

## UNION BUDGET 2021-22

**9.5 %** FISCAL DEFICIT FOR CURRENT FISCAL AGAINST 3.5 PC BUDGETED

**6.8 %** FISCAL DEFICIT FOR NEXT FISCAL

**12L cr** MARKET BORROWING TO FUND EXPENDITURE

**34.83L cr** EXPENDITURE FOR THE NEXT FISCAL



### MAJOR ALLOCATIONS

**₹2.24L cr** outlay for healthcare

Rural infra dev fund up to **₹40,000 cr**

Sharp hike in capex to **₹5.54L cr**

**₹4.78L cr** allocated to defence

Covid vaccination expenditure **₹35,000 cr**

**₹20,000 cr** recapitalisation for PSBs

**10%** hike in farm loan disbursement to **₹16.5 L cr**

Record **₹1.10 lakh crore** allocated to railways

# FM'S POLL PILL

A major portion of the spend allocated to poll-bound Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal and Assam

**TAMIL NADU**  
₹1.03 lakh crore

**KERALA**  
₹65,000 crore

**WEST BENGAL**  
₹25,000 crore

**ASSAM**  
₹34,000 crore



#### AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 1: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday proposed a sharp increase in expenditure on infrastructure, doubling of healthcare spending and raising of the cap on foreign investment in insurance in her Budget for the next fiscal in a bid to pull the economy out of the trough.

The Budget for the fiscal year made no changes in personal or corporate tax rates but raised customs duties on certain auto parts, mobile phone components and solar panels in order to provide impetus to domestic manufacturing.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed new highways projects of 3,500 kms in Tamil Nadu at a cost of Rs 1.03 lakh crore, 1,100 kms of highways in Kerala at an investment of Rs 65,000 crore. In West Bengal, she proposed 675 kms of highways works at a cost of Rs 25,000 crore and over 1,300 kms of highways in Assam at Rs 34,000 crore. It also imposed an Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC) on the import of certain items (like apples, peas, lentils, alcohol, chemicals, silver and cotton) to finance agricultural infrastructure and other development expenditure. But its impact on prices

has been offset by an equivalent or more reduction in the import duty.

Interest on employee contributions to PF over ₹2.5 lakhs per annum effective April 1, 2021, has now been made taxable. In the previous 2020 Budget, the finance minister had capped the tax exemption on employers contribution to PF, NPS and superannuation funds at an aggregate of ₹7.5 lakh per annum.

In a relief to senior citizens, those above 75 years of age with only pension and interest income would no longer have to file income tax returns, subject to certain conditions. Delivering her third straight Budget, Sitharaman allocated ₹5.54 lakh crore for capital creation in the infrastructure sector. This included ₹1.18 lakh crore for the roads and highways sector and ₹1.08 lakh crore for railways. The allocation was 37 per cent more than last year. The increased spending is aimed at creating demand in the economy and support job creation. With just 1 per cent of GDP being spent on health, she proposed raising of the spending to ₹2.2 lakh crore next fiscal to help improve health systems as well as fund vaccination drive against coronavirus.

"We decided to spend big on infrastructure in this Budget. We attended to the need of the health sector," she told a press conference after presenting the Budget for 2021-22 in Lok Sabha. "We decided to give greater impetus to the economy in this Budget." Additional resources

required are targeted to be raised through divestment and monetisation.

While ₹1.75 lakh crore is being targeted from the sale of non-strategic public sector companies, the government will get ₹30,000 crore from the new agriculture cess. With government spending more to support the economy during the pandemic that hit revenue collections, the fiscal deficit for the current year was put at 9.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) as against a target of 3.5 per cent. For the next fiscal, the fiscal deficit was projected at 6.8 per cent.

"We have spent, we have spent and we have spent. That's why fiscal deficit has reached this number," she said. She also signalled that the fiscal policy support of the economy will continue for at least three years, with the deficit being brought under 4.5 per cent by FY2025-26.

Officials in her ministry at the press conference explained that the new limit for interest-free PF would hit less than 1 per cent of the total EPFO base.

For the agriculture sector, she maintained the reform momentum such as the extension of farm credit provision to farmers, commodity expansion under 'Operation Green' and extension of Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) to APMCs. In order to incentivise the purchase of affordable house, the finance minister proposed to extend the period for claiming an additional deduction for the interest of ₹1.5 lakh paid for home loans by one year to March 31, 2022.

To remove hardship faced by NRIs in respect of their income accrued on foreign retirement benefits account due to mismatch in taxation, new rules for alignment will be notified. Foreign direct investment limit in insurance was proposed to be raised to 74 per cent from the current 49 per cent. Also, a tax deducted at source of 0.1 per cent will be levied on the purchase of goods exceeding ₹50 lakh in a year.



### COSTLIER

- Refrigerators and ACs
- LED lamps, parts and spares such as printed circuit board
- Raw silk and cotton,
- Solar invertors and lanterns
- Automobile parts such as safety and toughened glasses
- Windscreen wipers
- Signalling equipment
- Mobile phone parts like PCBA
- Camera module
- Connectors
- Back cover, side keys, mobile phone charger components
- Inputs or raw materials of Lithiumion battery
- Ink cartridges and ink spray no ..
- Finished leather products



### CHEAPER

- Gold and gold dore
- Silver and silver dore
- Precious metals like platinum and palladium
- Medical devices imported by international organisation and diplomatic missions
- Leather Goods
- Nylon Clothes
- Iron, steel and copper items

## No major deal for Odisha

NINL's disinvestment to be completed in coming fiscal

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: Except for development of a fishing harbour and landing centre at Pradaip, there is nothing new or big announcement for the state in the Union Budget for the year 2021-22.

During her Budget speech, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has proposed substantial investments in the development of modern fishing harbours and fish landing centres.

In first phase, the Centre planned to develop fishing harbours and fish-landing centres along the banks of rivers and waterways," she said.

The Union Minister said 464 km length Rajpur-Vishakhapatnam industrial corridor passing through Chhattisgarh, Odisha and north Andhra Pradesh will be awarded in the current year. Construction of the road project will start in 2021-22, she said.

Advanced traffic management system with speed radars, variable message signboards,

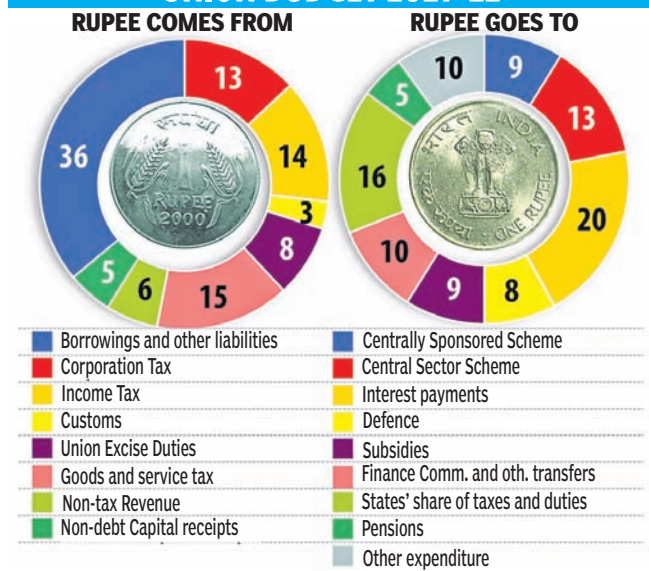
GPS-enabled recovery vans will be installed on the highway.

Similarly, the Centre has decided to complete the strategic disinvestment plan of Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL) during the year 2021-22. Following the state government's consent, the Union Cabinet had approved the disinvestment plan, January 8.

Four central PSUs - Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation (MMTC), National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) and MECON - and two Odisha government companies IPI-COL and Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) are shareholders in the NINL. Apart from the above, the state may get benefits from the increase in allocation for the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for the welfare of Scheduled Castes. The Union government is allotting ₹35,219 crore for six years till 2025-2026 to benefit four crores of SC students.

Though the state government had demanded allocation of ₹5,650 crore for development of the telecom sector in Odisha, the Finance Minister has not mentioned anything about this in her speech.

### UNION BUDGET 2021-22



### BUDGET 2021-22 At a Glance

(in Rs crore)

	2019-20 Actuals	2020-21 Budget Estimates	2020-21 Revised Estimates	2021-22 Budget Estimates
Revenue Receipts	1684059	2020926	1555153	1788424
Capital Receipts	1002271	1021304	1895152	11694812
Total Receipts	2686330	3042230	3450305	3483236
Revenue Account	2350604	2630145	3011142	2929000
Capital Account	335726	412085	439163	554236
Total Expenditure	2686330	3042230	3450305	3483236
Revenue Deficit	666545	609219	1455989	1140576
Fiscal Deficit	933651	796337	1848655	1506812
Primary Deficit	321581	88134	1155755	697111

## ₹10,840cr loss for state due to cut in central tax share: CM

INTRODUCTION OF CESS IN PETROL AND DIESEL WILL WEAKEN THE CENTRE-STATE FISCAL BALANCE

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: Giving mixed reactions to the Union Budget 2021-22, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said the state government would lose ₹10,840 crore during the current year for its drastic reduction of share in central taxes.

As per the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission, the horizontal share will decrease from 4.629 per cent to 4.528 per cent for coming five years. This will seriously impact the state, Naveen said.

Similarly, capital investments are very much required in Odisha both in railways and highways sectors. But, it has been planned for other states, he said.

The Chief Minister also said that there was a need to increase allocation in social assistance programmes and quantum of transfers for local bodies.

The centralization of revenue by introduction of cess in petrol and diesel will weaken the centre state fiscal balance. Banks have to be made accountable to extend credit to women, farmers and MSMEs, he said.

He expressed happiness that the Budget has turned green with digital budget like what Odisha has been following from last year.

The CM has liked a few points in the Budget that include focus on capital investment to push growth, reintroduction



of developmental financial institution, allocation for Covid vaccine, bold decision to expand fiscal deficit to provide growth impetus and a medium & long term vision for self reliant India.

"I am also delighted to see Mission Shakti appear in Union Budget focusing on women empowerment. After Odisha's Mamata scheme was adopted by the Union government from 2011-2012, replication of our state's flagship women empowerment initiative Mission Shakti clearly shows that Odisha sets benchmark for the nation," he said.

Patnaik exuded hope that like Mamata and Mission Sakti, the next logical step towards women empowerment would be reservation for women in Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies.

### FDI in insurance 74%

The government raised foreign direct investment limit in the insurance sector to 74 pc, a move aimed at attracting greater overseas capital inflows to help enhance insurance penetration in the country. Under the new structure, the majority of directors on the board and key management persons would be resident Indians, with at least 50 pc of directors being independent directors.

### Disinvestment ₹1.75Lcr

The Budget put ₹1.75 lakh crore as a target from stake sale in public sector companies and financial institutions. Disinvestments of BPCL, Air India, Shipping Corporation of India, Container Corporation of India, IDBI Bank, BEML, Pawan Hans and Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd -- among others are proposed to be completed in FY 2021-22. Other than IDBI Bank, a proposal of privatisation of two PSBs and one general insurance company will be taken up in 2021-22.

### More Ujjwala gas

Free cooking gas LPG scheme, Ujjwala will be extended to one crore more beneficiaries. Sitharaman said city gas distribution network of providing CNG to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households will be expanded to 100 more districts. She announced a transport system operator for regulating common carrier capacity in gas pipelines to boost gas-based economy.

### Environment-friendly

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the much-awaited voluntary vehicle scrapping policy to phase out old and polluting vehicles. Sitharaman said that under voluntary vehicle scrapping policy, personal vehicles would undergo fitness test after 20 years while commercial vehicles would require it after completion of 15 years. The minister said this will promote fuel-efficient and environment friendly vehicles while cutting on India's huge import bills.

### Relief to elderly

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman cut the time limit for reopening of IT assessment cases to three years from six years, while for serious tax fraud cases where concealment of income is ₹50 lakh or more it would be 10 years. Senior citizens above 75 years having only pension and interest income would not be required to file income tax returns. Banks paying the interest would deduct the tax on their behalf.

**This Budget has a special focus on strengthening the agriculture sector and boosting farmers' income. Villages and farmers are at its heart**

**NARENDRA MODI** | PRIME MINISTER

**Forget putting cash in the hands of people, Modi government plans to handover India's assets to his cronies capitalist friends**

**RAHUL GANDHI** | CONGRESS LEADER

**They (BJP) lecture others on nationalism, but in practice, they are the ones who sell the nation. They are selling everything from PSUs, insurance, railways to ports**

**MAMATA BANERJEE** | CM, WEST BENGAL

**Sitharaman has delivered on her promise of unveiling a 'Budget Like No Other' with a raft of prudent measures aimed at rejuvenating govt spending towards critical areas**

**UDAY KOTAK** | PRESIDENT, CII



# leisure



## TESSA THOMPSON FEELS SHE BECAME AN ADULT IN 2020

Actress Tessa Thompson feels that she became an adult during 2020 as she spent more time at home due to the pandemic. The 37-year-old realised her shopping habits have changed and she is more interested in interiors than clothes after spending so much time at home, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.

## FOR ANTONIO, BEATING COVID WAS HIS BIRTHDAY GIFT

Hollywood Antonio Banderas said the greatest gift he received for his 60th birthday was defeating the novel coronavirus. Banderas's girlfriend Nicole Kimpel said that they marked his special day, it didn't feel right to do anything lavish, *femalefirst.co.uk* reported.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181

#### ARIES

You will be quite circumspect throughout the day, predicts Ganesh. Your spirits will soar high as you will be invited to join parties and socialise a bit. You will find the correct balance between work and having fun.

#### TAURUS

You are likely to be in a mood to get away from the daily grind and take a much needed break. You would naturally try to stay free from future concerns and commitments and keep all your woes and worries aside for the day.

#### GEMINI

A long and hectic day awaits you. You will be in the mood to finish off long-pending projects at work or at home. There is a chance that your personal life may get affected due to the extra attention you pay towards work.

#### CANCER

Today, you will strictly follow your plan book. All Ganesh needs to do to predict your day is take a peep into the book. However, this is only one of those rare days when things go according to plan. You are likely to keep your views to yourself, and will hardly betray what's on your mind.

#### LEO

Most battles are fought and won inside our head. Hence, Ganesh urges you to maintain a positive outlook today. The stars grant you the ability to double your efforts, and allow your imagination to take flight and chart new routes to success.

#### VIRGO

A day to look inside and contemplate. Find peace and prosperity, says Ganesh. Clam up like those oysters and discover the pearl within you. A fine helping hand you shall lend today to those who need it, says Ganesh.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says that today in your office you should be very careful in your work. It is likely that your superiors will not be happy about your work or your ability today. Those of you who are businessmen should try and delay sending off tenders today.

#### SCORPIO

It is about time you learn to deal with frustration in a more healthy manner. The right choice is always the hardest to make. Do not let sentiments sway you into hasty choices because they may feel right, but might also be extremely impractical.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Going to private parties is a high probability today. All in all, make the most of it as you get nostalgic with old friends and make plans with new ones. Moreover, relatives will be pleased to meet you after a long time.

#### CAPRICORN

It's time to prove your extraordinary skills as a professional, says Ganesh. You will go out of your way, and even double your efforts to accomplish set goals, and chances are that you might succeed. Family and friends will be glad that could take out time to spend some happy hours with them.

#### AQUARIUS

It's a day you may want to spend with yourself. But it may still not bring the desired peace and tranquility. An unpleasant situation may force you to deal with reality, says Ganesh. You now realise how much strength you derive from your devotion to God.

#### PISCES

While you will need loads of moral support to keep your spirits up, you are also likely to be blessed with the company of a person who is equipped to provide just that. Positive results will come your way as long as you do not give up.

## Aamir decides to turn off his phone completely

**Mumbai:** Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan is going on a communication detox and has decided to turn off his phone completely, so that it doesn't come in the way of work and personal life.

The actor's spokesperson revealed that Aamir took a break from *Laal Singh Chaddha* to shoot a cameo for his friend, Amin Hajeer's directorial debut *Koi Jaane Na* in Jaipur.

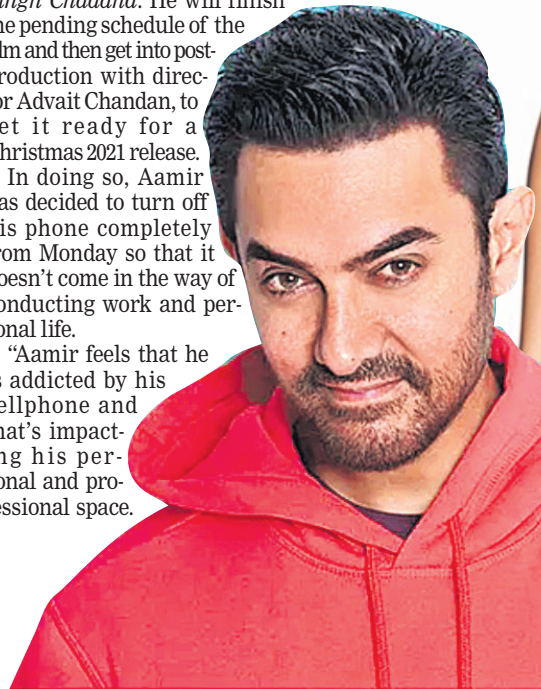
It is now learned that Aamir is back in Mumbai and all geared up to get back to his own film, *Laal Singh Chaddha*. He will finish the pending schedule of the film and then get into post-production with director Advait Chandan, to get it ready for a Christmas 2021 release.

In doing so, Aamir has decided to turn off his phone completely from Monday so that it doesn't come in the way of conducting work and personal life.

"Aamir feels that he is addicted by his cellphone and that's impacting his personal and professional space.

Hence, he has decided to go incognito and operate like in the older days," said the source.

The source added that Aamir has asked "all his close confidantes to reach out to his manager in case of urgency or work-related queries", adding: "Even his social media accounts now will be managed by the team until the release of *Laal Singh Chaddha*."



## Katrina starts shoot for Phone Bhoot in Udaipur

**Mumbai:** Actress Katrina Kaif has started shooting for her upcoming horror comedy *Phone Bhoot* in Udaipur. The actress shared the update with fans Monday, with a video clip she posted on Instagram.

The clip captures Katrina sitting in a flight wearing a mask and face shield, ready to take off. She used emojis of a phone, a ghost and an airplane to update fans about her working trip. Her co-stars Ishaan Khatter and Siddhant Chaturvedi took to Instagram Stories to share moments from the airport and the flight. Siddhant shared a picturesque image of Udaipur, revealing that the team is shooting in the city.

The film is directed by Gurmmeet Singh, and produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani. *Phone Bhoot* has been written by Ravi Shankaran and Jasvinder Singh Bath.

## Deepika defines February with blush pink mood

**Mumbai:** Actress Deepika Padukone Monday greeted the month of February with a stunning picture on social media.

Deepika posted a picture on Instagram, where she is seen dressed in a blush pink embellished kurta paired with diamond stud earrings. The actress is wearing soft make-up and has tied her hair in a neat bun. In the image, Deepika, who is married to actor Ranveer Singh, looks away from the camera and smiles.

"February," she captioned the image.

On the work front, the actress has a busy year ahead. She will be seen in Shikun Batra's upcoming yet-untitled film that also stars Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ananya Panday.

Deepika will also be seen in an untitled film with Amitabh Bachchan and Prabhas, and she has "83 in line where she stars opposite husband Ranveer Singh.

She will also unite with Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan for the first time for an action-adventure, *Fighter*, directed by Siddharth Anand.



## Kashmir turns shooting hotspot for music videos

**Mumbai:** Kashmir is no longer just a haven for filmmakers looking for a scenic backdrop for their lavish Bollywood productions. Beyond films, music video makers are also finding ideal backdrop in Paradise on Earth, to tell their stories of just a few minutes.

Bollywood's romance with Kashmir is nothing new. The industry has been revisiting Kashmir Valley for shoots back from the sixties, when films such as *Junglee*, *Kashmir Ki Kali* and *Himalay Ki God Mein* were filmed in the region's gorgeous locales to present day when we had *Raazi*, *Highway*, and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* among numerous others.

Except for a brief period when life and tourism in Kashmir Valley was

paralysed owing to terrorism, Bollywood has always loved the scenic beauty of the place.

Music video makers add the latest twist in B-town's romance with Kashmir. A slew of videos, capturing the essence of the music and singing of some of our most prolific musical talents have lately been shot in the Valley.

Music composer Salim Merchant recently returned from Kashmir after shooting for his upcoming song 'Tumhe dekh ke, and he sounds super excited with the experience.

"On the first day of our shoot, the temperature went down to minus 10 degrees celsius. However, despite the freezing cold, Kashmir is beautiful. I don't understand why people go to Switzerland and Europe when



India has the most beautiful place in the whole world!" Salim Merchant told IANS.

"The people of Kashmir are so loving and hardworking. We did not take a single technician with us

from Mumbai, and only worked with the local technicians from Kashmir," he informed.

The musician suggests more and more people should flock to Kashmir and enjoy the beauty of the place,

like it was in the 1970s and 80s, and he says there is nothing to be afraid of for tourists.

Merchant said: "Creative people who are associated with music and cinema must visit Kashmir. Back in the seventies and the eighties, almost every Hindi film had at least one song that was shot in Kashmir. It is a great place for shooting. It is very unfortunate that people are not coming to Kashmir because despite what you see on television and news, life over there is completely different."

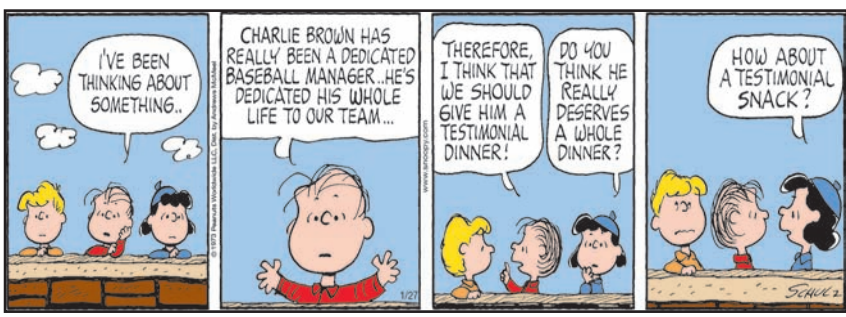
Singer-composer Jigar Saraiya features in the video of his latest song *Heera*, which has been shot in Kashmir. The Sachin-Jigar song also features actress Shriya Pilgaonkar. This team also worked with the local crew from Kashmir.

Recalling the experience, Saraiya said: "Shooting in Kashmir was fun, we had the local crew from there, who really helped us a lot in pulling through the shoot."

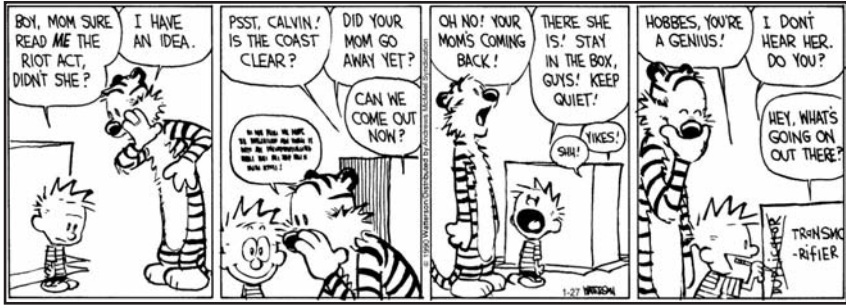
"When we were shooting over there, the minimum temperature was one degree and even went down to minus levels. It was very difficult to sit on a bike early in the morning, around six, and also to emote and lip-sync in the freezing cold. It was fun but very difficult!" he said.

Actress Mrunal Thakur, who recently shot with singer Guru Randhawa for his latest music video titled *Abhi na chhodho mujhe* in Kashmir, is smitten by the beauty of the place. She describes her experience as 'surreal' and 'enchanted'.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

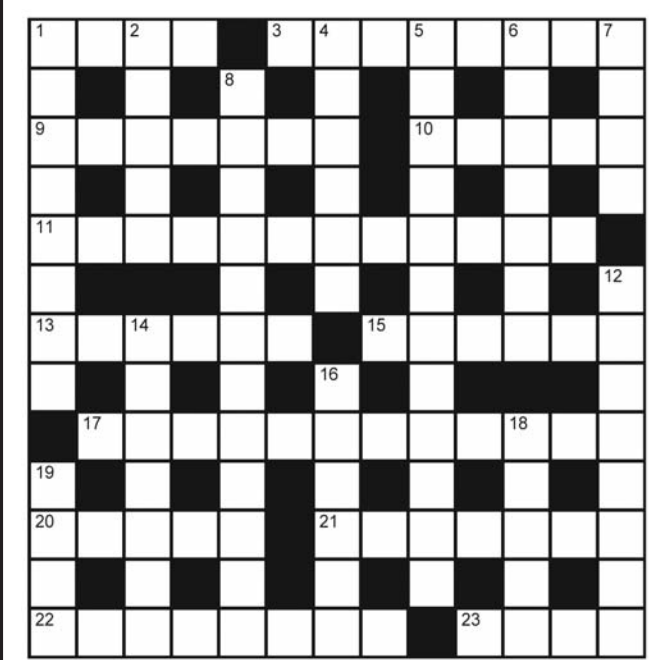


### BREVITY



### FUN post

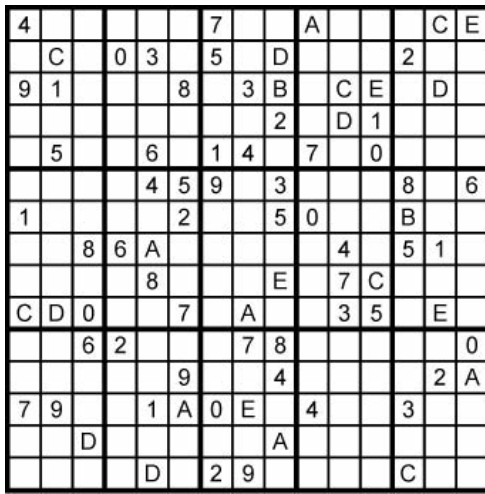
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Airport feature
  - 3 Automobile part (3,5)
  - 9 Anthology
  - 10 Plus
  - 11 You can't fool her (6,6)
  - 13 Refinement
  - 15 Knitted sock
  - 17 Smoke shop items (4,8)
  - 20 Blood carriers
  - 21 Inner circle
  - 22 Begrudged
  - 23 Norse thunder god
- Down**
- 1 Eventide, usu. in Scotland
  - 2 Dogma
  - 4 Not here
  - 5 Firm bandages for broken bones (7,5)
  - 6 Demolish
  - 7 After curfew
  - 8 Deterrent example (6,6)
  - 12 Clothing store aisle
  - 14 Medical buildings
  - 16 Platitude
  - 18 Third rock from the sun
  - 19 Profess, as fact

### SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



### SOLUTIONS



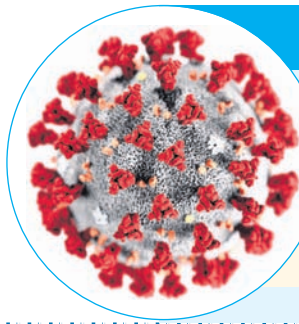
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





**ADIVASI MELA**

Girls paint *pattachitra*, one of the oldest and popular art forms of Odisha, at the ongoing Adivasi Mela in Bhubaneswar, Monday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	10,35,94,874	7,52,16,218	22,39,275
India	1,07,58,619	1,04,33,988	1,54,428
Odisha	3,35,151	3,32,239	1,906

# CURATE'S EGG BUDGET, SAYS CITY

This was probably the toughest budget yet for PM Narendra Modi, as his government navigates the twin challenges of steering the \$2.7-trillion Indian economy out of an unprecedented recession while ensuring more resources to fight the pandemic. With FM Nirmala Sitharaman introducing the all-important document, **Orissa POST** brings to you reactions from all corners of the society...

**NARASINGHA MISHRA** | CONGRESS LEADER  
The government has focused on the states where elections are scheduled with special attention given to them. The government however will ditch the same states post election claiming that these promises were nothing but jumlas

**MAHADEO JAISWAL** | DIRECTOR, IIM SAMBALPUR  
After a year of economic contraction, the Union Budget rightly focused on capital expenditure which was much needed. It needed to be more investment oriented rather than an income generating one. Laying emphasis on development of infrastructure across the country was essential to contribute to the growth and create employment

**PRADIPTA NAIK** | LEADER OF OPPOSITION  
The Narendra Modi government believes in the concept of Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas and the same has been reflected in the announcements of the 2021 Union Budget. The government has ensured welfare of all sections of the people. The government has made special provisions of providing credits to the aspiring industrialists

**NIRANJAN PATNAIK** | PRESIDENT, OPCC  
During the pandemic, economic condition of the state has worsened. The Budget has not been announced as per the prevailing conditions of the deteriorating economic health of the country. The budget has not much in store for the people from rural areas, middle class and the poor. There has nothing special done to counter the joblessness that people suffered from the pandemic

**SARAT DASH** | IRS (RETD)  
The expectations of the general tax payers were very high and they dreamt of a lot of reliefs and concessions on income tax in view of the fatal blow of Covid pandemic on earnings and income. The budget has fallen miserably short of their unreasonable desires. Not much tax concessions has been proposed in the budget. There is no change in the tax slabs and rates. No increase in the standard deduction given to the salaried class.



Denizens watch Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman delivering her budget speech through televisions at an electronics store in Bhubaneswar, Monday

**BASANT NAYAK** | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CYSD  
On National Social Assistant Program (NSAP), there is a dip in allocation from Rs 42,617 crore in Revised Estimates of current fiscal to Rs 9200 cr in the current budget. This indicates that the same amount of allocation has been retained for years, except some deviations noted due to pandemic

**BRAJA KISHORE BEHERA** | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SUM HOSPITAL  
The plan of the government to include pneumococcal vaccines in government schedule is likely to go way long way in reducing childhood mortality and reducing the burden of pneumonia in community. It was started as a pilot program in a few districts of some states and in Odisha it was only available in private vaccination settings

**DIVYANSH JAISWAL** | COMPANY SECRETARY  
The Budget has totally ignored the grievances of the corporate world and small GST filers. It appears to be a half-hearted approach by the Ministry. Direct tax reforms seem to be missing but it is a good endeavor to up the healthcare infrastructure. Moreover, the government needs to revisit crude oil price regulations for the common man

**JEETAMITRA SATPATHY** | PRINCIPAL, ITI BHUBANESWAR  
The Budget will help new start-ups and entrepreneurs as it has increased the funds cap and allowed several relaxations in order to invite investments and brains to steer the economic growth, which was badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The NRI entrepreneurs will also be attracted more to plan their entities in the new economic microsystem

**SURESH PANIGRAHI** | STATE SECRETARIAT MEMBER, CPI(M)  
The Budget has disappointed farmers of the state as it goes against them. The budgetary allocation for agriculture has seen a decline this year. This comes at a time when agrarian crisis is rising. The government is making false claims on MSP as it has failed to implement the recommendations of the MS Swaminathan Commission

**RABI BEHERA** | PRESIDENT, SAMAJWADI PARTY, ODISHA  
The Budget has brought no cheers for the common people of the country who are facing a stiff rise in petrol and diesel prices. Agri cess of Rs. 250 in a litre of petrol and Rs 4.00 on a litre of diesel will have cascading effect on the price of essential commodities which may lead to further inflation

**BN PATNAIK** | CHAIRMAN, CONFEDERATION OF ODISHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
The decision of strengthening of over 15,000 Schools across India under National Education Policy 2020 is a welcome step and it is one of the stronger steps of this government. Other decisions such as 100 Sainik Schools to be set up are also welcome

**BASUDEV BHATT** | CHAIRMAN, OPF  
We strongly oppose the move to qualitatively strengthen only 15,000 schools under NEP. This will deprive our students in other parts. The allocation for education is Rs 93,224 crore (around 2.67% of budget). This is less than last year's allocation. We are in a very critical juncture of education as the National Education Policy is to be implemented in 2021. Low funding will result in a disaster for our education system

**SUDARSHAN DAS** | SECRETARY, ODISHA ENVIRONMENT CONGRESS  
Bold steps are needed to mitigate air pollution in urban metros. The budgetary allocation of Rs 2,217 to address the issue is dismal. The factors contributing to air pollution need to be replaced in sectors like power, and garbage management. This needs policy reforms as well as resources to come up with alternatives. The amount allocated in the budget does not match the requirement

**RANJAN PANDA** | WATER CONSERVATIONIST  
It's a reduced budget for environment compared to last year when the govt proposed Rs 4,400 crore. One needs to see the actual allocation made for this purpose by the Ministry of Environment & Forests. Cities should invest in phasing out coal fired power plants, reducing vehicular carbon footprints, creating green spaces & designing dedicated cycle pathways

**PIYUSH RANJAN ROUT** | URBAN PLANNER  
The Centre should have come up with a Budget for all urban areas rather than focusing only on big cities. The government claims to be committed towards reducing the risk of Climate Change. Therefore, Budget focuses on the reduction of single-use plastic, air pollution, and segregation of waste

**BJAYA KUMAR SAHOO** | FOUNDER, SAI INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL GROUP  
I am happy that the Union Budget 2021 has focused on qualitative strengthening of over 15,000 schools across India under National Education Policy 2020. An umbrella structure will be created for central higher education in various cities. Legislation to set up the Higher Education Commission will be introduced soon. The FM announced a central university to be established in Leh for accessible higher education at Ladakh

**JK PANIGRAHI** | SECRETARY, ODISHA ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY  
The allocation of Rs 1,000 crore to solar energy corporation and Rs 1,500 to renewable energy development agency in the budget signifies the commitment to green energy and climate change mitigation. From healthcare and infrastructure to innovation and R&D, the FM has taken utmost care for presenting a well-balanced budget in the post-pandemic scenario giving justice to various sectors.

**RASMIRANJAN PRADHAN** | AVIATION CONSULTANT  
Finance Minister's statement on monetisation of airports of Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities is a desperate attempt to bring in private players. Many Tier 2 airports such as BPIA have posted profits for consecutive years and have absolutely no need for privatisation. While it may bring infrastructural boost, it will certainly increase rents, docking charges and even loss of jobs

**PRAFUL PANDA** | SENIOR CITIZEN  
It is a welcome move by the government to exempt senior citizens from filing returns. Although I am yet to fully assess the complete benefits that I will be getting under this year's budget, it's heartening to see that we will be relieved of filing the income tax returns on our own which was a lengthy and exhausting procedure

**SARTHAK ARYA** | BANKER  
While on one hand the government is planning to recapitalise about Rs 20,000 crores for state-owned banks, it is also proposing infusing a same amount to public banks. This two-way approach clearly states that the government wants to rescue smaller banks vis a vis privatisation meanwhile expanding the larger government-owned banks by capital infusion

**Std IX, XI classes from February 8**

**Bhubaneswar:** The state government Monday decided to allow students of more classes to attend physical learning at schools. School and Mass Education Secretary, Satyabrata Sahu informed students of Class 9 and 11 will attend the physical learning at schools from February 8.

**CLASSIFIED**

**LOST**

It is notified for the information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Main Secondary Examination of year 2007 and Roll No. 5171814 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the Candidate: Ranjeet Meher, Full Address: C-102, AFHNB Jalavayu Towers, Neeladri Vihar, Near Buddha Park, Bhubaneswar, Odisha - 751021, Ph.: 7042318615.

## Idco to clear projects in industrial estates

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 1:** In another move towards ease of doing business in Odisha, the state government has planned to provide building plan approval to units in the industrial estates and sector specific parks of the state through Idco.

State PSU Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (Idco) will provide building plan approval for expediting the process of the grounding of projects and lessening the burdens of compliance on the investors and entrepreneurs.

The proposal was discussed in detail during a high-level meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra here Monday.

At present, building plan approvals in the industrial estates and sector specific parks is being done by the concerned urban local bodies (ULBs) in urban areas or Gram Panchants/BDOs in rural areas. An investor is required to approach the ULB or the GP for obtaining the approval, sources said.



The proposed system will lessen this burden on the investors. As the Idco is providing land and basic infrastructural facilities in the industrial estates, the building plan approval by the same agency will make the process easier, the source said. Considering competitive advantage of the proposed system in enhancing business eco-system in the state, Mahapatra directed to develop an online system for the purpose. Chairman and Managing Director of Idco Sanjay Kumar Singh was advised to make the entire system automated eliminating the need for physical contact with the investors. It was decided to complete development of the 'web based application' along with its 'dry run' by end of March this year. Further, the Chief Secretary directed to set up in-house planning unit in the Idco office with necessary capacity enhancement orientation and training for meeting the rising demand. As of now, 116 Industrial Estates and eight sector specific parks in Odisha have been developed by the Idco. The major sector specific parks include sea food park at Deras, Plastic Park at Paradeep, Aluminum Park at Angul, Textile park at Bhadrak, Food Processing Park at Khurda, IT Park at Infocity and Infovalley and Electronic Manufacturing Park in Khurda.

## Highway patrolling units launched

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 1:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday rolled out 18 Highway Patrolling Units along various stretches of the State and National Highways to rein in the rising fatalities in road mishaps.

The state govt has identified 18 stretches in the state where the units will do patrolling. Speaking on the occasion, the CM said, "These units will play a crucial role in saving the lives of accident victims on highways."

"The Government is committed to reduce such fatalities and is taking up several steps to contain these unfortunate incidents," Patnaik added. He also stressed on the need to avail treatment to the accident victims in the golden hour; the first hour after accident. He further added that the timing for taking an accident victim from the point of

The patrolling units could save the lives of many accident victims by carrying them to the nearby hospitals as quickly as possible

accident to the nearest hospital was crucial in saving lives. The Patrolling units could save the lives of many accident victims by carrying them to the nearby hospitals as quickly as possible. The state govt will soon roll out another 18 patrolling units in the second phase. A total of 36 Patrolling Units will be deployed in various accident prone stretches of state. CM Patnaik also directed the officials to resume more sensitisation initiatives for drivers on various road safety mechanisms and laws relating to it.

## Fire breaks out at Cuttack hosp

AGENCIES

**Cuttack, Feb 1:** A fire broke out at a private hospital here Monday, but there were no reports of any injury or loss of life, officials said.

The fire broke out at the top floor of the five-storey building in Tulsipur area in the Millennium City, they said.

At least five fire tenders were rushed to the spot, Cuttack district Magistrate-cum-Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani said.

Odisha Fire Service and the State Disaster Rapid Action Force personnel have been engaged to contain the flames, he said, adding that the exact cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. "There were only 11 patients in Sun Hospital. And they were shifted



to safe places. The employees of the facility are also safe," he said. The facility has not admitted new patients in the last few days as construction work was on, an official said. Meanwhile, Odisha Fire and Disaster Response Academy director Maheswar Swain said that the health-care facility has been operating without requisite fire certification.

**CP Mohanty takes charge**

**New Delhi:** Lt Gen Chandri Prasad Mohanty Monday took charge as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff, succeeding Lt Gen SK Saini. In a career spanning four decades, the officer served in numerous positions in field and highly active counter-insurgency environments. Lt Gen Mohanty was heading the Army's Southern Command when he was appointed as Vice Chief of the Army Staff. Gen Saini retired from service Sunday. He has the unique distinction of commanding two brigades—first on the Line of Actual Control and at the multinational UN Brigade in DR of Congo.

**OPSC gets new chairman**

**Bhubaneswar:** The state government has appointed senior IPS officer and DG Fire Services Satyajit Mohanty as the new chairman of Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC). GA & PG department has issued a notification in this regard, Monday. Mohanty will continue to remain in the post until he attends the age of 62 years. The service condition of the IPS officer will be regulated as per the Odisha Public Service Commission (Conditions of service) Regulations, 1952.

**Budget session from February 18**

**Bhubaneswar:** The Budget session of the state Assembly will commence with Governor Ganeshi Lal's address February 18 and continue till April 9, 2021. Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari will present the annual Budget for 2021-22 before the House, February 22. Appropriation Bill will be tabled March 31. As per a notification issued Monday, the Budget session will have 31 working days in two phases. The House will remain closed from March 1 to 11.

**'Happiness kit' to boost immunity**

**Bhubaneswar:** With schools in the state likely to reopen this month, the state government has decided to gift students 'Happiness kits'—comprising peanuts, jaggery, chickpeas among other items—to boost their immunity. The distribution, set to begin during the first week of February, would cover five districts in the initial phase, an official said Monday.

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	48600.61	2314.84
NIFTY	14281.20	646.60
DOLLAR	74.01	₹0.16
EURO	88.49	₹0.92
GOLD	₹48,400	₹696
SILVER	₹73,763	₹4061

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	28.7°C	28.6°C
MIN	13.8°C	12.0°C
Humidity	94%	78%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Mainly clear sky



FOCUS INDIA

# GROWTH-ORIENTED BUDGET



This Budget aims to double the spending on health and nutrition. But to do more, we need higher economic growth which can generate tax revenues to fund the social sector

company will be privatised. Also, some of the government-owned assets, such as toll roads, or land owned by government companies, will be monetised. This is possibly the first such budget which is showing conviction about government vacating space for the private sector. Indeed, the stated philosophy is that the government will get out of all non-strategic sectors like airlines, hotels etc, and leave it for the private sector. This will certainly improve efficiency of the usage of capital and lead to higher growth.

India's ranking in the world hunger index, or child malnutrition is quite low. Hence, we need to substantially increase public spending on health, which is below our peer country average. This Budget aims to double the spending on health and nutrition. But to do more, we need higher economic growth which can generate tax revenues to fund the social sector. On health and education, surely the Finance Minister could have allocated more, but given that the size of the deficit is already high, the policy focus is clearly on growth rather than redistribution. If indeed the economy manages to generate 15.5 per cent nominal growth next year, as predicted by the International Monetary Fund, then the current Budget projections will turn out to be quite conservative and easily achievable. So, we must commend the Budget for a growth-oriented fiscal stimulus, accompanied by some spending on social sectors, and deficit numbers which seem credible and achievable. On that count, kudos to the Finance Minister.

The writer is an economist and Senior Fellow, Takshashila Institution.

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The government cannot spend even a rupee without the consent of Parliament. Hence its annual spending plan, called the Union Budget proposal is tabled in the Lok Sabha, as required by the Constitution. The Budget proposals are examined for how they impact the common man, how resources are to be raised, how the gap to be filled, how will it affect economic growth, and whether the proposals make sense and are credible.

On the eve of the Budget, the prime minister had said that the Budget would carry on the work of the previous year, when five mini-budgets were presented in the pandemic year, under the "Atmanirbhar" package. By contrast the finance minister had said this would be a "never before", once in a century kind of budget.

What we have got is certainly very bold and ambitious. It is clearly focused on reviving growth. It makes up for the lack of fiscal stimulus that was mostly absent during the pandemic year. It now makes sense, that the government chose to backload the fiscal stimulus, at a time when most of the lockdowns around the country are being dismantled. For if people are stuck in their homes, then fiscal spending would not bring a bigger bang for the buck.

The big relief is that there are no new taxes and the fiscal taps have been fully opened. Next year's annual Budget size is nearly ₹35 lakh crore, which is about 16 per cent higher than last year's Budget. But since we are just coming out of a recession, the tax revenues may not be very buoyant. Hence the gap between spending and revenue i.e. the fiscal deficit will widen. It was 9.5 per cent of the

GDP this year, since the GDP itself has shrunk by 8 per cent, and the economy was in lockdown for several months. But next year too, the fiscal deficit will be 6.8 per cent, which is more than twice as high as what is allowed by the fiscal responsibility law passed by Parliament. The Finance Minister said in her speech that the fiscal deficit will come down to 4.5 per cent only after four years, and even then it will be nowhere closer to the 3 per cent limit specified by the fiscal responsibility law.

If the deficit is so high, how does the government intend to finance the gap? By borrowing of course. Today's borrowing has to be paid back in the future, by taxing future citizens, who are basically unborn taxpayers. But today's borrowing is going to be used to build roads, highways, metro rail systems, ports and airports. Those assets will last long, and will proba-

bly be in use for decades or longer. It's just like when an individual buys a house (an asset) the home loan is repaid over the next fifteen or twenty years. The individual repays the housing loan before he or she dies. But a government lives on, so even in the future the government can borrow, and pay off old loans with new loans. That is not to say that this can be done recklessly. Even Mumbai's Municipal Corporation wants to borrow by selling bonds, but its corporators are opposing it. In this case however, the finance minister has presented a credible and realistic picture of the government's finances and that will go a long way in building trust with the taxpayers.

Apart from the big spending thrust on infrastructure we also have a decisive move toward privatisation. The Finance Minister announced that two public sector banks, and one general insurance



Ajit Ranade

THE BIG RELIEF IS THAT THERE ARE NO NEW TAXES AND THE FISCAL TAPS HAVE BEEN FULLY OPENED

Piate  
Tathagata Satpathy

## Perfect Math

Whenever in your life, you meet with a hardship, take it as a boon from the Divine's Grace and it will become so.

THE MOTHER



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman read out her 10,500 worded Budget 2021-22 speech in slightly over 100 minutes. Media has labeled it one of the shortest budgets in recent memory. The times justify this brevity because, maybe, not much was to be said. The nation has already surrendered most of its lucrative ports, airports and even heritage sites. Recent events highlighted the Red Fort of Delhi. But very few might remember that this Moghul period edifice has also been privatized. In 2018, the Red Fort was officially handed over to Dalmia Bharat Ltd at an annual rent of only ₹5 crores. With this in the backdrop, it is not surprising when people joke that India as a whole could be put up for sale on OLX.

The disinvestment drive mentioned in the budget has targeted two public sector banks and the mammoth Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). In the meanwhile, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in insurance sector has been enhanced from the earlier 49 per cent to a new 74 per cent. The obvious question that could arise is who will be willing to invest such huge amounts for these banks and insurance giants. It is known that most rich nations across the world today are on their knees economically. The pandemic has left no nation standing tall. In such a situation, even the US or Western European investors would be least interested to risk their money in India. Therefore, one may wonder where will all this FDI come from. Some years ago, people in Parliament used to say that FDI is really a circuitous route for the massive black money holders of India. All their wealth stashed abroad needs to be brought back home sooner than later. More so now since the pandemic has scared the Indian rich that their massive wealth may be safe but could become inaccessible. Therefore, banks and insurance companies going under the hammer will just manage to create the ring of return.

In the recent past, the FinMin had announced ₹27.1 lakh crore as Corona related lockdown package. These packages, which came in phases, were mostly in the form of loans. There was hope that the budget will have an impetus for small and medium enterprises that generate bulk of the employment in this country. An economy prospers only when people have jobs and thereby spending capacity. With the money rotating, the nation moves ahead. Money has to come to the poor and not get stalled only with the super rich. With the brave claim that this is not a populist budget, the government has choked off all avenues of earnings for the man on the street. This could usher in a dark economic future.

The proposal to create an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) which will swallow the non-performing assets and loans of all banks seems like a peacock feather on a crow. NPAs cannot be blamed on only a particular government or period. The amount of the past NPAs of the Congress have phenomenally increased since 2014. Whether we blame it on corrupt bank officials or an ineffective government, people continue to suffer. Formation of the ARC may set free the banks to go on a roll again. They will start lending out depositors' money afresh. The ARC may hide the NPA patches of economic leprosy for some time. However, the tax payer will again have to pay up for the losses to be incurred by the ARC.

Keeping the present political scenario in mind, the government has imposed an Agri Infrastructure Cess on petrol and diesel. The budget claims the cess will not affect individual consumers because equal quantum of excise duty will be reduced. Recent fuel price hikes have disturbed everybody. This change of nomenclature will temporarily not affect the consumer. But when the price again goes up, there will be a difference. The common man will start abusing farmers since they will feel the cess has a role to play in the price hike. Government will again claim market forces are deciding fuel prices and will throw up its arms. People's anger against farmers will clinch another political victory.

A huge amount has been set aside for healthcare. Like the lockdown packages vanishing into thin air, the healthcare funds will most likely leave no trace. Apart from a few crore frontline workers, the common Indian is not going to get free CoVID 19 vaccines. All this money will go into infrastructure building, which implies contracts and deals.

Politics has played the major role in this budget. Four states bound for Assembly elections have been doled out the biggest pies. While Tamil Nadu will get ₹1.03 lakh crore, Kerala will get ₹65,000 crore, West Bengal ₹25,000 crore and Assam will get ₹35,000 crore. The elections are but a few months away. There is no way the government can spend all this money before the election ban comes into place. In other words, these are just big attractive numbers to hoodwink the voters of those states.

The FinMin has said that this budget ends in 2022, which is the 75th year of Independence for India. So, she has waived off Income Tax for people aged 75 and above. In these virus ridden days, if someone survives till 75, then only s/he can benefit. An interesting question could be that will this age bar be raised to 100 when India attains her 100th year of Independence?

Perfect Math.

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

## Where Finance Minister missed the bus

The Budget has a number of plus points. Investment in infrastructure such as in urban metro rails has been increased. A target of strategic disinvestment of PSUs and even two public sector banks has been set to garner ₹1.75 crore in the coming year. Private players are to be encouraged to set up electricity distribution companies so as to save consumers from the inefficiency and corruption of state electricity boards and to give consumers a choice of suppliers. These are all good. However, the fundamental problem of providing employment has been given a miss. Employment is needed not only for its own sake, but also to create demand in the economy. The Budget has missed taking steps towards meeting this fundamental requirement.

The country is on the boil over the farmers' issue. The Finance Minister has rightly drawn attention to the fact that the purchases under the MSP programme have increased 1.5 times between 2013-14 and 2019-20. However, the Capital Gains Index increased from 220 to 289—or 31 per cent—in this same period, according to figures published by the finance ministry. Thus, the "true" increase in the purchase price was a meagre 19 per cent in six years. Even this does not translate into a 19 per cent increase in income of farmers because the cost of inputs such as diesel, labour and seeds has gone up. Let us assume the increase in farmers' income was 10 per cent. This is pittance compared to the avowed objective of the finance minister to have it doubled by 2020. There was a need to implement strong steps to secure this. That



will be difficult to obtain by enhancing the MSP because the production of the supported crop increases disproportionately leading to over production. The Finance Minister then has to spend further money in storage and the disposal of the surplus stocks at low prices.

The Finance Minister should have taken steps to diversify agriculture towards high-value crops. Large-scale cultivation of crops like mangoes, flowers, walnuts and bananas for export should have been encouraged. Our research establishment has failed to develop the strains for the international market and the system has shown no interest in developing the infrastructure such as cold chains for exports. The Finance Minister should have given contracts to NGOs and corporate houses for undertaking research and extension, developing cold chains and then exporting the produce. The contractor, for example, should be given the responsibility to bring the desired strains of coconuts, spread it among farmers, get silk produced and export it from Mandya in Karnataka. That would have led to higher incomes for farmers. The Minister has missed the

bus. The Minister has allocated ₹35,000 crore for research on vaccines. This is in the right direction. However, we have not overcome the pandemic on the strength of vaccine. We have succeeded on the strength of our lifestyle, that is, consumption of turmeric, ginger, giloy and other immune-boosting spices and by the practice of yoga and the like. Therefore, the need was to undertake research on the immune-boosting properties of these spices and other lifestyles and then globalise that knowledge. Further, a number of researchers have suggested that the low prevalence of Covid infection in India could be due to the poor cleanliness and health conditions under which our people live. Our bodies are more used to living with bacteria and viruses. Having said that, our people deserve clean drinking water and sanitation facilities. Therefore, the outlay of ₹2,87,000 crore made for providing clean drinking water and improving sanitation in the next five years is welcome.

The third area is that of education. A large number of our youths are entering and will enter the job market in the coming decade. The number of jobs in agriculture and

manufacturing are declining due to mechanisation. A number of studies show that total employment in organised manufacturing sector has been declining. The informal sector too has been blown away by the triple whammy of demonetization, GST and lockdown. There is no hope for these millions. These youth will take to crime and other destructive activities in absence of productive employment. It also will not be possible to absorb these large numbers in agriculture because the share of agriculture in the GDP is seen to decline as a country develops. The only path towards providing productive employment to our millions was to develop our services sectors. The Finance Minister, therefore, has moved in the right direction in establishing institutes of translation to make available government documents in regional languages. But there was a need to go much further. It was necessary to establish institutes in every district, for example, to train the youth in undertaking translations in foreign languages, making music, movies and computer apps, and in running portals for providing online tutorials and medical advice. The Budget has failed to take any steps in this direction.

This is an ordinary Budget. The increased investment in infrastructure and the resolve to jumpstart privatisation are most welcome. However, they fail to address the pressing problems of employment. I expect social tensions to increase as we are seeing in the ongoing farmers' agitation because of the underlying increase in unemployment.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore.



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

EMPLOYMENT IS NEEDED NOT ONLY FOR ITS OWN SAKE, BUT ALSO TO CREATE DEMAND IN THE ECONOMY. THE BUDGET HAS MISSED TAKING STEPS TOWARDS MEETING THIS FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENT

WISDOM CORNER

- There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self. **ALDOUS HUXLEY**
- You must trust and believe in people or life becomes impossible. **ANTON CHEKHOV**
- The world breaks everyone, and afterward, some are strong at the broken places. **ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

WORDSWORTH

Machicolation

When the world was younger, the principal defence against attackers was the castle, so effective before the age of gunnery that the only way to subdue it was to undermine its walls. To stop the enemy doing this, defenders evolved several techniques, one of which was to build out structures from the tops of the walls with openings in their floors so that stones, boiling oil or other deterrents could be dropped on those below. At first these structures were of wood (called hoardings) but they were later reconstructed in stone, most commonly over the particularly vulnerable gatehouses but in some cases all along the walls. These were the machicolations. The word came from the Old French machicolator, a compound of Provençal macar, "crush", and col, "neck", a graphic description of the result of being bombarded with stones from on high while you were trying to dig.

Machinima

It used to be that the process of creating an animated film, even digitally, required long hours of labour using specialised and expensive software. Then moviemakers cottoned on to the potential of the image-generating engines that exist inside animated computer games such as Quake. Some games, especially Quake 3, allow the user access to the underlying code to customise scenes or create new ones. It didn't take long for audio-visual experts to spot their potential for creating entirely new animated sequences. Films so made have been around for several years, but the technique, and the results, have begun to attract mainstream interest only recently. Machinima is usually said to be a blend of machine plus cinema; the large number of Web sites in German that feature it suggest the term may have been coined in that language.

Strong message

Sir, Expelled AIADMK leader VK Sasikala sent out a strong political message by leaving Bangalore, post her discharge from the Victoria Hospital, in a car once used by her friend and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, the late J Jayalalithaa. The car also had the flag of the ruling AIADMK. The ploy by Sasikala, who served a four-year jail term in a disproportionate assets case, is a clear sign she would plunge into active politics and give her adversaries a run for their money, even as the state stares at its most crucial polls in recent years.

NJ Ravi Chandar, BANGALORE

Regional peace

Sir, There never was a democratic government in Myanmar. It's a game plan to avoid sanctions against Myanmar. Aung San Suu Kyi is a crusader against the military rule in a land of pagodas where Buddhism is prevalent. For India, a peaceful neighbour is very helpful as we already have problems from Pakistan. Chinese interest in Myanmar is well known. Myanmar could have friendly relations with any country but shouldn't harbour anti-India activities. In Pakistan it's a democratic government but remote controlled by the army. Nepal has Chinese inclination. India needs peace in the region. A peaceful Myanmar is more important for India than for Myanmar's rulers.

Sunil Pradhan, NUPADA

Welcome move

Sir, It is welcome to note that the Union government has issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on preventive measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 for cinema halls and theatres. The SOP clarifies that all COVID-related safety standards must be continued inside the premises. The General Guidelines specify that respiratory etiquettes must be followed, including the use of face masks, the adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet to adhere outside the auditoriums, common areas, and waiting areas at all times, spitting will be prohibited and usage of Aarogya Setu app will be promoted. The SOP promotes the usage of contactless digital transactions for payments for tickets, food, and beverages, etc. The SOP also mandates theatre owners to ensure suitable arrangements to avoid crowding at the sale counters. After a long break, it seems to be good for the film industry and also for cinema lovers. Hope that everyone follows the COVID safety guidelines strictly while enjoying new movies.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, SATNA (MP)

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: [edit@orissapost.com](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

OrissaPOST  
B-15, Rasulpur Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



## FARM WORKS



Women farmers transplanting paddy saplings on a farmland for the rabi season in Hirakud command area in Sambalpur district

OP PHOTO

# 700 Anganwadi centres operating sans buildings

As many as 419 buildings for Anganwadi centres are still under construction

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Feb 1:** As per February guidelines issued by the state government, Anganwadi centres located outside containment zones can start functioning from Feb 1.

However, over 700 such centres in Kendrapara district are operating without a building. Children coming here are made to sit on verandahs of nearby schools or houses.

Though the project was launched in 2019, as many as 419 buildings for Anganwadi centres are still under construction.

According to Banambar Sahu, a social activist, various schemes and programmes, from immunization to providing food and security to helpless elderly persons, are being carried out at one Anganwadi centre in the district. Locals have alleged that this sorry state of affairs was mainly due to bureaucratic inertia.

Another social activist, Pratap Chandra Padhi said that there are a total of 2,147 Anganwadi centres under Integrated Child Development Services programme in nine blocks of Kendrapara district. Out of them, targets have been fixed for getting construction works of 492 centres completed by the end of current financial year.

The funds required for the construction works have already been released. Yet, the construction works on 68, 46, 22, 52, 51, 32, 60, 44



There are 2,147 Anganwadi centres under Integrated Child Development Services programme in 9 blocks of Kendrapara

However, targets have been fixed for completing construction of 492 buildings by the end of this year

## 17 stuck in Chilika, rescued after 6 hrs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balugaon, Feb 1:** 17 visitors and 2 boatmen suffered a huge scare when they were stranded in the Chilika Lake for over six hours Sunday night. They were finally rescued at about 11.30 pm.

Sources said, 17 visitors including a few children from Pentha area under Chilika tehsil in Khurda had set out on a boat trip in the lake Sunday. They first went to Kalijai and also visited Nalabana.

On their way back, the boat's engine conked out leaving everyone stranded. It was 5.30 pm in the evening and by then, a thick fog cover had engulfed the entire locality. The fog also made it difficult for the boatmen to navigate.



Alert passengers flashed the lights on their mobile phones which helped the rescue team to locate them

With no option left, the panicked passengers contacted their acquaintances and relatives over phone. After being informed about the situation, additional tehsildar, Chilika, Apanna Dangua contacted Balugaon fire station asking them to take immediate steps to rescue the stranded visitors.

A team led by fire officer Nityananda Jena left from Balugaon jetty for the stranded boat. Initially, it was difficult for the rescue team to locate the stranded boat. However, the alert passengers continuously flashed the lights on their mobile phones which helped the rescue team to locate them. Finally, they were rescued after spending more than 6 hours in apprehension and anxiety.

## JHARAPHULA DEATH Police take Swain on 3-day remand

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur/Jajpur Town, Feb 1:** A local court Monday granted a three-day remand of Rakesh Swain, the prime accused in the murder case of Jharaphula Nayak, a student of RD Women's University in Bhubaneswar.

The district sessions court here allowed the Kuakhia police to take Swain on three days remand for interrogation in the case over a prayer filed by the Kuakhia police. Kuakhia police had earlier prayed before the court for a five-day remand of the accused. During the remand period, the police is likely to question Swain to find out more details pertaining to the death of the girl. The remand period will start from February 2 and will remain valid till February 4. Probe has been intensified on all aspects of the case and very soon the accused will be arrested, Jajpur Road SDPO Chinmaya Nayak said.

Reports said that the Twin City Commissionerate Police had arrested Swain from his residence at Sundarpada in Bhubaneswar and handed him over to Jajpur police. Rakesh and Jharaphula had checked into OYO Shiv Sai Guest House, Dharma Vihar in Bhubaneswar and stayed at room



no. 201 of the hotel, January 26.

Swain reportedly found Jharaphula in an unconscious state at the hotel room on the morning of January 27 and called up his friend Shekhar seeking his help. While Shekhar drove the scooter, Rakesh rode pillion making the unconscious girl sit between them. They were spotted leaving the place around 7 AM.

Rakesh initially intended to hospitalise Jharaphula at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. He however, realised midway that Jharaphula had died. The two friends rode all the way to Jajpur on the scooter and allegedly dumped the body on roadside around 9 AM.

Kuakhia police in Jajpur district had recovered the body near Mulapal Wednesday last week.

## Padma Shri Pujari falls seriously ill

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jeypore, Feb 1:** Padma Shri Kamala Pujari fell seriously ill Monday and is currently bed-ridden at her native village Patrapur under Jeypore block in Koraput.

She is suffering from multiple old-age related ailments. According to sources, she is in dire need of urgent medical care.

It has also been learnt that she is unable to take food which has aggravated her problems. Pujari is in need of nasal feeding, sources said. She had met with an accident in the past and sustained injuries. The pain has returned making her condition critical, they added.

"She has been bedridden for the last few days without any medical treatment. We urge the administration to take immediate steps so that she recovers at the earliest," neighbours said.



A tribal woman, Pujari was conferred the Padma Shri for being a pioneer in preserving hundreds of local varieties of paddy seeds and for promoting organic farming. She has preserved over hundred varieties of locally grown paddy. Pujari has also been a crusader against use of chemical fertiliser.

## Jawans, Maoists exchange fire

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir/Lathore, Feb 1:** Security forces had a heavy exchange of fire with Maoists during a combing operation by the former in Bender forest near Lathore in Bolangir district Monday, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, the security forces were carrying out a combing

operation in the jungle area when the ultras opened fire after noticing the jawans. This prompted the jawans to retaliate with gunshots.

Reports said that a few guns were seized by the security forces from the spot. A search op-

eration was underway in the region by the security forces when reports last came in.

A Maoist was killed during an encounter when a team of Special Operations Group (SOG) and District Voluntary Force (DVF) jawans were conducting a search operation at a forest.

## Int'l weightlifter takes to cultivation for a living

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Umerkote, Feb 1:** A weightlifter from Odisha with two international gold medals has taken to cultivation for want of government help, a report said.

The man was identified as Arun Santa, an international weightlifter and a native of Telari village under this block in Nabarangpur district. Santa represented the country twice at two international sports meet and won gold in the events.

He has also won several medals by participating in various national meets. He was aiming to bring more laurels for the country by participating in Olympic games but his career was cut short due to lack of financial assistance from the government.

He was preparing to participate in various national meets when Covid-19 epidemic struck the globe and poured cold water on his plans. As a result, he left Bhubaneswar and came back to his native village where he took to cultivation for a livelihood by working on others' farmlands. He hopes to return to his game if the government provides him with financial assistance.



Reports said that Arun studied from Class 1 till Class 11 at Tarakanand School in Jhargarh. Later, he joined an Ashram School at Badabharandi where he studied from Class-IV till Class-VII.

Later, his flair for weightlifting came to notice following which he joined the Sports Hostel in Berhampur and undertook training in the event. The training helped him hone his skills in weightlifting and participate in many national and international events.

Fate smiled on him when he was chosen to participate at the Asian Championship held at Myanmar and later at Commonwealth Youth Games at New Zealand where he

won two gold medals. Arun also participated at national level meets at New Delhi, Haryana and Maharashtra and won gold and bronze medals.

His main aim was to participate in Olympics Games but his hopes was shattered as he failed to get any financial assistance from the government. Later, he worked for sometime at a gymnasium in Bhubaneswar to earn a living. However, he was left without any money after the gymnasium was shut down due to Covid-19 induced lockdown and subsequent shut-downs. He came back to his native village during the lockdown and took up cultivation to earn a living. He wishes to establish a sports

## SORRY STATE

Arun has also won several medals by participating in various national meets. He was aiming to bring more laurels for the country by participating in Olympic games but his career was cut short due to lack of financial assistance from the government.

Arun came back to his native village during the lockdown and took up cultivation to earn a living. He wishes to establish a sports academy in Umerkote but lack of funds has hindered his plan.

When contacted, Arun said there are many talented children in his area who if provided with proper training could bring laurels for the country. He lamented that he could not study more due to his involvement in sports. He said he could do more for the country if the Centre or state government provided him with financial help.

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 1:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in a severe road mishap in Koraput district late Sunday night.

The Prime Minister also announced Rs 50,000 to those who sustained critical injuries in the mishap. The amount will be released from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

"An ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakh each from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund would be given to the next of kin of those who have lost their lives due to the unfortunate road accident in Koraput, Odisha. Rs. 50,000 would be given to those seriously injured," PMO tweeted. Prime Minister Narendra Modi

and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday also expressed their grief over the loss of lives in a road mishap at Koraput Sunday night.

As many as nine people died and 13 others were critically injured in a road accident on National Highway-326 near Murtahandi under Kotpad police limits of Koraput district late Sunday night.

In a tweet, the Prime Minister said, "My thoughts are with all those who have lost their dear ones in the tragic accident at Koraput, Odisha. I hope that injured recover at the earliest (sic)."

The PM has approved an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for next of the kin of those who lost their lives to the mishap. Modi has also approved Rs 50,000 for the injured.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik condoled the deaths and prayed for the speedy recovery of all the injured. Taking to his Twitter page, Patnaik wrote, "Deeply saddened by the loss of precious lives in the road accident near #Kotpad in Koraput district. My condolences are with the bereaved families in this hour of grief. Pray for the speedy recovery of all the injured (sic)."

**EAST COAST RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION WORK**  
e-Tender Notice No. ETCPM/IVSKP/2021003, Dated: 22.01.2021  
Name of Work: KORAPUT - SINGAPUR ROAD DOUBLING PROJECT : CONSTRUCTION OF TUNNEL NO.T1 (FROM CH.40500M TO 41100M), T2 (FROM CH. 50990M TO 51720M), T3 (FROM CH.53110M TO 53490M), T4 (FROM CH.57680M TO 58220M) INCLUDING 4 (FOUR) MINOR BRIDGES, FORMATION IN APPROACH CUTTINGS AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS BETWEEN BAIGUDA AND LAXMIPUR ROAD SECTION OF WALTAIR DIVISION, EAST COAST RAILWAY.  
Approximate Cost of the work (₹): ₹ 13460.65 Lakhs, EMD : Nil, Cost of Tender Document : Nil, Completion Period of the work : 24 (Twenty Four) Months.  
Date and time of closing of tender : At 1200 hrs of 23.02.2021.  
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website fifteen days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.  
The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-C/G & G1 duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.  
Chief Administrative Officer (Con)/ PR-87/CD/20-21 Bhubaneswar

No. B-698  
**Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No. PWDK-34/2020-21  
No. G2/641 e-mail: eepwdkeonjhar@yahoo.com  
1. No. of the Work : 1 No. Building Work  
2. Estimated Cost : Rs. 44.65 lakhs  
3. Period of Completion : 3 (three) Calendar months  
4. Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 10.00 hr. 05.02.2021 to 17.00 hr. of 15.02.2021  
5. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : 17.00 hr. of 15.02.2021  
6. Date of opening of bid from portal : 11.30 hr. of 17.02.2021  
7. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Division, Keonjhar  
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<http://tendersodisha.gov.in>".  
Sd./- P.K. Rath  
Executive Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Division  
OIPR-34004/11/0008/2021

**WORKS DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, ROURKELA (R&B) DIVISION, UDITNAGAR, ROURKELA**  
No. B-697 email ID: eepwdrkl@gmail.com  
**Government of Orissa "e" Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No. 52/2020-21 Dated: 27.01.2021  
1. Number of Works : Total 6 (Six) Number of Works  
2. Estimated Cost : Rs. 5.68 lakhs to Rs. 26.44 lakhs  
3. Period of Completion : Three (03) to Five (05) Calendar Months each  
4. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : 09.02.2021 at 11.00 A.M.  
5. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : 23.02.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.  
6. Date of opening of Bid : 25.02.2021 at 11.30 A.M.  
7. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, (R&B) Division Rourkela, Uditnagar.  
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<http://tendersodisha.gov.in>".  
Sd./- Executive Engineer, R&B Division, Rourkela  
OIPR-34068/11/0027/2021

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-996**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, KALAHANDI RWS&S DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA**  
e-mail: eerwssklid@gmail.com, eerwss\_klid@nic.in, Phone No. 06670-230784  
**INVITATION OF BID THROUGH e-TENDERING**  
Bid Identification No. 34/EE/RWS/2020-21/Bpt Dated 29.01.2021  
01. Name of the Work : As per Annexure - A  
Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of Tender Online for Bidding on office hour only Date of Opening (Technical Bid)  
1 2 3 4 5  
Executive Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna 34/EE/RWS/2020-21/Bpt Dated 29.01.2021 04.02.2021 10.00 A.M. 15.02.2021 05.30 P.M. 17.02.2021 10.00 A.M. onwards  
Cost of tender paper & payment of EMD to be made online payment system. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tenderodisha.gov.in>.  
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna  
OIPR-25005/11/0015/2021



# For middle class: Full of sound & fury signifying nothing

In her third Budget presentation to the Parliament, FM Nirmala Sitharaman proposes to unleash the massive fiscal expansion in 2021-22 on the back of higher borrowings, fire sales and an agricultural-cess. The focus is growth, not minding the fiscal deficit concerns, but what about the middle-class taxpayer who has been waiting for years for a 'meaningful' relief to his/her wallet! Orissa POST takes a look:

## Fin Min claims new cess on fuel won't push up prices

To balance the new agri and infra cess, the govt has reduced basic excise duty and special additional excise duty on fuel

The government Monday imposed agriculture and infrastructure development cess at the rate of ₹2.5 per litre on petrol and ₹4 per litre on diesel to mobilise additional resources required for investment required in these two key segments of the economy.

However, to prevent the additional cess from impacting the retail price of two petroleum products that have already reached historically high levels across the country, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that rates of basic excise duty and special additional excise duty on petrol and diesel are being reduced from the existing levels.

Overall, while the agriculture and infrastructure cess will raise the level of taxation on the auto fuels, reduction in excise duty will make the taxation proposal in the Budget tax neutral that would keep oil marketing companies away from raising the retail price of petrol and diesel based on the new imposition.

The rise in petrol and diesel prices is on hold for the last five days, but before that it had risen 10 times in January with the two auto fuels increasing by ₹2.59 and ₹2.61 per litre respectively this month. Petrol continues to be available at new record high of ₹86.30 a litre in Delhi while diesel is available in the city at ₹76.48 a litre. The high retail price in the country is despite the

The current rate of taxation of diesel is the prime reason for its high retail prices... Government should have given a thought to this... High prices of fuel have a multiplier effect and impacts pricing of various segments and aids inflation

"The current rate of taxation of petrol and diesel is the prime reason for its high retail prices now. Government should have given a thought to this and reduced taxes



## Interest on EPF contributions over ₹2.5 lakh will get taxed

Interest on employee contributions to provident fund over ₹2.5 lakh per annum would be taxed from April 1, 2021, a move aimed at taxing high-value depositors in the EPF.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Employee Provident Fund (EPF) is aimed at welfare of workers and any person earning less than ₹2 lakh per month will not be affected by the Budget proposal.

Expenditure Secretary TV Somanathan said the number of people who actually contribute more than ₹2.5 lakh is less than 1



annual contribution of ₹2.5 lakh," Sitharaman said in her Budget 2021-22 speech. This would come into effect from April 1.

Addressing a post-Budget press conference, the minister said up to ₹2.5 lakh has been kept as the deposit limit for which interest is tax exempt.

"We are not reducing any workers' right. But at the same time, getting tax exemption and 8 per cent rate of interest for somebody who puts ₹1 crore into the account, we thought is may be not correct. And therefore we have put the ceiling," she said.



People at an electronics store watch the Budget

COVID-19 pandemic-hit middle class families kept their eyes glued to their television screens as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Budget 2021-22 Monday morning, but many said that they had expected more from the government.

In this year's Budget, the government has emphasised more on healthcare, infrastructure and other sectors, while providing no particular relief to middle class in terms of income tax exemption. However, in a major relief, senior citizens above 75 years of age are now exempted from filing tax returns.

Besides this, taxpayers were definitely left disappointed as the Union Finance Minister did not announce any change in income tax slabs for them in the much-awaited Union Budget announced during an undeniably tough year.

Homeowners were not content with the only earning member of the family, no relief on his income tax will not only affect my kitchen, but also the education of my children," said Delhi-based Vinita Kapoor.

Another homemaker said that she did not like the Budget. "The government should have made things cheaper at these tough times. Ration and home appliances are getting costlier day by day," Pushpa Sharma said.

A Delhi-based telecom expert said that the government should have been given some kind of stimulus to the sector.

"This Union Budget has been a dampener in terms of unshackling the telecom sector; which



#Budget2020 Govt collecting tax from Middle Class:

The Indian internet and the middle-class janta of the country were, for the obvious reasons, hooked to the Parliament session, one that directly affects them. It was only a matter of minutes that the meme-makers of Twitter imagined the expectations of the middle-class citizens from the Budget 2021

is ailing. There is a need for liquidity in the sector in terms of GST, input credit, reduction of spectrum usage charges. The incumbent telecom operators continue to face uphill struggles," said Amrith Kapoor, vice-president of Vodafone Idea.

Eshtwar Sharma, a retired Delhi government official, said, "There is no change in the income tax slab. No income tax return filing for senior citizens is, however, a big relief. This government's Budget was never satisfactory since the time it came to power."

A recent graduate, who is now looking for job, said that the government has stretched itself quite a bit given the current situation. "Fiscal prudence was not a very vital criterion right now and the government could borrow to invest more in order to kick start the economy. The economy needs

### HOPES DASHED

THE SALARIED INDIVIDUALS WERE HOPING THAT THE GOVT WOULD BROADEN SOME TAX ADVANTAGES THROUGH BUDGET

IN THE RUN-UP TO THE BUDGET PRESENTATION, SEVERAL EXPERTS AND PROFESSIONAL BODIES LIKE ICAI HAD RECOMMENDED THE GOVT TO INCREASE THE DEDUCTION LIMIT UNDER SECTION 80C OF THE INCOME TAX ACT

SOME EVEN SUGGESTED THE GOVT TO ALLOW HIGHER DEDUCTION UNDER SECTION 80D AND INCREASE THE DEPOSIT LIMIT IN PPF TO ₹3 LAKH



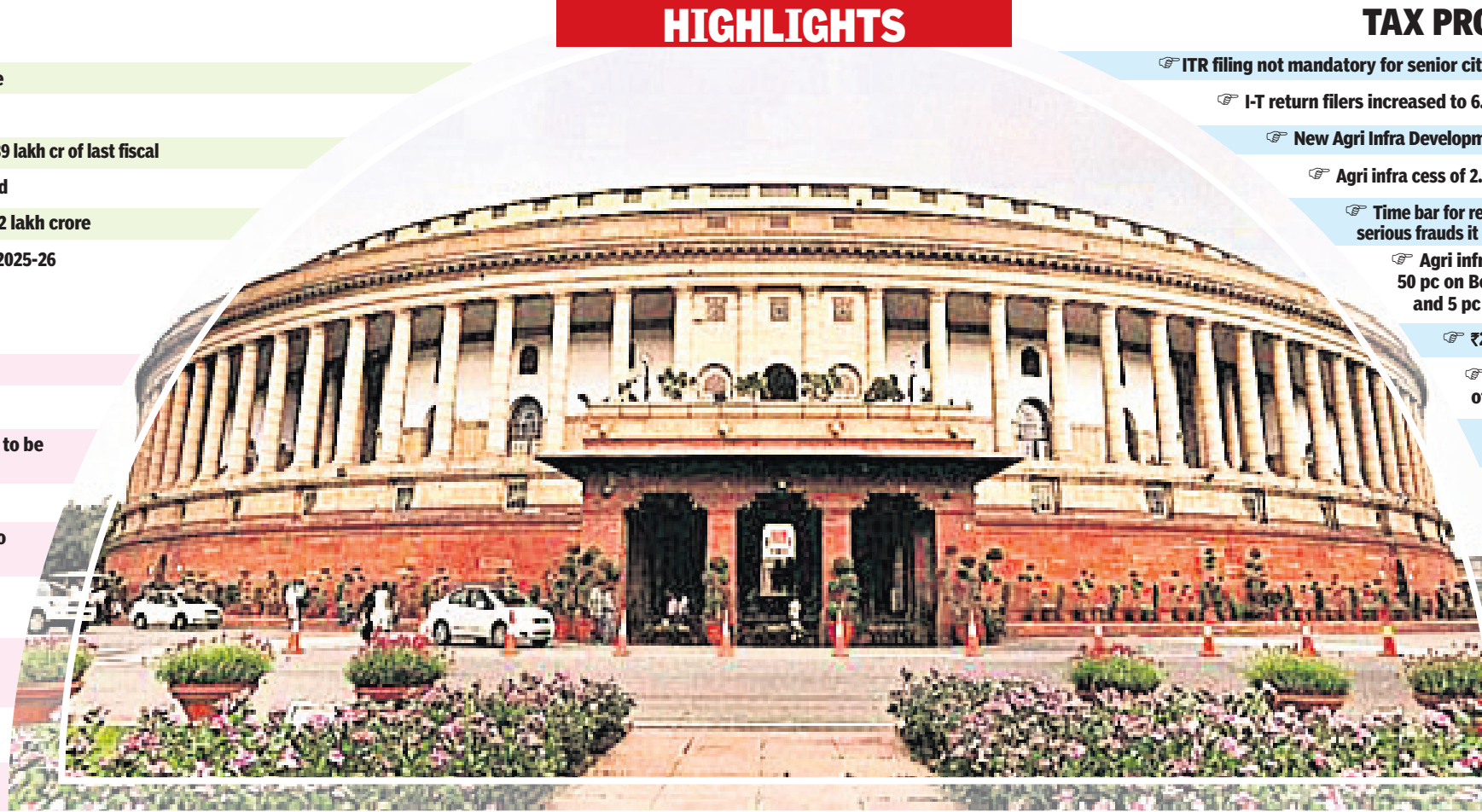
It's hard to be a middle class

### Fiscal position and health outlay

- Spending on healthcare hiked by 137 pc to over ₹2.23 lakh crore
- ₹35,000 cr outlay for Covid vaccine in fiscal beginning April
- Sharp increase in capex for next fiscal to ₹5.54 lakh cr, up from ₹4.39 lakh cr of last fiscal
- Fiscal deficit for current fiscal at 9.5 pc, against 3.5 pc budgeted
- Fiscal deficit for next fiscal pegged at 6.8 pc, govt to borrow ₹12 lakh crore
- Committed to bring down fiscal deficit below 4.5 pc of GDP by 2025-26

### Allocation and reforms

- FDI in insurance increased to 74 pc from 49 pc
- Disinvestment target pegged at ₹1.75 lakh crore
- BPCL, IDBI Bank, two more PSU banks, one insurance company to be privatised among others
- PSU Bank recapitalisation pegged at ₹20,000 crore next fiscal
- Aatmanirbhar health programme with an outlay of ₹64,180 cr to be introduced
- Govt to introduce a bill to set up development financial institution with an outlay of ₹20,000 cr
- Voluntary vehicle scrapping policy to phase out old vehicles; fitness tests after 20 yrs for personal vehicles and for commercial vehicles its 15 yrs
- National monetisation pipeline for potential brownfield infrastructure assets
- ₹3,726 cr for forthcoming Census, which will be the first digital Census



### HIGHLIGHTS

### TAX PROPOSALS

- ITR filing not mandatory for senior citizens above 75 years, banks to deduct TDS
- I-T return filers increased to 6.48 cr in 2020 from 3.31 cr in 2014
- New Agri Infra Development Cess from Feb 2
- Agri infra cess of 2.5 pc on gold, silver and dore bars; 35 pc on apples
- Time bar for reopening I-T assessment cases halved to 3 yrs, for serious frauds it is 10 yrs
- Agri infra cess of 30 pc on Kabuli chana, 10 pc on peas, 50 pc on Bengal gram/chickpeas, 20 pc on lentil (mosur) and 5 pc on cotton
- ₹2.5/lt agri infra cess on petrol, ₹4/lt on diesel
- Tax dept to notify rules to remove hardships of double taxation faced by NRIs
- Tax holiday for startups, capital gains exemption extended by one yr
- Tax exemption for aircraft leasing cos; tax exemption for notified affordable housing for migrant workers
- ₹1.5 lakh tax deduction on payment of interest for affordable housing extended by 1 yr
- Exemption from tax audit limit doubled to ₹10 cr turnover for cos. doing most of their biz through digital modes
- Proposes review of over 400 customs duty exemptions; to begin extensive consultation from Oct 2021

# Fireworks at Dalal Street; bond yields rise

THE MONDAY-RALLY MARKS NIFTY'S BEST DAILY PERFORMANCE ON A FEDERAL BUDGET DAY SINCE AT LEAST 1996

THE STOCK MARKETS HAVE SALUTED THE UNION BUDGET

SENSEX SAW GAINS OF 2,300 POINTS AS THE FEARS OF A COVID CESS OR INCREASE IN CAPITAL GAINS TAX DID NOT MATERIALISE

ANY ADDITIONAL TAX ON FPIs ALSO FOUND NO MENTION



growth side, with infra capex increase of around 34 pc on a year-on-year basis, which is a very healthy sign, a good roadmap on divestment and monetisation of assets of state owned enterprises," said Rupen Rajguru, head of equity investment and strategy, Julius Baer India.

The benchmark 10-year bond yield closed up 13 basis points at 6.08 pc, while the rupee weakened to 73.02 per dollar versus its previous close of 72.95, after Sitharaman said the government's fiscal deficit for the current fiscal year to March was likely to reach 9.5 pc, compared with the budget estimate of 3.5 pc, and that the government will borrow an additional 800 billion rupees from the market by end-March.

A 'substantially higher-than-expected' expenditure pushed fiscal deficit for fiscal 2021 and 2022 well above projections, said Aditi Nayar, principal economist at rating agency ICRA, adding that yields were expected to sustain a hardening bias, in the absence of frequent open market operations.

Among stock sub-indices, the Nifty Auto index climbed 4.2 pc, while the Nifty PSU Bank index, which tracks state-run lenders, jumped 7.8 pc after Sitharaman said India would set up an asset reconstruction company to take over toxic assets. Gains in ICICI Bank and Industrial Bank after quarterly earnings lifted the Nifty Bank index 8.3 pc to an all-time closing high.

India's economy is seen clocking robust growth of 11 pc for the coming fiscal year after likely contracting 7.7 pc in the current fiscal year to March 31, an annual economic survey showed Friday



India's blue-chip Nifty 50 index Monday recorded its best performance on a budget day in over two decades after the Finance minister announced a slew of measures to revive the pandemic-hit economy. Bond yields jumped sharply on the government's plans to raise more funds from the market.

The NSE Nifty 50 surged 4.7 pc to 14,281.2, while the S&P BSE Sensex jumped 5 pc to 48,800.61 after six sessions of losses in the run-up to the Budget.

# VEHICLE SCRAPPAGE POLICY SOON

FITNESS TEST FOR PERSONAL VEHICLES AFTER 20 YRS, FOR COMMERCIAL IT IS AFTER 15 YRS

Presenting the Union Budget 2021, Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, said that the government will announce a voluntary scrapping policy based on fitness test soon.

In her presentation of the Union Budget 2021, the Finance Minister said, "We are separately announcing a voluntary vehicle scrapping policy to phase out old and unfit vehicles. This will help encourage fuel-efficient and environment-friendly vehicles, thereby reducing vehicular pollution and oil import bills." More details will be shared soon by the Ministry.

She said this will promote fuel-efficient and environment friendly vehicles while cutting on India's huge import bills. The proposed scrapping policy says that if a vehicle fails the fitness test more than three, it might be subjected to mandatory scrapping, according to the proposed policy. That said, the government is yet to roll out the final scrapping policy. Setting up of vehicle scrapping facilities, is a different issue altogether.

Under the proposed Scrapping Policy, 51 lakh vehicles in India are currently over 20 years old and 34 lakh vehicles in the country are over 15 years old, and these vehicles have the potential to be scrapped, thereby reducing vehicular pollution by up to 25 per cent. The scrapped vehicles have the potential for providing raw materials after being recycled.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has already sent a Scrapping Policy proposal to

the government, for scrutiny. This announcement comes right after government's announcement of a scrapping policy for vehicles used by its various departments and public sector undertakings (PSUs). The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH) Monday approved the vehicle scrapping policy for vehicles owned by the government and PSU which are older than 15 years. This policy would apply to Central and state government-owned vehicles effective from April 1, 2022.

The voluntary scrapping policy will be based on fitness tests and for private vehicles, the life has been set at 20 years, while for commercial vehicles, the life is set at 15 years. More details will be shared by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways soon. The voluntary scrapping policy will be based on fitness tests and for private vehicles, the life has been set at 20 years, while for commercial vehicles, the life is set at 15 years. More details will be shared by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways soon.



Tinamool MP Derek O'Brien also says India's first paperless budget is a 100 per cent 'visionless' Budget



## of the day quote

When the Lieutenant Governor is responsible for the closure of textile mills, how can Nadda accuse me and my government

**V NARAYANASAMY** | PONDICHERRY CHIEF MINISTER

People were expecting a rebate in the income tax slabs, but it was not raised. They were also expecting a reduction in the prices of petrol-diesel and LPG, but they have been cheated again

**KAMAL NATH** | FORMER CHIEF MINISTER OF MADHYA PRADESH

Without a written script, almost all our native languages are only spoken and passed on orally. With modern education and exposure, the younger generation is moving away from their native languages and it has become a major concern for us

**PEMA KHANDU** | ARUNACHAL PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER



The greatness of the tribes lies in the fact that they have managed to retain their primal and natural simplicity

**M VENKAIHAH NAIDU** | VICE PRESIDENT

## SELF-DEFENCE MUST

Delhi Police personnel of Shahdara district have been given iron batons to protect themselves from attacks by sharp-edged weapons, police said on Monday



# Only election 'jumlas': Oppn on Budget

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 1:** The Congress Monday criticised the Modi-led NDA government for giving a sizeable chunk of the infra-Budget to the election-bound states of Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and termed the Budget as "road for vote" and full of election "jumlas".

The BJP is fighting a high-voltage election battle in West Bengal to dislodge Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress government and is also aiming for a second consecutive term in Assam. The BJP is also trying to form a government in Tamil Nadu with alliance partner AIADMK and working hard to increase its numbers in the Kerala Assembly where it has only one member.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed new highways projects of 3,500 kms in Tamil Nadu at a cost of Rs 1.03 lakh crore, 1,100 kms of highways in Kerala at an investment of Rs 65,000 crore. In West Bengal, she proposed 675 kms of highways works at a cost of Rs 25,000 crore and over 1,300 kms of highways in Assam at Rs 34,000 crore.

Rajya Sabha member and Assam



Congress chief, Ripun Bora tweeted, "So, the BJP government has made parliament the place to launch election manifestos for Assembly elections. This Budget is nothing more than an election manifesto full of 'jumlas'!"

"Congratulations India, FM presents the election budget," Bora said.

BJP General Secretary and West Bengal in-charge, Kailash Vijayvargiya said that this year's Budget is an attempt to find a self-reliant India, new possibilities of employment and business. "When the whole world is struggling with a deteriorating economy, the new Budget under the leadership of

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brought new hope," Vijayvargiya tweeted.

Congress Lok Sabha MP from Ernakulam in Kerala, Hibi Eden told IANS that the whole Budget exercise was turned into an "election drama" by announcing major infra projects in poll-bound states while ignoring the rest of the country.

"All the infrastructure projects are announced to reap political benefits in Assembly polls in four states to be held in coming two or three months. Even while announcing welfare schemes for poll-bound states, the BJP government has failed to include tea workers from Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the scheme announced for tea workers of West Bengal and Assam," said first-time MP Eden. The Budget proposed Rs 1,000 crore for welfare scheme for tea workers of Assam and West Bengal.

Budgetary announcements were made for Kochi Metro rail phase II and Chennai Metro rail phase II. Eden alleged that funds for phase II of Kochi Metro announced by UPA government were stalled and made part of Budget of 2021-22. "People are expecting announcement of phase-III of Kochi Metro rail but the BJP government announced

## Budget presented in 'exceptional circumstances': Nadda

Hailing the Union Budget, BJP chief J.P. Nadda on Monday said that the 2021 Budget has been presented in "exceptional circumstances" when the country is ready to write a new story of development in every region, despite the Covid-19 pandemic. Praising the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Nadda said it is a Budget to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of all sections, especially youth, elderly, women, organised and unorganised sector workers and small and big entrepreneurs.

budgetary provisions for phase-II," Eden added. Trinamool MP Derek O'Brien said that India's first paperless Budget is also a 100 per cent "visionless" Budget.

"Theme of the fake budget is 'Sell India! Railways: sold, Airports: sold, Ports: sold, Insurance: sold, PSUs: 23 sold! Common people ignored. Farmers ignored. Rich get richer; nothing for the middle class, poor get poorer,'" O'Brien tweeted.

# Govt asks Twitter to block 250 'fake' posts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 1:** Twitter has blocked several accounts and tweets after the government asked the microblogging platform to take action against 250 handles and posts for containing 'false and provocative content' related to the ongoing farmers' agitation, according to sources.

These include accounts of Kisan Ekta Morcha and BKU Ekta Urganhan that have thousands of followers and have been actively involved in the ongoing protests.

According to sources, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) directed Twitter to block around 250 tweets/Twitter accounts that were making 'fake, intimidatory and provocative tweets' on January 30 with hashtags accusing the Modi government of planning farmers' genocide without any further substantiation. This blocking was done at the request of the Ministry of Home Affairs and law enforcement agencies to prevent any

escalation of law and order in view of the ongoing farmer agitation, the sources said adding that these tweets/accounts have now been blocked. The sources said incitement to genocide is a grave threat to public order and therefore, MeitY ordered blocking of these Twitter accounts and tweets under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act.

When contacted, a Twitter spokesperson said if it receives a "properly scoped request" from an authorised entity, it may be necessary to withhold access to certain content in a particular country from time to time.

"Transparency is vital to protecting freedom of expression, so we have a notice policy for withheld content. Upon receipt of requests to withhold content, we will promptly notify the affected account holders (unless we are prohibited from doing so eg if we receive a court order under seal)," the spokesperson added.



## PROTEST SITES TURN FORTRESSES

# Barricades strengthened, roads studded with nails



AGENCIES

**New Delhi/Ghaziabad, Feb 1:** Farmers' protest sites at Delhi's borders turned into fortresses Monday as police beefed up security and strengthened barricades. Workers under the watch of police personnel were seen hooking iron rods between two rows of cement barriers on a flank of the main highway at the Singhu border to further restrict the movement of protesters, agitating against the new farm laws.

Another portion of the highway at the Delhi-Haryana border is practically blocked now as a makeshift cement wall has come up there. At Ghazipur on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border, there are multi-layer barricades to stop the movement of vehicles. Barbed wire has also been put up to keep off people on foot. Protesters were pouring in as Bharatiya Kisan Union members and its leader Rakesh Tikait stayed pitched at Ghazipur's UP Gate, occupying a stretch of the Delhi-Meerut highway since November. Hundreds of security personnel, including the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) and Rapid Action Force (RAF), kept vigil.

Drones were being used to monitor the situation and vehicles checked as more support flowed in for the BKU from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan.

At Singhu on the Haryana border, a worker drilled rods in cross-formation between two rows of solid barriers. "The other flank

## Farmers to block roads across India Feb 6

Farmer unions Monday announced a countrywide 'chakka jam' on February 6 when they would block national and state highways for three hours in protest against the internet ban in areas near their agitation sites, harassment allegedly meted out to them by authorities, and other issues.

Union leaders told a press conference at the Singhu Border here that they will block the roads between 12 pm to 3 pm February 6. They also alleged that farmers have been "ignored" in the Union Budget 2021-22, and water and power supply have been curtailed at their protest venues.

was done yesterday. Cement is to be poured in the space between the barriers on this flank to make a makeshift wall," he said. The move comes days after the violent clashes between some protesters and police January 26 during the tractor parade by the farmers.

The section of the highway at the Singhu border also saw a clash recently between farmers and a group of people who claimed to be local residents. On Monday, the Delhi side of the Singhu border saw a sparse crowd of protesters while the Haryana side was dominated by people making vociferous speeches, denouncing the new farm laws. Security personnel from the paramilitary forces, RAF and CRPF, were seen in relatively less numbers compared to the past few days at Singhu. But a large number of police personnel manned the stretch. Besides the makeshift wall on the highway, a small trench was dug up earlier across a street a little off the highway and cement barricades put up on both the sides.

Farmer leaders at the site, however, asserted that the barricades won't cage their spirit.

## TOUCHING THE SKY



Indian Air Force (IAF)'s acrobatic team, Suryakiran, performs a sortie ahead of the AERO INDIA 2021 show at Yelahanka Air Base in Bangalore

## Man attempts self-immolation outside Yogi's office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow/Kannauj, Feb 1:** A man set himself on fire outside the Chief Minister's Office in Lucknow Monday to draw the attention of the authorities to a land dispute case, police said.

Umashankar, 36, a resident of the Indragarh area in Kannauj district, suffered 30 per cent burns and undergoing treatment Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Civil Hospital, they said.

The incident took place in the morning when Umashankar arrived at the Lok Bhawan in the Hazratganj area of the city and poured kerosene and set himself afire, police said. A police team swung into action and doused the flames.

Police Commissioner D K Thakur said Umashankar's land was illegally grabbed and he had complained to the village head and the Lekhpal (revenue officer) concerned to get the encroachers removed from it but they had not helped him.

He came to Lucknow on a roadways bus in the morning and reached Gate No. 2 of the Lok Bhawan, which has the CMs Office, and set himself on fire, Thakur said. A probe into the matter is on, police said.

## India, Qatar take stock of bilateral ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 1:** India and Qatar on Monday reviewed their bilateral ties in a range of areas, including energy trade, investments, defence, food security and health.

The review was carried out at the fourth foreign office consultations between the two sides.

"The foreign office consultations provided an opportunity to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including political, energy, trade, investments, defence, food security, health security, science and technology, consular, community and cultural issues," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

The meeting took place in the virtual format.

"Both sides reiterated their commitment to working closely together in these areas and further discussing new areas of cooperation," the MEA said.

It said the two sides also exchanged views on issues of mutual interest at the regional and multilateral levels, including cooperation at the UN and other international fora.

The Indian delegation at the meeting was led by Sanjay Bhattacharyya, Secretary (Consular, Passport and Visa division) in the MEA while the Qatari side was headed by Ahmad Hassan Al-Hamadi, Secretary General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

# SC to resume physical hearing in hybrid manner soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 1:** Chief Justice of India S A Bobde told the bar leaders Monday that physical hearing in the Supreme Court will soon resume in a hybrid manner amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bar Council of India (BCI) has said.

Amid protest by several advocates demanding resumption of physical hearing in the top court, a meeting was held Monday in which the CJ, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, bar leaders including BCI chairman Manan Kumar Mishra as also office bearers of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) as well as Supreme Court

Advocates-on-Record Association and senior advocate Vikas Singh discussed the issue.

The apex court has been hearing cases through video-conferencing since March last year amid the pandemic and several bar bodies and lawyers, including former SCBA President Vikas Singh, have been demanding that physical hearing should resume immediately. "The Chief Justice of India made it clear that the judges of Supreme Court themselves are willing to restart the open court hearings but there are medical and technical issues which the registry of Supreme Court of India is trying to sort out and solve. Therefore, it will be done



gradually," said a press release issued by the BCI Chairman.

"The secretary general (of the apex court) was asked by Justice Bobde to get the technical problems solved at the earliest so that

physically could resume its functioning from the first week of March 2021," Mishra, who is also a senior advocate, said. The release said that after deliberations, it was also decided that though there shall

be hybrid system of hearing till the pandemic period is over but as proposed by senior advocate Vikas Singh, the "video-conferencing (during the hybrid hearings) could only be done by the lawyers who are present in Delhi and that should be done only through cable connections either in the lawyers chambers or the cubicles (to be installed in the premises of Supreme Court)".

It said Mishra requested for evolving an effective and expeditious method for mentioning and listing of urgent matters, on which the CJ "gave a positive assurance". "Most probably one or two judges will sit on all the working days for 'mentioning matters' only. A deci-

sion to this effect shall be taken soon by the Chief Justice of India in consultation with the other judges," the release said.

The Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA) said that in the meeting, it was assured that process for resumption of physical hearings has already begun and would be "available soon in a hybrid manner that is in both modes of physical hearing and virtual hearing at the earliest; after considering the medical advice and clearing the existing impediments regarding to health of the stakeholders, technology infrastructures and availability of staff of registry."





Those who have quit TMC and joined BJP have done so to secure the money they have accumulated  
**MAMATA BANERJEE**  
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

## SCHOOLS, COLLEGES REOPEN IN T'GANA

After nearly 11 months schools and colleges in Telangana reopened for physical classes Monday with all precautionary measures in view of pandemic



## of the day quote

The Maharashtra government will examine if any objectionable speeches were made at a recent Elgar Parishad conclave in Pune and will take action accordingly  
**ANIL DESHMUKH** | MAHARASHTRA HOME MINISTER

Those who've completed three terms as elected representatives and relatives of a politician, won't get the party's ticket to contest the upcoming local body and civic elections  
**CR PATIL** | PARTY PRESIDENT OF THE GUJARAT UNIT

All these leaders may have come from anywhere, now they have gelled with the BJP  
**P MURALIDHAR RAO** | POLITICIAN

# IMA begins hunger strike over 'mixopathy'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 1:** The IMA said its members and modern medicine doctors have started a relay hunger strike from Monday at over 50 places across the country in protest against a notification by the Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) authorising post-graduate practitioners of Ayurveda to perform general surgical procedures.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) said the new procedure will lead to "mixopathy". IMA national president, secretary general and other IMA leaders will visit various places across the country to enhance the public safety movement, the doctors' body said in a statement.

The relay strike will continue till February 14, it said. It said the women doctors will lead the nationwide hunger strike February 7.

The IMA condemns the notification by the CCIM, a statutory body under the AYUSH Ministry, authorising post-graduate practitioners in specified streams of Ayurveda to be trained to perform surgical procedures such as excisions of benign tumours, amputa-



FILE PHOTO

tion of gangrene, nasal and cataract surgeries, the statement said. "IMA demands immediate withdrawal of the said impractical, unscientific and unethical notification," it added.

All specialty associations across the country have joined the strike through Federation of Medical Associations under the aegis of IMA. The Dental Association also has joined this national movement, the statement said.

The IMA will launch a massive awareness drive across the country

as there is a clear threat to the safety of healthcare of people, it said. The IMA also said it will release awareness posters and banners across the country.

"All IMA members shall update their Members of Parliament and MLAs regarding the true picture of the notification and integration policy," the statement said. "The IMA will also give its rationale representations to all state governments. Under the Save People Movement, all NGOs will be updated with the core issues," it added.

Internationally, the IMA shall apprise various associations from different countries about this unscientific notification. The global voice of modern medicine shall echo the feelings of the Indian Medical Association and its all members, the statement said. The IMA asked its Medical Students' Network (MSN), Junior Doctors' Network (JDN), IMA Women's Wing, IMA Hospital Board, in-service doctors, medical colleges to participate in the strike, it said.

Further, the recent policy tilt as evidenced in the medical pluralism advocated by the National Education Policy 2020 and the four committees of NITI Aayog for officially integrating the systems of medicine in medical education, practice, public health and administration as well as research ostensibly for a 'One Nation - One System' policy will ring the death knell of all systems of medicine as a whole, the statement said. Doctors in Gujarat started a Relay hunger strike Monday as part of a nationwide protest called by the IMA against the Centre's decision to allow Ayurvedic physicians to perform certain types of surgeries.

# India expresses deep concern over coup in Myanmar

The country's powerful military grabbed power in a coup against the civilian govt and imposed a state of emergency after detaining Suu Kyi and other leaders in the early hours Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 1:** India Monday expressed deep concern over the military coup in Myanmar and detention of its top political leaders, and said the rule of law and the democratic process must be upheld in the country.

In its reaction to the fast-paced developments in Myanmar, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said India is monitoring the situation closely and that it has been steadfast in supporting the democratic transition in that country.

According to reports from Myanmar, the country's powerful military grabbed power in a coup against the civilian government and imposed a state of emergency after detaining Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders of her National League for Democracy (NLD) in the early hours Monday. "We have noted the developments in Myanmar with deep concern. India has always been steadfast in its support to the process of democratic transi-

tion in Myanmar," the MEA said.

"We believe that the rule of law and the democratic process must be upheld. We are monitoring the situation closely," it said in a statement. The Myanmar military staged the coup amid its rising friction with the ruling NLD government over the results of the November 8 general election. The NLD had registered a thumping victory in the polls. However, the military had alleged discrepancies in the electoral process.

According to media reports, an announcer on Myanmar's military-owned Myawaddy TV declared on Monday morning that the military had taken control of the country for one year. Myanmar's leader Suu Kyi and other senior figures from the ruling party have been detained in an early morning raid, the spokesman for the governing National League for Democracy (NLD) was quoted as saying in the media. The democratic transition in Myanmar had taken place in 2011 after decades of military rule.

## SHORT TAKES

### 1 dead, 5 injured in building collapse

**Thane:** At least one person was killed and five others were injured after a building collapsed in Bhiwandi town of Maharashtra's Thane district Monday morning, a civic official said. Search and rescue operations are still on at the site as it is suspected that some more people may be trapped under the debris, he said. The single-storey building, where a godown of an online goods delivery firm is located, collapsed around 10.30 am in Harihar Compound at Mankoli junction in Bhiwandi. Thane civic body's regional disaster management control cell chief Santosh Kadam said.

### Student killed by BSF

**Agartala:** A 24-year-old student was allegedly killed by some BSF jawans in a village in Tripura along the India-Bangladesh border over suspicion that he was a cattle smuggler, police said. A senior police official said that Jasim Mia was killed by the BSF troopers in the wee hours on Monday at Debipur village under Belonia subdivision in southern Tripura.

### Six labourers killed in mishap

**Chandigarh:** Six labourers were killed and as many injured when their vehicle collided head-on with a truck near village Giddarpindi in Punjab's Jalandhar district Monday, police said. The labourers were coming from Makhu side in Ferozepur district and going to Lohian in Jalandhar district when the accident took place, said the police. While two labourers died on the spot, four succumbed to their injuries in Zira civil hospital in Ferozepur, said a police official of Lohian police station in Jalandhar. The injured have been admitted to the hospital, said the police.

### Policeman killed

**Tuticorin (TN):** A police Sub-Inspector in this district died early Monday after a man he had pulled up for causing nuisance in an inebriated condition allegedly rammed the victim's two-wheeler using a load van, police said. Chief Minister K Palaniswami, condoling the death of sub-inspector Balu of Eral police station, announced a relief of Rs 50 lakh to his family while the accused person surrendered before a local court.

## BACK ON TRACK



Commuters travel in a crowded train as authorities permitted all members of the general public to travel in local trains, after a gap of about 320 days owing to the coronavirus pandemic, in Thane  
PTI PHOTO

## NON-SHARING OF UPI DATA WITH 3RD PARTIES

# SC seeks WhatsApp's reply

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 1:** The Supreme Court Monday asked instant messaging app WhatsApp to file response on a plea seeking a direction to the RBI and the NPCI to ensure that data collected on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platforms is not shared with their parent company or any other third party under any circumstances.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian said if WhatsApp does not file its reply, then the averment made in the writ petition filed by petitioner Rajya Sabha MP Binoy Viswam will be taken as accepted.

Several interlocutory applications have been filed in the plea which also seek direction for framing regulation to ensure that data collected on UPI platforms is not "exploited" or used in any manner other than for processing payments. Senior advocate Arvind Dattar, appearing for WhatsApp India, said however no formal no-



tice has been issued to it in the plea for implementation in the matter. Senior advocate V Giri, appearing for Reserve Bank of India, informed the top court that they have filed their reply in the matter. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, also appearing for WhatsApp, said "WhatsApp Pay" has received all necessary permission.

Senior advocate Krishna Venugopal, appearing for the petitioner, said the last time the court asked the company if Israeli spyware Pegasus has breached their system, it stated that the issue was not pleaded in the petition, which is wrong. The bench said that it pro-

poses that the petition be tagged with a similar plea pending in the top court and asked the Centre to file an affidavit on the issue of spyware. Venugopal said that till date Facebook and WhatsApp have not filed a counter-affidavit in the matter, despite the petition being pending for months and they should also be asked to file counter-affidavit.

At the fag end of the hearing, the CJT told the counsels for WhatsApp that pleas challenging its new privacy policy are pending before the Supreme Court and posted the matter for further hearing after four weeks.

## Southwest Monsoon in 2021 likely to be normal: Skymet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 1:** After two years, the southwest monsoon in 2021 is likely to be normal, private weather forecaster Skymet Weather has said on initial outlook for the rainfall season.

The southwest monsoon was above-normal in 2019 and 2020. La Nina, which is associated with the cooling of Pacific waters, was one of the important elements influencing the Indian monsoon. "There is sufficient cooling in the Pacific Ocean now and La Niña conditions are at peak. The Sea Surface Temperatures (SSTs) are likely to rise soon and the probability of continued La Niña will fall," the Skymet Weather said. This will reduce to about 50 per cent when the monsoon arrives, it noted. "This could be one of the normal monsoon years making a sound start and ending within the upper half of normal range. The range of normal rainfall is 96-104 per cent of LPA (880.6 mm). Initial readings are indicative of some risk attached to few pockets," the Skymet Weather said.

# Children use road as 'slate'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Betul (Madhya Pradesh), Feb 1:** Generally, people use roads to commute but a road in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district has come in handy for local children who are using this road as a giant slate or blackboard to learn counting, tables and other subjects.

The corona pandemic has severely affected children as schools are closed and roaming outside is a not safe. To tackle the situation people have moved to community classes and 'learn with fun' techniques.

A unique experiment has taken place in Simori village of Betul district. Children here are using a road as a giant slate. They assemble every evening and practice basic maths along with playing.

Children adopt various practices to learn like writing, counting, tables, month and day names, English, nouns, important days, counting in

Sanskrit, names of grains, flowers, fruits, and vegetables etc while also collecting interesting information about the country and abroad, and important personalities.

Whatever the children learn at home or in community classes, they write it on the road just for fun which is actually improving their writing skills. Apart from this, whenever any child passes through this road the written stuff acts as revision material for them. The children are also liking this concept. Shailendra Biharia, a teacher, said "This road was a hangout venue for children, they used to ride bicycles and play here for most of their spare time. In this situation, we have combined road and education in a single wire."

Mamata Gohar, member of a local NGO, said "We are providing white and coloured chalks to children free of cost. This new concept has become quite popular in the area."



# Treat homeless people with humanity: Indore official to staff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Indore, Feb 1:** After facing flak for dumping homeless people outside Indore amid the biting cold, the local administration has got into damage control by providing food and shelter to such people, and has asked officials to treat them with "sensitivity and humanity".

Food and bonfires are now being arranged in facilities where homeless people are provided shelter at night, Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) officials said Monday. Besides, a campaign has also been launched for the reha-

bilitation and health checkup of beggars here, they said.

Indore Divisional Commissioner (Revenue) and IMC's administrator Pawan Sharma said he has directed officials concerned to rehabilitate beggars and homeless elderly people with "sensitivity and humanity". There are already 10 facilities in the city for providing night shelter to those from deprived sections, Additional Municipal Commissioner Abhay Rajangaonkar told PTI.

"In view of the severe cold weather at present, the homeless elderly people are now also being



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

provided food under the state government's Deendayal Rasooyojana," he said. Bonfires have also been arranged for those taking shelter

in these facilities, he said. Another civic official said they have started a week-long campaign for the health checkup of

elderly people and beggars living on footpaths in the city. Indore is among 10 cities of the country selected for the drive of rehabilitating beggars under the Centre's social justice department, he said.

As part of the campaign, people surviving on begging are being identified, and they will be provided employment to bring them into the mainstream, he said. On Friday, a video on social media showed municipal workers dumping some homeless elderly persons outside the city, drawing sharp criticism from various quarters. District Magistrate Manish Singh

on Sunday said he has apologised to God for the local administration's action. Earlier, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday suspended an IMC official in connection with the incident.

The civic body has also removed two temporary employees from the job. The incident has taken place at a time when the administration of Indore, which has won the country's cleanest city tag four times in a row, is making all efforts to keep the city neat and tidy to win the 'Swachh Sarvekshan 2021'.



# international



I am deeply concerned by the Pakistani Supreme Court's decision to acquit those involved in Daniel Pearl's kidnapping and murder. We are committed to securing justice for the Pearl family and holding terrorists accountable

## PRINCE HARRY RECEIVES APOLOGY

Britain's Prince Harry has won an apology and substantial damages from the publishers of the Mail after he sued the tabloid for libel over claims he had turned his back on the military when he ended his royal role.



## of the day quote

When you're French, you have everything you need to succeed providing you dare to try



EMMANUEL MACRON | FRENCH PRESIDENT

The existing opposition parties have failed to achieve the confidence and trust of the people due to lack of leadership.



SHEIKH HASINA | BANGLADESH PRIME MINISTER

I have only limited tolerance for a Republican Party that wrings its hands and talks about unity and moving forward.



PRAMILA JAYAPAL | US REPRESENTATIVE

## SHORT TAKES

### Russia fines Navalny's wife

Moscow: A Russian court Monday fined Yulia Navalnaya, the wife of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, 20,000 roubles (\$265) for taking part in unsanctioned protests on Sunday, the court said.

### Pak receives first batch of vax

Islamabad: Pakistan Monday received the first batch of 500,000 doses of the coronavirus vaccine donated by its closest ally, China, as the country gears up to kick start its immunisation drive later this week.

### Wine disputes president's win

Kampala (Uganda): Ugandan presidential challenger Bobi Wine Monday launched a court case seeking to overturn the re-election of President Yoweri Museveni, who has been in power for 35 years.

### Jihadist siege of Somalia hotel ends

Mogadishu: At least five people have died in the attack on a Mogadishu hotel by Somalia's al-Shabab rebels that was ended early Monday by security forces, according to the Somali police force.

# Myanmar military seizes power, detains Suu Kyi

THE DETENTIONS CAME AFTER DAYS OF ESCALATING TENSION BETWEEN THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ELECTION, WHICH ACCORDING TO THE ARMY WAS FRAUDULENT

REUTERS

Naypyitaw (Myanmar), Feb 1: Myanmar's military seized power Monday in a coup against the democratically elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who was detained along with other leaders of her National League for Democracy (NLD) party in early morning raids.



Urge people not to accept this, to respond and wholeheartedly to protest against the coup by the military

AUNG SAN SUU KYI

The army said it had carried out the detentions in response to "election fraud", handing power to military chief Min Aung Hlaing and imposing a state of emergency for one year, according to a statement on a military-owned television station.

Suu Kyi's party published comments on Facebook that it said had been written in anticipation of a coup, quoting her as saying people should protest against the military takeover. The coup derails years of Western-backed efforts to establish democracy in Myanmar, also known as Burma, where neighbouring China also has a powerful influence.

and other NLD leaders were "taken" in the early hours of the morning, NLD spokesman Myo Nyunt told Reuters by phone.

Reuters was subsequently unable to contact him. A video posted to Facebook by one MP appeared to show the arrest of another, regional lawmaker Pa Pa Han. In the video, her husband pleads with men in military garb standing outside the gate.

### BROKEN WINGS

The pre-written statement uploaded on an NLD Facebook page quoted Suu Kyi as saying such army actions would put Myanmar "back under a dictatorship".

"I urge people not to accept this, to respond and wholeheartedly to protest against the coup by the military," it quoted her as saying.

Reuters was unable to reach any NLD officials to confirm the ver-

acity of the statement.

Supporters of the military celebrated the coup, parading through Yangon in pickup trucks and waving national flags. "Today is the day that people are happy," one nationalist monk told a crowd in a video published on Facebook.

"The NLD is the government we voted for. If they're unhappy with the result, they can call another election. A coup isn't acceptable," said a woman, who declined to be identified, whose husband works for the military. Senior NLD leader Win Htein said in a Facebook post the army chief's takeover demonstrated his ambition rather than concern for the country.

### POTENTIAL FOR UNREST

The military, summarising a meeting of the new junta, said Min Aung Hlaing had pledged to practice a "genuine discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system" and promised a free and fair election and a handover of power to the winning party.

## LONG UNDER MILITARY RULE

- Jan 4, 1948: Country then known as Burma gains independence from British colonial rule.
1962: Military leader Ne Win stages a coup and rules the country through a junta for many years.
1988: Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of an independence hero, returns to her home country as pro-democracy protests are erupting against junta.
July 1989: An increasingly outspoken critic of the junta, Suu Kyi is put under house arrest.
May 27, 1990: The National League for Democracy, founded by Suu Kyi, wins a landslide victory in elections, but the military refuses to hand over power.
Oct 1991: Suu Kyi is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her peaceful struggle against the regime.
Nov 7, 2010: A pro-junta party wins Myanmar's first elections in 20 years, a vote that was boycotted as unfair and rigged in its favour.
Nov 13, 2010: Suu Kyi is freed from detention after spending long periods of two decades under house arrest.

It gave no timeframe for an election but the military had already said the state of emergency would last a year. The United Nations led condemnation of the coup and calls for the release of detainees and restoration of democracy in comments largely mirrored by Australia, Britain, the European Union, India, Japan and the United States.

of State Antony Blinken said, while the U.S. embassy in Yangon issued an alert warning U.S. citizens of the "potential for civil and political unrest". In Japan, a major aid donor with scores of businesses in Myanmar, a ruling party source said the government may have to rethink the strengthening of defence relations with the country undergone as part of regional efforts to counterbalance China.

# Thousands flee HK for UK, fearing China crackdown

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong, Feb 1: Thousands of Hong Kongers have already made the sometimes painful decision to leave behind their hometown and move to Britain since Beijing imposed a strict national security law on the Chinese territory last summer.

Some are leaving because they fear punishment for supporting the pro-democracy protests that swept the former British colony in 2019. Others say China's encroachment on their way of life and civil liberties has become unbearable, and they want to seek a better future for their children abroad.

The moves are expected to accelerate now that 5 million Hong Kongers are eligible to apply for visas to Britain, allowing them to live, work and study there and eventually apply to become British citizens.

already arrived on British soil to get a head start. Britain's government said some 7,000 people with British National Overseas passports — a travel document that Hong Kongers could apply for before the city was handed over to Chinese control in 1997 — have arrived since July on the previously allowed six month visa.

It estimates that over 300,000 people will take up the offer of extended residency rights in the next five years. "Before the announcement of the BN(O) visa in July, we didn't have many enquiries about UK Immigration, maybe less than 10 a month," said Andrew Lo, founder of Anlex Immigration Consultants in Hong Kong.

Mike, a photojournalist, said he plans to apply for the visa and move to Leeds with his wife and young daughter in April. His motivation to leave came after the city's political situation deteriorated following the anti-government protests and he realised the city's police was not politically neutral.



## FOR A CAUSE



A participant shows a peace sign as he is detained by law enforcement officers during a rally in support of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny in Moscow, Russia, Monday.

# Pak SC rejects plea to suspend release of Pearl murder accused

AGENCIES

Islamabad, Feb 1: The Pakistan Supreme Court Monday rejected the government's request to suspend the order to release British-born al-Qaeda terrorist Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and his three aides in the brutal murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl, days after it announced to formally join the review proceedings against the acquittal of the accused amid mounting international pressure.

interim detention order of main accused Sheikh and his aides - Fahad Naseem, Sheikh Adil and Salman Saqib - by one day to hear the government's position on the case. During the hearing Monday, the Attorney General of Pakistan requested the Supreme Court to suspend the decision to release the accused so that he could argue the case in detail.

acquittal by the Sindh High Court. The judgement was denounced by Pearl's family as "a complete travesty of justice". The Sindh government Friday filed a review petition in the apex court against the acquittal of Sheikh and his three accomplices.

# As Google eyes Oz exit, Microsoft talks Bing with Morrison

Australia has introduced laws that would force Google and Facebook Inc to negotiate payments to domestic media outlets whose content links drive traffic to their platforms

REUTERS

Sydney, Feb 1: Software giant Microsoft Corp is confident its search product Bing can fill the gap in Australia if Google pulls its search over required payments to media outlets, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Monday.

Australia has introduced laws that would force internet giant Google and social media heavyweight Facebook Inc to negotiate payments to domestic media outlets whose content links drive traffic to their platforms.

called the laws unworkable and said last month they would withdraw key services from Australia if the regulations went ahead. Those services include Google's search engine, which has 94 per cent of the country's search market, according to industry data.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has since spoken with Morrison about the new rules, the tech company told Reuters, and Monday, Morrison said the software company was ready to grow the presence of its search tool Bing, the distant No. 2 player. "I can tell you, Microsoft's pretty confident, when I spoke to



Satya," Morrison told reporters in Canberra, without giving further detail of the conversation.

ical world," Morrison added. A Microsoft spokeswoman confirmed the discussion took place but declined to comment, because the company was not directly involved in the laws. "We recognise the importance of a vibrant media sector and public interest journalism in a democracy and we recognise the challenges the media sector has faced over many years through changing business models and consumer preferences," the spokeswoman said. Google declined to comment.

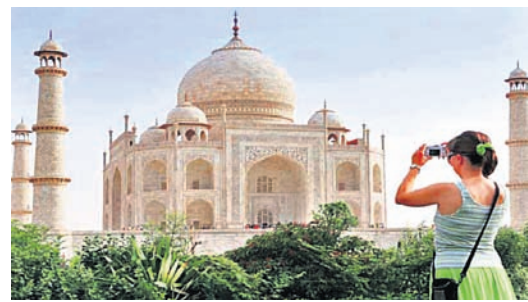
questioned a meeting over the law, and that they had talked, but that he would not back down on the change. At a Senate hearing into the laws, Department of Treasury deputy secretary of markets Meghan Quinn said the Australian government would have limited ability to intervene if Google's departure hurt businesses which rely on its search function. "The (media bargaining) code doesn't prevent the wholesale withdrawal of services, and there's difficulty in any of the legislative mechanisms we've got for someone to (be forced to) provide a service," Quinn said.



# business

## 'LACK OF SUPPORT TO TOURISM SECTOR DISAPPOINTING'

The lack of immediate support in the Budget has disappointed the tourism and hospitality sector, though measures to strengthen infrastructure may help the beleaguered segment, the industry players said Monday. The tourism, travel and hospitality industry was looking for immediate and short-term measures for critical revival. This has not happened in the budget announcements, they added.



# 'Budget reformist, will drive economic revival post Covid'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 1: India Inc Monday hailed Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget for 2021-22 as a reformist one that reimagines India's self-reliance like never before and will drive revival of the economy from the impact of the pandemic with enhanced spending.

The focus on growth over fiscal consolidation and steps to further help the startup ecosystem came in for praise from industry leaders across different sectors.

"Coming in the backdrop of a global pandemic of the century, it boldly spells the government's growth agenda and a march towards building a new and prosperous India. The budget clearly has the stamp of our Prime Minister with a clarion call for 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' and 'Vocal for Local,'" Founder and Chairman of Bharti Enterprises Sunil Bharti Mittal said. The first budget of this new decade reimagines India in the form of Aatmanirbhar Bharat like never before, he added.

Echoing similar views, Vedanta Resources Executive Chairman Anil Agarwal tweeted, "Congratulations to @narendramodi and FM @nsitharaman for a very reformist #Budget2021 with many big ideas including strategic disinvestment of two public sector banks & one insurance company. Thrust on infrastructure will boost growth." Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra said in a time

of unprecedented economic stress, the government's responsibility was to spend enough to revive the economy or else face enormous human suffering.

"So I had one expectation from this budget: that we should be very liberal in terms of the targeted fiscal deficit. Box ticked," Mahindra tweeted.

Lauding the finance minister for the focus on healthcare spending and immunization especially for COVID-19 and the pneumococcal vaccines, Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla said this will help India recover rapidly from this pandemic. "Hopefully, this will also encourage more innovation and expansion in the sector," he added.

Bringing in the cricketer's angle, RPG Enterprises Chairman Harsh Goenka tweeted, "Combination of Pujara & Pant innings - consistency and flamboyance! Steady focus on infra, commercial laws, ease of business with big shots of monetising PSU assets, new divestments, insurance FDI. India won in Australia. Now India shall rise above in new world order".

Congratulating Sitharaman for presenting a "pathbreaking, inclusive budget in these unprecedented times", Hinduja Group co-Chairman Gopichand Hinduja said, "The high fiscal deficit would be a worry for many, however, these uncertain times call for high government spending".

Ficci President Uday Shankar said the budget is a clear-headed and growth-oriented one that lays a strong foundation for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat. "The fact that government chose growth over fiscal consolidation is indeed heartening. There is a sharp focus on capital expenditure," he said.



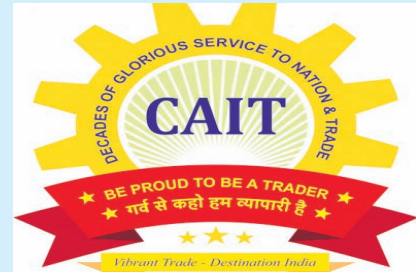
The focus on growth over fiscal consolidation and steps to further help the startup ecosystem came in for praise from industry leaders across different sectors

## MSME sector: Proposal on cards to double allocation



The government has proposed to double the allocation for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector, and set aside ₹15,700 crore for the financial year starting April 1. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made the announcement while presenting the Budget 2021-22 in Parliament. "We have taken a number of steps to support the MSME sector. In this Budget, I have provided ₹15,700 crore to this sector, more than double of this year's BE (budget estimate)," she said.

## 'Budget is a progressive and comprehensive document'



The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has termed the Union Budget 2021 as a "progressive and comprehensive document". "The Union Budget is a progressive and comprehensive document that ensures the structured development of every sector of the economy. It also brings relief to senior citizens from the burden of paying taxes. Also, developing the health sector and strengthening its services are its specialty," the CAIT said.

## ₹14,200 cr allocated to boost telecom infra



The government Monday allocated ₹14,200 crore for telecom infrastructure that entails completion of optical fibre cable-based network for Defence services, rolling out broadband in 2.2 lakh panchayats and improving mobile services in the North East. The government had approved ₹24,664 crore for an advanced communications network for defence services in lieu of their vacating spectrum for mobile telephony in May 2018. The project was to be completed within 24 months.

## Railways allocated 'record' ₹1.10L cr



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 1: The railways has been allocated a "record" ₹1.10 lakh crore in Budget 2021 of which ₹1.07 lakh crore accounts for capital expenditure, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Monday.

While the allocation in 2021-22 has been termed as a "record" for the national transporter, it had a slightly higher allocation of ₹1.11 lakh crore in the revised budget of 2020-21.

The national carrier will monetize the upcoming Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) assets for operations and maintenance after commissioning and the Indian Railways will have a National Rail Plan to create a "future ready" Railway system by 2030, Sitharaman said.

Presenting the Union Budget 2021-22, Sitharaman also applauded the services provided by the Railways to transport essential goods across the coun-

try during the coronavirus lockdown.

"I am announcing a record sum of ₹1,10,055 crore for railways of which ₹1,07,100 crore is for capital expenditure only," she said.

Railway Board Chairman and CEO Suneet Sharma on Monday described the Union Budget 2021-22 as a "transformational" budget for the national transporter and said the budget has focus on deliverance.

"This budget is a different budget altogether. It is a transformational budget, it is a future ready budget for railway, it is path breaking budget," Sharma said addressing a press conference here.

He said the focus of this budget is on deliverance, commitment to delivery, time schedule, focus on customers, focus on technology, induction to provide better services to customers, better passenger and freight services.

### Exemption from audit

Currently, if your turnover exceeds ₹1 crore, you have to get your accounts audited. In the previous Budget, the Centre had increased the limit for tax audit to ₹5 crore for those who carry out 95% of their transactions digitally. To further incentivise digital transactions, the Centre has increased this limit for tax audit for such persons from ₹5 crore to ₹10 crore.

### Relief for small trusts

Small charitable trusts running educational institutions and hospitals and whose annual receipt does not exceed ₹5 crore can avail blanket exemption. Presently, there is a blanket exemption to small charitable trusts, whose annual receipt does not exceed ₹1 crore. However, in the Budget 2021-22 it has been proposed to increase the amount to ₹5 crore.

### Iron and steel

MSMEs and other user industries have been severely hit by a recent sharp rise in iron and steel prices. Thus, the government has reduced the customs duty uniformly to 7.5% on semis, flat, and long products of non-alloy, alloy, and stainless steels. To provide relief to metal recyclers, mostly MSMEs, duty on steel scrap has been exempted for a period up to March 31, 2022.

### Incentives for startups

In order to incentivise start-ups in the country, the Centre has extended the eligibility for claiming tax holiday for start-ups by one more year, till March 31, 2022. Further, the capital gains exemption for investment in start-ups extended for another year.

### Duty on solar lanterns hiked

To encourage domestic production, duty on solar invertors has been increased from 5% to 20%, while duty on solar lanterns has been hiked from 5% to 15%.



BUDGET TID BITS

### Customs duty on cotton imposed

The Union government is going to impose 10% customs duty on cotton whereas the duty on raw silk and silk yarn has been increased from 10% to 15%. It has also withdrawn end-use based concession on denatured ethyl alcohol. Currently, rates are being uniformly calibrated to 15% on items like maize bran, rice bran oil cake, and animal feed additives.

## Tata Power bags Lol from OERC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: Tata Power, India's largest integrated power utility, Monday announced that it has received the Letter of Intent (LOI) from the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC) for the distribution and retail supply of electricity in Odisha's five circles of NESCO constituting the areas of Balasore, Bhadrak, Baripada, Jajpur and Keonjhar.

As per conditions of Bid Documentation Tata Power will hold 51 percent equity with management control and the State-owned GRIDCO will have the remaining 49% equity stake in the company.

With the inclusion of additional

distribution utility of Odisha, Tata Power shall now have privilege to serve entire population of State of Odisha with nearly 9 million consumers shall now experience uniform processes and synergies in operations across the State. This expansion shall enhance Tata Power consumer base to nearly 12 million from the present base of 9.6 million across Mumbai, New Delhi, Ajmer, Central, Southern and Western parts of Odisha.

CEO and MD of Tata Power Praveer Sinha said, "We are thankful to the Odisha Government and Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission for giving us this opportunity and reaffirming Tata Power's commitment of 'Lighting up Lives' for the people of Odisha."

## 'Only 4% rural households have piped water supply in Odisha'

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 1: Only 4 per cent rural households, which is less than one-fourth of the all India coverage of 18.3 per cent, have piped water supply in Odisha, reveals the final report of 15th Finance Commission for fiscal year 2021-22 to 2025-26, tabled in Parliament Monday.

The commission recommended that Odisha needs to invest into cost-effective and innovative approaches such as rain-water harvesting and end-to-end value chain management of drinking water.

The commission also recom-



mended that the state needs to expedite the development of the ports to provide impetus to industrialisation and economic growth. Currently, Odisha has only three ports, Paradip, Dhamara and Gopalpur. Paradip is a major port while Dhamara and Gopalpur are minor port.

The Finance Commission

stated in its report that the state's health care sector is facing severe shortage of healthcare professionals with 1,276 vacancies (83.5 per cent shortfall) of specialists in CHCs against the sanctioned strength of 1,529 and 409 vacancies (30.8 per cent shortfall) of doctors in PHCs against the sanctioned strength of 1,326.

The commission recommended that for a sustainable solution, Odisha may explore Maharashtra's model of recognising diplomas from the College of Physicians and Surgeons as adequate for converting MBBS doctors to specialists who may then serve in remote and tribal areas.

## WHO SAID WHAT

 <p><b>The Budget 2021-22 is a highly growth-oriented budget. It has given emphasis on infrastructure, health and education sector. The Budget's allocation of ₹35,000 crore towards vaccination will strengthen India's fight against COVID.</b></p> <p>SANJEEV KUMAR MOHANTY   JOINT DIRECTOR, FICCI</p>	 <p><b>FADA is happy to note that THE Finance Minister finally has announced the much awaited Scrapage Policy, though voluntary to phase out old vehicles. If we take 1990 as base year, there are approximately 37 lakh CVs and 52 lakh PVs eligible for voluntarily scrapping. As an estimate, 10% of CV and 5% of PV may still be plying on road</b></p> <p>VINKESH GULATI   PRESIDENT, FADA</p>	 <p><b>It is encouraging to note that the FM favoured a major expansion in government spending. The 34.5% rise budgeted in the cap-ex spending for FY22 mainly targeted towards major infrastructure expansion initiatives are laudable</b></p> <p>CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE   DIRECTOR GENERAL, CII</p>	 <p><b>Setting up of a Development Finance Institution to fund long gestation projects, and an asset reconstruction-cum-asset management company to deal with stressed assets are welcome steps. Limiting reopening of assessments and providing for a faceless ITAT will encourage the honest taxpayer.</b></p> <p>SUBHRAKANT PANDA   MANAGING DIRECTOR, IMFA</p>	 <p><b>The central government has been emphasizing importance on young entrepreneurs. We really appreciate that it has allowed one more year of tax free business for the start-ups. Incremental budget in infrastructure will create more job opportunities for youngsters</b></p> <p>GAURAV CHAMLA   CHAIR, YI (BHUBANESWAR CHAPTER)</p>	 <p><b>This is a Budget for a Healthy India with a strong infrastructure and industry. ₹64,180 cr would be spent on healthcare over 6 years with additional ₹35,000 crore on covid vaccines in FY 2021-22. ICC compliments for specific supports to textile, housing, fishing, tea, agriculture, energy</b></p> <p>VIKASH AGARWAL   PRESIDENT, INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</p>	 <p><b>The union government tried to reduce the raw materials cost like iron, steel, aluminium copper etc. Infrastructure and rural development was also focused which means increase in jobs. As far as MSME is concerned there is no such extra budget that is provided</b></p> <p>GAURI SHANKAR DASH   CHAIRMAN, OASME</p>	 <p><b>Extension of tax holiday for affordable housing projects for another year till March 31, 2022 and deduction of interest to buyers also has been extended for one more year, will boost overall demand for affordable housing</b></p> <p>SWADESH KUMAR ROUTRAY   PRESIDENT, CREDAI ODISHA</p>	 <p><b>The steps taken by the Finance Minister will improve productivity in infrastructure, result in housing for the poor, help in producing cheaper electricity, stimulate the growth of MSMEs and start-ups and create massive job opportunities.</b></p> <p>ANIL AGARWAL   CHAIRMAN, VEDANTA</p>
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# MESSI SHOWS HIS WORTH

Argentine scores 650th goal in his Barcelona career during the Catalan giants' 2-1 victory over Athletic Bilbao

## Leo, Barca furious over contract-leak

AGENCIES

Barcelona, Feb 1: Barcelona have stated their fury after Lionel Messi's contract leaked in the Spanish press and threatened legal action against 'El Mundo' after the newspaper published details. However, more details were brought to light via the Madrid daily Monday, despite the declaration from the Catalan giants. Barcelona find themselves in financial turmoil with debts of over 1bn pound, despite boasting the highest revenues in European football, over 200million pound of which must be repaid to banks by June 30.

A copy of the 33-year-old's enormous contract at the Catalan club has been obtained by Spanish publication 'El Mundo', who claims the six-time Ballon d'Or winner earns a maximum of 555,237,619 euro over four seasons if a series of conditions are met.

On top of that, Messi's four-year deal at the Camp Nou included a signing-on bonus of 115,225,000 euro for accepting the initial renewal, and a massive loyalty bonus of 77,929,955 euro. That means with just five months left on the deal agreed between club and player in November 2017, the player has already earned 511,540,545 euro - although he would have had to pay around half of that amount in taxes.

A seething Ronald Koeman has had his say on the matter, vowing to identify whoever is responsible and sack them. The Dutchman also labelled the leak 'malicious'.

Speaking after Sunday night's 2-1 win over Athletic Bilbao, Koeman said: "Whoever has leaked Messi's contract cannot have a future at Barca. What has come out in



the press about Messi was done maliciously.

"We have to try to know how this could have come out in the press. We have to concentrate on our season. The team's been fine lately. We won a lot of games. We don't have to focus on this issue, but there are people who want to hurt Barca and Leo.

"Messi has been demonstrating his quality as a footballer for years, has helped a lot to make this club great and has helped a lot to win titles."

El Mundo's initial report on Messi's contract - 'a sum equivalent to the aid approved by the Latvian government against COVID-19 for the next five years' - labelled it 'the pharaonic contract that ruins Barcelona'.

Equally as damning, they declare it a contract that 'shows the servitude of former president (Josep Maria) Bartomeu before the star' and which has helped to take the club 'from glory to ruin'.

Koeman added: "I don't understand why they say he's ruined Barca. He's spent years and years showing his quality as a footballer. We must highlight what he's done for this club. He's helped make this club great and we have to stop with all this contract nonsense."

Messi has also threatened to take legal action also while he has been defended by La Liga president Javier Tebas on social media.

One man who has denied anything to do with the leaking of Messi's deal is ex-president Bartomeu.

The controversial former Camp Nou supremo - whose soured tenure led to Messi pushing to leave the club last summer - hit out at suggestions that he had been involved in the information leak.

There are only four copies of the intricately detailed contract: one with Messi, one with Barca, one with La Liga and one also with the law firm used by the Argentine, Cuatrecasas.

If you breakdown those numbers, the Argentine forward rakes in a reported 138,000,000 euro per season and, if those numbers are indeed correct, it would confirm Messi is in possession of the biggest deal in sports history.

Los Cules have duly threatened to take 'appropriate legal action', having confirmed the veracity of the document in question.

They stated: "FC Barcelona categorically denies any responsibility for the publication of this document." They added: "FC Barcelona expresses its absolute support for Lionel Messi, especially in the face of any attempt to discredit his image, and to damage his relationship with the entity where he has worked to become the best player in the world and in football history."

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Antoine Griezmann looks on after scoring the winner against Athletic Bilbao, Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Feb 1: Lionel Messi showed his worth yet again, scoring on a beautiful free kick to lead Barcelona to a 2-1 win over Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish league.

The 650th goal in his Barcelona career came amid the noise prompted by Spanish newspaper El Mundo's report that his contract is worth 555 million euros (USD 673 million). The Catalan club, mired in debt and political turmoil, had to quickly deny its involvement in the leak.

Antoine Griezmann also scored for Barcelona, which won its fifth in a row in the league and moved into second place for the first time this season. It has the same 40 points as Real Madrid but is ahead on goal difference. Atlético earlier opened a 10-point lead after winning 4-2 at Cadiz with a pair of goals by Luis Suarez.

Messi, who had his request to leave Barcelona denied by the club last season, seemed unaffected by the leak Sunday of his contract details. He played well from the start and was decisive again at the Camp Nou Stadium. The Argentine great opened

the scoring in the 20th minute with a free kick shot that curled over the wall and found the top corner for his 12th league goal.

Athletic equalised with an own-goal by Jordi Alba as the defender tried to clear a cross by Raul Garcia in the 49th, and Griezmann put Barcelona ahead again, completing a cross by Oscar Mingueza in the 75th.

It was the third meeting between Barcelona and Athletic this month, with the Catalan club winning a postponed league game and losing the Spanish Super Cup final.

Athletic was trying to win its sixth consecutive match in all competitions. The loss was only its second since coach Marcelino Garcia Toral was signed in the beginning of the year - the first also was against Barcelona.

It was Barcelona's first home match in 2021. It had played eight consecutive games away from the Camp Nou, including in the Copa del Rey and the Spanish Super Cup.

### SUAREZ ON A ROLL

Suarez continued his stellar form with Atletico, scoring twice in the win



over Cadiz to help Diego Simeone's team open a huge lead at the top.

Suarez scored a goal in each half to reach 14 league goals this season, marking his best-ever league start in Spain and becoming the league's leading scorer. The Uruguayan striker, who was let go by Barcelona at the end of last season, has scored nine goals in his last eight matches with Atletico.

It was the eighth league win in a row for Atletico, which reaches the halfway mark of the season with the 10-point gap to Barcelona and Real Madrid despite having a game in hand.

Simeone's team have 50 points from 19 matches, remaining on pace for a 100-point season for the first time. Suarez opened the scoring with a

well-placed curling free kick in the 28th and added his second from the penalty spot in the 50th. Saul Niguez netted before halftime and Koke got on the board near the end of the match to complete the scoring for Atletico, which is seeking its first league title since 2014.

Cadiz, winless in its last three league matches and sitting 13th in the standings, got goals from Alvaro Negredo.

## Salah ends EPL goal drought to lift Reds



Mo Salah sends West Ham goalie the wrong way for his first goal, Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Liverpool, Feb 1: With a trademark left-footed curler into the top corner and the deftest of finishes from a clinical counterattack, Mohamed Salah ended one of his longest goal droughts in the Premier League for Liverpool in style.

The champions' chief scorer is back doing what he does best. And that should make them the biggest threat to relentless leader Manchester City in the title race.

Salah's sublime, second-half double set Liverpool on its way to a 3-1 win at West Ham Sunday, which backed up a victory by the same scoreline at Tottenham Thursday.

Jürgen Klopp's team hadn't won any of their previous five games and had dropped off the remorseless title pace being set by City, which has won eight straight league games.

Despite their lengthy injury list - and Sadio Mane joined it this week because of a minor muscle problem - Liverpool cannot be discounted, even if the third-place Reds are four points behind City having played one game more in their turbulent title

defense. They jumped above Leicester, who lost 1-3 at home to Leeds earlier Sunday.

Salah scored twice in an FA Cup loss to Manchester United last weekend, but he hadn't netted in six league matches, a barren run he had only experienced once - in February-March 2019 - since joining Liverpool in 2017.

His opener in the 57th minute was classic Salah, twisting and turning as he came in from the right before bending a shot into the far corner beyond goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski.

His second goal in the 68th was even better as he controlled a high, hanging pass from Xherdan Shaqiri with his weaker right foot and poked home a finish with his left.

Georginio Wijnaldum added a third off a well-worked team move in the 84th before Craig Dawson grabbed a consolation for an outclassed West Ham.

However well Liverpool play in the second half of the season, it will need City to drop their stunning levels of late. For Klopp, ideally that happens next weekend when City visits Anfield.



₹2596.15cr

Total sports budget for 2021-22, ₹795.99 crore more than the revised budget of 2020-21 (₹1800.15cr). The government revised the sports budget (2020-21) to ₹1800.15cr from the initial allocation of ₹2826.92cr because of the lack of activity caused by the pandemic.

## Sports budget takes cut of ₹230.78 crore

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic was felt on the national sports budget as the central government Monday allocated ₹2596.14 crore for the financial year 2021-22 - a reduction of ₹230.78 crore when compared to the amount earmarked initially for the previous year.

### ALLOCATION HIKED

₹660.41cr: Budget for the Sports Authority of India (SAI), ₹160.41cr more than 2020-21's ₹500cr. The SAI is the nodal organisation to manage national camps, provide infrastructure, equipment and other logistics to the country's sportspersons.

₹280cr: Budget for the National Sports Federations (NSFs), ₹35cr more than the previous fiscal year's allocation.

₹2.5cr: Contribution to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), ₹50 lakh more than previous year's allocation.

### ALLOCATION CUT

₹657.71cr: Budget for the government's flagship Khelo India programme, ₹232.71cr less than the previous fiscal year budget of ₹890.42cr.

₹53cr: Incentives for sportspersons, ₹17cr less than 2020-21's allocation of ₹70cr.

₹25cr: Budget for National Sports Development Fund, half of what they had got for 2020-21.

₹30cr: The allocation for the 2010 Commonwealth Games-SAI stadium renovation, ₹45cr less than what they were allocated last year (₹75cr).

### NO CHANGES

₹2cr: National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons, the same as the previous year.

₹50cr: The allocation for the enhancement of sports facilities in Jammu and Kashmir, the same as the previous year.

₹55cr: The allocation for the Laxmi Bai National Institute of Physical Education, same as the 2020-21 budget.

## Odisha FC lose to Jamshedpur

AGENCIES

Goa, Feb 1: Jamshedpur FC eked out a 1-0 win over Odisha FC at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim, Monday. Mohammad Mobashir's first half goal was enough for the Men of Steel to bag three points.

Both teams played end-to-end football with Mobashir scoring the lone goal in the 41st minute. Mobashir's early cross sneaks into the back of the net and the Red Miners take the lead. Mobashir got the ball just outside the right side of the box.

He crossed it early into the box. Nerijus Valskis, who was playing on the shoulder of the last defender, went to put the ball into the back of the net but he couldn't get a touch. However it confused Odisha custodian Arshdeep Singh and the ball sneaked into the back of the net.

Farukh Choudhary was in the thick of things for missing out on ample of opportunities - clear chances and from tight angle. Seiminlen Doungel was played into the right side of the box by Valskis. His low cross found



Nerijus Valskis's attempt from a Mobashir Rahman shot confused Odisha FC custodian as JFC takes the lead, Monday

Choudhary on the far post. Arshdeep, however, charged off his line to close down Choudhary and blocked his effort.

Choudhary again came into play in the 90th. He got the ball in the left channel outside the box. He then drifted in and shot the ball with his right foot. His effort came off the post to the keeper's left.

In the second half, the Bhubaneswar-based side did manage to trouble the defense of Jamshedpur but they couldn't beat

the stubborn defense of Stephen Eze and Peter Hartley.

The best chance came in the 71st. Diego Mauricio had the ball on the right edge of the box. He passed it for Paul Ramfangzauva to his left. Paul took a touch but then shot it wide of the far post.

TP Rehensh, the Jamshedpur FC goalkeeper, also had to make a few saves. In the end, the Men of Steel managed to hold on and have done well to win this game by a slender one-goal margin.

## 50 per cent spectators for second India-England Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 1: The BCCI and the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association have decided to allow 50 per cent spectators at the second India-England Test to be played at the MA Chidambaram Stadium here, a top TNCA official told this agency Monday.

The issue was discussed by the TNCA members after fresh COVID-19 guidelines on easing of public movement and entry of spectators into sporting venues were issued. The move was cleared in a meeting between TNCA and BCCI officials.

"We discussed the issue of allowing spectators for the second India vs England Test following fresh COVID-19 guidelines by the Central government permitting crowds at sporting venues and also the state government's SOPs given Sunday," the TNCA official said.

"It has been decided by the BCCI and TNCA to allow 50 per cent spectators for the second Test by following all safety protocols." The MA Chidambaram stadium has a capacity of 50,000. The first

### 1st outdoor session

CHENNAI: The Indian team Monday underwent their first outdoor session since arriving here, ahead of the opening Test against England beginning Friday. The Indian players, who completed their six-day quarantine period in the city Monday, began preparations for the four-match Test series with an outdoor session, the team's local media official said. The Virat Kohli-led home team will hit the ground running with net sessions from Tuesday (10am to 1pm). The full England team is expected to train for the first time since arriving in the city Tuesday from 2pm, according to an ECB spokesperson.

Test begins Friday while the second match starts February 13. Crowds have already been allowed for the third and fourth Test in Ahmedabad.

The official also said that media would be allowed to cover both the Tests from the press box at the stadium. However, media conferences would still be held virtually.