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RBI TO LAUNCH DIGITAL CURRENCY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will introduce its digital currency during the 2022-23 financial year, said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Union Budget Tuesday. The digital currency by RBI will be based on blockchain technology, the tech behind Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. "Digital currency will also lead to a more efficient and cheaper currency management system. It's therefore proposed to introduce a digital rupee using blockchain and other technologies, to be issued by the RBI, starting 2022-23," the finance minister said.



e-PASSPORTS WITH CHIP ON CARDS

The government will roll out e-Passports with embedded chips in FY22-23, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced while presenting the Union Budget 2022 Tuesday. "The issuance of e-Passports, using embedded chip and futuristic technology, will be rolled out in 2022-23 to enhance the convenience of citizens in their overseas travel," she stated. The e-Passports would contain microchips that would have important security data stored in them. India currently issues only printed passports to users, but e-passports are available in countries including the US, UK, and Germany.



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This budget is full of new possibilities for more infrastructure, more investment, more growth, and more jobs. It will also open up the field of green jobs

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Modi Government's Zero Sum Budget! Nothing for - Salaried class, Middle class, the poor and deprived, Youth, Farmers and MSMEs

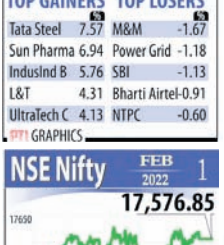
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

We are shocked that genuine demands of Odisha on rural housing are neglected, while the same has been considered for other states. I hope Centre would rectify this injustice

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CM, ODISHA

Budget has zero for common people, who are getting crushed by unemployment and inflation. Govt is lost in big words signifying nothing - A Pegasus spin budget (sic)

MAMATA BANERJEE | CM, WEST BENGAL



₹10.68L cr ESTIMATED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	₹39.45L cr ESTIMATED TOTAL EXPENDITURE	₹22.84L cr ESTIMATED TOTAL RECEIPTS OTHER THAN BORROWINGS	6.4% ESTIMATED FISCAL DEFICIT (2022-23)	9.2% ESTIMATED GROWTH (2021-22)
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Union Budget 2022, the fourth by FM Nirmala Sitharaman, has failed to excite the common man, not least the salaried class. The budget, full of jargons and highfalutin words, has very little to write home about



NOTHING STELLAR

Budget fails to dent price rise: CM

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: Stating that the middle-class and the poor are heavily impacted by price rise and inflation, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday said this budget has not addressed the price rise being faced by people.

"To compound this further, there is a sharp decline in LPG subsidy. This will affect household economics very badly and women will bear the brunt of LPG price rise," Patnaik said in his reaction to the Union Budget presented in Parliament Tuesday. Similarly, reduction in MGN-REGS in a pandemic situation is not going to help poor people, he said. "Already, there are serious issues of offtake by Food Corporation of India (FCI) leading to dislocation in paddy procurement. Further, reduction in food subsidy under National Food Security Act (NFSA) will put farmers in serious trouble. This needs to be reconsidered," the Chief Minister demanded. Raising objection on the proposal to collect over 20 per cent of the Union taxes through levy of cess and surcharge, he said, the increasing level of cess and surcharge is shrinking the mandated



transfers of share tax due to the states. And this is against the spirit of co-operative federalism, he said. The sectoral allocation is slashed in critical sectors like agriculture and farmers' welfare, higher education, rural development and women & child development, which could hamper inclusive growth, Naveen said. However, the proposed technology led development in health and education will help the country to a large extent in this pandemic situation, he said.

New Delhi, Feb 1: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday unveiled a bigger ₹39.45 lakh crore Budget, with higher spending on highways to affordable housing with a view to firing up the key engines of the economy to sustain a world-beating recovery from the pandemic. While she primed up spending on infrastructure to create jobs and boost economic activity, Sitharaman did not tinker with income tax slabs or tax rates. Her Budget for the fiscal year beginning April 2022 proposed

a massive 35 per cent jump in capital expenditure to ₹7.5 lakh crore, coupled with rationalisation of customs duty, an extension of time for setting up new manufacturing companies and plans for starting a digital currency and taxing crypto assets. At a post-Budget press conference, she parried questions on the middle class not being given relief in the form of tax cuts or raising of exemption, saying the Budget has not raised taxes last year or this year. "We did not try to raise money through higher taxes as we did not want to burden people with taxes during a pandemic," she said. Just like last year, the Budget gave a big boost for infrastructure spending - from 5G spectrum auction, expanding national highways by 25,000 kms, inter-linking of rivers and manufacturing of 400 new generation Vande Bharat trains. "The overall sharp rebound and recovery of the economy is reflective of our country's strong resilience," she said in her Budget speech in the Lok Sabha, vowing to lay the foundation for faster growth. The Budget prioritised economic expansion over fiscal consolidation. "This Budget continues to provide the impetus for growth," she asserted. She also announced



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, donning a Bomkai saree of Odisha, reading out her budget speech from a tablet in Parliament, Tuesday

plans to start a central bank-backed digital currency in the next fiscal to usher in cheaper, more efficient currency management. Also, a 30 per cent tax is proposed to be levied from April 1 on profits from digital asset transactions, including cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens (NFTs), as the country keeps pace with the global move toward virtual financial instruments. The crypto market in India grew 64 per cent in the year through June 2021, according to an October report from Chainalysis, an industry research firm. She also announced a new battery swapping policy for electric vehicles, allocated ₹60,000 crore for piped water to 3.8 crore homes, provided ₹19,500 crore worth of additional production-linked incentives for solar modules to boost local manufacturing and classified data storage as an infrastructure sector for providing cheaper and easier financing. To boost infrastructure, she said contracts to lay optical fibre in rural areas will be awarded, ₹48,000 crore has been set aside for affordable housing, national highways network will be expanded by 25,000 km, 4 multi-modal logistics parks will be set up, a string of ropeway projects are planned in hilly areas, a battery swapping policy will be announced, high priority for electric vehicles, allocated ₹60,000 crore for piped water to 3.8 crore homes, provided ₹19,500 crore

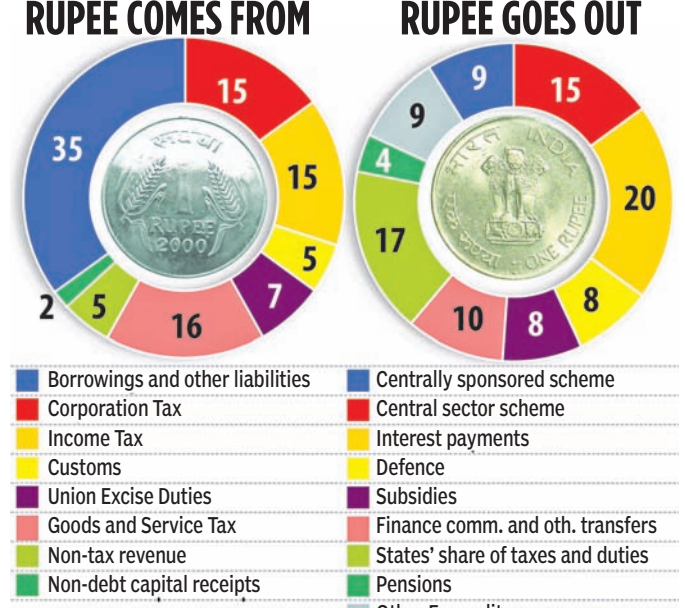
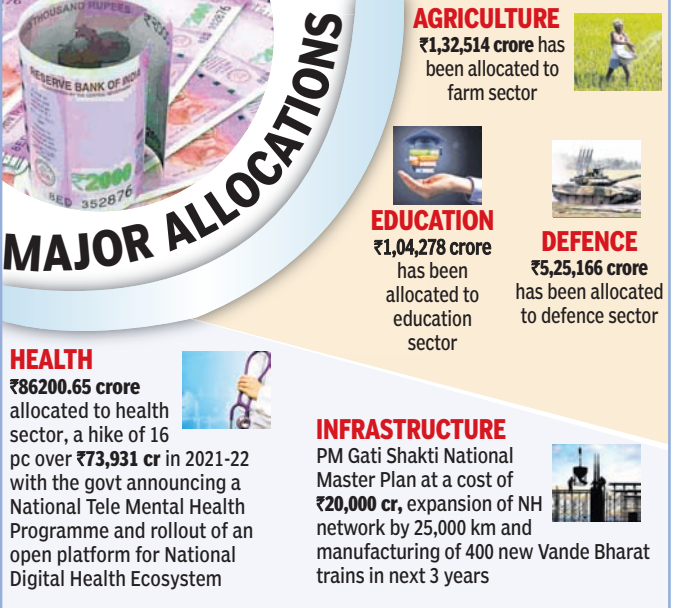
REACTIONS

Sagar @sagarcasm
Salaried Class to Nirmala, waiting for income tax slabs. #Budget2022

Zara short mein niptao na Seedhe point pe aao na

UPSC Meme & More @MemeUPSC
UPSC aspirants waiting for Union budget #UPSC #upscschemes #BudgetSession2022 #BudgetSession #Budget2022

BALA @erbmbha
Instagram influencer Lavanya explaining why #Budget2022 is useless



WHAT'S COSTLIER
WHAT'S CHEAPER

- Umbrella
- Imitation jewellery
- Loudspeakers
- Headphones & earphones
- Smart meters
- Solar cells
- Solar modules
- X-ray machines
- Electronic toys

- Clothes
- Gemstones and diamonds
- Camera lens for cellular mobile phone
- Mobile phone chargers
- Frozen mussels
- Frozen squids
- Asafoetida
- Cocoa beans
- Methyl alcohol
- Acetic acid

No sops for salaried

New Delhi, Feb 1: Belying expectations, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman did not tinker with the personal income tax rates in the Budget for 2022-23. The minister also did not raise standard deduction, which was widely anticipated in view of elevated inflation levels and impact of the pandemic on the middle class. The standard deduction currently stands at ₹50,000. There was no change in the personal income tax category in

the Budget unveiled Tuesday. The corporate tax rate too was kept at the same level. However, concessional rate of 15 per cent has been extended by one year for newly incorporated manufacturing units. However, the minister gave a one-time window to taxpayers to correct any discrepancy or omissions in their ITRs within two years of filing, subject to payment of taxes. In her 2022-23 Budget speech, the minister said this is an "affirmative step in the direction of voluntary tax compliance".

400 new Vande Bharat trains to roll out

New Delhi, Feb 1: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday announced that 400 new Vande Bharat trains will be introduced and the Railways will also develop new products for small farmers and MSMEs. Presenting the Union Budget for 2022-23, she said contracts for multi-modal parks at four locations will be awarded during the next fiscal. "400 new-generation Vande Bharat trains with better energy efficiency and passenger riding experience will be developed and



manufactured during the next three years," she said. These new trains are going to be made of lightweight aluminium, as opposed to steel, making each around 50 tonnes lighter in weight, consuming much less energy than their steel counterparts. She added that 100 PM Gati Shakti terminals would also be set up in

the next three years. "Railways will develop new products and efficient logistics services for small farmers and Small and Medium Enterprises, besides taking the lead in integration of Postal and Railways networks to provide seamless solutions for movement of parcels. "One Station-One Product concept will be popularized to help local businesses and supply chains," she said. As a part of Atmanirbhar Bharat, 2,000 km network will be brought under 'Kavach', the indigenous world-class technology for safety and capacity augmentation in 2022-23, she said.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Set today aside for your hobbies and pass-times. Ganesh says doing things that you like will put you in high spirits, and it will show up in the way you behave with people you love. You may not be able to fully involve yourself in work but your seniors will be understanding.

TAURUS
This day you are likely to face some health problems. Ganesh urges you not to expose your self to any kind of risk and take even the faintest symptom of illness seriously. Visit a doctor without delay. You could, otherwise, be bedridden for quite some time. Today, you may, unfortunately, be running after greater profits at the cost of family welfare.

GEMINI
Today, you would want to take your beloved into your embrace and confidence. You will whisper your feelings and secrets into his/her ears as you hold him/her. There are other things though, in your list of preoccupations, education being the topmost. You will be widely appreciated for your artistic bend.

CANCER
Today you may behave quite aggressively for most part of the day, predicts Ganesh. You may spend the afternoon with your business associates, and if you can use your aggression in a controlled manner, you can secure a very important deal today.

LEO
Today, you are defined by high hopes and expectations. It makes you incredibly calculative, and you weigh all pros and cons before taking any decision regarding work. The upshot of this is that your performance in financial transactions will be phenomenal.

VIRGO
Opening up to your beloved about your whims and fancies, as well as your goals, is the key today. Energy levels will hit the sky today. Pay due reverence to higher education and social customs. People will look up to your epicurean tastes, especially in the performing kinds.

LIBRA
Ganesh foresees that today you will chart out your future course of action, so that any steps you take from thereon leads only to success. Sudden and unexpected profits are also on the cards as on the professional front, increased reputation and rewards knock on your door.

SCORPIO
Today will consist of varying highs and lows at work and in confrontations, predicts Ganesh. At work, you may end up quarrelling with your peers. You will be reasonable in your views and still you will find yourself on the receiving side of the argument. Evening will compensate for the tough day as you kick back and relax in the company of loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS
Today is most likely to be a day of mixed fortunes for you, predicts Ganesh. At the workplace, you may have a hectic afternoon, burdened with more work than you can handle. In the evening, a loved one will understand your needs, and try to bring back cheer with a home-cooked meal for dinner.

CAPRICORN
Whether or not your business will prosper will depend on how decisive you are, says Ganesh. Besides, it's time to test the potential of subordinates you have appointed, and see if they can deliver their best. And if they meet your standards, you can expect quick returns by the end of the day.

AQUARIUS
You may not want to, but you have to pay the bills! Okay, so you can't even remember what you bought, and are cursing the loony credit cards. However, this may persuade you to be a bit more organised. There is no harm in taking ideas from others, suggests Ganesh.

PISCES
A turning point in romantic liaisons is likely today, says Ganesh. In love, as at the office, you will discover that there is no substitute for hard work. However, evening promises bountiful pleasure to make up for all the sweat and tears.



WHOOPI APOLOGISES FOR HER CLAIM ON HOLOCAUST

The View star Whoopi Goldberg has issued an apology after being met with fierce backlash for claiming the Holocaust 'isn't about race.' Appearing on the show *The View*, she said: "Let's be truthful about it because Holocaust isn't about race. It's about man's inhumanity to man..."

THE WALKING DEAD ACTOR J MOSELEY DIES AGED 31

The *Walking Dead* actor Moses J Moseley has died aged 31. The manner of his death is currently being investigated by the police. In a statement, Moseley's manager told *PEOPLE* magazine: "He was loved by everyone who met him. Such a bright light in everyone's eyes."



Viewers trust my choices: Taapsee

Mumbai: Actress Taapsee Pannu has preferred taking the road less travelled, choosing to attempt some rather out-of-the-box subjects in films like *Pink*, *Badla*, *Mulk*, *Baby*, *Manmarziyaan*, *Rashmi Rocket* and many others. The latest addition to this list is, *Loop Lapeta*, opposite Tahir Raj Bhasin.

Speaking about her experiments, Taapsee says, "The fact I choose different scripts has become my biggest strength. The audiences trust that I will take up something new and different each time. And I love to do that because, I as an audience, would want to see newer and unique concepts being made, and hence I choose such subjects. I'm glad I came across this film. Taking the road less traveled is going to be difficult because I don't have anyone else to follow. However, it's fun to create your own path. You're remembered for taking the risks and people do acknowledge that."

Throwing light on her film, Taapsee goes on to share, "For me, the film imparted an important message, that how one choice can affect so many lives around. You've to be careful of what you choose because it just doesn't limit the repercussions to your life, but it's going to travel and affect other people as well."

Loop Lapeta is the Hindi adaptation of Tom Tykwer's celebrated cult classic, *Run Lola Run*, and the directorial debut of Aakash Bhatia. AGENCIES



PRIYAMANI ON RUMOURS ABOUT HER PERSONAL LIFE

'I'm not answerable to the world'

Chennai: Priyamani is creating a rage with her powerful roles in web shows. After *The Family Man 2* and *His Story*, she is set to touch hearts with her portrayal of Anupama in the web series, *Bhamakalappam*. In an interview, Priyamani opened up about how she doesn't relate to her character Anupama from the show, who is shown as a homemaker, loves cooking and is a nosy housewife.

"I'm not at all like Anupama from the series. I don't know cooking. I like to stick to my own life, be me and within. I'm basically a home bird and probably go out when only needed," said Priyamani as she opened up about how much relates to Anupama in real life.

On the similar lines of the plot of her show, asked about how she deals with controversies, rumours about her personal life, Priyamani reacted saying, "I believe that if you react more to rumours then people will think there is something true to it and as I said, it is like adding fuel to the fire, which you don't want to. At the end of the day, you know what is true and you are answerable only to your family, husband and not to the whole world."

AGENCIES



'We need to look at single fatherhood differently now'

Mumbai: Actor-Producer Tushar Kapoor, who is gearing up to release his book titled *Bachelor Dad*, on his journey of single parenthood, says that it is high time for our society to look at single fatherhood differently, away from its earlier pre-conceived notion.

The *Golmaal* actor said: "One of the reasons I wrote this book is, while single motherhood is celebrated and rightfully so, thinking that a single man cannot be a good father and raise a child properly is wrong."

"Nurturing a child emotionally and providing every need so that they can grow up as a happy child is very universal. I am saying it from my experience and that is why I thought it will open the doors to many who are thinking of single fatherhood."

The offer to write the book came from the publication -- Penguin Random House India.

Tushar says penning down thoughts in the form of a book is quite a different experience as opposed to bringing life to a written material through acting that he has done in movies.

The actor became a single father of Lakshya Kapoor in 2016 through IVF. The book is likely to release February 12

IAWS

K-drama *Snowdrop* to be premiered Feb 9



THE SERIES EXPLORES THE FORBIDDEN LOVE BETWEEN A YOUNG COUPLE TRAPPED IN A TIME OF POLITICAL TURMOIL

Mumbai: The Korean drama series *Snowdrop* is all set for its OTT premiere February 9. The 16-part period drama series stars Jung Hae-In, the star of *Tune in for Love* and *While You Were Sleeping* BLACKPINK's Jisoo.

The series, which explores the forbidden love between a young couple trapped in a time of political turmoil, has been written by Yoo Hyunmi and directed by Jo Hyun-tak, the duo behind the 2018

thriller *Sky Castle*.

Commenting on the show's release, director Jo Hyun-tak said, "*Snowdrop* is a heart-warming fictional melodrama about a young couple in love, and as the story unfolds, find themselves enduring an unbearable pain that one rarely encounters in a lifetime. I hope global audiences find this heartfelt series also gripping and suspenseful as the two come to face their fate."

Snowdrop, Jisoo's debut-starring performance in a Korean drama, will showcase excitement, action, and romance as it follows Yeong-ro, who goes against her family and her country to help the man she loves, Jung Hae-In. Jung Hae-In too puts everything on the line to save his lady.

Snowdrop will be available to stream on Disney+ Hotstar from February 9 and will drop in a new episode each week.

IAWS

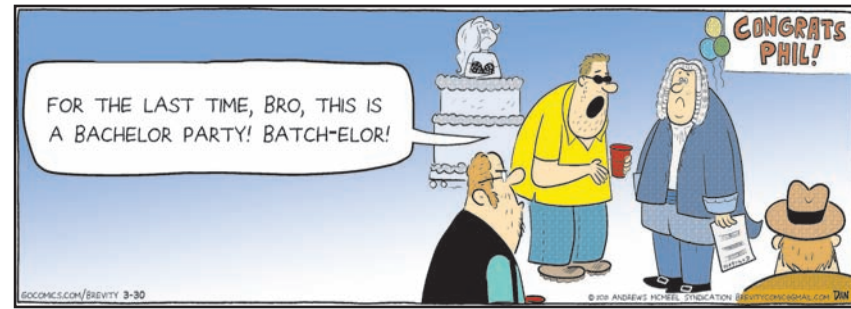
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

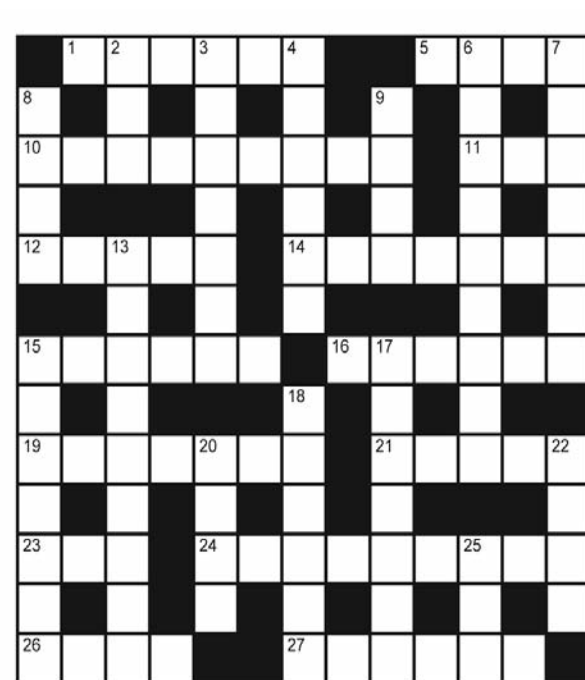


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

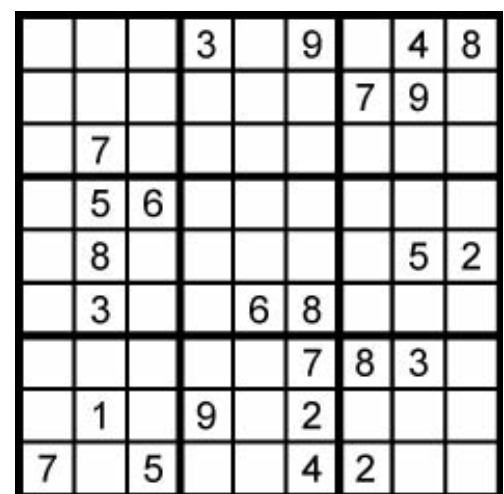


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- Across**
- 1 Where to find Pisces
 - 5 Safecracker
 - 10 Outlaw of the Old West
 - 11 Wax collector
 - 12 Relative of a giraffe
 - 14 Italian city
 - 15 Burrowing rodent
 - 16 Cognac
 - 19 They hang around in winter
 - 21 Vestibule
 - 23 Shade of green
 - 24 Made-up
 - 26 Young newts
 - 27 Warm ocean current (2,4)
- Down**
- 2 Saturn's wife
 - 3 Make a list
 - 4 Bad-tempered
 - 6 Hospital room
 - 7 Bremen site
 - 8 Taro plant root
 - 9 Betting group
 - 13 Job candidate
 - 15 Catch sight of
 - 17 Hooligan
 - 18 Princess loved by Cupid
 - 20 Elevator
 - 22 Lunar trench
 - 25 Convent dweller

SUDOKU

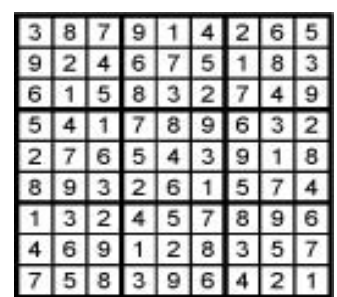
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD



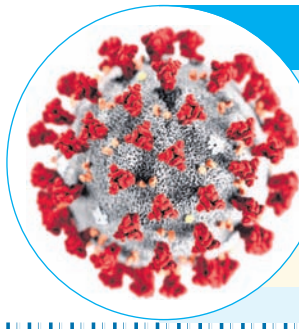
SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



SARASWATI PUJA AHEAD

A vendor displays clay idols of Goddess Saraswati at Unit-I market in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	379,664,126	299,522,936	5,694,074
India	4,14,69,499	3,92,30,198	4,96,242
Odisha	12,52,326	12,09,313	8,629

BUDGET EVOKES MIXED RESPONSE IN STATE

The Union Budget 2022 announced Tuesday was a hit and miss for the education sector. While it has finally recognised the issue of learning loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the need to develop digital infrastructure was not given adequate attention. The economically disadvantaged students, especially in rural areas, have lost essential years of education.

Supplementary education can help bridge the gap to a large extent. Expansion of the 'One Class, One TV Programme' from 12 to 200 TV channels to provide supplementary education in regional languages for class I-XI is a welcome move but it will not be enough. It is important that we adapt to our education system, pedagogies and assessments according to the changing times. Upskilling is the need of the hour. Thus, the launch of digital DESH e-portal for skilling, upskilling and reskilling will be the key to adapt to the shifting dynamics. Setting up of virtual labs and skilling e-labs will be valuable in developing critical thinking among students.

The Finance Minister used a Tablet to move the Budget proposal in the Parliament. This indicates that India is on the path of a digital revolution. As expected, the government has tried to reduce the digital learning gap between the urban and rural students by introducing 'One Class, One TV Programme', which will not only counter the learning losses but will bridge the learning gap. The e-Vidya initiative will be further expanded from 12 to 200 channels to facilitate supplementary learning. Emphasis has been given on e-services in rural areas. It has been proposed that



Mona Lisa Bal | Chairperson, KIIT International School

WHILE EDUCATIONISTS WELCOME THE PUSH FOR DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE MIDDLE CLASS AND FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS FIND NOTHING ENCOURAGING IN THE UNION BUDGET 2022-23, THE FOURTH OF FM NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

optical fibres will be laid in all villages by 2025. The overall financial allocation towards education sector is ₹1.04 lakh crore in 2022-23 fiscal against ₹93,224 crore (Budget estimate) in 2021-22 financial year.

Silpi Sahoo, Chairperson | SAI International Education Group

The Union Budget has given special focus on universalisation of quality education through bolstering the e-learning mode across the nation.

While a world-class Digital University will be established in the country, virtual labs and skilling e-labs would promote critical thinking skills and stimulate learning environments. The Budget also aims at circulating e-content through digital teachers and promoting online skill development ecosystem.

Jeetamitra Satapathy | Principal, Govt ITI, Bhubaneswar

Setting up of a Digital University to provide access to world-class education to our students is a welcome step. This year's Budget also focused on digital learning in the wake of prolonged closure of schools due to the pandemic. The Digital University will impart teaching in all regional languages. It will work with the central universities to provide the digital infrastructure and training. New skill development courses will also be introduced in the ITIs to boost the employability of our youths. The Finance Minister also put emphasis on revising the syllabi of agriculture



Jeetamitra Satapathy | Principal, Govt ITI, Bhubaneswar

universities to meet the requirements for natural, zero-budget and organic farming.

Basudev Bhatt | Educationist

The Budget has all components to put the economy back on track. The proposal for national tele mental health programme is encouraging. It has come at a very appropriate time. However, the allocation towards health sector is below expectations. While trust has been given on Ayushman Bharat, many other issues did not get much attention.

Amrit Patojoshi | Health Expert

The budgetary allocation to the Environment Ministry has been enhanced by 5.6 per cent with a commitment to reduce India's carbon footprints by proposing short-term and long-term strategies. Emphasis has been laid on sustainable development, clean energy, climate action, wildlife protection, pollution control, chemical-free natural farming, livelihood of coastal communities and carbon-neutral circular economy. Other significant initiatives include river linking projects to deal with water scarcity, new generation trains with better energy efficiency, resource mobilisation for green infrastructure, incentives for manufacturing of high efficiency modules and strengthening research institutes. However, the government needs to do more for this sector.

Jaya Krushna Panigrahi | Environmentalist



Jaya Krushna Panigrahi | Environmentalist

The Union Budget 2022-23 by the BJP government has ignored the genuine demands of the farmers. It seems like an act of revenge on the farmers' movement. There is no relief for farmers and agricultural labourers. Farmers' demand for assured procurement at remunerative prices and loan waiver has been ignored in the Budget proposal. The allocation towards agriculture has come down in this Budget. The allocation towards rural development has also fallen from 5.59 per cent to 5.23 per cent. There is also a cut in allocations for procurement of farm produce, MGNREGA, crop insurance, food and fertiliser subsidy. The allocation for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana was ₹16,000 crore in the last Budget but it has been reduced to ₹15,500 crore in this year's Budget. The allocation for PM-KISAN is 9 per cent less than what was originally announced at its inception in 2019.

Suresh Panigrahi | Convenor, Samyukta Kisan Morcha, Odisha

The Budget 2022 has given focus on digital currency and e-laboratory, which is a good thing but the Central government has ignored the issue of border dispute among states. Nothing has been done for the formation of a border security council. The Finance Minister has put emphasis on farming along river Ganga, but she forgets about farmers living near Mahanadi and Brahmani river.

Dilip Dash Sharma | Lawyer



Dilip Dash Sharma | Lawyer

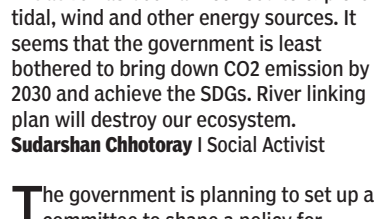
The Budget is not so encouraging despite the government's focus on upskilling and digital learning. However, it seems that the education sector is being privatised in a planned manner. Where is the focus to improve existing school infrastructure? We have been urging the government to allocate 6 per cent of the GDP to education, but the allocation never crossed even 4 per cent. We were expecting more from the government as the education of our children has been severely affected by the pandemic.

Naba Kishore Pujari | Educationist

This year's Budget will serve the interest of private companies as many projects would be implemented through PPP mode. Though the salaried class got some relief, the core issues like Inflation, unemployment and poverty remained unaddressed. The initiative to counter the climate change is insufficient. There is allocation for solar energy but no initiative has been announced to explore tidal, wind and other energy sources. It seems that the government is least bothered to bring down CO2 emission by 2030 and achieve the SDGs. River linking plan will destroy our ecosystem.

Sudarshan Chhotoray | Social Activist

The government is planning to set up a committee to shape a policy for urbanisation. There is proposal for high speed trains and green infrastructure. However, the Budget failed to address the issues of the poor and marginalised people. Educated youths need



Sudarshan Chhotoray | Social Activist

employment. Even, the green infrastructure plan doesn't speak anything about water bodies in cities and the issues related to urban forestry. It seems that we will create more concrete jungles.

Piyush Ranjan Rout | Urban Planner

Overall, the Budget is good and the government has planned things with a long term vision by opting for monetary discipline and efficient financial management. However, the only grey area is that there has been no special package for those who have been severely affected by the pandemic.

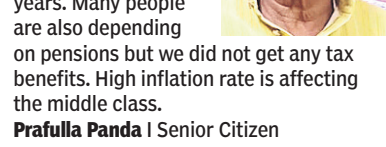
Ashok Kumar Sharda | Vice President, Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The government has proposed 30 per cent tax on cryptocurrencies. Virtual currencies will replace the cash transactions in future. The youths have already understood the potential of cryptocurrencies but high taxation can only stall the inevitable for some time.

Sarthak Arya | Banker

There is absolutely nothing for the middle class in the Budget. We have been facing salary cuts for last two years. Many people are also depending on pensions but we did not get any tax benefits. High inflation rate is affecting the middle class.

Prafulla Panda | Senior Citizen



Prafulla Panda | Senior Citizen

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Does Mahabharat say anything about how a king should be treated if he imposes too much tax?

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	SENSX	58862.57	↑	848.40
BOURSES	NIFTY	17576.80	↑	237.00
CURRENCY	DOLLAR	75.27	↑	₹0.11
	EURO	84.84	↑	₹0.0
BULLION	GOLD	₹48,003	↑	₹317
	SILVER	₹61,655	↑	₹679

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 30.6°C	31.0°C
	MIN 14.4°C	14.0°C
Humidity	49%	57%
Rainfall	NIL	NIL
Forecast	Dry weather	

Srimandir reopens with strict Covid protocol



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: The Lord Jagannath temple in Puri has been reopened for devotees with strict adherence to Covid-19 norms, officials said here Tuesday.

Due to the steep rise in Covid-19 cases in Odisha, the Srimandir remained closed for devotees from January 10 to January 31. However, the Chhatisha Nijog, at its meeting held January 28, decided to reopen the temple for public following protest by local traders, who depend on the temple for their livelihood.

The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has issued the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to ensure devotees have smooth darshan of the Deities. Devotees have been allowed to enter into the temple from 6am. The public darshan will continue till 9pm on all days when the temple will be open for public darshan. However, it will remain closed for public

all Sundays for sanitation activities as a measure to contain the spread of Covid-19 disease.

As per the SOP, all devotees will be required to bring their photo ID card along with a final Covid-19 vaccination certificate (of having taken two doses) or Covid-19 negative certificate (RT-PCR) of testing done within 96 hours prior to the visit to the temple.

It is mandatory for all devotees to wear masks at all times, inside and outside the temple. People flouting the norms will be fined, and can be refused entry, it said.

Devotees will have to sanitise their hands before entering the temple. There will be strict enforcement for ensuring Covid appropriate behaviour by all. Devotees will have to maintain physical distance at all times as per Covid-19 guidelines.

Meanwhile, the temple administration has set up a camp for administering precautionary dose to Sevayats in the age group of 18 to 60 years.

Budget '22 inclusive, aspirational: Pradhan

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 1: Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan Tuesday lauded the Union Budget 2022 for being inclusive and aspirational, and for laying foundation for the Amrit Kaal of the next 25 years.

The Union Minister hailed the record budgetary allocation of ₹1.04 lakh crore to the Ministry of Education in FY 2022-23.

"The budgetary allocation witnessed the jump of 11.86 per cent from FY 2021-22 which is 11,053.41 crore," he said.

Expressing his gratitude to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, he said that the Budget has made several direct interventions like announcing the setting



up of a Digital University, allowing foreign universities to run courses in GIFT City, launching of DESH-Stack eportal and aligning Skill Qualification Framework with industry requirements. These interventions will improve and strengthen the education and skilling ecosystems

in the country, he said.

Pradhan also highlighted the efforts of the Union Ministry to universalise quality education which will gain strength with setting up of a Digital University and expansion of One Class-One TV Channel programme of PM e-VIDYA on 12 to 200 TV channels. He said that the digital university will be built on a networked hub-spoke model, with the collaboration of best public universities and institutions in the country and it will provide access to world-class quality universal education at the doorsteps of the students from all over the country in different Indian languages. Expansion of one class-one TV channel programme will enable all states to provide quality supplementary education in regional languages for classes 1-12, he added.

90th Birth Anniversary
Dr Bansidhar Panda
26th Nov 1931 - 22nd May 2018

Mrs Ila Panda
26th Oct 1932 - 11th Jan 2005

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Cyber frauds siphon off ₹1.31cr in January

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: As per the data for the month of January, released by the Commissionerate Police Tuesday, cyber criminals succeeded in siphoning off twice the amount duped in December, 2021. The fraudsters duped people in the Capital city of more than ₹1.31 crores during January, 2022 as against ₹60.59 lakh in December last year. As many as 331 victims called the cyber crime help desk in January as against 213 in December. The cops blocked or got refunded ₹19,72,226 out of the amount stolen in December, 2021. However, the City police managed to recover only ₹9.47 lakh and block ₹3.17 lakh out of the total money duped in January. As many as 44 mobile numbers were blocked through cyber safe portal in January.

Spl enforcement drive to curb road fatalities begins

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: In a bid to curb deaths due to road mishaps, the state government has asked all Regional Transport Officers (RTOs) and police to launch a month-long special enforcement drive across the state from Tuesday. Transport and Commerce Secretary Bishnupada Sethi has recently written a letter to all district Collectors, SPs, DCPs and RTOs in this regard. This move was taken following an exponential increase in road accidents and fatalities during the last couple of months. It was the mandate of the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety to reduce road accident fatalities by 10 per cent every year. However, the fatalities increased by more than 12 per cent during



January to October, 2021 compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, Sethi said in his letter. "Road accidents and fatalities are normally very high during December to February due to heavy fog and picnic season. Hence, this

period is of utmost importance from road safety point of view," he pointed out. Therefore, the government has decided to conduct the special enforcement drive for one month from February 1 to 28, 2022 throughout the state by the RTOs and po-

lic rule violators. They have been asked to conduct enforcement activities during night too. The officials have been advised not to park their vehicles on highways during night hours, to avoid any accident. The Secretary has asked the RTOs to submit a weekly enforcement report to the Transport Commissioner. According to official data, a total of 8,922 road mishaps were reported during the January to October of 2021, in which 4,074 persons were killed and 8,087 were critically injured. In the same period of 2020, 7,619 road accident cases were reported in which 3,637 died and 6,977 were injured. Increase in fatalities was observed in all districts of Odisha except for Puri, Nayagarh, Koraput, Deogarh, Kendrapara and Subarnapur. The concerned officials have been instructed to form joint enforcement squads in their respective districts for roughing up traf-

BMC sand art on waste segregation at source

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: Aiming to sensitise denizens on source segregation of waste, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) in association with State Bank of India created a sand art at the SBI's main branch in Unit 1 Tuesday. The 12-feet high and 10-feet wide sand art was created as part of Swachh Survekshan-2022 observed in different cities of the country. This is the second sand art by renowned sculptor Subal Maharana who is also a staff of SBI. In order for smooth functioning of Micro Composting Centres (MCCs), waste segregation at source improves collection efficiency and leads to better processing of waste. Hence, the objective of creating this art piece was to ask people to segregate waste on their own at home before handing it over to the BMC Safaiwalas. This is second such initiative after the first sand art was created in the premises of Local Head Office (LHO) of State Bank of India, Monday, which was jointly inaugurated by BMC Deputy Commissioner (Sanitation) Suvendu Kumar Sahoo and Chef General Manager of the LHO Vidya Krishnan in presence of several officials and dignitaries of the Civic Body and the bank. "Through this one-of-its-kind initiative, we are aiming to create awareness and promote waste segregation at source for effective process and treat of the waste. It will help Bhubaneswar achieve the status of zero landfill cities soon," Sahoo said. Notably, the Civic Body has engaged 'safaigadis' in different wards to spread awareness on Swachh Survekshan 2022 and Swachhata Pakhawada along with usual collection of segregated waste, E-waste, and DHW. The Civic Body has institutionalised the waste segregation system by setting up a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) where non-compostable solid waste is stored and then processed at Micro Composting Centers (MCC) to generate organic waste and ensure zero discharge to the landfill site. Certified, good quality compost Mo Khata (My Compost) is now available at affordable prices.

CREDAI prez writes to govt seeking support in Budget

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: President of CREDAI Odisha Swadesh Kumar Routray wrote to the Union government his demands while seeking support in the Budget-2022. Swadesh wrote, "In India, the House Building Sector provides the largest number of employment opportunities to people, next to agriculture sector. But the pandemic has been tormenting this sector for the last two years. Hence we appeal for substantive support from the Government in the Budget-2022 for sustainability and growth of the sector." Listing his demands, the businessman wrote, "Our first and foremost appeal to the Government is to allow GST Inputs. The second most important hurdle faced by builders is stiff escalation of prices of raw materials resulting in unavoidable rise of cost of houses. This escalation needs to be streamlined in the budget as a matter of policy." "In my third appeal, I request the

government for interest subvention on affordable housing loans. With a target in hand to achieve houses for all in 2022, I would like to point out that home loan interest benefits given by banks are not being extended to the ones buying houses costing above ₹30 lakh. This should be sorted out in the Budget," he added. "The Finance Minister has presented the Budget in the Parliament. We are happy over the proposal to develop rural infrastructure and boost incomes, coupled with an extension of real estate incentives. We welcome a higher allocation to ongoing schemes targeted at the rural segment - be it the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana for the roads sector or the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana for housing sector. Under the NIP (National Infrastructure Plan), the government has ambitious plans to develop the infrastructure landscape of the country. It's good that the price of steel is reduced, any measure to improve and bring down the logistics cost is good," he added.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS



People watching the presentation of the Union Budget 2022 at an electronics showroom in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

CUO, IMMT Bhub knowledge exchange pact State logs 3,086 fresh Cov cases, 17 deaths

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: The Central University of Odisha, Koraput, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the CSIR-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT), Bhubaneswar Tuesday. The MoU will cover collative research, and the exchange of knowledge, technical know-how and mentoring between the two institutions in areas of mutual interest such as Biological and Allied Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Pharmaceutical Sciences and Technology, Intellectual Property and Innovation Management, and Technology Development and Entrepreneurship. CUO Vice-Chancellor in charge SK Palita and IMMT Bhubaneswar Director Suddhasatwa Basu signed the MoU.

The mode of cooperation will include collaborative efforts in developing joint proposals in basic and applied research for external sponsorship; awareness/sensitisation & mentoring; setting up innovation/incubation centers; giving impetus to societal relevance in developing technologies and disseminating information; joint MSc and PhD guidance; sharing research facilities; initiating profes-

sional development and capacity-building programmes; sharing IP and research publications emanating from joint programmes and conducting joint HR programmes for industry and academia. This MOU will remain in force for a period of five years. Both the institutes shall, within the means available to each institute, promote the institutional exchange of scientists, faculty and student researchers to participate in appropriate research and academic activities and jointly organise symposia, conferences, workshops, and meetings on current and futuristic research issues. This landmark MoU between these two institutions is expected to boost research and development and help tap both natural and biological resources for the betterment of Odisha in general and underdeveloped regions of the state.

State logs 3,086 fresh Cov cases, 17 deaths

The daily infection caseload in the coastal state has plunged by 47.6 per cent from 5,891 a week ago

Odisha now has 42,098 active cases, including 11,906 in Khurda, which is in the red zone along with Sundargarh and Cuttack

Balasure, Nuapada and Jajpur are among the seven districts that are in the yellow zone with each having over 1,000 cases at present

Gajapati (63), Ganjam (46), Jagatsinghpur (74), Jajpur (149), Jharsuguda (69), Kalahandi (77), Kandhamal (24), Kendrapara (49), Keonjhar (39), Koraput (44), Malkangiri (30), Mayurbhanj (109), Nabarangpur (84), Nayagarh (110), Nuapada (106), Puri (42), Rayagada (40), Sambalpur (75), Sonapur (35) and Sundargarh (216). Four fresh Covid fatalities were reported from Cuttack, two each from Puri and Khurda and one each from Balasure, Angul, Bhadrak, Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Malkangiri and Rayagada. Fifty-three other coronavirus-positive patients have died in the state due to comorbidities so far, it said. Odisha now has 42,098 active cases, including 11,906 in Khurda, which is in the red zone along with Sundargarh and Cuttack. A district with over 2,500 active cases falls in red category Balasure, Nuapada and Jajpur are among the seven districts in the yellow zone with each having over 1,000 cases. At least 8,181 patients recuperated from the highly infectious disease in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries from the contagion to 12,01,546, the Health department bulletin added.

Universities, colleges to run with full staff

BHUBANESWAR: The Higher Education department Tuesday directed all the colleges and universities in state to function with full strength of employees. Department Secretary Saswat Mishra, in a letter to Vice Chancellors of state public universities and principals of government and non government degree colleges, said that all universities and colleges coming under Higher Education department will function with full strength from February. He added that the teaching faculties will take online classes from their respective institutes. Notably, Odisha government had closed all colleges, universities, and technical educational institutions except for medical colleges/nursing colleges and institutions under the control of the Health and Family Welfare department from January 10, in view of the rising Covid cases.

Omicron BA.2 more infectious than 'original': Danish study

The study was conducted by researchers at Statens Serum Institut (SSI), Copenhagen University, Statistics Denmark and Technical University of Denmark

The BA.2 subvariant of the Omicron variant of the Coronavirus, which has quickly taken over in Denmark, is more transmissible and more able to infect even the vaccinated people than the common BA.1 subvariant, a Danish study has found. The study, which analysed coronavirus infections in more than 8,500 Danish households between December and January, found

that people infected with the BA.2 subvariant were roughly 33 per cent more likely to infect others, compared to those infected with BA.1. Worldwide, the original BA.1 subvariant accounts for more than 98 per cent of Omicron cases. But its close cousin BA.2 has quickly become the dominant strain in Denmark, dethroning BA.1 in the second week of January. We conclude that Omicron BA.2 is inherently substantially more transmissible than BA.1, and that it also possesses immune-evasive properties that further reduce the protective effect of vaccination against infection, the study's researchers said. The study, which has not yet been peer-reviewed, was conducted by researchers at Statens Serum



Institut (SSI), Copenhagen University, Statistics Denmark and Technical University of Denmark. "If you have been exposed to Omicron BA.2 in your household, you have 39 per cent probability of

being infected within seven days. If you instead had been exposed to BA.1, the probability is 29 per cent," lead study author Frederik Plesner told Reuters. That suggests BA.2 is around 33 per cent more infectious than BA.1, he added. BA.2 cases have also been registered in the United States, Britain, Sweden and Norway, but to a much lesser extent than in Denmark, where it accounts for roughly 82 per cent of cases. The study also showed that BA.2

was relatively better than BA.1 at infecting vaccinated and booster-vaccinated people, indicating greater immune evasive properties of the subvariant. But vaccines still played an important role, the study underlined, since both booster-vaccinated and fully vaccinated individuals were less likely to get infected and transmit either subvariants, compared to those not vaccinated. Preliminary analysis by SSI has shown that there is no difference in the risk of hospitalisation for BA.2 compared to BA.1. The study also confirms preliminary analysis from England, which showed that BA.2 appears to have a substantial growth advantage over the BA.1 type, according to Britain's UK Health Security Agency. REUTERS

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SHORT TAKES

Immolation bid near PS: Man dies

Berhampur: A 25-year old man died Tuesday after suffering burn injuries in a self-immolation attempt near a police station in Ganjam district. Santosh Samantara, a resident of Randha village, visited the Golanthara police station Monday and claimed his life was under threat. He was repeatedly asked to submit a written complaint, including details of those who had threatened him, police said. Samantara left but barged into the police station later after setting himself on fire. He was rushed to a local hospital and then shifted to a private healthcare facility in Bhubaneswar, where he died early Tuesday morning.

Elderly woman dies in bonfire

Behera (Kalahandi): An 84-year-old woman died after the bonfire she had set burnt her while she was asleep at Rainagada village under Dharmagarh block in Kalahandi district, late Monday night. The woman had lit up the bonfire under the bed to save her from the biting cold. However, the fire accidentally caught the blanket she wrapped herself, said sources. Police sent the body for post-mortem.

Engg student 'killed' in pre-poll violence

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Feb 1: A youth was allegedly killed by a sarpanch candidate and his associates in a pre-poll violence that erupted in Brahmapur village under Bhadrak block, Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Subhasis Giri, an engineering student of the village. Tension prevailed in the area as two platoons of police force were deployed in the village. Sabarang police registered a case after Archana Giri, sister of the deceased, lodged a complaint in this regard. Archana has named Priya Ranjan Senapati, Maheswar Palai, Maheswar Mahal, Prasant Arakh and Jyoti Ranjan Senapati as the accused. Police started an investigation and seized a tube well handle used in the crime. Villagers and family members staged a road blockade at Brahmapur Sqaure on Bhadrak-Ichhapur road by putting up the body. Hemant Padhi, BJP's district president, was leading the protest. The blockade disrupted traffic movement for over three hours. SDPO Prabhas Chandra Pal, Bhadrak rural IIC Mrutyunjaya Pradhan and his Sabarang counterpart Sobhan Kumar Swain rushed to the spot and tried to placate the villagers. The agitators relented after the SDPO assured

BHADRAK TENSE



them to nab all the accused within 24 hours. According to the complainant, sarpanch candidate Maheswar Palai, a construction material trader, was regularly dumping chips and spalls on the Brahmapur School playground and had also encroached upon the village club building. He was using the club space for trading. Subhasis and some other villagers had objected to such encroachment and illegal dumping of construction materials by Palai and his henchmen. This resulted in regular fights. When Palai noticed Subhasis Tuesday, he attacked him with the tube well handle with the help of his aides. Panicked, Subhasis jumped into a nearby pond when he saw Palai and his men chasing him. His family members alerted the fire services personnel who fished out the body after long hours of search operation.

Differently-abled BJP worker attacked

Bhadrak: A differently-abled BJP worker sustained severe injuries after he was allegedly attacked by a ruling party worker over campaigning for the safron party in panchayat polls at Kanjiapal under Khadiyapada panchayat of Dhamnagar block in Bhadrak district, Tuesday. The injured, identified as Sujay Das, was admitted to Dhamnagar hospital for treatment. He had visited Kanjiapal to campaign for the BJP supported candidates. When he was on his way back home, a ruling party worker Kailash Das questioned him over campaigning for BJP instead of BJD. This led to an altercation between the two. In a fit of rage, Kailash attacked him with a billhook on his head. However, the weapon hit his hand and rendered him critical. Dhamnagar police launched an investigation over a complaint filed by Sujay's family members.

Students start hunger stir

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 1: Peeved over poor mobile network which hindered online studies, several students of remote Talapada panchayat under Telkoi block Tuesday launched a hunger strike and took out a rally to the block office.

According to sources, students of remote hilly regions in the district have been facing loads of difficulties in online studies because of poor mobile network. "Our studies have been badly affected due to poor mobile network. The only place where mobile network is available is 6 km from our village. Hence, we have no way but to walk 6 km every day to attend online classes," rued the students. They also said mobile signals are also not available in other villages like Guruma, Similipal and Rangamatia. "Although a Jio tower was in-

POOR NETWORK



stalled at Talapada a year ago, it is yet to be made operational. We have long been demanding steps to ensure mobile networks in our hilly region, but precious little has been done. So, we under the banner of Talapada Students' Union started a hunger strike today to draw attention of the administration," said the agitating students. When contacted, Telkoi IIC Saiprabha Rout said the Jio tower is yet to be completed. The administration has intimated the company to make the tower functional as soon as possible, the IIC said.

PHONE ADDICTION

Girl kills self as mom scolds her

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Feb 1: A girl committed suicide by consuming poison after being rebuked by her mother for spending too much time on mobile phone, police said Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Ranjita Goud, 19, daughter of Suli and late Abhimanyu Goud of Badakholi village under Aska police limits. Police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem.



Police said Suli was the sole bread earner of the family after the death of her husband. However, her daughter Ranjita used to spend several hours on mobile phone without doing any work to supplement the family income or in helping her mother in household chores. Suli used to caution Ranjita and ask her to mend her habits but to no avail. A frustrated Ranjita decided to end her life and consumed position, Monday evening. Her mother rescued her in a critical condition and admit her to MKCG Medical College and Hospital where she succumbed, late Monday night.

2 candidates get show cause

Aradi: Chandbali block development officer (BDO) has served show cause notices on a zilla parishad candidate and a sarpanch candidate for allegedly distributing cash to an elderly person during campaign at Paradia village in Sundarpur panchayat in Bhadrak district. The two candidates were identified as Prince Rakesh Nayak of the BJD (zilla parishad-zone1) and BJD-backed sarpanch candidate Abhimanyu Jena. A video of Nayak and Jena distributing cash to two voters ahead of the upcoming panchayat elections went viral on social media a couple of days ago. BJP activists had demanded action against the two for such unfair act of influencing voters during the electioneering. They had taken up the issue with the State Election Commission and the BDO seeking legal action against the duo. However, the ZP candidate had refuted the charge, saying, he was not involved in any kind of unfair act like distributing cash to the local voters. He said this is a design by the opposition to tarnish his image.

CASH-FOR-VOTE VIDEO

Once a Red bastion, Swabhiman Anchal braces for rural polls

OVER 30,000 VOTERS OF 151 VILLAGES WILL EXERCISE THEIR FRANCHISE IN THE ELECTIONS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Feb 1: People in 'Swabhiman Anchal', once the cut-off area of Malkangiri district, have the reason to cheer as they will be participating in panchayat polls after more than a decade.

A few years ago, the area used to be a hotbed of Maoists. However, changes happened after the construction of Gurupriya bridge on Chittrakonda reservoir: Gradually, the Maoist citadel started crumbling and people started reaping the benefits of developmental initiatives. The hard work which was put in to free the area from the clutches of the ultras has paved the way for panchayat polls in Swabhiman Anchal. The three-tier polls would be held under close watch of security forces.

Development, connectivity, presence of security forces and faith of the locals in democracy and governance has changed the face of the erstwhile cut-off region of Malkangiri district.

The region comprises 151 villages of nine panchayats. The GPs are Jantri, Panasput, Gajalmamudi, Jodaamba, Paparmetla, Badapada, Badapadar,

not see proper elections for over 10 years as fear of Maoists loomed large. The ultras used to award death sentence to anyone who dared to defy their orders against polls. Many of the villagers had to quit their homeland and shift to other parts of the district, but there are others who take the pride of calling themselves as natives of Swabhiman Anchal.

Chittrakonda region will go to the rural polls February 24 and people here are happy to be part of the festival of democracy. Although the contesting candidates are yet to launch campaigns in bigger way, they are leaving no stone unturned to reach out to the voters and educate them about the benefits of participating in the elections.

Sources said more than 300 nominations for sarpanch, ward member and panchayat samiti member posts have been filed in Chittrakonda block.

The villagers are of the opinion that earlier it was like a headless family and there was no one to listen to and address their plight. However, things would change now, they added.

Narsingh Sindheri and Daitari Golari, both sarpanch candidates of Paparmetla panchayat said now they would participate in the election and ensure development in their region.

A DECADE'S WAIT

THE AREA DID NOT SEE PROPER ELECTIONS FOR OVER 10 YEARS AS FEAR OF MAOISTS LOOMED LARGE

THE WALLS AND TREES ONCE USED BY MAOISTS TO STICK THEIR POSTERS ARE NOW DECKED UP WITH BANNERS AND POSTERS OF VARIOUS CANDIDATES IN THE FRAY FOR POLLS

Dhuliput and Ralegeda. Over, 30,000 voters of 151 villages will exercise their franchise in this election.

The area, which was once trekked by the Red rebels, is now abuzz with sloganeering and campaigning. The walls and trees once used by Maoists to stick their posters are now decked up with banners and posters of various candidates in the fray for the polls. The locals are now holding village committee meetings to discuss development issues in their areas instead of participating in Praja courts. The area did

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No.: 56-KUR-TRD-OT-2021-22
Name of the Work: OPERATION OF ISOLATORS ON BOT DOWN LINE, ENGINE ESCAPE LINE, PLOT-14 AND PLOT-15 INSIDE PARADEEP PORT YARD OF MS. PPT (PARADEEP PORT TRUST) AT PARADEEP (PRDP) IN DEPOSIT TERMS FOR THREE YEARS.
Advertised Value: ₹ 57,58,605/-, EMD: ₹ 1,15,200/-, Tender document cost: ₹ 5,900/-, Period of Completion: 1095 Days.
Bidding start date: 03.02.2022, Tender closing date & time: at 1300 hrs. of 17.02.2022.
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.
Complete details & tender documents will be available at website www.reps.gov.in
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), Khurda Road
PR-759/M/21-22

National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Announcement of Award for acquisition of land for construction of National Highway for Land owners / persons interested therein and payment of Compensation Amount

Kind attention of all landowners / interested persons is invited to the Notification dated 27/12/2019 issued under Section 3A of the NH Act, 1956 for acquisition of land for the building / construction of a National Highway and the Notification dated 10/09/2020 issued under Section 3D of the NH Act, 1956 and published in the following newspapers:

Sr. No.	Notification	Names of Newspapers in which published	Date of Newspaper
1	Section 3A	The Times of India and Dharitri	23/01/2020
2	Section 3D	The Times of India and Dharitri	24/02/2021

It is informed that the undersigned has announced the Award in respect of the said land under Section 3G of the NH Act, 1956 vide order dated 28/05/2021. The land acquiring agency (NHAI) has placed the requisite amount of compensation at the disposal of the undersigned. Notices are being issued to the concerned landowners/ interested persons as required under Section 3E of the NH Act, 1956.

Accordingly, all the concerned landowners/ interested persons are hereby informed/ notified through this additional Public Notice that the Compensation amount is hereby offered to all the land owners. Further, it may be noted that:

- The compensation amount in respect of all such landowners, who have already submitted their Bank account details, is being credited to their respective Bank Accounts through RTGS;
- The landowners, who have not submitted their Bank Accounts details, may do so immediately in the office of the undersigned and the amount shall be credited to their accounts within one week of the receipt of such Bank Account details;
- All other claimants entitled to receive the compensation amount may collect their amount of compensation from the office of the undersigned on any working day between 10:00 am to 5:30 pm within a period of 60 days.

It may further be noted that since the amount of Compensation has been determined and tendered to the concerned landowners/ persons interested therein through this additional public notice, any failure to collect the compensation amount would be to their account and the amount shall be deemed to have been paid on expiry of this period of sixty days from the date of publication of this notice.

The landowners / persons interested therein are further called upon to surrender or deliver the possession of the subject land to the undersigned, failing which the possession of subject land will be taken with police assistance on expiry of the period of 60 days.

Sd/-
Competent Authority for Land Acquisition, NH130(CD) & Tahasildar-Cum-CALA, BORGUMMA
Date: 29.01.2022

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

SUNDARAM HOME

Regd Office: No. 21, Patulos Road, Chennai - 600002.
Corporate Office: Sundaram Towers, No. 46, Whites Road, Chennai-600014
Branch Office: A/108, 2nd Floor, C/o Sundaram Finance Banadev Bhawan, Saheed Nagar, Khurda Dist, Bhubaneswar - 751 007.

POSSESSION NOTICE

Rule 8(2) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Whereas the authorized officer of **SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LTD** erstwhile **SUNDARAM BNP PARIBAS HOME FINANCE LTD.**, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice U/s. 13(2) dated 01-02-2017** calling upon the **Borrower Mr. Nigamananda Sahoo, Co-Borrower, Mrs. Sarmila Sahoo** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 14,55,567/- (Rupees Fourteen Lakhs Fifty Five Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Seven Only)** being the amount due and payable under the **Loan Account number 66200335** and with Future Interest + Statutory Expenditure + Legal expenses + Incidental charges within 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice.

The Borrower, Co-Borrower having failed to repay the amount in full, notice is hereby given to the Borrower, Co-Borrower and the public in general that the Authorised Officer has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules on this **29-01-2022**.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The Borrower, Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LTD.**, for an amount **Rs. 12,94,810/- (Rupees Twelve Lakhs Ninety Four Thousand Eight Hundred Ten Only)** as of **29-01-2022** and interest thereon @ 24% p. a. + Statutory Expenditure + Legal expenses + Incidental charges.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the property admeasuring Ac 0.200 dec, comprised in Khata No.885/16. Situated at Plot No.1208, Mouza - Bhagabatpur, P.S.Kendrapara, No.296 and Tahasil - Kendrapara, District Kendrapara Odisha, under the jurisdiction of Sub-Registrar: Kendrapara. **Bounded on the:** North: Dhaneswar Samal, South: Road & Chitaranjan Barik, East : Plot No-482 (Part), West: Plot No-482 (Part).

for **SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LTD.,**
AUTHORISED OFFICER

Date: 29-01-2022

Over 600 booked in Digapahandi

Digapahandi: Police have registered cases against more than 600 people under Section 107 of CrPc in Digapahandi block of Ganjam district ahead of the three-tier panchayat elections. Political and domestic violence cases have been registered against these people in various police stations, said Digapahandi inspector-in-charge (IIC) Basant Kumar Sethi. The administration has stepped up its preparedness to ensure free, fair and peaceful panchayat elections. Keeping this in view, the court of executive magistrate had issued notices to the accused persons. Sources said the crackdown will continue in coming days.

ଓଡିଶା ବନ ଉନ୍ନୟନ ନିଗମ ଲିମିଟେଡ
ODISHA FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(Formerly Orissa Forest Development Corporation Limited)
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking), CIN-U02005OR1962SGC000446
Regd. Off.: Plot No. A/84 Kharavel Nagar, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Pin-751001, Telephone: 0674-2534086, 2534269, Fax: 0674-2535934, (Website: www.odishafdc.com, E-mail ID: general@odishafdc.com)
Notification No. 2593/T/SM/60/2021-22 Dated: Bhubaneswar, the 1st February, 2022

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF 4 NOS OF AUTOMATED SAWMILL UNITS INCLUDING DESIGN OF LAY OUT & WORKSHED, OPERATIONAL TRAINING AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE FOR A PERIOD OF 3 YEARS

Request for proposal is invited from eligible Automated Sawmill Equipment Manufacturers/ Integrators having proven track record of manufacturing of Automated Saw Mills for supply, installation, testing & Commissioning of 4 Nos of Automated Sawmill Units inside the sawmill premises of OFDC Ltd. situated at Cuttack, Berhampur, Sambalpur and Rourkela. The proposal is to be submitted to the Managing Director, Odisha Forest Development Corporation Limited (OFDC) in two parts viz. (a) Technical and (b) Financial, strictly as per terms and conditions and instructions to bidders, in sealed covers. Interested vendors are required to obtain details of terms and conditions of the RFP from Corporate Office, OFDC Ltd, A/84 Kharavel Nagar, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar, Odisha on payment of Rs. 10,000/- + GST @ 18% towards tender document fees. The RFP document can also be downloaded from OFDC's website **www.odishafdc.com** and can be submitted by paying equal amount of document fees in shape of a Bank Draft drawn from any nationalized bank in favour of Managing Director, Odisha Forest Development Corporation Ltd. Payable at Bhubaneswar. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of Rs.5,00,000/- in shape of a separate bank draft should accompany the bids. Cash or cheque will not be accepted. Last date of receiving of tender is **01.02.2022 up to 4.00 p.m.**, which is now extended up to **28.02.2022 at 4.00 p.m.** Tenders will be opened on **28.02.2022 at 5.00 p.m** in presence of authorized representatives of the vendor. OFDC reserve its right to accept or reject all or any of the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.

For Odisha Forest Development Corporation Limited.
Sd/- Managing Director

REGIONAL OFFICE: BHUBANESWAR
1st Floor, Bivab Gulmohar, Behera Sahi, Nayapalli,
Bhubaneswar-751012, Odisha, Ph.: 0674-2421210,
Fax: 0674-2421614, Email Id:- rm.orissa@bankofbaroda.co.in

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES "APPENDIX - IV - A [See Proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6)]"
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6(2) & 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s), Mortgagor(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable properties Mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, POSSESSION of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" AND "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned accounts. The details of Borrower(s)/ Mortgagor(s)/ Guarantor(s)/Secured Asset(s)/Dues/Reserve Price/ e-Auction Date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below-

Sl. No.	Name & Address of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) and Mortgagor (s)	Description of Secured Assets with Boundaries	Demand/Possession Notice Date/ Outstanding (Secured Debt.)	Date & Time of E-auction	Reserve Price EMD of the Property Bid Increment	Status of Possession (Symbolic / Physical)	Property Inspection Date & Time
1.	SWARGADWARA BRANCH, PURI/ Borrower: M/s. Mudra Enterprises, Prop.: Sri Batakrushna Mudra, S/o.: Sri Chintamani Mudra, At: Gadanti Chhak, Sri Jagannath Temple (West Gate), Dist.: Puri, Odisha - 752001, Sri Batakrushna Mudra, S/o.: Chintamani Mudra, Prop. of M/s Mudra Enterprises, At: Bhatta Jaga Lane, Markandeswar Sahi, Dist.: Puri, Odisha 752001/ Guarantor/Mortgagor: Sri Chintamani Mudra, S/o: Late Birabara Mudra, At: Gadanti Chhak, Sri Jagannath Temple (West Gate), Dist.: Puri, Odisha - 752001	Equitable Mortgage of Land and Building situated at Dist.: Puri, PS.: Puri Town No. 3, Mouza: Mangalaghat, corresponds to Sabik M o u z a : Markandeswar Sahi, having Sabik Khata No.: 50/1, covered under 2 Plots bearing Plot No.: 548, Area: Ac.0.075 Dec. out of Ac.0.090 Dec. and Plot No.: 549/1487, Area: Ac.0.040 Dec., Total Area: Ac.0.115 Dec. , in the name of Sri Chintamani Mudra, S/o.: Late Birabara Mudra, Bounded by East: Panda Babu, West: Road, South: Road, North: Rabi Panda	16.11.2019 / 24.08.2021 / ₹98,96,367/- + further interest + Charges incurred	04.03.2022 10.00 AM to 05.00 PM	₹2,18,51,000/- to ₹21,85,100/- ₹10,000/-	Symbolic	28.02.2022 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM
2.	CUTTACK ROAD BRANCH/ Borrower: Mr. Anup Kumar Patra, S/o.: Mr. Dharendra Nath Patra, At: Chilika Road, Balugaon, Odisha - 752030/ Guarantor: Mr. Dharendra Nath Patra, At: Chilika Road, Balugaon, Odisha-752030	Equitable Mortgage of all part and parcel of Flat No. 103/A in 3rd Floor, S a n d h y a r a n i Complex, Khata No.: 70, Plot No: 800, Mouza: Balukhanda, Puri, Odisha-752001, belonging to Mr. Anup Kumar Patra. The Area Measuring of 580 sqft. super built area with proportionate undivided share in land Ac. 0.006 dec out of Ac. 0.177 decs of the said apartment. Bounded by East: Open Space, West: Corridor & Flat No. 103/B, North: Open Space, South: Open Space	15.02.2020 / 25.10.2021 / ₹18,23,989/- + further interest + Charges incurred	04.03.2022 10.00 AM to 05.00 PM	₹20,00,000/- to ₹2,00,000/- ₹10,000/-	Symbolic	28.02.2022 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM

TERMS & CONDITIONS : The interested bidders shall login **www.mstcecommerce.com** to deposit EMD amount online latest on **03.03.2022 by 5.00 PM.** FOR DETAILED TERMS AND CONDITIONS PLEASE VISIT WEBSITE **https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm, www.mstcecommerce.com** and **https://ibapi.in** Also prospective bidders may contact the Authorised Officer: **0674-2421210, 7077727060, 7077721555, 7077727032**

STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE TO THE BORROWER/ GUARANTOR/ MORTGAGOR FOR SUBSEQUENT SALE UNDER RULE 8(5), 8(6) AND 9(1) AS PER AMENDED SARFAESI ACT 2002

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 01.02.2022
Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

FOCUS UNION BUDGET

BASIC ISSUES UNSOLVED



The basic problem of the Budget is that the same supply side policy that has led to the slowdown of the economy over the last seven years of the present government continues to be followed

The Finance Minister has given a push to 'Make in India'. The domestic procurement of defence sector has been increased from 58 per cent to 68 per cent and concessions have been given for items that are necessary for jump-starting production in India. For example, imports of lenses for mobile phones have been made easier. Import duty has been increased on capital goods such as machinery for which we have adequate capacity to manufacture in India. The same holds for chemicals. Import duty has been increased on certain chemicals that we can produce ourselves. Incentives have also been given to the manufacturers of solar panels. These policies are entirely in the right direction and the Finance Minister needs to be congratulated for taking these steps for promoting 'Make in India'.

large number of youths who are entering the job market. No employment means no demand. The supply side incentives will be of no avail. The economy will continue in the slow lane as it has been continuing for the last seven years.

The Finance Minister has rightly claimed that the government has implemented schemes for providing free gas cylinders and accessible electricity and such. However, such reliefs do not translate into market demand. The challenge was to reduce government consumption and shift it to people's consumption. The government is paying high salaries to its employees. These employees already have the money to buy their requirements from the market. They invest their additional salaries in share markets or park them in tax havens, whereas if the same money were to be given to poor people as cash transfers, then they would buy more products from the market and jumpstart the economy. The Finance Minister has totally ignored the fact that there is no demand in the market and hence the economy is likely to continue to move in the slow lane.

The Finance Minister has said the capital expenditures will be increased from ₹5.5 lakh crore to ₹7.5 lakh crore indicating an increase of ₹2 lakh crore. The total expenditures will increase from ₹34 lakh crore to ₹39 lakh crore in the next year indicating an increase of ₹5 lakh crore. The increase in cap-

ital expenditure is substantial. However, it is still like a drop in the ocean. The fact is that our economy is being swamped by imports both of services and goods. People still use apps like Zoom and CamScanner that had been prohibited because we are not able to produce equivalent domestic apps. The need was to increase the capital expenditure from ₹5.5 lakh crore to say ₹10.5 lakh crore and actually reduce the government consumption. That would have helped reduce the cost of production in the country. For example, free Wi-Fi could have been provided for all the small towns so that the youth can access the internet easily and export their services like online tuition, music or whatever. Such massive increase in investment in pro-poor infrastructure alone would help the people to compete in the global market of services. There has been nothing like this in the Budget.

The Finance Minister expressed happiness at the buoyant GST collections at ₹1.4 lakh crore in a month which is indeed good. However, the question is that if collections have increased from ₹1 lakh crore to ₹1.4 lakh crore within a period of about one year, showing an increase of 40 per cent, then why the GDP has grown only at 9 per cent? The reason is that most increase in GST collection is coming from the transfer of manufacturing from the informal sector to formal sector. The poor man who was selling peanuts on the roadside has lost his business

and the same has been transferred to big manufacturers who are selling packed peanuts. The small street vendor was not paying GST. The big manufacturer is paying GST. Therefore, a transfer of production from the small to the big business involves increasing GST collection without an increase in production. This is the reason why the GST collection is buoyant. The Finance Minister has not taken any steps to protect the livelihoods of the poor.

The last point is that the states will lose the compensation for the shortfall in GST beginning with July 2022. At this point, many states will see a decline in their revenue by 20 to 40 per cent. In order to help them overcome this situation, the Finance Minister has provided that they can take large amount of loans. But loans will not solve the problem at all. The states need to generate their incomes. This is like the Finance Minister providing loan to a person who has lost his job. How long will he survive on loans unless he can get a job? The Finance Minister should have enabled the states to increase their income by allowing them to increase the rates of GST within their ambit. Without such a step, the states will not be able to earn revenue today or five years later and the situation will only get worse.

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



Bharat Jhunjunwala

THE FINANCE MINISTER HAS FAILED TO DEAL WITH THE BASIC PROBLEM OF LACK OF DEMAND IN THE MARKET

The basic problem of the Budget is that the same supply side policy that has led to the slowdown of the economy over the last seven years of the present government continues to be followed. The Finance Minister has provided for increased outlays on 'Production Linked Incentive Scheme' and provided incentives to promote private investment. However, this will not be of any avail. The fundamental calculation of a businessman is whether he can sell the goods in the market. If there is no demand in the market, then a businessman will not invest irrespective of whether he is entitled to income tax exemptions or Production Linked Incentives. Of what use are income tax incentives when there is no income? The Budget is like providing incentives to potato growers to reach their potatoes to the market at a lower cost when there are no buyers for potatoes in the market. If the consumers do not have money in their pockets, it hardly matters to them whether the potatoes are available at ₹20 a kilo or ₹15 a kilo. The Finance Minister has failed to deal with the basic problem of lack of demand in the market. Demonetisation and GST have led to the collapse of small and medium industries which has badly affected employment in these sectors. The Finance Minister has not made any discussion about how she proposes to provide employment to the

IN JEST THIS

How to become a chapati-making pro



Melvin Durai

SOON AFTER MARRIAGE, I REALISED THAT IF I WANTED TO SEE CHAPATIS AT THE DINING TABLE MORE THAN ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR, I NEEDED TO MAKE THEM MYSELF

In many families, husbands and wives split up the household duties. Most wives handle all the cooking and cleaning, while the husbands handle almost all tasks related to beer and sports. This includes purchasing, sharing and consuming.

My family is quite different, partly because I was a stay-at-home dad for many years and partly because my wife is the primary breadwinner. Well, to be more precise, she is the primary rice-winner. She's also the primary chapati-winner.

As far as staple foods are concerned, my wife generally prefers rice over anything else. She loves almost anything made of rice, including biryani, idli, dosa, and bisi bele bhat. Please don't invite my wife to any wedding where rice will be thrown at the bride and groom for good luck. She'll be picking it up off the floor.

I enjoy eating rice too, especially biryani, but given a choice between plain rice or chapatis for dinner, I'm going for the chapatis

(or rotis). Though I grew up in a household where rice dominated the menu, I prefer foods made from wheat. But soon after marriage, I realised that if I wanted to see chapatis at the dining table more than once or twice a year, I needed to make them myself.

My first attempt at making chapatis didn't go well. I couldn't roll them properly and they were a little too crispy. But I didn't give up: I kept trying, until I received a great compliment from my wife. "Wow," she said one evening. "They're almost edible."

I've been practicing my chapati-making techniques for the last 20 years or so, and I'm proud to say that I've graduated from "almost edible" to "almost incredible."

My chapatis aren't quite as good as the ones you'd get at a high-quality Indian restaurant, but that's partly because I'm not a professional chef and partly because I do not add any secret ingredients. My ingredients are not secret at all. All I put in my chapatis are flour,

salt, water and a little oil. The oil isn't necessary, of course, but it adds to the taste and is healthier than butter.

Making chapatis isn't easy, so I'd like to share a few important tips for anyone who'd like to give it a try:

1. The dough needs to be somewhat moist. This makes it much easier to roll. For two cups of flour, you need at least one cup of water. When I first started making chapatis, I didn't add enough water. Not only was the dough a pain to roll, it resisted any type of symmetry. My kids had fun with the chapatis though.

Divya: "What country does this one look like?"

Lekha: "India."

Divya: "No, it's more like Australia."

Lekha: "Daddy, were you trying for Australia or India?"

Me: "Zimbabwe."

2. If the dough seems too sticky, just spread some flour on your rolling surface or dab each ball of dough with a little flour. If you

don't do this, you might find that you've created the perfect chapati, but it's stuck to your rolling board. Please do not invert your board over the stove. Just scrape it all off and try again with some flour. Be patient and don't get frustrated. Remember: there is no such thing as an overnight chapati-making pro.

3. Do not put your chapati on the cooking pan or tava until the pan is extremely hot. How hot should it be? Well, it should be so hot that if you put your finger just above it, your wife will scream. "What are you doing, you idiot? You'll burn yourself." If you don't have a wife, the next best thing is to put a few drops of water on the pan. They should sizzle and evaporate almost immediately. Having the right temperature ensures that there'll be some puffing up.

Not only will your chapatis puff up, you might also puff up with pride. Please resist the temptation to light up a cigar and do more puffing.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

All existence is a manifestation of God.

SRI AUROBINDO



Directionless Budget

The focus of the Union Budget 2022-23 presented to Parliament February 1, 2022 is to facilitate "the process of strong growth." Accordingly, the Budget "seeks to lay the foundation and give a blueprint to steer the economy over the 'amrit kaal' of the next 25 years - from India at 75 to India at 100." In this context, the three-fold vision which the Budget has enumerated is: (a) complementing the macro-economic level growth focus with a micro-economic level all-inclusive welfare focus, (b) promoting digital economy & fintech, technology-enabled development, energy transition, and climate action, and (c) relying on a virtuous cycle starting from private investment with public capital investment helping to crowd-in private investment. The Budget has mentioned that 'amrit kaal' is futuristic and inclusive and to give impetus to growth with four clear priorities viz; (a) the PM Gati Shakti, (b) inclusive development, (c) productivity enhancement & investment, sunrise opportunities, energy transition and climate action and (d) financing of investments.

It is pertinent to note that the vision and the priorities cited in the Budget are mostly in a longer-term perspective. We wonder how this could be addressed in the Budget 2022-23 which has been under a rule based fiscal policy (limits on borrowing by the government) since July 5, 2004. It is important therefore, to delve into the extent to which budgetary expenditure could be enhanced to move the economy to higher growth, given the limitations to raise revenues. Accordingly, let us study the fiscal management of the government which is the core function of a Budget.

Fiscal management deals with expenditure (both revenue or consumption and capital or asset creating expenditure), receipts (tax, non-tax and disinvestment proceeds) and borrowings to finance the deficit of the government. During 2021-22, as per the April-November data, there was a rebound of revenues and expenditures were lower and we are expecting a lower fiscal deficit relative to GDP. But in the revised estimates, the fiscal deficit to GDP ratio became higher at 6.9 per cent of GDP than that of 6.8 per cent of GDP in 2021-22 Budget estimates because of higher provision of expenditure. This is attributed to the surge in socio-economic welfare related expenditure on account of successive pandemic waves during the year and also settlement of past Air India dues. Thus, revenue growth has not really supported lower fiscal deficit as was expected.

Another important issue is disinvestment proceeds. Evidence suggests that the government has an ambitious disinvestment target but has not been able to materialise the same. For example, the Budget for 2021-22 estimated an amount of ₹1,75,000 crore but in the revised estimate it was reduced to ₹78,000 crore.

The Budget for 2022-23 has made a provision of total expenditure relative to GDP at 15.3 per cent with a breakup of revenue expenditure of 12.4 per cent of GDP and balance 2.9 per cent of GDP as capital expenditure. The receipts which include tax receipts (7.50 per cent of GDP), non-tax receipts (1.05 per cent of GDP) and disinvestment proceeds and recovery of loans (0.31 per cent of GDP) together accounted for 8.9 per cent thus, leaving a deficit (fiscal deficit) of 6.4 per cent of GDP. Fiscal deficit at this level is more than double of the level legislatively mandated under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM). The higher fiscal deficit is contributed by higher revenue deficit (revenue expenditure minus revenue receipt) at 3.3 per cent of GDP. It may be mentioned that fiscal correction and consolidation (limit the fiscal deficit to GDP ratio at 3 per cent) efforts have been weak. As the Budget has mentioned, even a 3 per cent fiscal deficit will not be achieved by 2025-26.

The above discussion suggests that in a democracy there is a deficit bias as expenditure is welcome but not tax. This means higher borrowings.

Needless to say, borrowing to finance the fiscal deficit has adverse implications on the interest rate. Interest rate on government borrowing goes up with higher borrowing and makes the cost of the bank lending rate higher. The private sector is discouraged from borrowing from banks by the higher interest rate. Furthermore, as the interest rate increases, the private sector is discouraged to issue bonds. In the end, private investment and private consumption because of the higher interest rate decline and ultimately economic growth suffers. This development contradicts the government claim that "FY 2022-23 will see an unprecedented thrust on capex public spending which is crucial for economic growth and generation of productive employment."

There are two crucial issues which need to be addressed in the context of the fiscal policy strategy of the government. One is resurfacing of inflation in advanced economies and in many emerging market economies. This trend will result in imported inflation in India leading to higher input costs which will adversely impact growth.

The second issue is sustaining economic growth while adhering to a lower fiscal deficit. What is important in this context is higher tax collection, minimising tax exemptions, and broadening the tax base to achieve a higher tax to GDP ratio. In Budget 2022-23, the gross tax revenue (GTR) has been estimated at 10.7 per cent of GDP. This is inadequate to address the fiscal correction. At least GTR as a percentage to GDP should go up to 11.5 per cent in a conservative estimate.

Another important issue is the amendment to the FRBM Act which remains pending. The FRBM Act should be amended to include revenue deficit to GDP ratio at zero. The root of all fiscal malaise is borrowing for current consumption. This trend of a persisting higher revenue deficit should be arrested. The government should not and cannot live beyond its means. Inclusive growth is also critical. Lower inflation facilitates inclusive growth.

In the context of constitutional mandate, state governments have more expenditure responsibility. An effective coordination between the Centre and states is helpful. Similarly, the civic government which is also called the third layer government should not suffer from a resource crunch as the basic health, basic education and provision of basic amenities are the responsibilities of municipalities.

The Budget lacks the direction of a longer-term perspective on managing growth, inflation and fiscal consolidation. This development questions how the Budget could be helpful in facilitating its professed vision and priorities, one of "amrit kaal."

The writer is a former central banker and a faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.

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WORDSWORTH

Roscid

Though Latin r s, meaning dew or light rain, has formed a number of English words, almost all of them have become either obsolete or so rare that you will seek them in vain in dictionaries Roscid, for example, means "dewy": The incense of thy stuffing fills the air, And holds the senses in its fragrant snare; Rich ichor from thy roscid body flows, That e'en would tempt one in dyspepsia's throes (From The Chant Royal of the Turkey, in the New York Times, 22 Nov. 1903). Another word, rorid, also means dew, deriving from r r-, the inflected form of r s. So does rore (with its adjective roral). Rore is even rarer than the others, now known solely because Shakespeare used it in Timon of Athens ("My words neither aspersed or interspersed with the flore or rore of eloquence.") Others from the same source include roriferous, bringing or bearing dew, and rorigenous, produced by dew. This last word seems to have appeared nowhere else but Nathan Bailey's Dictionarium Britannicum of 1730.

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

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

Middle class neglected

Sir, Salaried and middle class people are disappointed with no changes made in income tax slabs or increase in standard deduction. If minorities can be termed as vote bank of the political parties, salaried and middle class people are the tax bank of the government. While vote bank people get the benefits, tax bank people are given nothing. The expectation of the people for change in slab and/or increase in standard deduction has been belied. At least a small gesture of exemption for investments from the present ₹1.5 lakh to ₹2 lakh has not been given. Denial of tax benefits to the salaried class spurs in abnormal demand for hike in pay when the pay revisions are due. Qatar, Kuwait, Monaco, Oman, Panama, United Arab Emirates and the Bahamas are the countries where income tax on individuals is not being imposed. Subrahmanian Swamy has advocated for total abolition of income tax. This is unthinkable in India no matter which party is in power.

KV Seetharamaiah, BANGALORE

Welcome decision

Sir, This refers to "Madras HC orders CBI probe," Orissa POST, Feb 1. Harshly criticising the investigation by the Tamil Nadu police into the suicide of the Tanjavur girl student for ruling out the angle of alleged attempts of conversion to Christianity from her school, the Madras High Court Monday ordered a probe by the CBI into the matter. The girl Shylaja, a Class XII student of Sacred Heart Higher Secondary School, Michealpatti, had died January 19 following an attempt to suicide. After her death, certain video clips of her recorded by a third party named Muthuvel emerged in social media, in which the girl had allegedly made statements about forcible conversion attempts. But, the Tamil Nadu police made concerted efforts to water-down the case. The Superintendent of Police, Tanjavur, issued press statement to rule out the conversion angle in the suicide case. Instead of ordering the investigation officer to take the additional materials to account, the SP directed the local police to register an FIR against the person who had taken the video - in order to silence any discussion regarding the conversion angle. The sequence of events compounded by the actions and inactions of the police department raised serious doubts over the transparency of the investigation. As the conversion angle is not improbable, the HC has done well to order a CBI probe into the case to dig out the truth behind the loss of a young girl's life.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

national

of the day quote

We have a long standing demand for special status of Bihar and expecting that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman would say something on it but unfortunately, she completely ignored it

UPENDRA KUSHWAHA | JD-U PARLIAMENTARY BOARD PRESIDENT

The way BJP and JD-U shared themselves and did not consider any other alliance partner is disheartening for the HAM. We and Mukesh Sahani's VIP are the coalition partners in the current NDA government in Bihar. It is extremely unfortunate that they did not invite us for the meeting

JITAN RAM MANUHI | FORMER BIHAR CM

The central government not only reduced allocation for minimum support price (MSP) but also cut down the number of beneficiaries in the Budget. The government has also failed to double the income of farmers as was promised

MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

Cop injured in militant firing

Srinagar: A J&K Police constable was critically injured Tuesday in militant attack in J&K's Shopian district, police said. Police said militants fired at police constable, Shabir Ahmad Wagay in Amshipora village of Shopian. "He was shifted to hospital for treatment and the area has been cordoned off for searches," a police official said.

Vehicle runs over senior citizen

Ahmedabad: A mob of around 100 people torched two private buses carrying employees of a company on the outskirts of Gujarat's Bharuch town after one of the vehicles mowed down and killed an elderly man, police said Tuesday. The incident took place on Dahej bypass road Monday night, but no one was injured in the mob violence as all passengers of the two buses of the Dahej-based firm got down before the vehicles were set ablaze. Bharuch 'A' division police station's inspector A K Bharwad said.

Life term for three

Dhanbad: A court in Dhanbad sentenced three persons to life imprisonment Tuesday in a six-year-old murder case. Public Prosecutor (PP) Virendra Kumar said that the court of district and sessions judge Sujit Kumar Singh awarded life in prison to Vicky Dome, Suraj Verma and Neeraj Verma and slapped a fine of ₹40,000 each for the murder of one Sanjay Sonkar alias Sanjay Khatik.



The fight of the Congress in this election is with inflation and unemployment

RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA | CONGRESS NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY

DEEP OCEAN MISSION GETS MASSIVE PUSH

India's deep ocean mission that seeks to explore vast marine living and non-living resources has received a massive boost in the Union Budget with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocating ₹650 crore for the initiative



OPPN SLAMS 'ZERO-SUM BUDGET'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 1: The Opposition Tuesday slammed the Union Budget, calling it a "Pegasus spin budget" and a "zero-sum budget" that has nothing for the salaried class and the poor, even as

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP leaders hailed it as "people-friendly" with a focus on building a self-reliant India.

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

Calling the budget "people-friendly and progressive", Modi said it has brought new confidence to usher development in the midst of one of the most terrible calamities in 100 years, a reference to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In his televised remarks on the Budget, Modi said it will create many new opportunities for the common people, besides strengthening the economy. Hailing the Union Budget as 'visionary', top BJP leaders said it outlines the Narendra Modi government's focus on building a self-reliant India and is growth-oriented.

BJP chief J P Nadda said the Budget realises the concept of social justice, equality, respect and equal opportunity, he said. Echoing similar sentiments, Union minister Amit Shah said this "visionary" Budget will prove to be a budget to change the scale of India's economy



The budget will be helpful in making India the world's leading economy under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi by exploiting the opportunities that have arisen in the global economic world after the Covid-19 pandemic, Shah said in a series of tweets in Hindi with the hashtag #AatmanirbharBharatKaBudget.

Union Minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh termed the budget "growth-oriented" and said it outlines the government's focus on Atmanirbharta (self-reliant India) and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for development and pro-people reforms.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari praised the Budget for giving impetus to infrastructure development, and said, "It is a budget to promote modern infrastructure in the country, which will lay the foundation for a new India and improve the lives of 130 crore Indians."

The Opposition is preparing to unitedly take on the government in Parliament on the Pegasus snooping row after the New York Times claimed that India purchased the snooping spyware as part of a defence deal with Israel in 2017.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal dubbed the Union Budget as "disappointing" and said it has nothing for the common people.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury questioned the government on the purpose of the Budget and asked why the wealthy have not been taxed further.

"Budget for whom? The richest 10% Indians own 75% of the country's wealth. The bottom 60% own less than 5%. Why are those who amassed super-profits during the pandemic, while joblessness, poverty & hunger have grown, not being taxed more?" Yechury asked in a tweet.

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati said the Budget has been brought to "woo the public with new promises" and alleged that the Centre has forgotten to implement its old announcements.

The Budget proposed a massive 35 per cent jump in capital expenditure to ₹7.5 lakh crore, coupled with rationalisation of customs duty, an extension of time for setting up new manufacturing companies and plans for starting a digital currency and tax crypto assets.

Just an attack on subsidy and 'jumlas' that have become old. This is the essence of the Modi government's Budget

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY



The citizens of Rajasthan, who gave 25 MPs to the NDA from this Budget, have been completely disappointed. No announcement has been made for National Project status to ERCP, 90:10 ratio of Centre-State expenditure in Jal Jeevan Mission, Jaisalmer-Kandla railway line and establishment of MEMU coach in Gulabpura

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

I did not have much expectations from this Budget but the country's farmers, women, and the general public were expecting more. Their expectation has gone in vain

SIDDARAMAIAH | FORMER KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER



There is no change in the slabs for personal income tax; no welfare schemes announced for those who lost their lives protesting against the three farm laws; no fund allocation for any projects proposed by Tamil Nadu government, especially the state's new railway schemes. No fund allocation for disaster relief funds, including relief for rainfall. This Budget has caused disappointment to the state and its people

MK STALIN | TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER

It is a disappointment to employees and the general public. There is no concrete answer to rising unemployment in the country. Without realising how many of these dreams have actually been fulfilled, new dreams have been presented to the people in the Budget of 2022-23. But the Budget shows no direction to fulfil the dreams of the past and the present

UDDHAV THACKRAY | MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

Over 2mn Indian accounts banned by WhatsApp in Dec '21

Meta also received 534 reports for Facebook through the Indian grievance mechanism from December 1 to December 31, and responded to all of these reports, spanning from fake profiles to harassment/abusive content and hacked accounts



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 1: Meta-owned WhatsApp Tuesday said that it has banned 2,079,000 accounts in India in the month of December in compliance with the new IT Rules, 2021.

The company said that it also received 528 grievance reports in the same month from the country and took action on 24 of those.

"In accordance with the IT Rules 2021, we have published our seventh monthly report for the month of December," a WhatsApp spokesperson said in a statement.

"As captured in the latest monthly report, WhatsApp banned over 2 million accounts in the month of December," the spokesperson added.

The company said that data shared highlights the number of Indian accounts banned by WhatsApp between December 1 to December 31 using the aforementioned abuse detection approach, which also includes action taken in furtherance to negative feedback received from users via our "Report" feature. "WhatsApp is an industry leader in preventing abuse, among end-to-end encrypted messaging services," the spokesperson said.

"Over the years, we have consistently invested in Artificial Intelligence and other state of the art technology, data scientists and experts, and in processes, in order to keep our users safe on our platform," it added.

SKM terms Budget as 'anti-farmer'

The umbrella body of farm unions, that spearheaded protests against the Centre's now-repealed agri laws, claimed there has been a reduction in the share of agriculture and allied activities in the Budget to 3.8% from 4.3% last time

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 1: Alleging the Union Budget for 2022-23 has shown the government does not care about farmers' welfare, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha Tuesday called on farmers to prepare for another "massive struggle" over minimum support price and other issues.

The umbrella body of farm unions, that spearheaded protests against the Centre's now-repealed agri laws, claimed there has been a reduction in the share of agriculture and allied activities in the Budget to 3.8 per cent from 4.3 per cent last time.

"It claimed the government wants to "punish" the farmers for their successful over a year-long demonstration at Delhi's borders that were withdrawn after the con-



Photo for representation purposes

PTI FILE

tentious farm laws were rescinded in Parliament last year.

"On the whole, this Budget has shown the government does not care about the welfare of farmers despite the 'jumla' (rhetoric) of adding 'Farmers Welfare' to the name of its Ministry.

"It is as if the government, smarting under its defeat on the three anti-farmer laws, is out to take revenge on the farmer community," the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) said in a statement. It pointed out that the gov-

ernment has not established the committee on MSP even after 50 days of its written promise.

"While the farmers are demanding MSP guarantee for all crops, the Budget speech mentioned only procurement for paddy and wheat from 1.63 crore farmers which form about 10 per cent of all farmers in the country."

"The SKM denounces this anti-farmer budget and calls upon the farmers of the country to prepare for another massive struggle

for the minimum support price and other burning issues," the statement said. Accusing the government of

On the whole, this Budget has shown the government does not care about the welfare of farmers despite the 'jumla' (rhetoric) of adding 'Farmers Welfare' to the name of its Ministry

SAMYUKTA KISAN MORCHA

"stalling" the demand for legal guarantee of MSP, it said, "The least expected by the farmers is the government will make sufficient budget allocations to implement MSP." On Monday too, the SKM threatened to resume its agitation if the government does not fulfil promises made to farmers in December last year.

Thousands of farmers from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh camped at Delhi's borders for over a year demanding the repeal of the Centre's three contentious farm laws.

They decided to suspend their protest, December 9 last year after the government gave in to their main demand and agreed to consider six others, including a legal guarantee on MSP.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) has announced that it will launch "Mission Uttar Pradesh" from February 3 against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the poll-bound state.

Be cautious on matters impacting economy: SC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 1: The Supreme Court Tuesday said the courts should be cautious, especially in commercial matters having a serious impact on the economy and employment of thousands of people.

It made these observations while setting aside Delhi High Court orders, which included initiating coercive steps against Future Group companies and its promoters for alleged violation of the emergency award (EA) passed by the Singapore Arbitration Tribunal.

A bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana said: "It is well-known that natural justice is the sworn enemy of unfairness. It is expected of the Courts to be cautious and afford a reasonable opportunity to parties, especially in commercial matters having a serious impact on the economy and employment of thousands of people."

The bench, also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and Hima Kohli, said the opportunity provided to the Future Group companies was insufficient, and cannot be upheld in the eyes of law.

The top court set aside the orders passed by the single bench of the high court, ordering coercive steps against Future Group, and also the order passed in October last year, where the high court refused to stay the tribunal's refusal to vacate the EA, restraining Future deal with Reliance.

Chief Justice Ramana, who authored the judgment on behalf of the bench, said: "On a perusal of the orders, we find that serious procedural errors were committed by the learned Single Judge. Natural justice is an important facet of a judicial review. Providing effective natural justice to affected parties, before a decision is taken, is necessary to maintain the Rule of Law." The



bench noted that natural justice is usually discussed in the context of administrative actions, wherein procedural requirement of a fair hearing is read in to ensure that no injustice is caused.

"When it comes to judicial review, the natural justice principle is built into the rules and procedures of the

court, which are expected to be followed meticulously to ensure that highest standards of fairness are afforded to the parties," it said.

The bench observed that whenever an order is struck down as invalid being in violation of the principles of natural justice, there is no final decision of the case and fresh pro-

ceedings are left open. "All that is done is to vacate the order assailed by virtue of its inherent defect. Such proceedings are not terminated and are usually remitted back," it said, asking the high court to decide all matters afresh.

"We are inclined to set aside aforesaid directions as the pre-condition of 'sufficient mental element for wilful disobedience' is not satisfied." Future Coupons and Future Retail have moved the top court challenging the Delhi High Court's single bench orders passed in February and March 2021, which involved directing attachment of assets of Future Group companies and its promoters for breach of Emergency Award by the Singapore Tribunal. Both sides have so far filed several cases at various forums, which include the apex court, Delhi High Court, and the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC).

RECRUITMENT OF CONSTABLE/FIRE (MALE)-2021 IN CISF

Dates of submission of online applications:
29/01/2022 to 04/03/2022
Closing date:
04/03/2022 (upto 5:00 PM)

Online applications are invited from Male Indian citizens for filling up the temporary posts of CONSTABLE/FIRE in Central Industrial Security Force in the Pay Level-3 (Rs.21,700-69,100/-).

The details of vacancies are as follow :-

UR	EWS	SC	ST	OBC	Total
489	113	161	137	249	1149

For complete details of the notification, applicants should go through the advertisement/ notification published in Employment News/Rozgar Samachar dated 29/01/2022 and CISF website <https://cisfrectt.in>. Applicants should read and understand all the information carefully before applying for the post.

dayp 19141/11/0003/2122

Will choose 'NOTA', say Kheri farmers

THE FARMERS SAY WHILE THE TWO MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE STATE - THE BJP AND THE SP - HAVE 'CHEATED' THEM, THE OTHER PARTIES ARE 'INEFFECTIVE'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lakhimpur Kheri, Feb 1: Farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri, who are yet to come to terms with the infamous October incident, are considering using the 'NOTA' option in the upcoming Assembly polls.

They alleged that while the two main political parties in the state - the BJP and the Samajwadi Party (SP) - have "cheated" them, the other parties are "ineffective".

The condition of the farmers turned worse under the BJP regime, which ironically had promised to double our income

KEWAL SINGH | FARMER

Farmers, that constitute the bulk of the population in Lakhimpur Kheri district located in the Terai belt, said while they have decided not to vote for the BJP owing to the contentious farm laws, they do not wish to support the SP as the previous Akhilesh Yadav-led government had waived off Rs 2,000 crore interest amount payable by sugarcane mill owners to the cultivators.

Several farmers said they will choose 'NOTA' (none of the above)



February 23, if necessary, as all parties pay them lip service during elections but do not take any concrete steps to address their grievances.

Jagpal Dhillon, a farmer in Marauha village located in Palia tehsil here told PTI that all political parties - the BJP, SP, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress - give them false assurances and "use them as commodities" during the elections.

"We have no hope from any political party," he said, adding, "the BJP will have to bear the brunt of the October 3 Tikoniya incident."

October 3, eight people, including four farmers, were killed in violence during the farmers' protest at Tikoniya village in Lakhimpur

Kheri. Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Teni's son Ashish Mishra is named as the prime accused and is in jail.

Kewal Singh, who along with his two brothers owns 45 acres of land in Palia, says the farmers will not forget how the previous Akhilesh Yadav government waived off the interest amount of Rs 2,000 crore which the sugarcane farmers were entitled to receive from mill owners.

"The condition of the farmers turned worse under the BJP regime, which ironically had promised to double our income," he said.

On asked whom he would support in the upcoming elections, Singh said, "We have no hopes from the BJP or the SP. The

rest of the parties have no meaning. A large number of farmers are in favour of refraining from voting. But if necessary, we will press the NOTA button."

VM Singh, head of the Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan, alleged that the SP and the BJP "cheated" the farmers. "The SP-Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance and the BJP are fooling the farmers. Why should we support either of them," he sought to know. About 75 per cent of the farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri district cultivate sugarcane. Nine sugar mills, run by co-operative organisations and the private sector, crush about 15 lakh quintals of sugarcane here.

Farmer leader Anjani Dixit, who supplies sugarcane to a mill at Gola here, said the sugar mills in the district have paid the farmers only until February 6 last year.

"So far, the sugar mills have not paid us. Earlier, the SP government did not pay attention to the farmers. Today, Akhilesh Yadav (during Anna Sankalp campaign) says that he is with the farmers."

"Then Narendra Modi made promises. He said his party would ensure that we got our dues paid. Five years on, our concerns remain unaddressed," he said.

BSF trains people to keep vigil on drone intrusions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 1: Living along a 198-kilometre long borderline with Pakistan, people have become a force multiplier for the BSF by keeping a hawk's eye on the drone activities from Pakistan.

The BSF has trained people by conducting over 140 drone awareness programmes (DAPs) on various aspects of drone activities along the Indo-Pak border.

As one drives into the border hamlets in R S Pura, Aknoor and Arnia sector along International Border, various flex boards have come up in hamlets to spread awareness among the population about the drone activities. "We keep an eye on drone activities on the border. We have been made aware about the drone activities from across the border for dropping weapons, explosives and narcotics on this side for use of terrorists," Suchetgarh resident Dayan Singh said.

Apart from BSF's manual vigilance and technological surveillance, people have now become the third eye on the border on Pakistan-backed drone activities. Another villager and former ex-serviceman Suram Chand says that people living in hamlets along IB are now the third eye on the border apart from BSF's twin eyes of manual vigi-



lance and equipment surveillance. The BSF conducted 144 drone awareness programs in over 170 hamlets and schools in border areas of Jammu, Samba and Kathua district in the past, DIG BSF SPS Sandhu said.

Drone awareness programmes were launched along IB last year by the Border Security Force following the increase in drone activities from across the border, the BSF officer said. Drone activities from Pakistan have become a real cause of concern in border areas as many drone droppings have been reported, the DIG BSF said.

"Live demonstrations were shown on dropping of consignments by drone," he said.

BSF officials said that various flex boards were also displayed in vil-

lages and schools to spread awareness and enhance coordination and understanding among the border population to foil and report any suspicious drone activities in border areas. GPS-fitted drones capable of lifting 10 kg of weight flew in from Pakistan dozens of times to air-drop several caches of arms, ammunition and narcotics, which were seized by the BSF and the police along IB in the Jammu frontier in 2021. BSF troops also reached out to the border population and held 86 village coordination meetings (VCMs).

"Around 86 village coordination meetings with public representatives and villagers were also conducted by the BSF during the period for better coordination to resolve problems of the border population," the DIG said.

1.5cr devotees take holy dips in Ganga amid pandemic



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj, Feb 1: Nearly 1.50 crore devotees took holy dips in the Ganga river here in Prayagraj on the occasion of the rare Tuesday "mauni amawasya" ending Tuesday amid the ongoing Magh fair on the river bank.

The fair authorities Tuesday said the number of devotees taking dips in the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers here reached 1.47 crore Tuesday with over 50 lakh people taking the bath by Monday night itself.

The mauni amawasya, falling on the moonless day of the Magh month under the Hindu calendar, is considered a pious day with

devotees taking dips in the Ganga amid the month-long fair on river banks in Prayagraj. As per the Hindu calendar, the mauni amawasya fell on two days this year - January 31 and February 1.

Performing the 'pind daan' rituals here at the behest of devotees for securing the salvation of departed souls of their family members, priest Bholu Nath Tripathi said the 'muhurat' (pious period) of the mauni amawasya began at 2.20 pm Monday and lasted till 11.16 am Tuesday.

The devotees, however, kept taking holy dips in the river till evening, he said.

Fair authorities said the people had begun arriving at the fair site

since Sunday itself and began taking dips from Monday. They said the fair is being held amid strict observance of the Covid protocol and over 300 people were penalised for violating it. The officials also said the fair is being held amid various security and safety measures including the deployment and patrolling of policemen, horse-mounted jawans, anti-terror and bomb disposal squads, state disaster management personnel besides divers to avert any untoward incident.

A total of 150 CCTV cameras have been installed at various crucial points for monitoring various activities in the fairground, they said.

BJP working flat out in Gandhi bastion Rae Bareilly

Rae Bareilly was the only Lok Sabha seat won by the Congress in 2019 in UP even as the all-important Amethi constituency fell to the BJP with Smriti Irani defeating top leader Rahul Gandhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rae Bareilly (UP), Feb 1: After thrashing the Congress in neighbouring Amethi, the BJP is working flat out for a win across the assembly segments in Rae Bareilly - the only citadel left of the Gandhi family in Uttar Pradesh.

The ruling party appears to have worked to a plan, beginning with the weaning away of Congress MLC and MLAs.

Rae Bareilly was the only Lok Sabha seat won by the Congress in 2019 in UP even as the all-important Amethi constituency fell to the BJP with Smriti Irani defeating top leader Rahul Gandhi.

In the 2017 assembly elections, only two Vidhan Sabha seats, Rae Bareilly (Sadar) and Harchandpur, remained loyal to the Congress. They were won by Aditi Singh and Rakesh Singh for the party.

Both winners from the last time have now switched sides to the BJP and have been fielded against the Congress from the same seats.

Besides Rae Bareilly (Sadar) and Harchandpur seats, Rae Bareilly has four assembly constituencies - Bachrawan (Reserved), Saraini, Uchahar and Salon (Reserved).

Bachrawan, Saraini and Salon were won last time for the BJP by Ram Naresh Rawat, Dharendra Bahadur Singh and Dal Bahadur, respectively. Uchahar was bagged by Samajwadi Party's Manoj Kumar Pandey.

The Congress and the SP had



contested the 2017 assembly polls as allies, but are no longer together.

The Congress claims that whatever development has taken place in the constituency has been during the UPA government, a boast countered by the BJP.

"During 2004-2014, the then UPA government had given projects worth over Rs 12,500 crore projects to Rae Bareilly," Congress spokesman Vinay Dwivedi claimed.

He mentioned a women's hospital, AIIMS, five national highways and the Rail Coach Factory, saying they provided employment to the local people. "In the past over seven years, the BJP cannot cite any new project here, or even in Amethi," he told PTI.

Rakesh Singh, who is fighting the election as BJP nominee this time

from Harchandpur, claimed that the bond that the local people had with the Gandhi family once has weakened over time - and there is a growing disconnect now.

He dismissed the importance of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the Congress general secretary leading the party's election campaign in Uttar Pradesh.

"Priyanka is no factor in Rae Bareilly. She might have a presence elsewhere but people have not seen her coming here, except during election time. The Gandhi family has failed to give development to the area or sustain the emotional bond it had with the people of the constituency," Singh said.

He claimed that most of the industries set up during Indira Gandhi's time have closed down,

and projects like the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Academy did not benefit the local youth.

"It will be a direct BJP-Samajwadi Party contest on all the seats. The Congress' time is over and it will only get 10,000 to 12,000 votes on every seat, on some of them it might also lose its deposit," he said.

BJP district president Ram Dev Pal said his party has been working hard in Rae Bareilly all through and has made gradual progress every election.

"This time it will win all the six seats, and there is no doubt about it. As of now we are concentrating on the 2022 assembly elections and after that it will be Mission 2024 for us," he said, referring to the next Lok Sabha polls.

He claimed that Congress president Sonia Gandhi has not come to the constituency after winning last time and people would like to have a representative who has a presence here.

Unlike Amethi, where the party had to bring a national level leader in Smriti Irani to win the seat, BJP leaders claimed they will not require any big name to challenge Sonia Gandhi in 2024. She faced a "tough fight" last time against MLC Dinesh Pratap Singh, who had left her party to join the BJP.

Sonia Gandhi had retained her Lok Sabha seat in 2019 defeating Dinesh Pratap Singh by 1.6 lakh votes, the lowest victory margin in 15 years.

Life-sustaining 'kuls' turn into dump-yards

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Budgam (J&K), Feb 1: Up until a few decades ago, the small canal (locally known as 'Gaam-i-kul') passing through Budgam district's Lasipora village was not just another feature in Kashmir's exhilarating landscape. It was also a life-sustaining resource for the villagers. Residents, especially women, would often be sighted on its banks drawing the crystal clear waters carried down from the Karshan stream. However, this beautiful Gaam-i-Kul (Gaam means 'village' and Kul translates to 'water canal') has lost its charm over the years due to human activity.

"Single-use plastic bags, polystyrenes, and other non-biodegradable material have found their way into the stream. Besides that, untreated solid and liquid waste is directly being discharged into this canal," Rifat Qadri, a 25-year-old student from the village said.

In Kashmir, there are 2,827 canals most of which are suffering a similar fate. "There is at least one Gaam-i-Kul in every village in Kashmir, serving as an irrigation canal and as a source of water for its residents for centuries," said



Ghulam Rasool Sheikh, a school teacher from Budgam's Chakpora village. "With the advent of modern living, households are now dumping into the kuls their solid and untreated liquid waste without any hesitation, and there is a criminal silence in the civil society and government about this brazen violation of moral and legal laws. We have polluted them so much that they are no longer even fit for agriculture," Sheikh said. He believes that Gaam-i-Kuls, once a source of livelihood, have now deteriorated to the point that they are affecting the village's sanitation.

Sheikh's claims are proven right in every village we visited to report

this story. For instance, in Ramhuma village in the same district, the people who reside near the stream dump their waste on the banks every day. Mohammad Yousof, a local, said, "We don't have a waste processing site. It is the responsibility of authorities to identify a proper site so people can dispose of the waste properly." Failing this, the canal has become a place where all kinds of communicable diseases originate, he said.

Similarly, the Gaam-i-Kul at the heart of the Chewdara village in Budgam, originating from the famed Sukhnag stream, has turned into a garbage dumping yard. Sarpanch Hilal Mir said that while

he has planned to dredge it under MGNREGA it will not be a long-term solution as long as people continue to discharge waste into it. It needs community and administration intervention to safeguard it from further pollution. He added that the government, in collaboration with the panchayat body, should prepare a sustainable long-term plan for waste management for rural residents including providing alternatives for and incentives against dumping into the water bodies.

Under the Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin (SBM-G), rolled out by the ruling government in 2014, each state must identify suitable technologies or methods to manage the liquid and solid waste generated from villages. For this purpose, Rs 7,00,000 are allocated for Gram Panchayats having 150 households and Rs 20,00,000 for Panchayats having more than 500 households.

The majority of the population in Jammu and Kashmir lives in rural areas. Yet, only Rs 4 crores have been allocated by the administration towards waste management in rural areas as compared to Rs 464 crores for 91 urban local bodies in the 2019-20 budget.

MAJESTIC VIEW



Taj Mahal being silhouetted against sunlight during sunset in Agra, Tuesday.

PTI PHOTO

national

of the day **QUOTE**

The previous SP governments pushed the state (Uttar Pradesh) into violence

Positive politics has been carried forward and I hope people of Uttar Pradesh will remove those who do negative politics in this election. Therefore, I appeal to people to give opportunity to the SP not only in Karhal but in every area. The party will take the state on the path of development, prosperity and progress

Gati Shakti is not a scheme, but it is an initiative, a foundation. But it will not be an exaggeration if I say that it is a 'brahmastra'

Short Takes

TN: Mother kills 2 children

Erode (TN): A 30-year-old woman killed her two children and then attempted to take her life in a village here Tuesday morning, police said. According to police, Ramesh (40) from Kattupudur village in Vijayamangalam area of the district was living with his wife Sahayaselvi (30), son Vinil Kumar (4) and two-year-old daughter Malavika. After a quarrel, Sahayaselvi demanded some money from her husband for the children but he refused to give it.

Four killed in separate mishaps

Sagar/Seoni (MP): Four persons, including a forest department guard, were killed and two others injured in separate road accidents in Sagar and Seoni districts of Madhya Pradesh, police said Tuesday. A police squad on patrolling duty spotted a badly damaged car in the wee hours of Tuesday and found three bodies inside it on the National Highway 44 near Bandri town in Sagar district, Bandri Police Station in-charge Dharmendra Gurjar told PTI.

3 persons die of electrocution

Medininagar: Three persons died of electrocution after a high tension wire snapped and fell on them in Jharkhand's Palamu district Tuesday, an official said. The incident occurred when the high tension wire suddenly snapped and fell on a group of people in Lahar Banjari village. While three were electrocuted after coming in contact with the live wire several others had a narrow escape.

ABIDE BY INDIAN LAW OR PACK UP: AP HC TO TWITTER

Amaravati, Feb 1: The Andhra Pradesh High Court (HC) has issued a stern warning to social media giant Twitter to either abide by Indian law or else move out from the country.

The HC's warning came in connection with Twitter not following the orders of withdrawing abusive content against judiciary from the social media platform. The matter has been posted for hearing February 7.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra and Justice M Satyanarayana Murthy Monday said that Twitter must explain why 'cease and desist' orders must not be initiated before the next hearing. It also stressed that Twitter can't play "hide and seek" with Indian law and should abide by the law of the land if it wants to operate on Indian soil.

The bench said it is a clear case fit for contempt and criminal proceedings could be initiated against Twitter. The bench also referred to a recent judgment against Google where an FIR has been registered. Submitting the abusive content to the bench, Assistant Solicitor General SV Raju, who appeared for CBI, brought to the notice of the court that such social media posts are still visible on Twitter, despite the court's clear directions for withdrawal. SV Raju said that Twitter removes abusive content from the social media accounts of those who are Indian nationals. However, the abusive content is still not removed from those who reside in India and declare their nationality with some foreign country.

'Arunachal teen tortured by China'

INDIAN ARMY REUNITED MIRAM TARON WITH HIS PARENTS AT A FUNCTION IN TUTING IN UPPER SIANG DISTRICT MONDAY EVENING, DISTRICT DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SHASWAT SAURABH SAID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Itanagar, Feb 1: The Indian teenager who was allegedly abducted by the Chinese army from Arunachal Pradesh was reunited with his family, an official said Tuesday.

Indian Army reunited Miram Taron with his parents at a function in Tuting in Upper Siang district on Monday evening, district Deputy Commissioner Shaswat Saurabh said.

He was given a warm welcome by the local administration and panchayat leaders on returning home. Miram, 17, was allegedly abducted by the Chinese army on January 18 from Lungta Jor area near the Line of Actual Control when he went on a hunting trip with his friend Johnny Yaying. Yaying managed to escape from the scene and report the matter to the authorities.

The Chinese army handed over Miram to the Indian Army on January 27 at the Wacha-Damai



interaction point at Kibithu in Anjaw district, where he underwent quarantine and completed legal formalities. Miram's father Opang Taron said his son was mentally exhausted as the whole incident scared him.

He was tied and blindfolded while in the custody of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) for more than a week, the father alleged. "He is still in shock. He was kicked in the back and given a mild electric shock initially. He was kept blindfolded most of the time and his hands were tied during captivity. They untied

India to boost infrastructure in villages along China border

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday announced a scheme to strengthen infrastructure in villages along the border with China. The move comes in the backdrop of the lingering border standoff in eastern Ladakh and concerns in the security establishment over China setting up villages in several sectors close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC). "Border villages with sparse population, limited connectivity and infrastructure often get left out from the development gains. Such villages on the northern border will be covered under the new Vibrant Villages Programme," Sitharaman said during her budget speech. "The activities will include construction of village infrastructure, housing, tourist centres, road connectivity, provisioning of decentralised renewable energy, direct to home access for Doordarshan and educational channels, and support for livelihood generation," she said.

him only when it was time to eat or relieve himself. But, they provided him with adequate food," Opang Taron told reporters at the function.

BJP MP from Arunachal East Constituency Tapir Gao, who had shared the information of the teen's abduction January 19 on Twitter, said, "Miram was given a warm

welcome by the villagers of Zido, officials and panchayat leaders." In September 2020, the PLA had allegedly captured five boys from Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Subansiri district before releasing them after about a week, also at a border point in Anjaw district. Arunachal Pradesh shares a 1,080-km boundary with China.



LOVE FOR TRADITION: Tribal artistes perform during 'Joy Johar Mela' at Gazole in Malda district, West Bengal

Centre enhances IB Budget

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 1: Amid threats from the Pakistan-based terrorists, Afghan Mujahideen, insurgency in the Northeast states and the Left Wing Extremism (LWE), the Centre has enhanced Budget for the Intelligence Bureau (IB) by 13.43 per cent with allocation of ₹3,168.36 crore.

In the last fiscal year 2021-2022, the revised Budget of the intelligence gathering agency was ₹2,839.24 crore. In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the bureau has been allocated ₹2,350.56 crore.

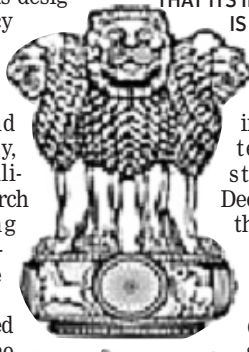
The increase in the Budget is also related to a bigger role the government has assigned to the bureau relating to the neighbour-

ing countries of Bangladesh and Myanmar also.

The government has designated IB's Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) as the nodal point for sharing intelligence inputs with Bangladesh and Myanmar. Generally, India's external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), deals with intelligence affairs in the foreign nations.

The MAC was created in December 2001 in the aftermath of the Kargil conflict as a platform to

late and analyse all intelligence relating to terrorism. It was strengthened in December 2008 following the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. The forum, along with its Subsidiary MAC (SMAC) units in all the states, has emerged as the nationally recognised coordinating agency for in-



share, col-

THIS YEAR OUT OF THE TOTAL ALLOCATION OF ₹3,168.36 CRORE, ₹ 3039.36 HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED FOR THE REVENUE EXPENDITURE AND ₹129 CRORE FOR CAPITAL OUTLAY

telligence on terrorism and insurgency. A dedicated, secure electronic network for real-time information sharing has been extended across the country.

On an average, every day the MAC gathers, collates, stores, shares and disseminates about 150 inputs to the concerned agencies. Special alerts are also issued as and when called for.

The inputs are broadly divided under four heads -- Jammu and Kashmir, Northeast, Left Wing Extremism (LWE) and the rest of India.

Intelligence Bureau

India 10th largest country by forest area: Survey

FOREST AREA REFERS TO THE AREA RECORDED AS FOREST IN GOVERNMENT RECORDS AND IS ALSO CALLED "RECORDED FOREST AREA". RUSSIA, BRAZIL, CANADA, THE US, AND CHINA WERE THE TOP FIVE LARGEST COUNTRIES BY FOREST AREA IN 2020, WHILE INDIA WAS THE TENTH LARGEST

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 1: India's total forest cover was 7,13,789 sq km in 2021, reflecting an increase of 3.14 per cent over 2011 even as it remained as the tenth largest country by forest area in the world, the Economic Survey 2021-22 said.

Forest area refers to the area recorded as forest in government records and is also called "recorded forest area". Russia, Brazil, Canada, the US, and China were the top five largest countries by forest area in 2020, while India was the tenth largest.

Forests covered 24 per cent of India's total geographical area accounting for two per cent of the

world's total forest area in 2020. The top 10 countries account for 66 per cent of the world's forest area. Of these countries, Brazil (59 per cent), Peru (57 per cent), Democratic Republic of Congo (56 per cent), and Russia (50 per cent) have half or more of their total geographical area under forests.

"India has increased its forest area significantly over the past decade. It ranks third globally in average annual net gain in forest area between 2010 to 2020, adding an average 2,66,000 ha of additional forest area every year during the period, or adding approximately 0.38 per cent of the 2010 forest area every year between 2010 to 2020," said the



Economic Survey. Forest cover comprises all lands, more than one hectare in

area, with a tree canopy density of more than 10 per cent, irrespective of ownership and legal

status. Such lands may not necessarily be a recorded forest area, and also include orchards, bamboo, and palm plantations.

Open forest (all lands with tree canopy density between 10-40 per cent) also improved by 6.71 per cent, while moderately dense forest (all lands with tree canopy density between 40-70 per cent) declined by 4.32 per cent between 2011 and 2021.

Amongst states, Madhya Pradesh (11 per cent of India's total) had the largest forest cover in India in 2021, followed by Arunachal Pradesh (9 per cent), Chhattisgarh (8 per cent), Odisha (7 per cent), and Maharashtra (7 per cent). Mizoram (85 per cent),

Arunachal Pradesh (79 per cent), Meghalaya (76 per cent), Manipur (74 per cent) and Nagaland (74 per cent) were the top five states in terms of highest per cent of forest cover with respect to total geographical area of the state in 2021.

Arunachal Pradesh accounted for 21 per cent of India's very dense forest in 2021, followed by Maharashtra (9 per cent), Odisha (7 per cent), Chhattisgarh (7 per cent), and Madhya Pradesh (7 per cent).

Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh accounted for 11 per cent of India's moderately dense forest in 2021, followed by Arunachal Pradesh (10 per cent), Odisha (7 per cent), and Karnataka (7 per cent).

BOOST TO DELHI POLICE

The Delhi Police has been allocated ₹10,355.29 crore in the Union Budget for 2022-23, an increase of ₹1,701.03 crore from the last fiscal, officials said Tuesday



K'TAKA HIJAB ROW

Students defying govt order sent out of classrooms

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Udupi (Karnataka), Feb 1: The protesting Muslim girl students of the Government Girls Pre-University College here, who attended their Class wearing 'hijab' thereby defying the Karnataka government order, were sent out of the respective Classrooms Tuesday.

The entry to media has been prohibited in the premises of the college and security has been beefed in the campus to avoid any untoward incident.

The government recently issued an order to maintain the status quo in the college until the high-level committee submitted a report on allowing hijab along with uniform.

Incidentally, February 1 is celebrated as World Hijab Day.

Aliya Assadi, one of the protesting students, said on her social media platform that the protesting girls will come to the college wearing hijab, which is their religious and constitutional right. "The college is being run on the tax money that we gave to the government. There is no necessity for anyone's interference. Our judi-



cious fight can't be sidelined by threats." BJP MLA Raghupathy Bhat had earlier stated that the police have been informed about the matter and no outer persons, including those from the Muslim as well as Hindu organisations will be allowed into the campus as the hijab row has put the academic career of the 1,000 students studying in the college at stake.

The students have to be ready for examinations, which are going to be held in another two months.

He further stated after holding a meeting that the students, who are protesting for wearing hijab in Classrooms, are being told to come to the college campus only if they decide to shun hijab.

On the other hand the students have moved a petition in the High Court seeking relief in this regard.

Lt Gen Dwivedi assumes charge of Army's Northern Command

JAMMU: Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi Tuesday assumed the appointment of General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Udhampur-based prestigious Northern Command of the Army. Lt Gen Dwivedi assumed the post upon superannuation of Lt Gen Yogesh Kumar Joshi, a Kargil war hero who hanged his boots Monday after serving at various strategic postings in the Indian army during his distinguished career spanning 40 years. Lt General Upendra Dwivedi was deputy chief of the army staff prior to being appointed as the Army Commander, Northern Command. On assuming the charge of the Northern Command, the General Officer paid homage to the brave hearts of Northern Command and laid the wreath at the Dhruva War Memorial, Jammu-based Army PRO Lt Col Devender Anand said. Later, he conveyed his greetings to all ranks and expressed his commitment to take forward the excellent work by his predecessors and all ranks of the Northern Command.



PUNJAB POLL

Three-time Cong minister joins AAP



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Feb 1: Three-time Punjab cabinet minister Jagmohan Kang, who was denied party nomination for contesting the February 20 assembly polls, parted ways with the Congress on Tuesday after serving it 47 years and joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

Earlier, Kang, who is known for proximity with Congress leader Ambika Soni, announced to field his son from Kharar. Kang faced defeat in the 2017 Assembly polls by a slender margin of 2,000 votes from journalist-turned-politician Kanwar Sandhu, now AAP rebel. Since the code of conduct, two veteran Congress leaders have joined AAP. Kang joined AAP along with his two sons -- Yadvinder Kang and Amarinder Kang.

The three leaders joined in the presence of AAP's national convener Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab affairs co-in-charge Raghav Chadha.

Kang was Vice President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. He has been elected MLA thrice -- 1992-97, 2002-2007 and 2012-2017 -- and was a minister in the Congress government from 1992 to 1995. Kang is an influential leader in Punjab and has a deep hold among the people of Kharar and Anandpur Sahib region. His younger son Amarinder was the state general secretary of the social media wing of the Congress. He has been active in the politics of Kharar and Anandpur Sahib.

international

of the day quote

If he does start answering specific questions that have been referred to the police, he will be accused, in fact fairly and rightly, of prejudicing or preventing or interfering in that investigation

DOMINIC RAAB | DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, UK

The Jewish people around the world have always had my support and that will never waiver. I'm sorry for the hurt I have caused. Written with my sincerest apologies, Whoopi Goldberg

WHOOPI GOLDBERG | ACTRESS

North Korea is testing missile capabilities, testing regional stability and testing the global community's patience

RAHM EMANUEL | US AMBASSADOR TO TOKYO

SHORT TAKES

At least 14 killed in Quito landslide

Quito: At least 14 people died and another 32 were injured in a landslide in the north of Ecuador's capital Quito, the country's emergency response office said Tuesday, as firefighter rescue crews continue searching homes and streets covered by mud. Torrential rains Monday night caused a build-up of water in a gorge near the working class neighborhoods of La Gasca and La Comuna, sending mud and rocks down on residences and affecting electricity provision.

2 charged over threats to Biden

College Park (US): A Maryland man and a Kansas man have been charged with making separate threats to kill President Joe Biden, authorities said Tuesday. Ryan Matthew Conlon, 37, of Halethorpe, Maryland; and Scott Ryan Merryman, 37, of Independence, Kansas; were both arrested last week, but Conlon's case was sealed until Monday. He is also charged with making threats to blow up National Security Agency headquarters.

India, Nepal sign MoU for bridge

Kathmandu: India and Nepal Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the construction of a motorable bridge over the Mahakali River connecting Dharchula in Uttarakhand with Darchula in Nepal with Indian grant assistance. Indian Ambassador to Nepal Vinay Mohan Kwatra and Nepal's Secretary, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport Rabindra Nath Shrestha signed the MoU in presence of Transport Minister Renu Kumari Yadav, according to a statement issued by the Indian Embassy here.

After win, Portugal PM tests Covid+ve

Lisbon: Portugal's Socialist Party leader Antonio Costa announced Tuesday he has tested positive for Covid-19, two days after his landslide election victory and just as he starts forming his new government. Costa said in a statement he will self-isolate for seven days, in accordance with the country's pandemic rules. Costa, who has been Portugal's prime minister since 2015 and is set to serve another four years, was due to meet with President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa Wednesday as a first step toward being sworn in. It wasn't immediately clear if another Socialist Party official would replace him.

New York Times buys viral word game Wordle

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Feb 1: The New York Times said Monday that it has bought Wordle, the free online word game that has exploded in popularity and, for some, become a daily obsession. It listed the purchase price as being in the "low-seven figures," but did not disclose specifics.

The Times, which has popular word games like Spelling Bee and its crossword puzzle, said "at the time it moves to The New York Times, Wordle will be free to play for new and existing players, and



no changes will be made to its gameplay." Wordle was created by Josh Wardle, a Brooklyn software engineer. He originally made it for his partner, but released it to the public in October. On Nov 1, only 90 people had played it. Within two

Ukraine plans army expansion

REUTERS

Kyiv, Feb 1: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a decree Tuesday to boost his armed forces by 100,000 troops over three years and raise soldiers' pay, but said this did not mean war with Russia was imminent. Meanwhile, European leaders lined up to back him in a standoff with Russia and the United States demanded immediate Russian de-escalation.

Russia has amassed more than 100,000 troops near Ukraine's borders. It denies plans to invade but says it could take unspecified military action if demands are not met, including barring Ukraine from ever joining NATO. The United States and its allies say any invasion would trigger tough sanctions.

Speaking to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov by phone, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated Washington's readiness to continue dialogue, but called for "immediate Russian de-escalation and the withdrawal of troops and equipment from Ukraine's borders", the State Department said.

Ukraine's armed forces number about 250,000, compared to Russia's overall strength of around 900,000.

Russian troops have been holding drills in Belarus and in a breakaway region of Moldova, potentially making it possible to attack from several directions.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson also visited Kyiv Tuesday in a Western show of support intended to convince Russian President



This decree was prepared not because we will soon have a war... but so that soon and in the future there will be peace in Ukraine. We must be united in domestic politics. You can be in opposition to the government, but you can't be in opposition to Ukraine

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

Vladimir Putin he would pay a high price for any aggression. "We urge Russia to step back and engage in dialogue to find a diplomatic resolution and avoid further bloodshed," Johnson said in remarks released ahead of his arrival.

Russia, US exchange harsh words at UN

United Nations: Russia accused the West Tuesday of "whipping up tensions" over Ukraine and said the US had brought "pure Nazis" to power in Kyiv as the UN Security Council held a stormy and bellicose debate on Moscow's troop buildup near its southern neighbour. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield shot back that Russia's growing military force of more than 100,000 troops along Ukraine's borders was "the largest mobilization" in Europe in decades, adding that there has been a spike in cyberattacks and Russian disinformation. "And they are attempting, without any factual basis, to paint Ukraine and Western countries as the aggressors to fabricate a pretext for attack," she said. The harsh exchanges in the Security Council came as Moscow lost an attempt to block the meeting and reflected the gulf between the two nuclear powers. It was the first open session where all protagonists in the Ukraine crisis spoke publicly, even though the UN's most powerful body took no action.

Boris wins breathing space

There could be worse to come. Gray only released her findings on four of 16 events being probed, because police are investigating the other dozen of parties in the PM's private Downing Street apartment

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Feb 1: Caught partying during a pandemic, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson bought himself some breathing space with an apology and a promise to change.

'PARTYGATE' WOES



But his troubles are far from over. Johnson was battling to rally a rancorous Conservative Party Tuesday after an inquiry slammed failures at the top that led to Downing Street staff holding boozy parties while the country was in lockdown. He told lawmakers in Parliament "I get it, and I will fix it," promising to overhaul the way his office

runs after senior civil servant Sue Gray found in her partial report that "failures of leadership and judgment" allowed events to occur that "should not have been allowed to take place." Johnson addressed scores of Conservative legislators behind closed doors Monday night, assuring them he took criticisms seriously and promising to get a tighter grip on a Downing Street operation that Gray found was marked by excessive drinking and dysfunctional dynamics.

Johnson rallied his Cabinet at its weekly meeting Tuesday — where "partygate" didn't come up. Johnson's spokesman insisted — before flying to Kyiv for talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Attenborough, WHO among nominees for Nobel Peace Prize

NOMINATIONS, WHICH CLOSED MONDAY, DO NOT IMPLY AN ENDORSEMENT FROM THE NOBEL COMMITTEE. THE 2021 LAUREATE WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN OCTOBER

REUTERS

Oslo, Feb 1: British nature broadcaster David Attenborough, the World Health Organization and Belarusian dissident Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya are among the nominees for this year's Nobel Peace Prize after being backed by Norwegian lawmakers who have a track record of picking the winner.

Also among the candidates for the accolade were Greta Thunberg, Pope Francis, the Myanmar National Unity Government formed by opponents of last year's coup and Tuvalu's foreign minister Simon Kofe, last-minute announcements showed.

Thousands of people, from members of parliaments worldwide to former winners, are eligible to propose candidates. Norwegian lawmakers have nominated an eventual Peace laureate every year since 2014 — with the exception of 2019 — including one of the two laureates last year, Maria Ressa.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee, which decides who wins the award, does not comment on nominations, keeping secret for 50 years the names of nominators and unsuccessful nominees.

However, some nominators like Norwegian lawmakers choose to reveal their picks.



Natural world Attenborough, 95, is best known for his landmark television series illustrating the natural world, including Life on Earth and The Blue Planet. He was nominated jointly with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES),

which assesses the state of biodiversity worldwide for policymakers. They were put forward for their efforts to inform about, and protect, Earth's natural diversity, a prerequisite for sustainable and peaceful societies, said nominator Une Bastholm, the leader of the Norwegian Green Party.

NZ JOURNO'S HOMECOMING

Pregnant New Zealand journalist Charlotte Bellis, who was stranded in Afghanistan by her home country's COVID-19 border policy said Tuesday she will return home after her government finally offered her a pathway back



Lankan Navy arrests 21 Indian fishermen

Colombo: The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 21 Indians along with two fishing trawlers for allegedly poaching in the country's territorial waters after being alerted by local fishermen, the Navy said here Tuesday. The development came as the local fishermen in the North have been protesting for over a week to stop the Indians from entering the Sri Lankan waters for fishing. The two Indian boats were noted by the local fishermen off the coast of Point Pedro within the Sri Lankan side of the international waters around midnight Monday. Navy spokesman captain Indika Silva said the Indian fishermen and the two boats were handed over to the custody of the police by the fishing inspectorate for further action.

A YEAR OF MILITARY RULE

Myanmar sees anti-junta strike despite crackdown



REUTERS

Yangon, Feb 1: Streets in some of Myanmar's main cities were nearly deserted Tuesday as opponents of military rule called for a silent strike to mark the first anniversary of a coup that snuffed out tentative progress towards democracy.

The United States, Britain and Canada imposed new sanctions on Myanmar's military after a year of chaos since a government led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi was overthrown.

Suu Kyi and other leaders of her National League for Democracy (NLD) were rounded up in raids Feb 1 last year as they prepared to take their seats in parliament, after winning a late 2020 election the generals accused them of rigging. The overthrow of Suu Kyi's government triggered huge street protests and the security forces killed hundreds in crackdowns that ensued. In response, protesters have formed people's defence forces, some linking up with ethnic minority insurgents, to take on the well-equipped army.

Protests death toll exceeds 1,500: UN

Geneva: At least 1,500 people are known to have been killed in year-long protests against the coup in Myanmar, with thousands more possibly killed in the armed conflict, the United Nations human rights office said Tuesday. At least 11,787 people were unlawfully detained in Myanmar in that period, including 8,792 who remain in custody, UN human rights spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani said. Myanmar's ruling junta has disputed past estimates of the death toll made by rights groups. Shamdasani announced the figures for arbitrary detentions at a UN briefing in Geneva, adding: "This is for voicing their opposition to the military, whether in peaceful protests or through online activities even."

Activists urged people to stay indoors and businesses to close in a silent show of defiance on the anniversary.



A child in a tiger costume walks with a lantern during the Chinese Lunar New Year festival at Yu Garden, following the new coronavirus disease cases in Shanghai, China

REUTERS



FM Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday unveiled a bigger ₹39.45 lakh crore Budget, with higher spending on highways to affordable housing with a view to firing up the key engines of the economy to sustain a world-beating recovery from the pandemic. While she primed up spending on infrastructure, FM did not tinker with income tax slabs or tax rates which was heavily criticised by the Opposition. The people of the country were expecting a 'miracle budget' that would help the common folk, who are battered by the pandemic and rising inflation, but were left with empty hands

CRYPTO PARTY OVER IN INDIA

TID-BITS

Privatisation target reduced

The Centre has drastically lowered the divestment target for fiscal 2022-23 to ₹65,000 crore. According to the budget documents 'Miscellaneous Capital Receipts', the current fiscal FY22's target was revised to ₹78,000 crore from the budget estimates of ₹1.75 lakh crore. The Centre had planned major divestments and strategic sale of Air India, BPCL, public sector banks, an insurance company amongst others. Besides, LIC's IPO has been targeted to be completed by March 31, 2022. As per the budget document's 'Disinvestment of Government stake in Public Sector Banks and Financial Institutions', the revised target for FY22 has been brought down to nil from ₹100,000 lakh crore.



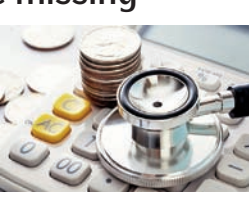
Welfare remains in focus

The Union Budget for 2022-23 dovetails a massive welfare focus encompassing several schemes of the central government. Under the Har Ghar, Nal Se Jal, 3.8 crore households are to be covered in 2022-23. Under the PM Awas Yojana, 80 lakh houses are to be completed in 2022-23. The PM-DevINE scheme seeks to fund infrastructure and social development based on felt needs of the North East India. The current coverage of Har Ghar, Nal Se Jal is 8.7 crore. Of this 5.5 crore households were provided tap water in last 2 years itself. Allocation of ₹60,000 crore has been made with an aim to cover 3.8 crore households in 2022-23. In 2022-23 80 lakh houses will be completed for the identified eligible beneficiaries of PM Awas Yojana, both rural and urban. ₹48,000 crore is allocated for this purpose.



Impetus to healthcare missing

Fresh impetus to the healthcare sector was missing in the Union Budget 2022-23 presented in the Parliament Tuesday, healthcare sector players and experts said. DVS Soma Raju, Executive Director, S LG Hospital, feels that while the existing healthcare machinery in India stood up to the challenge posed by Covid-19 pandemic and did its best to keep a possible disaster under check, this sector needed a fresh impetus to enhance and strengthen the healthcare net across the country.



Budgetary allocation up for MSMEs

While presenting Budget 2022-23, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced a slew of measures to help bolster India's MSME sector. A significant takeaway of the FM's Budget speech was that she extended the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme to March 2023. Besides, the guaranteed cover has also been extended by an additional ₹50,000 crore. The total allotment under the scheme would increase to ₹5 lakh crore. In the previous Budget, the FM unveiled ECLGS of ₹20 lakh crore to help the Covid-hit MSMEs. One key highlight of the FM's announcement was the increase in budgetary allocation for MSMEs from last year's ₹15,699.65 crore to ₹21,422 crore now (up by 26.71%).



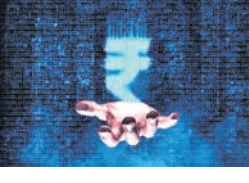
Extended tax benefits for startups

Startups have emerged as drivers of growth for India's economy and with an aim to boost this segment, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman February 1 announced extended tax benefits for this segment. So far the startups that were incorporated between April 1, 2016, till March 31, 2021, were eligible for this tax benefit scheme. The finance minister extended the eligibility to March 31, 2023, which is an additional year for the startups. Such startups will be eligible to get a 100% tax rebate on the profit made for a period of three years in a total time frame of ten years of operations provided that the overall annual turnover does not exceed ₹25 crore in any financial year.



Major thrust to digital economy

In a major boost for the digital economy, Finance Minister said during her Budget speech that the Centre has proposed to set up 75 digital banking units (DBUs) in 75 districts across India through scheduled commercial banks. Sitharaman said that in recent years, digital banking, digital payments and fintech have grown rapidly in India. The finance minister also announced that in 2022-23, all 1.5 lakh post offices will be connected to the core banking system, enabling financial inclusion and access to accounts through net banking, mobile banking and ATMs. It will also allow online transfer of funds between post office accounts and bank accounts.



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi: Hitting hard private cryptocurrency exchanges and apps which are luring millions, especially the young, into investing their hard-earned money in Bitcoin and other digital tokens, the government on Tuesday announced a 30 per cent tax on any income from the transfer of virtual digital assets, specifying that no deductions and exemptions will be allowed.

Stressing that since there has been a phenomenal increase in transactions in virtual digital assets, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, presenting the Budget 2022-23, said that the magnitude and frequency of these transactions have made it imperative to provide for a specific tax regime. "Accordingly, for the taxation of virtual digital assets, I propose to provide that any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset shall be taxed at the rate of 30 per cent," she said, clearing the air around the taxation on cryptocurrencies. "No deduction in respect of any

- Any income from transfer of crypto to be taxed at 30%
- No deductions allowed while computing such income, except the cost of acquisition. Losses cannot be set off against any other income
- To capture transaction agents, 1% TDS on purchases (above a certain threshold) made with virtual currencies
- Gift taxes if any will be the liability of the recipient
- The budget also provided a specific timeline for India's central bank digital currency (CBDC) launch



expenditure or allowance shall be allowed while computing such income except cost of acquisition. Further, loss from transfer of virtual digital assets cannot be set off against any other income," she stressed.

In order to capture the transaction details, she also proposed to provide for TDS on payment made in relation to transfer of virtual digital assets at the rate of 1 per cent of such consideration above a monetary threshold. "Gift of virtual digital assets is also proposed to be taxed in the hands of the recipient," the Finance Minister said. "No Crypto bill but taxation at 30 per cent of virtual asset transfer

gains and an additional 1 per cent tax collection at the time of transfer means that party seems to be over for crypto assets and exchanges," former Union Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg, a key figure behind drafting the original Crypto bill, told IANS.

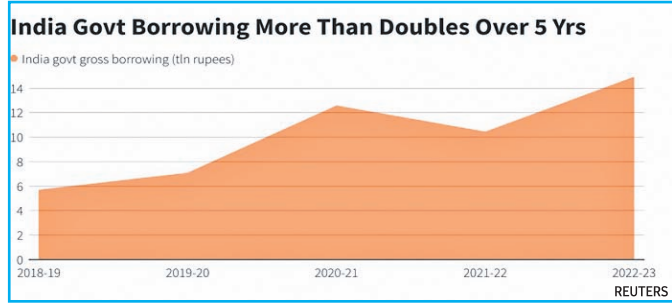
The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill 2021, seeking to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India, was set to be tabled in the Winter Session of Parliament that began November 29. But the Bill did not make it to the table -- second time in a year -- as the

chorus around the legality of digital coins and how to safeguard investors' money grew louder. There are an estimated 15 to 20 million crypto investors and there is no clarity on the size of the Indian crypto market.

Reports late last year claimed that Indians have invested over ₹6 lakh crore in crypto assets to date -- a figure which is highly questionable, as no one has any actual idea about the kind of money being routed via crypto exchanges.

“ I said that the reserve bank will be issuing a digital currency... a currency is a currency only when it is issued by a central bank, even if it's a crypto. So, let's understand that we are not taxing currencies which are yet to be regularized **”**
Nirmala Sitharaman | Finance Minister

Record borrowing to meet expenses



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 1: The government will borrow a record ₹11.6 lakh crore from the market in 2022-23 to meet its expenditure requirement to prop up the economy hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. This is nearly ₹2 lakh crore higher than the current year's Budget estimate of ₹9.7 lakh crore.

Total market borrowings of the government for 2022-23 are estimated at ₹11,58,719 crore, according to the Budget document. The Revised Estimates for the same for 2021-22 are ₹8,75,771 crore, as against the Budget Estimates of ₹9,67,708 crore.

Even the gross borrowing for the next financial year will be the highest-ever at ₹14,95,000 crore as against ₹12,05,500 crore Budget Estimate (BE) for 2021-22.

However, the gross borrowing has been revised downwards by nearly ₹2 lakh crore to ₹10,46,500 crore for the current financial year.

Gross borrowing includes repayment of past loans. The government raises money from the market to fund its fiscal deficit through dated securities and treasury bills.

Speaking at a post-Budget media interaction, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said green bonds announced in the Budget is part of the overall borrowing target for the next financial year.

At this point of time, he said, this would be issued in the domestic market. Finance Secretary and Expenditure Secretary T V Somanathan also emphasised it as part of the total borrowing projected at ₹11.58 lakh crore.

Government raises its market loans under the Scheme of Sale of Dated Government Securities. These auctions are conducted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as debt manager to the central government.

WINNERS

EV Battery Makers

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

Solar Sector

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

Cement, Construction

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

Telcos, Data Centers

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

Digital Finance

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

LOSERS

State-Run Banks

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

Coal, Thermal Power

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

Stainless Steel

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

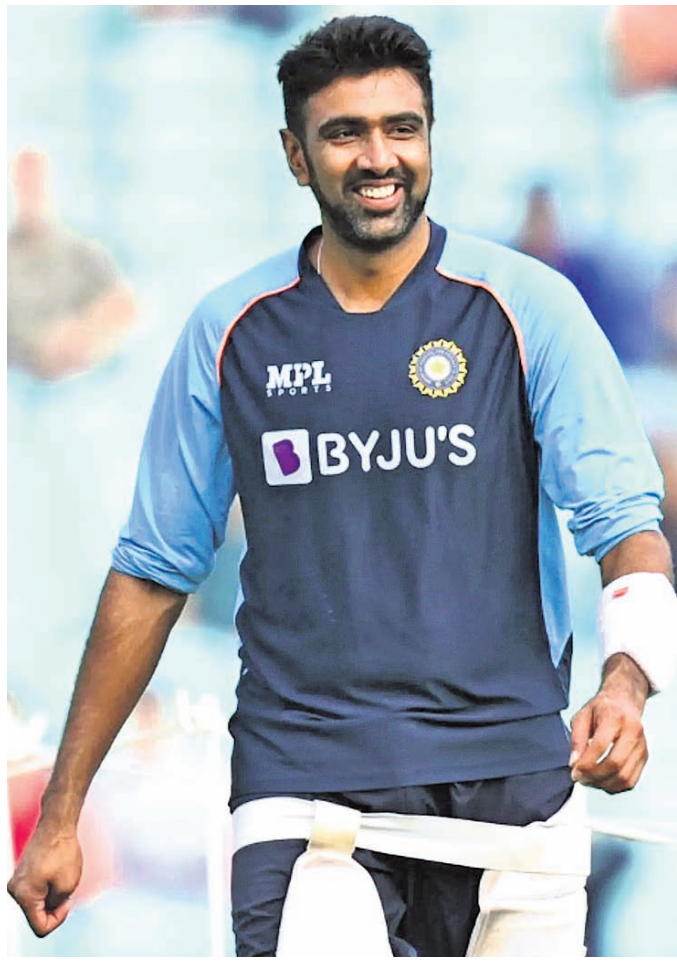
Automobile Makers

Car manufacturers, which received little attention from the finance minister, continue to reel under a global semiconductor crunch. Companies to watch include Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, Tata Motors Ltd, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.

INDIA INC HAILS BUDGET

<p>Indian industry welcomes the government's unwavering commitment towards boosting investments, creating jobs, improving ease of doing business, maintaining tax stability and certainty in policy regime through well-designed and prudent measures delineated in the budget</p> <p>CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, CII</p>	<p>A great attempt by the finance minister to lay the economic blueprint for India's growth in the next 25 years. However, the devil is always in the detail, and the success of the measures taken will depend on the government's ability to focus on the implementation</p> <p>GOPICHAND HINDUJA CO-CHAIRMAN, HINDUJA GROUP</p>	<p>It is highly encouraging that the Union Budget seeks to lay the foundation and give a blueprint of the economy over 'Amrit Kal' of next 25 years -- from India at 75 to India at 100</p> <p>PRADEEP MULTANI PRESIDENT, PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY</p>	<p>Fiscal prudence and business ease have been the theme. 35% increase in capital expenditure will drive infra and jobs - positive rhetoric with no negative surprises= balanced budget</p> <p>KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON, BIOCON</p>	<p>With today's budget focussed on capex, digital and welfare - I can clearly imagine the future. Today's wordle Budget edition</p> <p>HARSH GOENKA CHAIRMAN, RPG ENTERPRISES</p>	<p>Brevity has always been a virtue. @nsitharaman Ji for a growth-oriented and forward-looking #Budget for the masses. It sets the stage for rapid progress post-pandemic</p> <p>ANAND MAHINDRA CHAIRMAN, MAHINDRA GROUP</p>	<p>I congratulate FM @nsitharaman Ji for a growth-oriented and forward-looking #Budget for the masses. It sets the stage for rapid progress post-pandemic</p> <p>ANIL AGARWAL EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, VEDANTA RESOURCES</p>
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DHAWAN, ASHWIN IN TOP BRACKET



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 1: Top Indian players, including senior opener Shikhar Dhawan and Shreyas Iyer, along with overseas stars such as Pat Cummins and Kagiso Rabada have been bracketed in the ₹2 crore highest base price category for the upcoming IPL auction.

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

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

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

Senior Indian players Mohammad Shami, Bhuvneshwar

Kumar, Umesh Yadav, Ashwin, Ishant Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane have also registered with a base price of ₹2 crore.

While Iyer and Dhawan are the top draws, the 10 teams are also likely to be involved in a bidding war for youngsters Ishan Kishan, Devdutt Padikal, Washington Sundar, Deepak Chahar, last season's top wicket-taker Harshal Patel, spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and fast bowler Shardul Thakur. All of them are in the top bracket.

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

Among the foreign players the franchises are expected to go after pacers Trent Boult, Cummins, Rabada, the Australian duo of all-rounder Mitchell Marsh and Steve Smith, former Bangladesh skip-

Subhanshu Senapati and Abhishek Raut are only the two players from Odisha who will feature in the IPL 2022 auction (uncapped Indian category)

per Shakib Al Hasan and big-hitting South African Faf du Plessis, who have all registered themselves in the top bracket.

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

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

India's U-19 stars, skipper Yash Dhull, Vicky Ostwal and Rajvardhan Hangargekar, besides the likes of Shahrulkh Khan, Deepak Hooda and Avesh Khan, will also be looking to cash in and make their mark during the auction.

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

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

PUNJAB KINGS HAVE MOST MONEY IN PURSE

Punjab Kings have the highest number of 23 slots available while Chennai Super Kings, Delhi Capitals, Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians have 21 vacancies. The rest of the teams have 22 slots each.

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

AUSTRALIA TOP OVERSEAS LIST

Australia topped the overseas list with 47 players while 34 cricketers from the West Indies will also go under the hammer. South Africa have 33 players, Sri Lanka 23, England 24, New Zealand 24 and Afghanistan 17.

India colts face Oz in U-19 WC semis



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Coolidge (Antigua), Feb 1: Heavyweights India and Australia will face off in a blockbuster Super League semifinal of the U-19 World Cup here Wednesday, having beaten their opponents on the field and COVID-19 off it, on way to the last four stage.

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

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

Five members of the squad were unavailable for their second group clash, against Ireland January 19 after a COVID outbreak. Captain Yash Dhull, his deputy Shaik Rasheed, Aaradhya Yadav, Manav Parakh and Siddharth Yadav were part of that group and missed both the Ireland and Uganda fixtures, forcing the BCCI to fly in reinforcements.

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

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

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

India are now back to full strength and in another good news, Nishant Sindhu has recovered from COVID-19 and will be available for selection for the all-important semifinal. But if the match against Bangladesh was any indication, India would like to improve their finishing with bat.

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

Now up against a formidable Australian side, India will take confidence from the fact that they made the semifinals with wins on the trot despite the challenges posed the virus. This is the fourth time in a row that India will be appearing in the last-four stage of the competition.

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

The bowling department is taken care of by left-arm pacer Ravi Kumar, who wreaked havoc in a five-over spell to leave Bangladesh struggling at 14/3, right-arm seamer Rajvardhan Hangargekar, spinners Vicky Ostwal and Kaushal Tambe, besides medium pacer Bawa.

Nice show PSG door at French Cup

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Feb 1: Nice coach Christophe Galtier outwitted Paris Saint-Germain again as his side won a tense penalty shootout 6-5 to reach the quarterfinals of the French Cup following a 0-0 away draw.

Holder PSG's bid for a record-extending 15th trophy and an eighth straight final fell short at Parc des Princes against visiting Galtier's expertly organized side.

Perhaps it's no surprise, seeing as he led his former club Lille to the French title against the odds last season by winning at PSG and drawing at home without conceding a goal. Same again.

His defense held out as PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino's seemingly odd decision not to start top scorer Kylian Mbappe backfired. He kept Mbappe on the bench until an hour in.

But by the time he came on, a Nice defense marshalled confidently by Brazilian veteran Dante and former Barcelona central defender Jean-Clair Todibo was settled.

Lionel Messi started up front

after recovering from the coronavirus, yet he made little impact in a frustrating first half for Pochettino's side.

Left winger Justin Kluivert had a shot saved for Nice soon after the break and PSG midfielder Marco Verratti curled a shot over from a decent position midway through the second period.

Mbappe and Nice's Amine Gouiri

have been in fine form up front but neither had opportunities to score.

Both scored in the shootout, however, but after Dante dinked the ball in with a brilliant Panenka-style kick, former PSG goalkeeper Marcin Bulka kept out midfielder Xavi Simons to give Nice a big win.

Nice goes on to face Marseille at home next week.



Late Romario goal saves Gaurs' day

POST NEWS NETWORK & ISL

Goa, Feb 1: Odisha FC suffer a huge blow in their quest for semi-finals qualification after a 1-1 draw with FC Goa in the Indian Super League (ISL) at the Athletic Stadium in Bambolim. Goals from Jonathas (61st minute, P) and a last-minute equaliser from Romario (90+5th) meant that neither team would take away three points.

The result prevents OFC from rising to fifth place in the points table, level on points with Bengaluru FC and Kerala Blasters FC. As for FCG, the winless run extends to five games in the division.

Plenty of end-to-end stuff was observed in the starting few minutes by both teams. The Gaurs had a bigger share of the possession but struggled to translate it into scoring opportunities. Airan Cabrera got space behind OFC defence at the first quarter of the hour but ended up elevating hit shot above the crossbar. On the other end, Liridon Krasniqi missed a great opportunity to score owing to brave goalkeep-



ing from Naveen Kumar.

Arshdeep Singh also had to pull off a strong save from Edu Bedia right after the drinks break. Princeton Rebello thought he had scored at the 40th-minute mark until Thoiba Singh made a goal-saving block inside the box. Both teams lacked inspiration in the at-

tack, leading to no goals at the half-time break.

Post the restart, Aridai Cabrera demanded a penalty for a potential handball but to no avail. The striker got his shot past the goalkeeper but saw it blocked by the defender, seemingly with the hand. However, right at the hour mark, the

Kalinga Warriors were awarded a penalty after Javier Hernandez was tripped by Alberto Noguera inside the box.

Jonathas stepped up and sent his spot-kick into the top left corner for the breakthrough goal. A few minutes later, Jerry Mawihmingthanga came close to extending OFC's lead but his chip hit the crossbar as it had too much elevation.

Derrick Pereira made several changes heading into the last stage of the match, pushing for the equaliser. Four minutes were added for stoppages which saw more pressure from the Gaurs, looking for that elusive equaliser. It finally came through Romario who scored through a header in the final minute of the added time, thus sharing the points between both sides.

In their upcoming fixtures, Odisha FC plays bottom-placed SC East Bengal at the Tilak Maidan Stadium on Monday whereas FC Goa has a nine-day rest period before their clash with Chennaiyin FC at the same venue Thursday.

Coach Chinmaya, Jagannath in for taekwondo meet

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 1: Chinmaya Behera has been recommended by the national taekwondo federation to join a coach in the upcoming Fujairah International G2 Taekwondo Championship in Dubai February 5-6.

Jagannath Behera, from Bhadrak, will also be a part of the event as he will join Chinmaya as a participant in the under-54kg weight category.

Chinmaya, also from Bhadrak, is a fourth Dan Blackbelt, Level-1 international coach, World Taekwondo.

This championship is considered as a world ranking championship and the participants of this event will get world ranking which will help them to get selected for major international championships like World Championship and Asian Games.

India, Australia to open cricket event

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Feb 1: Cricket will mark its return to the Commonwealth Games after a gap of 24 years with India taking on Australia July 29 in the 2022 Birmingham edition.

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

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

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



the subsequent CGF ratification of the island nation's entry.

Australia, Barbados, England, India, New Zealand, South Africa and Pakistan have already qualified as women's cricket makes its first entry into the Commonwealth Games.

It will only be the second time that cricket features in the multi-discipline event after a men's com-

petition was part of the Games in Kuala Lumpur in 1998 and is considered a massive opportunity to bring the game to new audiences.

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

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

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

The Birmingham Commonwealth Games, being held from July 28 to August 8, will see 4,500 athletes from 72 nations and territories compete across 11 days. Birmingham 2022 will be the first major multi-sport event in history to award more medals to women than men.

SPORTS BUDGET HIKED BY ₹305.58cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 1: Country's tremendous success at the Tokyo Olympics seems to have influenced the sports budget as the central government on Tuesday allocated ₹3062.60 crore for financial year 2022-23 - an increase of ₹305.58 crore, compared to the last year's amount.

In the last financial year, the government had allocated ₹2596.14 crore for sports, which was later revised to ₹2757.02 crore.

India won seven medals, including a historic track and field gold, at the Tokyo Olympics. The sporting activities have also resumed in a phased manner in the country and 2022 is an important season because of two global events - the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and Hangzhou Asian Games - lined up.

Considering all of it, the government may have decided to spend more on sporting activities.

The government's flagship Khelo India programme witnessed an



increase of ₹316.29 crore in the 2021-22 budget, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday.

The financial allocation towards Khelo India programme, which got ₹657.71 crore in the last budget, was increased to ₹974 crore.

The total encouragement and awards to sports persons have seen a substantial increase from ₹245 crore to ₹357 crore.

The Sports Authority of India's budget had been reduced by ₹7.41 crore to ₹653 crore. The SAI is the nodal organisation to manage national camps, provide infrastructure, equipment and other logistics

to the country's sportspersons. The allocation towards National Sports Development Fund has been reduced by ₹9 crore to ₹16 crore. The National service scheme has witnessed a whopping jump of ₹118.50 crore from ₹165 crore to ₹283.50 crore.

The allocation towards National Sports Federations (NSFs) remained untouched at ₹280 crore. As far as incentives for sportspersons are concerned, the budget has proposed a minimal hike of ₹55 crore. The budget for National Sports Development Fund has been further reduced to ₹16 crore from ₹25 crore.