUSHIKI



Pakistan might be tempted to test Indo-US strategic ties by launching terror strikes in Kashmir through proxies

fter the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the relations between the US and Pakistan have strategically declined. However, Pakistan's fight with TTP, apart from the China-induced economic crisis and the denial of a loan package by the IMF, has renewed American interests in Pakistan.

Reasons for the American interests are varied and have deep connections with the history of South and Central Asia. Despite Islamabad's active support to the Taliban, the American interests will bring the much-required finance and military support, as it has done in the past. The development increases opportunities for Washington to adopt a leapfrog approach again in the two regions to enhance its strategic outreach.

Pakistan lies at the cusp of the two regions. To be more specific, its location to the south of Russia and its 'strategic backyard,' i.e. Central Asia makes it relatively important. Historically, the US and Pakistan were joined by China, and their efforts were based on shared interests against the Soviet Union apart from limiting India's political and geostrategic influence in the South Asian region.

From Pakistan's perspective, the US interest allowed it to put forward its 'geostrategic marketability' and extract military leverage against India. In 1954, the US government announced a military aid package of \$500 million instead of its mutual defence assistance agreement. Further, from 1967-1980 the US provided military and technical assistance of around \$6 billion.

Pakistan used this aid against Indian interests. Thus, it adopted the approach of buck passing, which was relatively cheaper than internal and external balancing and bandwagoning. Before any conflict, Pakistan expected the US to guarantee its security. In the first case, before the 1965 war, Ayub Khan had demanded that the United States should accept securing Pakistan against India's "aggression" as an essential component of guarantees provided through an alliance with the US. Although defeated, one cannot deny the US military supplies to Pakistan that made it believe that it could fight India. But Islamabad, too, realized that Washington was not prepared to issue a "blank check' against India. The tables were turned again against India in the 1971 war. Even though Pakistan launched a pre-emptive war against India in 1971, the US' seventh fleet ensured that India did not consider retaking PoK while liberating East Pakistan.

Later, during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan gained financial support \$3.2 billion from 1980 to 1990, aiding the Mujahideen to fight against the Soviet Union. Additionally, the US supplied Pakistan with F-16.

After the nuclear tests, Pakistan adopted a similar approach and always used its



IT IS PERTINENT TO MENTION THAT THE US NATIONAL **SECURITY STRATEGY** (2022) HAS **EMPHASISED** THE ISSUE OF TERRORISM BUT **DELIBERATELY OMITTED TO** NAME THE

> TERROR MODULES IN PAKISTAN AS A SOURCE OF TERROR BUT MENTIONS THE TALIBAN AS A CHALLENGE

(Nishtha Kaushiki is Associate Professor in Central University of Punjab, Bathinda; Nikhil Sharma is a research scholar)



Islamic state status quo of possessing nuclear weapons, thereby extracting substantial advantages through its nuclear blackmailing. Despite India's readiness to take a limited military action against Pakistan after the Kargil crisis and the attacks on Parliament, it was the US that intervened on the grounds of restoring "normalcy" and substantially limited India's response.

The 9/11 again brought the US and Pakistan in a more tactical and Pakistan in a more tactical embrace with each other. Pakistan became a major non-NATO ally, and as per the SIPRI data, during 2002-14, it got military aid worth \$5.81 billion, of which the arms sales component was \$3.2 billion. After the killing of Osama in Abbottabad, as per the C.R.S. report, in 2014-15, the total financial and military aid decreased to cial and military aid decreased to 40 per cent from 2011-2015. In the years preceding the US exit from Afghanistan, Washington had become diplomatically and strategically dependent on Islamabad to help it handle the coerced talks with the Taliban and smartly ensure its safe exit from the region.

In the process, it made the Taliban and itself essential stakeholders in the region. Pakistan's case study proves that the weak states thrive on the great power insecurities and mismanagement of international politics. In the contemporary situation, the renewed interest of the US in Pakistan has historical interlinkages between Russia and Pakistan apart from the triangular dynamics between Russia, China and Pakistan. Russia has been making positive overtures to Pakistan much before the outbreak of the Ukraine War. Starting from the Iran-Pakistan pipeline in the news in mid-2010, one has witnessed rapid convergences between Russia,

the two have broadened the horizon of their strategic relations, which included a defence agreement, supply of Mi-35M Hind-E helicopter and joint military exercises apart from signing a 'Rare Military Cooperation Pact' in 2018. Interestingly, Pakistan's military arsenal includes Russia's Klimov RD-93 engine used to make JF-17 Thunder aircraft.

Russia has reignited its interest in the pipeline politics of Iran and Pakistan and has expressed a willingness to supply crude oil to Pakistan. The deal is to be materialized in the "currency of friendly countries", which might slightly dent the Western sanctions on Ŕussia. Further, the Kazakhstan-Pakistan pipeline also has the potential to turn the tables and form new energy architectures. From another perspective, Russia and Pakistan agreement on "practical engagement" on the Afghan Taliban issues have serious undertones for the two regions.

It is pertinent to mention that the US National Security Strategy (2022) has emphasized the issue of terrorism but has deliberately omitted to name the terror modules in Pakistan as a source of terror but mentions the Taliban as a challenge. The document speaks of increasing its "cooperation and support to trusted partners" and "shifting from a strategy that is 'US-led, partnerenabled to one that is 'partner-led, US-enabled". The document further hints that the US might be interested in exploiting the emerging faultlines of Russia-China relations which have emerged as the fallout of the Ukraine war.

Additionally, the US will make

its presence felt in Central Asia in the coming few days through the C5+1 diplomatic platform (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the United States).

Now, one needs to brainstorm what position Pakistan will occupy in this "partner-led, US-enabled" strategy to finish terror? The most pertinent question is how Pakistan would exploit the insecurities and fear of Russia, the US, and China vis-à-vis each other? What military and financial packages will Pakistan get hold of in this new emerging great power game? Will the Afghan Taliban, Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and other Islamic groups be finally crushed? Will there be another military onslaught in Afghanistan as it was in 1979-80?

From an Indian perspective, while coordinating with the US to crush the TTP, Pakistan might be tempted to test the Indo-US strategic relations by launching simultaneous terror strikes in Kashmir through its proxies. If so, would the US be neutral again and insist on "normalcy"? Pakistan thus has a well-designed strategy to play the US and Russia off of one another to enhance its security against the possible Indian response to its misadventures in India, gain military and financial packages and finally, slow down the US-China hostility.

All these factors may constrain India's options to enhance its posturing on crucial future developments. The emerging faultlines remind us of an American mathematician John Allen Paules who stated: "Uncertainty is the only certainty there is, and knowing how to live with this insecurity is the only security".

THIS BUDGET IS ONE OF THE BEST BUDGETS EVER, TRULY INCLUSIVE AND ADDRESSES THE ASPIRATIONS OF EVERY SECTION OF SOCIETY. — VEDANTA CHAIRMAN **ANIL AGARWAL**





THIS IS A CALLOUS BUDGET THAT HAS BETRAYED THE HOPES OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE. — FORMER FINANCE MINISTER **P CHIDAMBARAM**

Disruptive innovation often shakes up an industry

For disruption to happen, a company has to target an overlooked customer base, provide a right fit of product or service

nnovation, which is advancement over an exist-Ling product or idea, is a prerequisite for continuous improvement. But a disruptive innovation shakes up an industry once in a while. Disruptive innovation in business is not a new concept. It took birth in 1995 when it was proposed by one of the world's leading thinkers on innovation Christensen along with his

co-authors. However, over the years, this concept has been misunderstood. It has generally been misapplied to a situation where the industry norms are shaken up and existing players stirred. And here's where the catch is. Originally, Christensen ideated the concept of disruption, more like a David and Goliath situa-



(The author is an

educator)

tion- a smaller company with fewer resources successfully challenging an established business

Established businesses in their effort to retain their existing majority target customer base, focus mainly on improving their present products or services and largely ignore other market segments. New entrants that sense this gap provide products or services lucrative to the overlooked segments.

While the established businesses do not pay heed to these new entrants, they slowly make inroads into upmarket, providing the same products or services to the majority customers whilst retaining their earlier advantage-lower prices. Once these mainstream customers embrace

the new products or services, ket. Additionally, disruption in large quantities, one can say disruption has occurred.

According to Christensen, potential for disruptive innovations arise because established businesses ignore both low-end and new markets. In an attempt to be more profitable, established businesses concentrate on providing mainstream customers with high quality products and services and commit resources in upgrading, enhancing and perfecting their existing products and services, all the while ignoring the low-end market. Sensing this opportunity, new entrants foray into this gap by using a low-cost business model. A low-end disruptor snatches the market share in this segment and pushes the established businesses upmarcan occur by creating new markets where none existed, by developing new products for consumers, at a lower price and an acceptable quality. Arrival of personal computers, and later smartphones are perfect examples of new-mar-

et disruption. The first computers, known as mainframes, were huge and very expensive. With costs as high as \$2 million and size as big as to fill an entire room, computing technology was out of bounds for the common man. With the invention of the personal computer, a small and affordable piece of machine, a new market segment of individuals was created.

Over the years, with con-

capabilities, a humble personal computer made the mainframe computers virtually obsolete. The next step in new market disruption is the emergence of smartphones, which are creating disruptions at two levels. One, the ability to use the internet in a phone at a fraction of cost of a personal computer is making usage of personal computers less necessary. Two, smartphone photograph taking capabilities are set to disrupt the digital photography industry.

However, over the years, the above concept has been misused by many who have not given a serious thought about the notion itself. Internationally, Uber has been touted as a disruption. It uses mobile applications to connect tinuous improvement in its consumers who need rides

with drivers who are willing to provide them. Founded in 2009, the company has enjoyed fantastic growth and is still expanding. It has reported tremendous financial success, with funding rounds and soaring valuation. No doubt, Uber has transformed the

business of transportation. But has it brought about disruption? For disruption to happen, a company has to target an overlooked customer base, provide a right fit of product or service, usually at a lower cost. Uber connected the end users, i.e., customers used to taking cab services, to service providers. So, Uber did not fulfil any of the two conditions to become a disrupter - firstly, it did not bring the market segment that did not use cab services aries of any industry.

into its fold; and secondly, cab and taxi services were definitely not a new market. Finally, there is no threat to the car industry from Uber. A well-known quote

prevalent in Silicon Valley "disrupt or be disrupted" says it all. All businesses are continuously looking for opportunities to become disruptors with new innovative ideas, products or business models. But only a few are able to become disruptors. Disruptive innovation transforms complex and expensive products or services into simple and reasonable options. Although very time-consuming and enormously risky, creating disruption shakes up the existing established products and services by pushing the bound-

Telangana

Corporate budget that hits States financially: Harish

BRS came down heavily on the Budget and termed it as a 'corporate budget' that hits States financially.

Finance Minister T Harish Rao said, "Anti-farmer budget, anti-employee budget, the budget that will push the country into debt, the budget that does not give relief to employees, corporate budget, the budget that will hit states financially, budget that ignores education and medical sectors and budget that offers nothing to Telangana.'

The Central government has cut funds in the budget for the employment guarantee scheme. While Rs 89,400 crore was allocated in the last budget, this time it was reduced to Rs 60,000 crore.

There are massive cuts in food security funding for the poor as Rs 2,87,194 crore was allocated in 2022-23, but this time it has been reduced to Rs 1,97,350 crore. That meant Rs 89,844 crore had been cut for food subsidy in this budget.



a single one has been given to Telangana. Now, the Centre announced that nursing colleges would also be set up in the areas where 157 medical colleges were granted earlier.

Last year's budget allocated Rs 68,000 crore for PM Kisan Fund, but this time the Centre reduced it to Rs 60,000 crore in the budget. At the same time, the Center is reducing the number of farmers who are getting the benefit. PM Kisan earlier benefited 11.27 crore farmers, now the number of farmers has been reduced to 8.99 crores.

There is a huge cut in fertiliser subsidy to farmers. Rs 2, 25, 220 crore funds had been allocated in 2022-23 RE, but it has been reduced to Rs 1, 75, 100 crore in this financial year. That meant a direct cut of Rs 50,120 crore. To purchase cotton at a support price through Cotton Corporation of India in last year's budget Rs 9,243 crore have been allocated, but this time only Rs one lakh has been

the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, RS 10,433 crore were allocated in the last year's budget, but this time it has been reduced to Rs 7,150 crore in the budget. That meant a cut of Rs 3,283 crore had been made. While Rs 5020 crore was allocated in last year's budget for minorities, this time it was reduced to Rs 3,097 crore in the budget.

"Since 1979-80 the revenue deficit at the centre has been steadily increasing. The revenue deficit was Rs 694 crore in 1979-80, it has increased to Rs11,10,546 crore in 2022-23 as per the revised estimates. This is against FRBM Act. Even if the States comply with the FRBM norms, non-compliance by the Center may undermine the fiscal discipline of the country. The Center is strictly implementing the FRBM rules even on the states that are doing well, but it is violating the FRBM rules from time to time, misusing the power in its hands and taking exceptions",

Residents leave village for a day to ward off evil

PNS NALGONDA

Chandupatla village under Nakrekal mandal in the district wore a deserted look on Wednesday. The people deserted the village following a series of deaths since January 21. They left their homes to live under the shade of trees on the outskirts of the village for

a day.
According to villagers, there were 12 deaths since January 21. While some died of illness, others were natural deaths. The series of deaths sparked panic among the villagers.

The deaths caused anguish among the villagers. Bereaved family members are weeping inconsolably for their near and dear. The people were perplexed over the deaths, which they said, were shrouded in

The villagers put their heads together to come up with a solution to the problem. They blamed the death on evil spirits and decided to do something to ward off the danger. The village elders decided to abandon the village and performed puja to the village Goddess to pacify her.

Govt committed to providing quality education: KTR

O The Minister pointed out that education is the only treasure that cannot be stolen

PNS RAJANNA SIRCILLA

"Education is a powerful tool and it is the only treasure that cannot be stolen," said Minister for Information Technology and Industries K T Rama Rao on Wednesday.

KTR, along with Minister for Education P Sabita Indra Reddy, was inaugurating the first Kindergarten to Postgraduate (KG to PG) Complex at Gambhiraopein the district. It provides free

education to students.
A total of 3,500 students, including pre-primary, primary, high school, Intermediate, degree and PG are provided education in three language media, such as English, Urdu and Telugu.

Speaking on the occasion, KTR recalled that Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president K Chandrashekar Rao, during his visit to Gambhiraopet on September 17, 2004, assured the people that a KG to PG Complex



Minister for Information Technology K T Rama Rao and Minister for Education P Sabita Indra Reddy with children at the first KG-PG Complex at Gambhiroapet in Raianna Sircilla district on Wednesday

would be established after achieving statehood for Telangana. Now, the complex came up as assured by the Chief Minister, he said.

He specifically pointed out that the countries with the best education system made rapid progress. The State government is committed to providing quality education to all sections of society. The Chief

Minister is determined to extend quality education to all sections of society, he said.

The State government in the new State of Telangana established 1,000 Gurukula schools. Telangana witnessed unprecedented progress. Apart from development, the State government introduced several welfare schemes for the

Budget a disappointment to Telangana: Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC president A Revanth Reddy said that the budget presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is a major disappointment. Huge injustice was done to Telangana in the budget. Promises like the Bayyaram steel factory, Kazipet railway factory and national status for any irrigation project mentioned in the Bifurcation Act were ignored in the budget. He also recalled that there is no mention of the ITIR project given by the Congress Party in the past.

During the 2019 elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised to double the income of farmers by 2022 and construct houses for every poor person. During the 2014 elections, he promised to provide 2 crore BJP and BRS should be responsible for the inj meted out to the State.



jobs every year. None of these promises had been fulfilled. Revanth Reddy pointed out that 18 crore jobs should have been provided in these nine years. Out of that, Telangana State needed to get 75 lakh jobs.

The Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme saw funds cut and the work Days under the scheme were cut. He criticised the State government for failing to exert pressure on the Centre. He said that both the BJP and BRS should be held responsible for the injustice

'PM Cares Fund' is misuse of govt machinery

PNS HYDERABAD

Minister KT Rama Rao said that PM Cares Fund is a classic case of blatant abuse of government machinery by the NPA. He was responding to the Centre's statement to Delhi High Court that

PM Cares Fund is not created under the Constitution of India or by any law made by Parliament or by any State Legislature. KTR said, "Using government emblem, PMO, and the government website, still claiming it's not a govt entity!"

Budget bonanza for middle class: Bandi

PNS HYDERABAD

State BJP president Bandi Sanjay expressed happiness that the Central budget is getting good public response. He said, "Amrit Kaal

Budget is inclusive - a bonanza for middle class and salaried, honours Nari Shakti, prioritises poor and vulnerable sections. Under the able leadership of Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman presented budget focused on agriculture and infrastructure." He added, "The first Budget in Amrit Kaal focused on seven priority areas of inclusive development, reaching last mile, infrastructure and investment, unleashing potential, green growth, youth power and financial sector - has drawn a blue print for India@100.

He said that the opposition parties are criticising only after seeing the Central Budget. He said that the benefits to the last person. He said that BJP's mission is the development of all communities. Bandi Sanjay said that proposals were sent because Karnataka is a drought-prone region, and that is why the Centre announced a package for Karnataka.

Minister vows to promote super-speciality healthcare

PNS MAHABUBNAGAR

Minister for Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud on Wednesday vowed to ensure that super-speciality healthcare is provided to people in the district. The initiative will obviate the need for patients to go all the way to Hyderabad for the best medical treatment, he

The Minister was inaugurating the Nursing College on the premises of the Government

the government hospitals lacked facilities in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. But in the new Telangana State, the State government strengthened the government hospitals. Patients from outside the district sought medical treatment in Mahabubnagar Government Hospital during the Covid-19 pandemic, he said.

The State government has sanctioned a medical college and a nursing college. A physiotherapy college, too, would be set up in the district, he said. Speaking on the occasion, Nurses would extend extraor-



dinary care to patients. The nurses would play a pivotal role in saving the lives of patients. A super-speciality hospital is coming up at a cost of Rs 500 crore on the premises of the old Collectorate, he

Municipal Chairman K C Narasimhulu, Samstha Grandhalaya Samstha Chairman Rajeswar Goud, Medical College director Ramesh, Nursing College principal Swarajya Lakshmi and District Medical and Health Officer Krishna were present.

BJP to implement UP strategy in TS

PNS HYDERABAD

The BJP, which is determined to gain power in Telangana, is drafting special strategies. With the success of the threepronged strategy formulated in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, it has decided to implement it in the State as well. As part of this, meetings and large public meetings will the polling booth level to the state level.

Prime Minister Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and BJP national president Nadda will also attend the public meetings organised in phases. On 11 Feb, Amit Shah and a few days later Prime

Minister Modi are likely to come to Telangana. Shah will visit Adilabad, Peddapally, Mahabubnagar, and Nagar Kurnool districts. Prime Minister's visit to Telangana on February 13 is yet to be con-

The BJP is planning to have Prime Minister Modi attend four to five public meetings as soon as the assembly part of this, each program has prepared activities for 15 days. "Organisationally, the polling booth committee presidents, the in-charges of Shaktikendras will be activated, local leadership is prepared, how much funds have the Center given to those areas? What happened to

those funds? About 11,000 corner meetings will be held across the state discussing topics from February 10 to 25. On the first day of these meetings, BJP national general secretaries, State in-charges, state chiefs, and senior leaders representing the national party executive committee will attend 119 Assembly constituencies. In the second phase, bike ralthe name of Prajagosa-BJP Bharosa as a Mandal unit. And, in the third phase, public meetings will be organized in the Assembly Constituency Centre. These will be completed in 15 days and after that meetings will be held at the dis-

Arvind chairs preparatory

meeting for Budget session PNS HYDERABAD

Wednesday.

Arvind Kumar, Special Chief Secretary, MA&UD held a meeting with the Principal Secretaries, Secretaries and HODs on LAQs, LCQs, Special Mentions, Assurances BRKR Bhavan on

He directed the officials to prepare replies on LAQs, LCQs, Special Mentions and Assurances for the ensuing Assembly Budget Session commencing from February

He asked the officials to nominate a Nodal Officer for each department and co-ordinate with Assembly officials on submitting replies from the

department. The officials were asked to inform the Assembly Business and issues raised by the members during the Zero hour and other related matters in advance.

He also directed the Secretaries to ensure that senior officials are present during the sessions. Replies should be submitted on all the pending audit paras. Information on grants should also be given in view of the Budget session and all the officers should be ready with full information.

Special Chief Secretaries Rajat Kumar, Adhar Sinha, Principal Secretaries, Secretaries and other officials attended the meeting.

BRS criticised for boycotting President's address

PNS KARIMNAGAR

BJP State unit official spokesperson Rani Rudrama has taken the ruling BRS to task for its stance against Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and boycotting of President's address

of both Houses of Parliament. Refuting the allegations made by Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao against the BJP, she sought to know whether the BRS was implementing the 33 per cent quota for women in the State Cabinet. He wondered why the BRS was reserving 33 per cent of seats for women in the elec-

She recalled that Jagtial Municipal Chairperson Bhoga Sravani quit her post as she was harassed by the local MLA. But the BRS leaders did not intervene, she said. The BJP spokesperson said that the Centre had granted the funds meant for Telangana. Apart from it, the Centre had extended financial assistance for the development of roads, a midday meal scheme, free ration scheme. The Centre allocated funds for railway projects, too, she said. She alleged that KTR did not participate in the debate.

BJP district president Gangadi Krishna Reddy, party leaders Boinapalli Pravin Rao, Srinivas, Kalyan Chandra and others took part in the event.

Budget a mathematical calculation of Modi govt' Niranjan Reddy said, "This

PNS HYDERABAD

MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha responded to the Budget tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. She asked the BJP government at the Centre, 'why is there no equitable dissemination of the funds state-wise?' She said that this budget is a mathematical calculation that confirms the failures of the Modi government.

She further added that Telangana and a few other States that are either non- BJP ruling States or are not pollbound find no mention in the budget and that everybody now understands this pattern of the government.

Former Member of Parliament from Nizamabad ing each State on an equal further added that "if the government wants sabka sath, then why does it not believe in keep-



footing. BRS Leader Kavitha added

that no concrete steps have

been taken to protect and empower MSMEs on the whole which is the need of the hour and a strong economy when not even 1 lakh crores were released for MSMEs across the nation. Kavitha further said that the TRS government has been persistently seeking a centre's nod to work on SEZs, airports and several zones but the Ĉentre has had no response to it.

Agriculture Minister

less than last year. In the previous budget, Rs.2.25 lakh crore was allocated, in this budget it was reduced to Rs.1.75 lakh The Center is slowly reducing the fertilizer subsidy. The

year's allocation is 22 per cent

investment burden on farmers has already increased with the increase in fertilizer prices, diesel and petrol prices.

Tension as bus station on 'donated' land dismantled

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

Tension prevailed at the bus station in Garepally village of the district on Wednesday as TS RTC senior officials and donors of the land clashed over halting the buses there. Some vested interests dismantled the bus station and planned to sell the land by dividing it into plots

The RTC authorities went there to implement the High Court verdict which directed the authorities to use the bus station. Earlier, the site was donat-

ed for building the bus station. The bus station was built there three years ago. But some vested interests removed the structures there.

A dispute between the donors of the land and RTC authorities was taken to the High Court. The High Court



in December ruled that the mitted memoranda to ed bus station by Feb 3. RTC can halt its buses at the Kataram police authorities Therefore RTC regional disputed site.

The RTC officials urged the police to protect the buses halted there. They sub-

Bhavesh Misra. The High halt the buses at the disput-

Kataram police authorities Therefore RTC regional and also to District Collector manager of Karimnagar, Deputy regional manager Court directed the RTC to Chander Rao and Siva Sankar respectively made

the buses halt. Donors and some others supporting the donors

objected to this. As precautionary measures, the Kataram police prevented the RTC buses from entering the bus station. They sent out the buses and halted the bus station.

Srinivas has asked both sides to come to the police station. As tension prevailed at the bus station, the police took precautionary mea-

Kataram sub-inspector

sures. The RTC officials allege that the police are not cooperating with them though the High Court made it clear that none should object to halting the buses.

Managers of Godavarikhani, Karimnagar, Bhupalapalli, Parakala, and Manthani Depots were pre-

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT e-PROCUREMENT TENDER

Tenders are invited 08 Bridges: Plox Bridges works in the following Districts" (under Non-plan 2022-23) vide E-in-C(R&B), SR&CRN, e-NIT No.77(Non-Plan(2022-23)E-in-C)SR&CRN, VSE(DSP)-IN-E)SR/DCEIAEF/2022-23, 4t 30.01.2023

Name of District 1), Sanga Reddy, No. of Works: 03, 2), Medak, No. of Works: 04, 3), Vikarabad, No. of Works: 01, Total: 08

Tenderers can download the tender schedule at https://tender.felangana.gov.in/.
The last date of receipt 10.02.2023 up to 5.30 PM. S4/, Evaluate in Charles DIPR R.O. No.: 1297-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2022-23

Non-Plan/E-in-C (SR&CRN/SE)D&P)+I/EE(SR)/DEE/AEE) 2022-23, dt: 30.01.2023. Name of District & No. of works: (1) Rangaredty - 1 work, (2) Rajanna Sincilla / Karimnagar - 1 work, (3) Sanga Raddy - 1 work. Total - 03 works. Tenderers can download the tender schedule at https://tender.telangana.gov.inl. The last date of receipt of tenders is on or before 17.02.2023 up to 5.30 PM.

Sdi- Engineer-in-Chief (R&B).

😭 GREATER HYDERABAD MU NICIPAL CORPORATION 📶 e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Nit No.: 'e' Notice No: 32/CTO/GHMC/2022-23

Date: 01-02-2023

Name of the Work: Annual Maintenance Contract of finger print based Bio-metric device. with application software and web interface/portal with License for cloud application and server utilized at Transport Parking Yards, Transfer Stations, Circle/Zonal offices of GHMC. Start Date & Time: 01.02.2023 @ 04.00 P.M onwards, End Date & Time 04.02.2022@ 04.00 P.M. Name & Address Officer Cell No.: O/o. Chief Transport Office 4th Floor, GHMC, Head Office, Tank bund Hyderabad, Sri, K. Ajay CTO, GHMC, Contact No: 040-29680748 & Mob.No. 7993360314. Address of the officer concerned Chief Transport Officer, GHMC. Ph. No. 040-29880748 & Mob.No. 7993360314. Further tetalis can be seen at e-procurement @ www.eprocurement.telangana.gov.in

R.O.No: 12072-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2022-23, Dt. 01.02.2023 Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

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Thursday February 2, 2023

Sensitising people for responsible pet parenting

It is important for potential pet owners to know that responsible pet parenting means committing to caring for their pets for their entire lives. With a similar aim, we have Phillip Butt, the secretary of the Hyderabad Canine Club, who puts the spotlight on responsible pet parenting and also speaks up on the recent recurring incidents.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Por the Hyderabad Canine Club, it's become an annual tradition. The whole team didn't choose one pet but brought together hundreds of show dogs under one roof.
They learn something new about pets every day and have found babies in them.

When we interacted with Phillip Butt, the secretary of the Hyderabad Canine Club, we learned how he ensures so many pets come together to be crowned best in the show, and that's his way of experiencing absolute pleasure.

"Responsible pet parenting is the only way forward to avoid recurring freak incidents like the recent one that took place in the city, where a food delivery boy jumped off a building to escape a dog and subsequently died. Our clubs' main focus is awareness: pet owners all over the city should enjoy more mutually loving and rewarding relationships than ever before. Attending our pets' gatherings like these puts a stamp on

humanising your pet. Increasingly urban societies attend every year, and we see how they know about veterinary telehealth, first-class dog food, their accessories, and

The Hyderabad Canine Club's love for animals is so great that they are letting people know that dogs are not scary to be around, despite a few strange incidents across the country. "Pets own the city now — they have taken on the role of playmates. Whenever I see so many breeds of animals coming together for our shows, it's like peacekeepers coming with elan. This is not our bread and butter; it's our sheer love for them. And we are overjoyed to be organising such shows for pets all over the city.

It's a known fact that the majority of the millions of dogs don't bite. "For the dogs that do attack, it's usually because they are acting out of fear rather than aggression. Pet adoption multiplied during the pandemic. The challenge came when there was no pet education! You can't train out all of a dog's natural instincts because many will protect





ulated environment." On a concluding note, the secre-

aggressive; it's a stereotype. They love to chase, but we must not get overexcited. Socialize them by making them meet other breeds! They

were isolated by the pandemic, and now they are suddenly out of that space — they are biting by accident

tary said that each competition requires plenty of time, energy, and treats. The purebred dogs that you see on the premises are show dogs

in an

overstim-

for a moment, but please remember that they are family pets at the end of the day. They all take home the best in the show in

Make your fitness effective with smart gym equipment

K. RAMYA SREE

The fitness industry is rapidly transforming all over the world, especially in India. The importance given to health and fitness is at an all-time high. In fact, the total revenue in the health and fitness industry is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2022–2026) of 5.62%, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$55.68m by 2026.

As gym owners and fitness centres began offering their services online, it became easier for Indians to incorporate fitness into their weekly routines. The outcome? During the lockdown, 84% of Indians attempted online fitness classes at least three times a week. According to recent studies, millennials in India spend on average INR 4,000 per month on wellness services and goods.

Equipment plays a key role in fitness. With the right equipment, you can achieve the desired body shape.

Prateek Sood, a trustee of Fit India Trust, has Prateek Sood, a trustee of Fit India Irust, has been in the fitness industry since 1992, open-ing over 2,000 gyms and selling nearly 2 mil-lion pieces of gym equipment (including out-door and home use equipment) in more than 25 states. He speaks to us about the technolog-ical advancements in fitness equipment and

Speaking about bringing new equipments to the Indian audience, Prateek said,

ment have fundamentally changed how people maintain their physical fitness. In the past, people had to manually keep track of their advancement and outcomes. On the other side, modern technology has made tracking progress and setting new marks simpler than ever. Similar to Advagym by Sony, it not only provides clients with fitness content but also allows them to track with fitness content but also allows them to track their workouts to make sure they are improv-ing and pushing over their boundaries. Clients will be able to monitor their development wher-ever they complete their workouts. The Advagym app will also display clients' exercise histories, enabling them to make the most of each session, enhance their outcomes, and maintain motivation as they work towards new,

maintain motivation as they work towards new, more challenging goals. The popularity of smart gym equipment is rising as a result of the more customised workouts it offers."

What's interesting about this brand is that they offer personalised best practices for each consumer's needs on a global scale. He said, "The Fitness industry is changing rapidly with new and advanced features, we have been at the forefront of personalized best practices for each consumer's needs on a global scale. Our goal is to build the finest relationships possigoal is to build the finest relationships possible with our clients in the following year and to attract a large customer that represents a variety of institutions and businesses. With its recent cooperation with Advagym by Sony, which will take the fitness age to the next level by monitoring, directing, and aiding you in your training programme, we are taking steps to ensure the same legacy in the coming years."





Maestro Ilaiyaraaja set to mesmerise **Hyderabad**

people in a way that's truly special," said the legendary Indian film composer Ilaivaraaja.

The maestro will be performing LIVE at the Gachibowli Stadium on February 26. The live-in concert will feature an ensemble of 100 musicians on stage and is expected to attract over 20,000 attendees to witness the spectacular event and savour the magic of his music.

"It's a honour to be back on stage and connect with my fans through the power of music. I can't wait to share this night of unforget-table performances and memories with all of you," added the music Maestro Ilaiyaraaja.

Hyderabad Talkies, known for its legacy events including A.R. Rahman in 2017 and Arijit Singh in 2019, has once again raised the bar by bringing the maestro to the city, including film fraternity members, political leaders, celebrities, and business leaders.

'Ilaiyaraaja's music is known for its fusion of Indian classical music with traditional and western Indian film music!

usic has the power to evoke emotions and connect with soul-stirring compositions and has been an inspiration to many aspiring musicians. His music has the power to evoke emotions, and the fans are expecting a spellbinding performance from the maestro," says Sainath Goud Malkapuram, founder of Hyderabad

The My Music My Country (#m3c) initiative by Hyderabad Talkies aims to re-introduce the ethnicity of Indian Music and treat the music-lovers of the city to the best of the songs of the legendary artists. The platform has already made the city groove to foot-tapping numbers and exquisite music, with a show by youth sensation Sid Sriram in February 2020 attracting a footfall of over 60,000.

So gear up, get ready, to be transported to another world with the soul-stirring sounds of Ilaiyaraaja . A musical extravaganza that promises to be a night to remember for the lifetime. Book your tickets now to bask in the brilliance of Illayaraja, the maestro of

'If you love acting, nothing is challenging'

Young actress Riva Arora has not only

been a social media

sensation but also

a great actor at a

very young age.

Riva, who was

recently seen in

Chhatriwali,

speaks to *The*

Pioneer about

working on the

film, balancing her

acting life with the world of content

creation, and more.

AMARTYA SMARAN

Riva Arora, who amassed a massive social media following for her charming looks and acting skills, was recently featured in Zee5's *Chhatriwali*, starring Rakul Preet Singh, Sumeet Vyas, Satish Kaushik, and Prachee Shah.

In one of her Instagram posts, the actress wrote, "I can't thank everyone enough for all the support, but really, thank you so much for your love and support." This shows how overwhelmed she is by the response the film overwhelmed she is by the response the film has garnered over the last few weeks since its release on January 20. *Chhatriwali* has racked up over 100 million watch minutes within just a few days of its release on the OTT platform. The film tells the story of Sanya Dhingra, who tries her best to break the taboo of sex education while actively seeking a full time job. ing a full-time job.

Just one day ahead of her birthday, on the cusp of entering a rather exciting adulthood, Riva Arora interacted

with The Pioneer via with *The Pioneer* via Zoom. The *Uri* actress discussed working on a social drama like *Chhatriwali*, acting alongside Rakul Preet Singh, balancing acting life and creating content for the gram, and her desire to dabble with international film industries industries.

"Chhatriwali happened in the most beautiful way. We were at the RSVP office for a meeting. I auditioned from home in 2021 because the pandemic was still on, back then. When they told us about the script, we really loved it. We were just like, We have to do this film because it has such a beautiful story,""shared Riva.

Riva has around 9.6 million followers on Instagram, and the number doesn't seem to stop growing. We asked her whether all the praise and adulation ever got to her head. To ever got to her head. Io which she replied, "Acting is what I love, and I will continue doing that. Being both a creator and an actress, I always try to balance both. Whenever I get free time, I make a video or click a picture and tell my fans on Instagram about what's happening. Even when I'm on the set, I always inform my fans online."

Guess what? The Mom star doesn't feel acting is as challenging as it seems if one really loves it to the core. "Well! If you love acting, you don't find any-thing extremely challenging because if you really want to do it, it will come automatical-

ly," said Riva. All said, she shared one partic-ular instance where she found it hard while filming Chhatriwali. "The emotional scene that I had to perform with Rakul di was difficult because there was this wedding that was happening near the shooting spot," shared Riva with a chuckle. "We had to shoot that multiple times because all we could hear was the noise from the venue. The acting part was not difficult, but dubbing for it was a challenge. I had to dub in the exact same way. The first take turned out great, and Tejas sir was there to sup-port me through-

out the process."
The Gunjan Saxena actress

was all praise for her co-star Rakul Preet Singh, "It was amazing working with Rakul di, Rajesh sir, and Prachee ma'am. I got to work with some great actors, and I learned so much from them. There was this positive vibe on the set, and we all started bonding on the very first day. Everybody was so friendly, and I'm grateful to be working with them. I'd say working with them was one of the best experiences. Rakul Di and I already share a good bond, so it was easy to work with her even on the emotional scenes. It was a joy sharing screen space with all of them."

As we've informed you earlier that Chhatriwali deals with breaking the shackles of social conventions such as sex education in India, Riva feels it's imperative to talk about such topics in the open and spread awareness among the youth. "Yes! Definitely, for people who don't know much about it and aren't aware of what's going on in the world; I feel it is important to talk about how miscarriages and abortions happen. It's rather important for teenagers to know about it.

And this movie has been getting so much love and support for its content. I'm super happy and grateful for that."

Speaking of the best performance that she's witnessed in recent years, she said, "It was a pleasure working with Vicky Mamu at *Uri*. He's such a talented actor, and he's so down to earth. His acting in the film was one of the finest performances that I've seen in recent times. Also, the entire cast of *Chhatriwali* has outdone themselves in terms of their per-formances." The Bharat actress further added, "I want to do great in Bollywood and I also want to work down South. I'd also love to enter the Hollywood and Korean industries and learn as much as I can from all the industries across the world."

The Chhatriwali



what's brewing?





Sri Ashoka Jewellers showroom at Somajiguda























asakawa-India Leprosy Foundation (S-ILF) organised a national Youth festival Youth Against Leprosy', to raise awareness about leprosy amongst the younger generation. The festival was graced by Chandrajit Banerjee, DG, CII, who was the Chief Guest at the event.

LISTINGS

MYSHUBHLIFE TO OFFER DIGITAL CREDIT TO ITS USERS

yShubhLifea digital lending and full-stack financial service platform and MobiKwik have partnered to offer Digital Credit at a nominal rate of interest, with a frictionless experience to MobiKwik customers. With the technology-led partnership, MyShubhLife aims to disburse loans to millions of MobiKwik customers. The partnership will work towards enhancing the shared goals of the two organizations, which are committed to enabling financial inclusiveness and the economic well-being of retail customers. MobiKwik today has 135 million registered users who can make payments for all their daily life needs, including utility bills, eCommerce shopping, food delivery, and shopping at large retail chains, mom & pop (kirana) stores, etc. across a 3.7 million merchant network.

EXPERIENCE LOVE WITH STARBUCKS VALENTINE'S SPECIALS!

he season of love is here, and with it comes Tata Starbucks' range of limited-edition beverages, delicacies, and merchandise. The Valentine's special menu will include the much-awaited red velvet cheesecake beverages, available in hot, iced and frappuccino variants, heart shaped cakes in variants like red velvet and orange and dutch truffle gateau. Complimenting these delectable treasures, customers can also get their hands on the adorable 'Butter Together' range of mugs, tumblers, and

FUN

ARCHIE



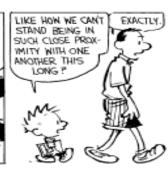












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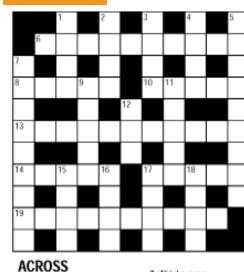
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DOWN

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- 2 Skinny 3 Molten stuff from a volcano

6 A machine in a kitchen

10 A room just under the roof

14 Imagine things while you

19 A large African animal

with a hom on its nose

13 A country famous for

making watches

are asleep

8 Frequently

7 Thinks over

11 Speaks

12 Not many

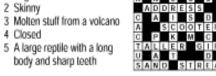
15 A door out of a

building

17 Second-hand 18 On

9 More than is needed

16 This orbits the Earth











5 A large reptile with a long • The sum of all numbers in body and sharp teeth any row or column must equal 45.

tollywood

'Original films didn't penetrate the local areas in our states

PNS HYDERABAD

Butta Bomma, named after the Telugu hit song from Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo is a remake of the Malayalam superhit film, Kappela. The makers adapted the story line to match up to the taste of the Telugu audience. The film is produced by Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, which stars Anikha Surendran, Surya Vashista and Arjun Das in prominent characters. Butta Bomma which is all set to hit the theatres on February 4 is directed by debutant Sowri Chandrasekhar T Ramesh.

In a candid conversation with the local media ahead of Butta Bomma's release, Sowri Chandrasekhar opened up about his passion for cinema, the idea behind the film's script, casting choices, and the best compliment he received in the due process.

The filmmaker always believed that getting a basic education was essential to survive if things go haywire. Therefore, before entering into the tinsel town of Tollywood, Sowri Chandrasekhar pursued an MBA in Marketing. He started his journey with Varma Corporation and further worked under the guidance of director E Nivas for films like *Shool, Love ke Liye Kuch* Bhi Karega, Bardaasht, and Dum. Later, after his father had passed away, he had to move back to Hyderabad. It was at that time, he met filmmaker Sukumar, who recently scored a hit with Pushpa, and travelled with the ace film right from

Pushpa, and travelled with the ace film right from Jagadam to Pushpa 2.

The director shared he was confident since day one that Kappela could be remade into Telugu, "I happened to watch Kappela during Covid and I really liked the screenplay of the film. Only a few films can be remade into other languages. When it comes to Kappela, it is a script based film so it can be made into any language. That's film, so it can be made into any language. That's the reason I chose this particular film and more than anything it excited me as a filmmaker. And I always had the confidence that it would go well with our audience. Later, I got to know that Sithara Entertainment bought the rights for the film and I approached them."

The film is being appreciated for the casting choices and the debutant said, "We were searching for someone who'd look really innocent. In that process, I happened to see Anikha in Gautham Vasudev Menon's web series and I felt she's the right fit for the role. When it comes to Arjun Das, our producer Naga Vamsi was really excited to see him play the part. And after looking at Surya Vasishta's audition clips, we locked in on him after discussing with the producers. All the three actors will surely create an impact on the audience. I don't know whether I can say this or not but Anikha, Surya and Arjun will go places after the release of the film."

While dealing with a film made for a different region, the director should see to it that it doesn't get lost in transla-

tion. Remaking a film isn't as easy as it seems. Right from casting to adapting the story to a region's sensibilities, everything poses a challenge. "Our Telugu culture is a lot different when compared to Kerala. We changed much of the first and made sure not to change the main plot of the film. There's also a major screenplay change in the first half and I think after watching Butta Bomma, even the Kappela director might envy that particular change. Apart from that we tried our level best to capture those nuances that the story demanded. I am not worried about comparisons. And I feel the original films didn't penetrate the local areas in our states. So, I thought we could take a chance," informed the *Butta Bomma* creator.

Everyone is aware of the close relationship that Sithara Entertainments holds with master director Trivikram Srinivas. When the first timer was asked if Trivikram Srinivas ever suggested any changes to the script, he replied, "He never interfered while we were shooting for the film but after watching the film in its entirety, he suggested a few changes and we immediately made all those changes."

There's this idea that romantic films only garner critical success and don't make astro-

nomical box-office numbers. "I never believed in that philosophy. I feel it all depends on its merit. If you're able to honestly instil emotions with your story and keep the audience hooked to the seats, that film is bound to work. No matter who the star is, if the film doesn't have the potential to get through the audience, it won't perform well. I felt really happy when Chinna Babu garu complimented me after watching the movie. I can't reveal as to why he complimented me because I'd be letting you all in on an important twist," assured the director.

Sowri Chandrasekhar T Ramesh

looks super confident about the suc-

cess of Butta Bomma and is keen on making films in the action genre. "I don't have any reservations in terms of who I want to cast in my films. I'm open to casting anyone who goes well with the character and the story. Everything depends on the script,"

h a l a p a -thy67 is one of the most touted films from Tamil Cinema. The 67th film of Thalapathy Vijay, was officially launched recently. Many vague details referring to the star cast of the film have been making rounds regularly since director Lokesh approved that he is joining with

Thalapathy Vijay.

The makers have now made the official announcement of the enire starcast, and also unveiled the character posters. While, earlier it was officially confirmed that the senior Bollywood star

Sanjay Dutt is making his Tamil debut in Vijay's film, by playing the lead antag-onist, Arjun Sarja, who is best known as the 'Action king' of South cinema, is playing a pivotal role in *Thalapathy 67*.

Thalapathy67 features an ensemble cast including Sanjay Dutt, Priya Anand, Arjun Sarja, Gautham Menon, Mysskin,

Mansoor Ali Khan, Mathew Thomas, and Sandy Master. Now, Trisha Krishnan comes on board as the leading lady opposite Vijay in the movie. This will be the fifth movie for Trisha with Vijay. The magical pair is set

to work together after 14 long years.
Rockstar Anirudh Ravichander scores the music for the movie, while Manoj Paramahamsa handles the cinematography. Philomin Raj takes care of editing and N. Sathees Kumar is the art director. Ramkumar Balasubramanian is the



to the release of the upcoming film Butta Bomma, director Sowri Chandrasekhar opened up about his passion for cinema, the idea behind the film's script, casting choices, and the

> compliment he received in the due process.

Samantha to begin shooting for *Kushi* & Citadel soon

A Samantha Ruth Prabhu has been one of the most loved actresses of the Indian film industry. Her Oo Antava turned out to be a global hit. With her recently released *Yashoda*, the actress has received immense love from all around the world.

And here comes two of the biggest announce-ments of the actresses" projects; Kushi and Citadel.

While there were talks that the Yashoda actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu will be starring in the Varun Dhawan starrer Citadel, Prime video on Wednesday had officially announced that the actress will be starring alongside Varun in the Indian instalment of the Citadel universe, the global-event series from Prime Video and the Russo Brothers' AGBO.

The untitled *Citadel* series based out of India is being helmed by renowned creator duo Raj & DK (Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK), who are the showrunners and directors. The local instalment is written by Sita R. Menon, along with Raj & DK. The streaming service also confirmed that the production is currently underway in Mumbai.

Sharing her excitement on fan of the

When Prime Video and Raj & DK approached me with this project, I decided to take it up in a heartbeat! After working with this team on *The Family Man*, it is homecoming for me. The *Citadel* universe the interconnected story. universe, the interconnected storylines between the productions across the globe, and most importantly, the script of the Indian instalment really excit-

ed me. I am thrilled to be a part of this brilliant universe conceptualised by the Russo Brothers' AGBO. I am also looking forward to working with Varun for the first time on this project. He is someone who is full of life and cheer

when you're around him." While, the actress has been trending on all social media platforms ever since it was announced the actress being part of Citadel, there have been reports that the makers of her upcoming Telugu film, Kushi, are upset with her as she had allotted dates for Citadel. However, in a tweet, the actress dropped an update about *Kushi* and revealed that she will soon begin the shooting for Kushi, and apologised to the team.

Wednesday, after the announcement related to Citadel was done, a

actress took to Twitter and asked her about her upcoming film, Kushi. Replying to him, the actress wrote, "#*Kushi* will resume very soon .. my apologies to @TheDeverakonda @ShivaNirvana @MythriOfficial (sic)."

Meanwhile, Deverakonda acknowledged her tweet and wrote, "We all await wait your return in full health and your big s m i l e (sic)."



Reintroducing Brahmanandam like never before in Keedaa Cola

delivered consecutive hits with his first two very first feature-length production of VG Sainma. The film is being produced by Bharath Kumar, Sripad Nandiraj,

Upendra Varma, Srinivas Kaushik, Saikrishna Gadwal, Vijay Kumar, There are 8 main characters in this film and it will not have heroes or heroines. Comedy King Brahmanandam is playing one of

the crucial roles in the movie. Director Tharun Bhascker's statement reads: "When I was supposed to cast I had immense pressure. The pressure of working with a star was becoming a burden and I didn't want to fall prey to that. This is a crime comedy and say it with me who's the star of comedy? The OG meme god?Re-Introducing Mr.Brahmi! Like never before.

Watch him in

The extremely talented Tharun Bhascker, who delivered consecutive hits with his first two - "Thatha". VaradhaRaju is the mean old grandpa who you'll films is presently working on his third directorial venture *Keedaa Cola*, a crime comedy. It's the with a disposable urine attachment, the man's only super-

power is sarcasm. "Peru Varadha, posedhi pithukantha." Watch him deliver a fine performance that's subtle yet immensely funny ee sari mr.B meeku kharchulaki ichesthadu and leave you saying - "He paid

> Brahmanandam's first look poster has been unveiled on the occasion of his birthday and it shows Brahmanandam with a puzzled

Your world is going to get weirder," reads the poster.

AJ Aaron is taking care of the cinematography, while Upendra Varma is the editor and Ashish Teja Pulala is the art director. Tharun Bhascker penned the

Keedaa Cola will be released sometime this year.

arjuna & Pooja Hedge aaza's new campaign

aaza, Coca-Cola India's homegrown mango drink, has unveiled its new 'Aam Wali Dildaari, Bina Naam Wali Dildaari' campaign.

Maaza has on-boarded the iconic south Indian superstar, Nagarjuna, as the new face of the brand With this new campaign, Maaza extends its spirit of benevolence and encourages anonymous acts of kindness to spread joy and happiness. The campaign further highlights the fulfilling mango experience that brings out one's selfless personality.

The light-hearted storytelling in the TVC depicts Amitabh Bachchan or Nagarjuna as a passionate Maaza lover while Pooja Hegde is an

inquisitive kind citizen who loves to take part in social service activities. The two ad films portray the spirit of Indian citizens who like to indulge in the act of generosity by contributing to society. It also highlights the message of how true generosity comes with anonymity. Pooja Hegde, Indian actress & star of the new Maaza campaign, said, "I am proud to be associated

with Maaza for over a year now. The brand's philosophy of true generosity and acts of kindness is something I personally relate to. The brand brings nostalgia and takes me back to my childhood days of enjoying fresh mangoes and sharing joyous moments with my loved ones."

Ruchira Entertainments & N Cinemas bags the Telugu rights of Kabzaa

igh octane Kannada action drama Kabzaa starring Real Star Nimma Upendra, Kichcha Sudeep and Shriya Saran is due for its release on March 17. Ít's a known fact that Nimma Upendra shares a great fan base in the Telugu states. Now, here's the good news; N. Sudhakar Reddy's Ruchira Entertainments & N Cinemas bagged the Telugu rights of the film for a huge price.

Actor Nithiin, popular Tollywood star and N. Sudhakar Reddy's son took to his twitter account saying, "Happy to bring you all @nimmaupendra Garu & KicchaSudeep Garu's #Kabzaa in Telugu through our #RuchiraEntertainments and N Cinemas."



Sonu Sood pledges 1 crore in scholarships for cyber security enthusiasts

onu Sood's Sood Charity Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting education and skill develop-ment, has announced the launch of the "Mera Bharat, Surakshit Bharat Initiative" in association with EC-Council, the world's largest

cybersecurity certification body.
India is currently facing a high number of cyber-attacks, with 18 million attacks daily in the first quarter of 2022. The program provides an opportunity for individuals to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to defend against cyber threats and secure a fulfilling career in the cybersecurity industry.

career in the cybersecurity industry.

The scholarship offers full funding for EC-Council's Certified Cybersecurity Technician program, a globally recognized certification that can help individuals build skills in ethical hacking, network defense, digital forensics, and security operations that are required for in-demand job roles in cybersecurity. The program is created by the team behind the renowned Certified Ethical Hacker Program and is sure to impress recruiters and open doors to a successful cybersecurity career for

"Our country is facing a significant resource crisis in cybersecurity, and I am proud to be a part of the solution through the 'Mera Bharat, Surakshit Bharat Initiative' scholarship program with EC-Council. By helping students and entry-level professionals gain the necessary skills and knowledge to defend against cyber threats, Sood Charity Foundation aims to build a stronger and more secure India. I urge all those passionate about cybersecurity to apply for the scholarship and take the first step towards a fulfilling career



in this industry," said Sonu Sood. The scholarship program is open to applicants who are committed to pursuing a career in cybersecurity and have the desire to contribute to keeping their country safe. Deserving applicants will be selected based on their career goals

and potential for success in the field.

The application period for the scholarship is now open and interested applicants can

SENSATIONAL GILL SEALS T201 SERIES

Shubman Gill smashed a whirlwind unbeaten maiden century in the shortest format as India thrashed New Zealand by 168 runs, their biggest ever win in terms of runs, in the third and final T20 International to pocket the hard-fought series 2-1 here on Wednesday.

India's second highest margin of victory was 143-run win over Ireland in Dublin in 2018.

Gill continued his fine form and showcased his array of shots, hitting the New Zealand bowlers to all parts of the Narendra Modi Stadium to score 126 not out off just 63 balls balls with the help of 12 fours and seven sixes.

Riding on Gill's brilliance, India posted 234 for 4 after electing to bat.

New Zealand never got going in the huge chase as Indian bowlers performed in unison to bowl out the visitors for a mere 66 in 12.1 overs, the third lowest score for the Kiwis in this format.

Skipper Hardik Pandya led the bowling department with figures of 4/16, while Umran Malik (2/9), Shivam Mavi (2/12) and Arshdeep Singh (2/16) scalped two wickets each.

New Zealand lost Finn Allen in the fifth ball of the opening over bowled by Pandya, caught by Suryakumar Yadav.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep struck with his first delivery, as Devon Conway lobbed a fuller delivery to Pandya at mid-off.

New Zealand continued to lose wickets as Mark Champman got a faint inside edge which went straight to Ishan Kishan off Arshdeep's last delivery of the over.

Wickets kept on tumbling like of pack of cards for New Zealand with Glenn Phillips becoming the next victim, caught by Suryakumar at slips off Pandya.

Down at 13 for 4 after three overs, it was all but over for New Zealand.

The situation became even worst for New Zealand when Michael Bracewell was cleaned up up by a fast delivery from Umran Malik.

New Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner (13) and Daryl Mitchell (35) then added 32 runs for the sixth wicket before Shivam Mavi dismissed the former, caught by Suryakumar at deep midwicket fence as the left-hander



Tendulkar felicitates women's U19 WC-winning cricket team

PTI AHMEDABAD

Sachin Tendulkar on Wednesday felicitated the India U-19 women's cricket team for its triumph in the inaugural ICC T20 World Cup in South Africa, saying the feat will encourage many girls to take up the sport and realise their dreams.

"I would likely to congratulate you on the magnificent achievement. The entire nation will celebrate (the triumph) for years to come.

"For me, my cricketing dreams started in 1983 but by winning this

World Cup, you have given birth to many dreams. It was a magnificent performance," Tendulkar said during the felicitation ceremony.
"By winning this World Cup,

you have given a dream to young girls in India to represent the country.

"The beginning of the WPL (Women's Premier League) is going to be the biggest thing. I believe in equality for men and women, and not just in sports. There should be equal opportunities," he added.

Tendulkar said the BCCI is doing its best for the growth of women's

cricket in the country.
"What BCCI has been able to do and the officials' contribution in helping women's cricket prosper, I think it's a sign that we will really do well (in future).

During the brief felicitation function, which was also attended by BCCI secretary Jay Shah, president Roger Binny, vice-president Rajeev Shukla and treasurer Ashish Shelar, the dignitaries handed over a cheque of Rs five crore to the victorious India U-19 women's team as announced by the

Mavi struck again a ball later, removing Ish Sodhi (0) caught by Tripathi at backward point as New Zealand slumped to 53 for seven in nine

Thereafter, it was just a formality for India and the hosts romped home in

Earlier, the start was far from rosy for India after electing to bat as Mitchell Santner made a master-stroke decision by handing Michael Bracewell the sec-ond over and the off-spinner reposed his captain's faith by removing an out-of-form Ishan Kishan, who was adjudged LBW with the second ball of the over.

In-form Gill struck two boundaries off Lockie Ferguson in the next over. Gill was at his ominous best, be it pick up hits, drives or pulls to contin-

ue his onslaught.

He hit Blair Tickner for three fours in the fifth over as India reached 44 for

Young Rahul Tripathi (44 off 22), who has immense potential but yet to fire in the series, then struck Ferguson for a boundary and a six in consecutive

balls to keep up the tempo.
Tripathi then pulled Santner over short-fine leg before coming down and lofting the left-arm spinner for a straight six. Tripathi showed his attacking class and dispatched Ish Sodhi over extra cover for his third six of the innings but perished in the next ball in search of one too many, holing out at deep square leg to Ferguson.

Gill reached his maiden T20I fifty

off 35 balls with a single off Santner.
While Gill held one end,
Suryakumar Yadav (24 off 13) showed glimpses of his class but fell in the 13th over, brilliantly caught by Bracewell at mid-off as the batter mistimed his

Gill brought up his century with a four over the mid-off fielder off the bowling of Ferguson in the first ball of the 18th over. He broke free and clobbered Ferguson over mid-wicket for a huge six in the next ball.

It was mayhem as skipper Pandya (30 off 17) too went ballistic.

But it was Gill who stole the show as he continued with his attacking shots after the ton, finding the boundaries at will as New Zealand attack



India seek tri-series title going into T20 WC

PTI ■ EAST LONDON

With the Women's T20 World Cup days away, India will look to conclude the final leg of their preparations with a win in the tri-series final against South Africa here on Thursday.

India, following their 1-4 series loss to Australia at home, have bounced back with three wins in the tri-series and would be hoping to end the tournament on a high before they enter the 10-team global competition beginning on February 10. India had got the better of South Africa in the triseries opener before their repeat league fixture was washed out. India beat West Indies twice to enter the final.

However, in the World Cup, India's main challenge will be to outsmart the likes of England and Australia.

With eight wickets in three games, all-rounder Deepti Sharma will be the go-to bowler for India in the final.

Under fire batter Jemimah Rodrigues got much needed runs in the final league game against West Indies and would be aiming for consistency.

A big positive for India was the return of Pooja Vastrakar, who had been out of action due to an injury.

The India U-19 women's team lifting the inaugural U19 World Cup in Potchefstroom could be the motivation for Harmanpreet's side to go all out in the final, and then go on to win an elusive ICC title.

India Women: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Anjali Sarvani, Yastika Bhatia, Harleen Deol, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Amanjot Kaur, Sabbhineni Meghana, Meghna Singh, Shikha Pandey, Sneh Rana, Renuka Singh, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Devika Vaidya, Pooja Vastrakar, Sushma Verma, Radha Yadav.

South Africa Women: Sune Luus (c), Chloe Tryon (vc), Anneke Bosch, Tazmin Brits, Nadine de Klerk, Annerie Dercksen, Lara Goodall, Shabnim Ismail, Sinalo Jafta, Marizanne Kapp, Ayabonga Khaka, Masabata Klaas, Tebogo Macheke, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Tumi Sekhukhune, Delmi Tucker, Laura Wolvaardt.

Ballance in Zimbabwe squad for Windies Tests

Former England batsman Gary Ballance was included on Tuesday in a 16-man Zimbahara and former transfer. babwe squad for a two-Test series against the West Indies.

Harare-born Ballance plaadopted country during the last Under International Cricket

Council (ICC) rules a player can switch from one full member nation to another after a threeyear stand-down period, which the 33-year-old has served. Ballance was released by

English county Yorkshire last

year after admitting he used

racist language against former teammate Azeem Rafiq, and signed a two-year contract with Zimbabwe. Revelations by Rafiq, who was born in Pakistan, of institu-

tional racism triggered wholesale changes at Yorkshire. Ballance debuted for Zimbabwe this month in a T20I against Ireland in Harare, scor-

ing 30, but missed the other two

due to concussion. He then made 23 and top scored with 52 in two ODIs against the Irish before the

series decider was washed out.



Star white-ball batter Sikandar Raza will miss the series, starting on Saturday in Bulawayo, as he is playing franchise cricket in the United Arab Emirates.

Ryan Burl, potentially highly effective both with bat and ball, also misses out as he is fulfilling franchise commitments in Bangladesh. A fractured finger sidelines regular Test captain and all-rounder Sean Williams so white-ball skipper Craig Ervine stands in.

Pacemen Tendai Chatara and Blessing Muzarabani will be absent due to thigh injuries as Zimbabwe seek a first Test win over the West Indies after three draws and seven losses.

Gill & Surya to compete for Iyer's slot in middle order

The Indian team management could consider playing Shubman Gill in the middle order ahead of Suryakumar Yadav in the first Test against Australia after Shreyas Iyer was ruled out of the

series opener due to a back injury.

Iyer failing to recover from back spasms will certainly open one spot in the Indian batting order and the choice will be between Surya, a career middle Gill, who has mostly opened for the national team in Tests.

Iyer, who has been a consistent performer in his short Test career, was India's stand out batter in the 2-0 series win in Bangladesh in December.

When New Zealand came to India in late 2021, Shubman Gill was being considered for middle order as KL Rahul was supposed to open with Mayank Agarwal. Then Rahul got injured and Gill opened. Then he got injured again. He was being considered for middle order in red ball," a BCCI source privy to development said.

With skipper Rohit Sharma and vice captain Rahul being the first choice openers in the squad, followed by Cheteshwar Pujara and Virat Kohli at numbers three and four respectively, the number five slot becomes very important in the Indian context as that individual is expected to play the second new

In case of Gill, being a Test regular and having originally started his red ball career as a middle order batter, certainly helps his case.



"When Rahul Dravid manned India A, Gill had played in middle order in a West Indies A tour where he had a double hundred in one of the Tests. To be fair, he was originally a middle order batter, who was converted into an opener," the former national selector said.

In case of Surya, his dominance against spinners on wickets offering turn

"In case Nathan Lyon gets to turn his off breaks big, then SKY can dismantle him with his footwork. But against Cummins, Hazlewood, Gill could be a better bet," he added.

Iyer, who missed the limited overs home series against New Zealand, has not yet fully recovered from his back injury and remains at the National Cricket Academy for rehabilitation.

SKY remains at top of ICC rankings

Swashbuckling Indian batter Surya-kumar Yadav continued his stay at the top in the ICC rankings released on

Suryakumar reached the rating of 910 points after he stroked a quick-fire India's ongoing series against New Zealand in Ranchi as the exciting righthander maintained his healthy lead at the top of the T20I rankings for batters.

While Suryakumar played a more composed knock of 26 not out in the second match of the series, the 32-year-old dropped back to a total of 908 rating points as a result. It also means Suryakumar remains within striking distance of England batter Dawid Malan in the race to hold the highest rating of all time for men's T20I batters.

Malan achieved a rating of 915 points in Cape Town back in 2020, but Suryakumar now holds the second highest rating of all time for T20I batters following his recent heroics with the willow.

He claimed the top ranking for current batters while scoring a total of 239 runs from six matches at last year's T20 World Cup and only last month was deservedly named the ICC T20 Cricketer of the Year. No other Indian featured in the top 10 of the batters or bowlers list while Hardik Pandya remained third among all-rounders.

defending champions to 144 for 4 at

stumps to seize control of the

of 262 for 2, things did not go

Andhra's way as the hard-working

MP bowlers hit back after toiling

hard during the massive 251-run

stand between Ricky Bhui (149) and

balls even as Bhui kept going to frustrate the home team's bowling

Agarwal (4 for 72) broke the partnership when he got Shinde to nick

one to wicket-keeper Himanshu

innings ended when he was caught

Mantri with the score at 323.

Shinde reached his ton off 254

Medium-pacer Anubhav

Five runs later, Bhui's marathon

Karan Shinde (110).

Resuming at the overnight score

Visa delay forces Khawaja to miss his flight to India

PTI SYDNEY

A ustralia opener Usman Kha-waja was forced to miss his flight to India on Wednesday due to a visa delay.

the high-profile four-Test series against India without Khawaja, who is now expected to depart on Thursday. "Me waiting for my Indian

Visa like... #stranded #dontleaveme #standard #anytimenow, wrote Khawaja while posting a meme on social media. The Pakistan-born batter

year-old also featured in the IPL back in 2016. He was named Australia's

has played 56 Tests, 40 ODIs and

nine T20s for Australia. The 36-

Test Player of the Year on Monday, an award named after the legendary Shane Warne. Australia will have a four-

day training camp in the outskirts of Bengaluru before moving to Nagpur for the first Test beginning February 9. The other venues are Delhi, Dharamsala and Ahmedabad.

Both teams are in the running to reach the World Test Championship final.

Batters put Karnataka in command against Uttarakhand

PTI BENGALURU

Karnataka, riding on veteran all-rounder Shreyas Gopal's unbeaten 103, took a massive 358-run lead against Uttarakhand on day two of their Ranji Trophy quarter-final match here on Wednesday.

On a day when runs flowed freely for the hosts, skipper Mayank Agarwal (83) was involved in a 159run opening partnership with Ravikumar Samarth (82) before Devdutt Padikkal (69) and Nikin Jose (62) too scored half centuries as Karnataka ended the day at 474 for

None of the Uttarakhand bowlers seemed effective against the batterheavy Karnataka side at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, with pace bowler Deepak Dhapola, who had career-best figures of 8/35 in an innings during the Ranji Trophy group phase this season, returning empty-handed on Wednesday.

With the Uttarakhand strike bowler seemingly ineffective, there were four half-centurions and a century-maker in Karnataka's lineup.

no loss, overnight batters Agarwal and Samarth, who were on 65 and 54 respectively on Tuesday, flourished in favourable home condi-

However, the pair departed in

quick succession with Uttarakhand

pacer Abhay Negi accounting for both in the first session of Their departure, however, didn't end Uttarakhand's misery with

Padikkal and Jose guiding the hosts past the 300-run mark. Their partnership yielded 118 runs and broke the back of the visitors' bowlers. But more misery was about to unfold for the visitors later in the day as veteran all-rounder Gopal struck

his fifth first-class century and, in the

process, crossed the 3,000-run mark

to put Karnataka in an almost invin-

cible position. Going by Uttarakhand's capitulation in the first innings, Karnataka could declare their innings in the first session and finish the contest on day

PRABH, NAMAN HIT 100s

Rajkot: Openers Prabhsimran Singh and Naman Dhir struck sparkling centuries to give Punjab the upper hand on the second day of their quarterfinal match against Saurashtra.

Resuming the day at 3 for no loss in reply to Saurashtra's first innings total of 303 all out, Punjab were 327 for 5 from 91 overs at the close of second day for a lead of 24 runs with Prabhsimran and Naman scoring 126 and 131 runs respectively.

Prabhsimran faced 158 balls from which he struck 13 fours and three sixes, while Naman hit nine fours and seven sixes during his 180ball knock. Prabhsimran was the first to go

lunch session while Naman stayed a little longer and was the third Punjab batsman to get out. One-down Pukhraj Mann (1), Anmolpreet Singh (9) and Nehal Wadhera (4) did not contribute

at the team score of 212 in the post-

innings total.

Mandeep was batting on 39 off 120 balls, while Malhotra was giving him company on 16 off 57 deliveries when the stumps were drawn. For Saurashtra, Dharmendrasinh much but captain Mandeep Singh Jadeja and Yuvrajsinh Dodiya took and wicketkeeper Anmol Malhotra wickets apiece while Parth Bhut got took Punjab past Suarashtra's first

VIHARI BATS LEFT HANDED

Indore: In an act of bravery, Andhra ond day of the quarterfinal.

skipper Hanuma Vihari batted lefthanded and defied the speedy Avesh Khan to add 26 runs for the 10th wicket to help the team reach 379 against Madhya Pradesh on the sec-

Andhra then reduced the

by Saransh Jain in the covers off Agarwal. The MP bowlers then got into the act and struck at regular intervals to leave Andhra at 353 for 9 when Vihari walked in to bat.

Batting left-handed after injuring his left hand wrist, the Andhra captain managed to hit a couple of

boundaries to make sure the team total swelled to 379. He batted with only one hand.

He was dismissed LBW by Jain for 27. He had retired hurt on Tuesday on 16 after being hit by a bouncer from Avesh Khan.

BENGAL TAKE 1ST INN LEAD

Kolkata: Skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran and Sudip Gharami struck half centuries as Bengal took a slender first innings lead against Jharkhand on day two of their quarterfinal.

After bowling Jharkhand out for 173, Bengal were 238 for 5 at the end of the second day with a crucial 65run first innings lead.

Abhimanyu (77) and Gharami (68) displayed a dominant show with the bat after rookie opener Kazi Junaid Saifi (1) was adjudged LBW off Ashish Kumar in the ninth over of the day.

From there on, Abhimanyu and Gharami added 136 runs for the sec-

ond wicket to put the home side to touching distance of claiming a first innings lead.