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**COVER STORY** BUDGET 2024-25 : A BLUEPRINT FOR INDIA'S FUTURE UNDER NDA 3.0

States have been encouraged to lower stamp duty on property purchased by women. Scheme has been announced to develop 100 weekly haats for street food hubs in select cities to encourage street markets. A programme to promote water management including sewage treatment and solid waste management projects for 100 large cities has also been announced.

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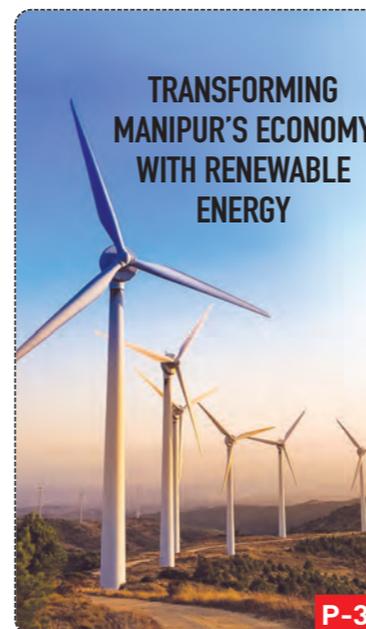


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Shri Hanumate Namah

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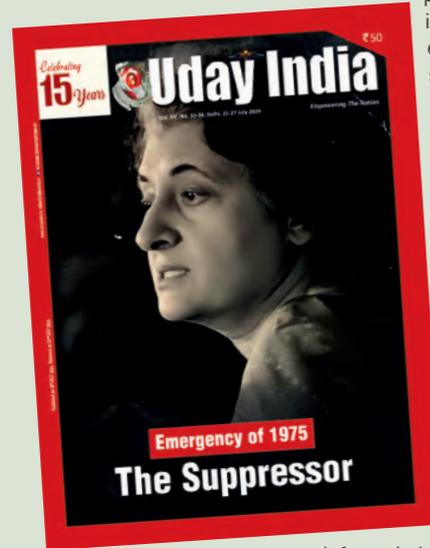
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## MAILBOX

27 JULY, 2024

E-MAIL: editor@udayindia.in



The cover story on the Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi from 1975 to 1977 presents a thorough examination of a period that remains one of the most controversial chapters in Indian history. The imposition of the Emergency, ostensibly to address internal disturbances, resulted in the suspension of civil liberties and the imprisonment of opposition leaders. These actions undeniably constituted a severe blow to the democratic fabric of the nation. The suspension of fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech and the right to assemble, coupled with the censorship of the press, undermined the core principles enshrined in our Constitution. The government's use of preventive detention laws to arrest political opponents without due process, the forced sterilisation campaigns, and the centralisation of power are clear indicators of the authoritarian drift during this period. These measures, which included violations of human rights and individual freedoms, left an indelible mark on the collective consciousness of the nation. The Emergency serves as a potent reminder of the fragility of democratic institutions and the critical need to safeguard them against any form of authoritarianism.

— Nandini Mishra, Luknow

\* \* \*

While some argue that the Emergency period brought about certain administrative efficiencies and attention to issues like population control and land reforms, these potential positives are overshadowed by the overarching negatives. The forced nature of many policies and the human rights abuses associated with their implementation cannot be ignored. The backlash against the Emergency eventually mobilised public opinion in favour of democracy, leading to the restoration of civil liberties and democratic governance in 1977. This period in history is a testament to the resilience of the Indian populace and their commitment to democratic principles.

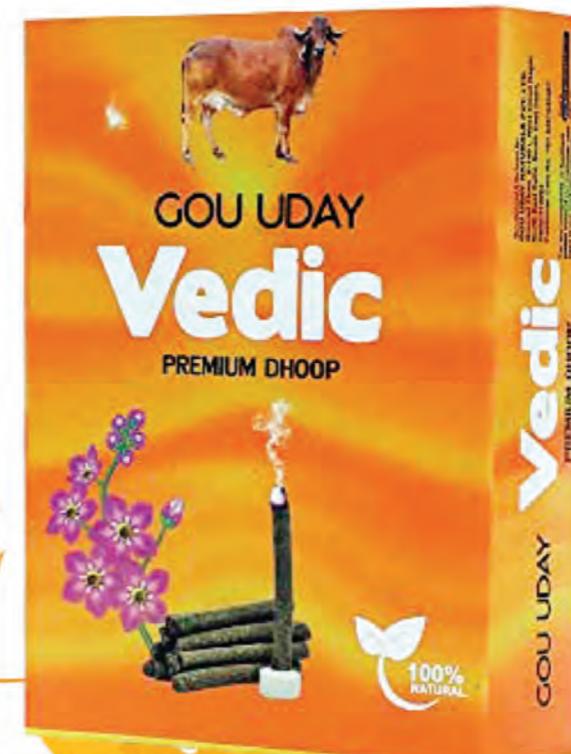
— Raghurib Dash, Cuttack

## Strategic autonomy in foreign policy decisions

I am writing in response to your recent article on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia and the ensuing criticisms from Western nations and certain Indian quarters. The perspective presented in your article is commendable, as it highlights the critical aspect of India's strategic autonomy in foreign policy decisions. India, as a rising global power, must prioritize its national interests, and PM Modi's visit to Russia exemplifies this approach. The long-standing Indo-Russian relationship, particularly in defense cooperation, is crucial for India's security framework. The supply of Iglu-S MANPADS and the S-400 air defense systems underscore Russia's role as a reliable defense partner, especially given the current geopolitical tensions with China and Pakistan. Critics who urge India to align more closely with the West often overlook the historical and strategic depth of the India-Russia partnership. This relationship has consistently supported India's defence capabilities and technological advancements.

— Abhishek Sharan, Delhi

  
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# Will Modi apply the lesson learnt from Korea in Ukraine?

**I**s India Prime Minister Narendra Modi going to visit Ukraine in the last week of this month?

If he is visiting, is that part of a mission to broker peace between Ukraine and Russia, something India had done quite admirably during the Korean War by bringing about an Armistice Agreement between South Korea supported by the United States and North Korea backed by Communist China and the then Soviet Union?

If India under Modi is really serious about mediating between the two warring nations of Russia and Ukraine, something China and Turkey have also been attempting, does New Delhi have better global credibility and support than Beijing and Ankara for the job?

Let us attempt answering these three questions, one by one.

First, Modi's scheduled visit to Ukraine has not been officially announced as one writes this. But the very fact that it has been widely reported over the last two days without inviting any denial by the Modi-government means that the news is credible. Apparently, one such report says that the Indian Prime Minister will leave for Ukraine on August 23.



**PRAKASH NANDA**

Coming to the second question, since Modi's date has not been officially announced, it is difficult to say about his exact agenda, something that is usually disclosed by senior foreign ministry officials in select briefings to the press on the eve of the Prime Minister's foreign trips.

However, what is unmistakable is that Modi's very visit to Ukraine would go a long way in assuaging Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's hurt feelings over his trip to Moscow last month to resume India-Russia summit, an annual feature since 2000 but suspended for two years (2022, 2023).

It is true that Ukraine has not liked India's perceived neutrality on the Russian invasion by not condemning it and New Delhi's continued diplomatic, political, and economic and defense interactions with Moscow. But it is also a fact that despite the historically strong and time-tested Indo-Russian strategic ties, Modi and his officials, including foreign minister S. Jaishankar, have always pointed out to Russia that war in Ukraine will not end by military might amid bombs, guns and bullets, but through 'diplomacy and dialogue'.

Russia seems to have appreciated India's position, but that does not seem to have been the case with Ukraine,



though Modi has spoken on this on the telephone to Zelenskyy, apart from conveying this physically at the G7 summits, this year in Italy and last year in Tokyo. India has sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Modi was reported to have assured Zelenskyy that India would do "everything it can" to help end the war.

In fact, the joint Statement that was issued at the end of Modi's visit to Russia last month says that both sides "highlighted the imperative of peaceful resolution of the conflict around Ukraine through dialogue and diplomacy including engagement between both parties. They noted with appreciation relevant proposals of mediation and good offices aimed at peaceful resolution of the conflict in accordance with international law and on the basis of the UN Charter".

What can India do to end the war? Here its role during the Korean War is instructive.

In some ways, the war in Ukraine has some features that are comparable to the ones in the Korean War. That war commenced in 1950 with the invasion by the northern half of the Korean peninsula controlled by the Communists on the southern half resided by the West-oriented Koreans backed by the United States.

It may be noted that India had led the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) to conduct 'peaceful and highly representative elections' in 1948 that had resulted in the creation of the first democratically elected government in Korea. But that was in the southern half, today's South Korea.

Anyway, with China's subsequent participation in the war in 1951 and Russian help to the North, the war in Korea seemed to be never-ending. The then South Korean President Syngman Rhee was adamant, like Zelenskyy now, that the aggressors must be defeated and that the West must provide all the needed military and economic help.

But the war got bogged down in a frozen stalemate, such as the standoff between American and Chinese

forces in 1951 in the mountains along what is now the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

Meanwhile, the continued American support to South Korea became a domestic political issue as it is the case over the limits of American contribution to the war in Ukraine today. Republican attacks on the then U.S. President Harry Truman (Democrat) were so intense that he did not seek another term in office in the 1952 presidential election. Republican Dwight Eisenhower won that election eventually (is this history ominous for Democrats in November elections this year?).

And this was the time during which India, under the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, played a somewhat mediatory role by engaging with all the major stakeholders – the U.S. (which had entered the war on behalf of the United Nations), China and the then USSR. His proposal for an immediate ceasefire did not bear fruits initially, but it was the Indian resolution that was passed in the United Nations in 1952 on the exchange of prisoners of war (PoW) and it was India that was selected to chair the Neutral Nations Repatriation Committee (NNRC), which successfully held PoWs for 90 days.

And most importantly, it was the success of this NNRC that facilitated the eventual signing of the Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953 between the warring parties and the subsequent establishment of the Korean DMZ. This 1953 Agreement has not "ended" the war technically as of now, but by "suspending" the war, this Agreement has upheld the peace all these years in the Korean peninsula.

A similar initiative can bring a pause to the on-going war in Ukraine; its suspension could subsequently lead to a negotiated settlement acceptable to both Moscow and Kyiv. To begin with, India could make both the parties agree on the humane treatment and exchange of prisoners, safety of nuclear power plants, non-use of cluster bombs and evacuation of the civilians from intense war zones. Mutual confidence generated in the process may lead to a durable ceasefire and the establishment of a demilitarized zone, with Russian and Ukraine forces withdrawing several kilometres from their forward positions. The idea of U.N. mandated peacekeepers to organize a referendum to ascertain the popular will in the disputed territories towards a peaceful settlement of the dispute could then be explored (this has been suggested by Tesla CEO Elon Musk, which now has many buyers).

Now comes the most important point raised in the third question – credibility of India compared to Turkey and China for playing such a role. And when one is talking of credibility, it is not only a question of acceptance by Russia and Ukraine but also the endorsement of the global community in general and the U.S.-led Western world in particular as that is sustaining the war in Ukraine by its billions of dollars' worth economic and military assistance to Ukraine.

Turkey, it may be noted, had played an important role in activating the corridor in the Black Sea to transport grain from Ukraine to various world markets as Russia had blocked it following the escalation of its conflict with Ukraine. But of late, it

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has not shown any similar zeal.

Besides, Turkey's recent roles in inflaming the delicate situation in the Middle East and exhibiting positions encouraging the cause of radical Islam in many parts of the world are being seen by many as "irresponsible behaviour" on the part of a major power.

On its part, China has recently hosted Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. It has made some proposals ("three principles" of conflict norms, "three elements" of the peace negotiation plan, "three concerns" of humanitarian protection) that have been endorsed by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

But then, China's readiness as a mediator is not that forthcoming as its latest position is that though Ukraine and Russia "have sent signals of willingness to negotiate to varying degrees", conditions are "not yet ripe" for peace negotiations.

Moreover, as the Western world strongly believes that China is the biggest "enabler" of Russia in its war against Ukraine and that Beijing is a big flouter of international laws and world order, it playing a mediatory role does not generate that much confidence for them.

On the other hand, India has reasons to be taken seriously by both Russia and the U.S.-led West. Modi seems to have Putin's support. America may have not liked India's "strategic autonomy" and its continuing links with Russia, but the fact remains that it is India which is "the swing-power" in its real rivalry with China, Washington's principal geopolitical adversary in the world.

For the West, it is India that can deliver a large geopolitical payoff because both share the same approach to the international order that is more fluid and open than that of China or Russia. It is India that has invariably behaved as a responsible power. It is India that respects territorial sovereignty for all nations and advocates for rule-based governance and 'security and growth for all'.

In sum, India is in a favourable position to stake out a mediatory role in Ukraine and remind the world that it is a responsible global player. But whether Modi is prepared to play that role remains to be seen.

(prakash.nanda@hotmail.com)



# New Wave of Terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir

Pakistan's long-standing strategy of employing proxy war tactics against India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, poses a significant threat to national security. The ongoing recruitment, training, arming, and financing of terrorists by Pakistan has resulted in numerous attacks on civilians and Indian Army personnel. The recent strikes in Kathua and Doda resulting in a high rate of our soldiers' casualties are stark reminders of this persistent menace. To combat this menace effectively, the Indian Government and the Army need to transition from their reactive stance to a proactive offensive approach. Having served in the Army and Special Forces like the NSG, I dare say there is a need for reviewing our fighting concepts, strategies and tactics from top to bottom.

Whereas we need a distinctly visible and universally credible national

policy to destroy all forms of terrorism and anti-national activities within and outside the Indian territory, there is also a need to recast our strategy at the execution level, that is, military, police, CPOs and the civil administration.

## Threat Analysis

Proxy war involves indirect engagement where a hostile nation uses third parties to fight on its behalf causing attrition and spreading intimidation across people in the targeted areas. It is no longer any secret that the Pakistan Army's primary intelligence arm – the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) – recruits, equips, trains, finances and pushes terrorists into the Indian territory to carry out sporadic attacks on unsuspecting civilians and military patrols and installations. Even as the Indian Army and

security forces have killed and apprehended many such terrorists over the years, such counter measures have proved nothing more than reactive and marginally punitive without hurting the guilty nation much. Costs thus imposed on Pakistan are too frugal to hurt and quite affordable even for today's Pakistan which is neck-deep in financial debt. These proxies are well-trained, heavily armed, often aided by local empathisers, and strategically supported making them formidable adversaries. They employ surprise attacks on civilian targets and military convoys, causing significant casualties and spreading fear and instability. The proxy soldiers of Pakistan have now graduated from AK 47s to the US-made M4 assault rifles, Chinese gadgetry and encrypted radio sets and satellite phones.

While there is visible development and a discernible positive shift in the locals towards development projects and fast rising tourism, the Jammu region has suddenly emerged as terrorists' new playfield. The recent attacks in Riasi, Rajauri, Kathua and Doda highlight a new trend of evolving tactics of these terror groups. Equipped with high-precision firearms that could damage even bulletproof vehicles, they were most likely helped locally with navigational aids and logistics too.

India's new offensive strategy started taking shape when Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power heading a comfortable single-party majority in the Lok Sabha in 2014. Carrying out cross-border surgical strikes in September 2016, the Indian Army eliminated seven terrorist launch pads, killing all terrorist elements who were planning to infiltrate into India from those launch pads. After the Pulwama convoy attack on 14 February 2019, India launched the first ever air strike since the 1971 Indo-Pak War. As a consequence of these offensive actions from India, there had been a discernible decline in the Pakistan sponsored terrorism in J&K and elsewhere as well. Alarms were against the removal of Article 370 especially by politicians like Farukh Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti who claimed "Kashmir will be on fire! There would be none to pick up India's national flag there!" Yet, it remained peaceful and most people welcomed it. The youths in the Kashmir Valley are no longer indulging in stone-pelting against the Army and the terror graph has also significantly declined. Across the border, however, there is no decline in Pakistan's terror export policy. Any complacency or predictable style of military operations would be suicidal.

India's national aim must be explicitly defined and eloquently stated. The USA has no military threat from across its borders and yet, they have the world's largest Armed Forces. To offset the costs of maintaining such large military power, it has a robust armament industry which not only meets its own military needs but exports all kinds of military hardware from rifles to tanks, warships to aircraft and hordes of other state-of-the-art technologies. Even as India is racing to be the world's 3rd largest economy, our top leadership is focusing not on sharpening the fighting potential of the Armed Forces but on reducing the manpower to reduce the pension budget of the growing number of defence pensioners! All this when we have live threats all along our land borders from China and Pakistan.

In addition to the perpetuity of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, India is also strewn with several internal security issues

**While there is visible development and a discernible positive shift in the locals towards development projects and fast rising tourism, the Jammu region has suddenly emerged as terrorists' new playfield. The recent attacks in Riasi, Rajauri, Kathua and Doda highlight a new trend of evolving tactics of these terror groups. Equipped with high-precision firearms that could damage even bulletproof vehicles, they were most likely helped locally with navigational aids and logistics too.**

from insurgents, leftists disguised as intellectuals and pseudo guardians of human rights patronised by various political parties. Unless liquidated through 'encounters' and covert operations, such operatives have enough resources to wriggle out of the rings of law. India's vote bank based politics is the bane of all ills that threaten not only internal security but also encourage external enemies to take advantage of the widening communal divides within.

## Needed a Multi-pronged Strategy

Prolonged deployment of the Army to fight this ongoing proxy war has acquired a predictable pattern rendering our military camps, patrols and convoys increasingly vulnerable to the terrorists waiting to hit with grenades and bursts of fire before melting away into the forest of friendly habitats. These proxy soldiers are trained, equipped and helped to cross over to India with the help of Pakistan Rangers through pre-determined safe routes under the cover of darkness or inclement weather. There is now a need to review the current field tactics and evolve a two-pronged strategy: 1) Area Domination and 2) Surgical Strikes.

**1. Area Domination:** Units are fairly well trained and experienced in this aspect except that they need to be equipped with the latest technology including harnessing our Satellites for real-time imageries, area scanning through drones at the unit level, prompt helicopter availability on demand and so on. The Army's relationship with the local population is of paramount importance too. However, experience reveals that irrespective of religion, locals in the border areas remain vulnerable to exploitation and greed. That is why it has often turned out that the local guide himself was the culprit guiding our patrol to pass through the 'killing ground' chosen by the terrorists waiting under cover. Nonetheless, sealing off from the locals would be even more blinding. Units and intelligence resources with field formations should keep vigil and provide actionable intelligence to the troops on the ground. Keeping the movement of terrorists under continuous sur-



KARAN KHARB



veillance is of paramount importance too.

2. **Cross border Covert Ops.** All through India has followed a policy of good peaceful neighbourliness with neighbours including Pakistan. It is widely known throughout the world that Pakistan has not honoured this gesture of goodwill and indulged in transporting cross-border terrorists to make people's lives unsafe. India, on its part, has been suffering avoidable loss of life and material. This stance must change. India must now change its operational response and mount covert operations inside Pakistan territory. Such operations should render routine military and civilian activities unsafe not merely for a specific period but as a matter of routine. Intelligence agencies like RAW and MI must be speedily reorganised, re-equipped and expanded to carry out these tasks covertly. The aim of such operations should be to coerce the enemy to surrender, that is, to force Pakistan to seek peace and cooperation with India and agree to sign a Treaty for Peace, Friendship and Cooperation at the latter's terms. It may not happen in a month or a year, but if India were to sustain such pressure on Pakistan, it is very likely to yield positive results.
3. **Special Forces Missions.** India's Special Forces (SF) enjoy a reputation of highly capable that can match the very best in the world. They may be employed under the direction of the Strategic Command to hit and destroy pre-designated targets of strategic significance. It is essential to carry out such missions under the cover of absolute secrecy maintaining the ability to credibly deny it. Pakistan has been indulging in such missions from the beginning. If Ajmal Kasab was not caught alive in Mumbai in November 2008, Pakistan would have denied the Mumbai attack as stubbornly as it has

always done for the rest all along.

4. **Counter-Proxies:** The current socio-political situation in Pakistan is ideal for India to recruit 'counter-proxies' within Pakistan. India's intelligence agencies should identify and create a covert force within Pakistan. Agreed that such mercenaries would often betray but our intelligence agencies would be conscious of such betrayals and plan effective measures to terminate such moves soonest as discovered. The anti-government anti-Army bitterness among Pathans triggered by the imprisonment of Imran Khan, the ongoing alienation and unrest in Baluchistan, growing resentment in Sindh and even in PoK are ripe opportunities for the Indian secret services to pluck and exploit.
5. **Cyber Warfare:** India's cyber capabilities are provenly better than Pakistan's. Yet, we have not done much to exploit our superior cyber capabilities and remained content fighting a defensive counter-terrorist battle and suffering attrition all this while. The time has come when India must muster all its national security resources including its cyber warfare machinery and employ them in proactive offensive missions. India's cyber-attacks could disrupt the financial networks, hamper communication networks, cripple the banking system, disrupt supply chains, push malware, phishing and even spoofing from time to time. Such proactive cyber activities would impose extra caution on the Government and the Army affecting their efficiency and sucking extra resources to guard their assets.
6. **The 'AI' Factor.** AI has added a new dimension to threats and responses as well. In the age of a hugely diversified spectrum of media communication systems, it has become

cumbersome and time consuming for military analysts to correctly assess and react to fleeting opportunities. This problem is now largely solved by the advent of AI tools that would provide real-time responses. Systems based on AI can decipher encrypted communications and predict fairly accurately the coming threat. AI has also simplified the control and guidance of aerial vehicles, and drones besides predicting and shooting vital targets most accurately in real-time. At the moment, however, not much is publically known about the advancements, if any, made by the Indian military planners and what capabilities exist in this field today.

## Economic Measures

There is enough evidence that a lot of cash flow continues to fund terrorists overtly in the name of religion, health, education and covertly through hawala channels. Government intelligence agencies are already conscious of such cash flows and have been doing a commendable job in sealing such illegal flow-ins. Extra vigil and more deterrent and swift actions are, however, needed to be mounted to deter terror funding. It is also of equal importance that Indian authorities must maintain close rapport and cooperation with international financial institutions.

Efforts of different agencies interacting with different international financial institutions will be more meaningful and effective when buttressed diplomatically as well. Imposing economic sanctions on individuals and entities involved in supporting terrorism should be interwoven to have the desired effect. India should also adjust trade policies to economically isolate Pakistan leveraging India's position in global trade networks.

## Politics and Media

India must raise the tempo of showcasing and condemning Pakistan-sponsored terrorism more vehemently at international forums such as the United Nations, G20, BRICS, SCO and regional forums like SAARC and ASEAN to mount pressure on Pakistan to eschew exporting terrorism or get isolated. India should also endeavour to strengthen alliances with countries affected by terrorism to create a unified front against Pakistan's proxy war policy and strategies.

## Internal Stability

The speedy execution of multiple development projects in Kashmir is now distinctly visible and the youths who once seemed alienated and inimical towards the Army, are now emerging as a new vibrant society ready to charter their future integrated with India. No matter what the political demagogues claim and preach through their lectures and debates, the people see the 'government' only at the Thana, Tehsil and district levels. Therefore, there is a need to foster inclusive governance in Jammu and Kashmir to expose the narrative used by the terrorists to seek local support. Alongside development, there is a need to run information campaigns for educating the public about how terrorism has retarded progress and kept people deprived of their genuine dues in life. The Army and civil authorities must ensure that foolproof security is provided unobtrusively to the local informants because the killing of such faithful sources demotivates others from coming forward. There is a need to raise the tempo of educating the people by reviewing and recasting regular information campaigns highlighting the coming benefits of the development projects and public welfare schemes. Since the politicians have lost their credibility, positively inclined public figures from cinema, media, educational institutions and social activists should be projected to eloquently voice their ideas on the harms of violence and parochial ideologies.

Finally, the popular impression about the so-called decline of terrorist menace in the Kashmir Valley should not induce complacency in the Security Forces and the government. The kind of lethal weaponry and the audacious video-filming of terrorists ambushing an army vehicle and shooting a soldier on a road are the new competencies acquired by terrorists which call for an immediate review of military tactics and government policy. India's approach to combating Pakistan-sponsored terrorism requires a multidimensional strategy that encompasses military offensive, financial countermeasures, political diplomacy, and internal security enhancements. Mere defensive posturing and reactive drills have failed to deter the terrorists who are hitting targets of their choice in their chosen ways. India can wrest the initiative from these terrorist groups and their sponsors only by imposing prohibitive costs on Pakistan. A concerted effort across all fronts from field level to political and diplomatic levels will ensure that India not only defends its sovereignty but also secures a future free from the scourge of terrorism.

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## China's Bid to Play Global Peacemaker A Major Challenge for India

**China's strategic push to position itself as a global peacemaker poses a complex challenge for India, intertwining issues of regional dominance, economic influence, and diplomatic leverage. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for India as it navigates its own path on the global stage.**

■ UDAY INDIA BUREAU

On July 22, in Beijing, the leaders of the Palestinian organisations Hamas and Fatah signed a statement "pledging to end division and strengthen unity," and accepting the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, mediated by China. The political leadership of the Palestinian territories has historically been a point of contention for the two factions. Now, Who are PLO, Hamas, and Fatah? Let me tell you.

Major political organisations in the Palestinian territories—the West Bank and the Gaza Strip—are Hamas and

Fatah. While Fatah leads the Palestinian Authority, which is in charge of some areas of the West Bank, Hamas controls Gaza. The majority of the West Bank is governed by Israel.

This also follows another agreement that China mediated between Saudi Arabia and Iran, two competitors in the area, in 2023. China has made an effort to contrast itself with the United States in the Middle East and present itself as a trustworthy ally. Its considerable economic power also enables it to establish trade links that support diplomatic ties.

China's strategic push to position itself as a global peacemaker poses a complex challenge for India, intertwining issues of regional dominance, economic influence, and diplomatic leverage. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for India as it navigates its own path on the global stage.

One of the primary challenges arises from the ongoing geopolitical rivalry and regional dominance. China's assertive territorial claims and military activities along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India have resulted in frequent standoffs and skirmishes. The 2020 Galwan Valley clash is a stark reminder of the potential for conflict. While China portrays itself as a peacemaker globally, its aggressive posturing towards India undermines regional stability and complicates bilateral relations. Furthermore, China's growing influence in South Asia through economic and military aid to countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal challenges India's traditional sphere of influence. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), not only violates Indian sovereignty claims in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir but also establishes a strategic foothold for China in the region.

Economic coercion and development competition add another layer of complexity. China's BRI, while marketed as a developmental initiative, often leads to significant debt for participating countries. This economic leverage can be used to exert political influence, which directly impacts India's neighbors. For instance, Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port, leased to China for 99 years due to debt repayment issues, highlights the strategic implications of such investments. India has

launched its own connectivity projects, such as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), to counterbalance the BRI. However, China's financial muscle and rapid project execution often outpace India's efforts, making it challenging for India to offer a viable alternative to its neighbors and other global partners.

Diplomatic leverage and multilateral influence further complicate the scenario. China's increasing role in United Nations peacekeeping and its assertiveness in international organizations enhance its image as a global peacemaker. This allows China to push its agenda and norms, sometimes at odds with India's interests. For example, China's stance on the designation of terrorists in the UN Security Council has often conflicted with India's efforts to address cross-border terrorism from Pakistan. Moreover, China's leadership in multilateral forums like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) can overshadow India's contributions and priorities. While these platforms offer India opportunities for engagement, China's dominant position can steer the agenda in directions that may not always align with India's strategic interests.

In terms of soft power and global image, China's investments in global media, cultural exchanges, and educational initiatives help it shape the narrative about its role as a peacemaker. India's soft power, while significant, needs further amplification to counter China's well-funded campaigns. Competing in the realm of global perception is crucial for India to ensure its perspective is adequately represented. Additionally, China's provision of aid during global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, bolsters its image as a benevolent power. India's own efforts, like the Vaccine Maitri initiative, highlight its humanitarian contributions. However, India must continuously innovate and expand its outreach to match China's extensive aid programs and enhance its standing as a global good Samaritan.

Lastly, strategic autonomy and alliance building are pivotal in this context. India's principle of not aligning too closely with any major power bloc faces challenges due to China's peacemaker rhetoric. Aligning too closely with the US or other Western powers to counter China could impact India's independent foreign policy stance. Conversely, engaging with China requires careful navigation to avoid being overshadowed or outmaneuvered. India's participation in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with the US, Japan, and Australia aims to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. However, China's diplomatic efforts to portray itself as a peacemaker in the region could undermine these efforts, complicating India's strategic objectives and partnerships.

In conclusion, China's bid to play the global peacemaker, juxtaposed with its imperial designs, presents a multifaceted challenge for India. While China's diplomacy and economic initiatives extend its influence, India must strategically enhance its own capabilities, partnerships, and global outreach to safeguard its interests and maintain its regional and global standing. By leveraging its democratic values, economic potential, and diplomatic agility, India can effectively counter China's narrative and assert its role as a responsible global player.

# Pandian Albatross Round BJD's Neck

Political Analysts feel that if the BJD is intact still after the poll debacle precisely because Patnaik continue to enjoy trust of the party workers and supporters. However, these are the people who very much detest Patnaik's protection extended to Pandian and his tricky narcissistic agenda. Unless the BJD Chief completely revamps the party by ousting Pandian and his clique the party is destined to witness severe unrest in future.



PRATAP MOHANTY  
FROM BHUBANESWAR

The Biju Janata Dal is seemingly in dire straits. Internal bickering is damaging the party when it supposed to show unity as a cohesive opposition to newly elected Bharatiya Janata Party government in Odisha. The BJD has 51 members of the 147 strong state legislature. The Party lost 2024 elections after ruling Odisha for 24 years under the leadership of Naveen Patnaik.

Already majority of party's rank and file have been blaming the "ambitious arrogance" of Patnaik's official aide turned politician, Kartikeyan Pandian for BJD's defeat. But that's old story. The present crisis in the party stem from Patnaik's continuous protection and dependency on Pandian and his handpicked cohorts. The cadre want them out of the party.

What has offended party men most is Patnaik's post in social media platform "X" last week which said: "As I have



Santrupt Mishra

**While Pandian had announced his retirement from politics, BJD's second rung leaders insist that Pandian is still operating from "Naveen Niwas" - Patanik's house in Bhubaneswar and continue to influence him. The recent appointment of a former corporate executive, Santrupt Mishra as the political secretary to Patnaik is believed to be pushed by Pandian. Mishra had contested Cuttack Lok Sabha seat and lost to BJP's Bhartruhari Mahtab.**

stated earlier Mr Pandian has served the state and the party with utmost dedication efficiency and integrity and he is known and respected for the same". Patnaik was reacting to a story carried by an English daily with the caption "Naveen wants BJP to spurn Pandian overtures".

Most of the party's MLAs seemed peeved over such a statement from Patnaik. This is utter nonsense. Naveen Patnaik is still our leader and his popularity is intact. But then why we lost the polls despite no reduction in our vote share. Its only due to Pandian who was not acceptable to people", an angry BJD lawmaker told Uday India who was not willing to be quoted. "Why is that Patnaik has refrained from summoning the party think-tank for vivid review of reasons behind party's humiliating fall so far", added another BJD law maker.

While Pandian had announced his retirement from politics, BJD's second rung leaders insist that Pandian is still operating from "Naveen Niwas" - Patanik's house in Bhubaneswar and

continue to influence him. The recent appointment of a former corporate executive, Santrupt Mishra as the political secretary to Patnaik is believed to be pushed by Pandian. Mishra had contested Cuttack Lok Sabha seat and lost to BJP's Bhartruhari Mahtab.

Patnaik, who is now the leader of Opposition in the state assembly, has already disbanded state units. "The new office-bearers will be appointed soon" a signed statement by Patnaik said. "But how soon", questioned a senior leader of the party. This is in contrast to Patnaik quickly announcing names of party spokespersons and media panel inducting new names.

Meanwhile, "Sankha Bhavan" - BJD's state headquarters continues to witness slogan shouting by the young brigade of the party at random blaming party's defeat on Pandian, and his acolytes - Organizational secretary Pranab Prakash Das and media in charge Manas Mangaraj.

Though yet to be out in the open the irritation is very much visible in private conversations. "Unless the party dumps the men in question it won't be far when the pent-up frustrations among the majority takes the shape of an open revolt and possibly triggering a split", said a senior BJD leader.

Political Analysts feel that if the BJD is intact still after the poll debacle precisely because Patnaik continue to enjoy trust of the party workers and supporters. However, these are the people who very much detest Patnaik's protection extended to Pandian and his tricky narcissistic agenda. Unless the BJD Chief completely revamps the party by ousting Pandian and his clique the party is destined to witness severe unrest in future.

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## Nirmala Sitharaman Unveils India's Budget 2024-25 Buoyant Budget



ALOK SHARMA

Perhaps no one explains the importance of budgeting better than writer and publisher William Feather. A budget is a great tool to tell you where your money should go. But it's up to you to hold yourself accountable. "A budget tells us what we can't afford, but it doesn't keep us from buying it," – William Feather, who founded a successful printing business but was best known as editor of the company's, The William Feather Magazine.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, outlining the

government's financial roadmap aimed at reviving the economy, promoting growth, and ensuring social welfare. The budget, delivered against the backdrop of ongoing economic challenges and global uncertainties, focused on several key areas to propel India towards a path of sustainable development and inclusive growth.

**Economic Recovery and Growth:** The budget emphasised the government's commitment to reviving economic growth post-pandemic. Measures such as increased infrastructure spending, incentives for key sectors, and

reforms to boost private investment were announced to stimulate economic activity and create job opportunities.

**Healthcare and Pandemic Preparedness:** Recognising the importance of a robust healthcare system, significant allocations were made towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure, enhancing medical research, and improving access to quality healthcare services. Investments in vaccine development and pandemic preparedness were also prioritised.

The Budget significantly focussed on healthcare, recognising the importance of a robust healthcare system in light of the ongoing pandemic and the country's long-term development goals. The budget allocated significant funds towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure across the country. This includes investments in building new hospitals, upgrading existing healthcare facilities, and improving medical equipment and technology to enhance healthcare services.

Emphasis was placed on promoting medical research and innovation in the healthcare sector. Funds were allocated towards supporting research institutions, encouraging collaboration between academia and industry, and fostering the development of new medical technologies and treatments.

Measures were introduced to improve access to quality healthcare services, especially in rural and underserved areas. Initiatives such as setting up health clinics, mobile health units, and telemedicine services were announced to ensure that healthcare reaches all sections of society.

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of vaccination in controlling the spread of diseases, the budget allocated resources towards vaccine development, procurement, and distribution. Additionally, funds were earmarked for enhancing pandemic preparedness and strengthening public health infrastructure.

The budget included provisions to expand health insurance coverage and provide financial support to individuals for healthcare expenses. Measures to make healthcare more affordable and accessible, particularly for low-income groups, were introduced to ensure that healthcare services are within reach for all.

Overall, the budget for healthcare in India reflected a comprehensive approach towards improving healthcare infrastructure, promoting medical research, enhancing access to healthcare services, and strengthening pandemic preparedness. By prioritising healthcare in the budget, the government aims to build a resilient healthcare system that can effectively address current challenges and cater to the healthcare needs of the population in the years to come.

**Education and Skill Development:** The budget laid emphasis on enhancing the quality of education and promoting skill development to equip the workforce with the necessary capabilities for the future. Initiatives to modernise educational institutions, promote digital learning, and foster innovation and research were announced.

**Infrastructure Development:** Infrastructure development emerged as a key focus area, with substantial allocations for projects aimed at improving connectivity, modernising urban infrastructure, and bolstering rural development. Investments in transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure were high-

**Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, outlining the government's financial roadmap aimed at reviving the economy, promoting growth, and ensuring social welfare. The budget, delivered against the backdrop of ongoing economic challenges and global uncertainties, focused on several key areas to propel India towards a path of sustainable development and inclusive growth.**

lighted to spur economic growth.

**Social Welfare:** The budget underscored the government's commitment to social welfare schemes and inclusive development. Measures to enhance social security, promote welfare programs for marginalised communities, and ensure financial inclusion were announced to address the needs of vulnerable sections of society.

**Taxation Reforms:** The budget proposed certain taxation reforms aimed at simplifying the tax system, promoting compliance, and incentivising investment. Measures to rationalise tax structures, streamline procedures, and enhance transparency were introduced to create a more conducive environment for businesses and individuals.

**Reactions:** Prominent economists and industry experts who praised certain aspects of the financial roadmap while also offering constructive feedback on areas that could be further strengthened.

**Infrastructure and Healthcare Focus:** Economists and industry experts commended the government's emphasis on infrastructure development and healthcare in the budget. They viewed investments in these sectors as crucial for economic growth, job creation, and overall well-being of the population.

**Long-Term Vision:** Many experts appreciated the budget's focus on long-term growth and development rather than short-term fixes. They lauded the government's efforts to address structural challenges and lay the foundation for sustainable progress in key areas such as education, skill development, and social welfare.

**Taxation Reforms:** Certain economists welcomed the proposed taxation reforms aimed at simplifying the tax system, promoting compliance, and incentivising investment. They viewed these measures as positive steps towards creating a more business-friendly environment and fostering economic dynamism.

**Inclusive Approach:** Experts also noted the budget's emphasis on social welfare schemes and inclusive develop-

ment, highlighting the government's commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable sections of society and promoting financial inclusion.

**Healthcare Investments:** The substantial allocations towards healthcare infrastructure, medical research, and pandemic preparedness were particularly well-received by experts, who recognised the importance of a robust healthcare system in safeguarding public health and promoting overall well-being.

## Constructive Feedback

While offering praise for several aspects of the budget, experts also provided constructive feedback on areas that could be further improved. Experts emphasised the need for a robust implementation strategy to ensure that the proposed measures translate into tangible outcomes on the ground. They called for clear timelines, monitoring mechanisms, and accountability frameworks to track progress and address implementation challenges.

**Fiscal Discipline:** Some experts highlighted the importance of maintaining fiscal discipline and ensuring sustainable debt levels to safeguard macroeconomic stability. They advised caution in managing fiscal deficits and debt accumulation to prevent adverse consequences on the economy.

Recommendations were made to further prioritise key sectors such as agriculture, job creation, and rural development to address pressing challenges and promote inclusive growth across all regions of the country.

Overall, the positive reaction to the budget highlighted the government's efforts to address critical issues and foster long-term development, while also underscoring the importance of effective implementation, fiscal prudence, and sectoral prioritisation to maximise the budget's impact and drive sustainable progress in the Indian economy.

"The recent budget announcement marks a significant boost for the fintech sector. Key highlights include a ₹10,000 crore allocation to enhance digital infrastructure, aiming to facilitate smoother online transactions and bridge the digital divide. To encourage digital payments, the government has introduced ₹2,000 crore in tax incentives for businesses and individuals," says Ms. Neeru Puri, Managing Director RupeeQ.

"Fintech startups receive robust support with ₹5,000 crore allocated to the Fintech Startup Fund, alongside tax holidays and simplified regulatory frameworks benefiting over 2,500 startups. Cybersecurity receives a ₹3,000 crore investment to safeguard against fraud, and data protection laws are strengthened with a ₹1,500 crore budget."

"The budget also focuses on financial inclusion, with ₹2,000 crore allocated to expand mobile banking, targeting 50 million additional rural users. Collateral-free loans for MSMEs are enhanced with ₹4,000 crore in guarantees. Additionally, ₹1,000 crore is earmarked for fintech hubs, fostering innovation and collaboration within the sector," says Ms. Puri.

The union budget has tried to give impetus to employable skills, industry exposure of youth and support to students pursuing higher education in India. The health sector, and the



National Health Mission within it, have seen an increase in budget allocation this time. Newborn, young mothers and adolescents will continue to benefit immensely. I believe more collaborative and coordinated efforts among various sectors such as corporate, government and non-profits will further the vision of a developed India, says Santanu Mishra, Co-founder of Smile Foundation.

The budget presentation received mixed reactions from various stakeholders, with industry bodies welcoming certain initiatives while expressing concerns over certain aspects. Economists lauded the focus on infrastructure and healthcare, viewing them as critical for sustainable growth. However, some experts raised questions about the fiscal deficit targets and the implementation strategy of proposed reforms.

Overall, the Union Budget for 2024-25 outlined a comprehensive roadmap for economic recovery and growth, emphasising key sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and social welfare. The success of the budget lies in effective implementation and monitoring of the proposed measures to achieve the desired outcomes and propel India towards a path of prosperity and development.

## Opposition's take on the Budget

Overall, the opposition's response to the budget was characterised by a skeptical view of the government's fiscal policies, implementation strategies, sectoral priorities, and consultation processes. While acknowledging certain positive aspects of the budget, opposition parties called for greater transparency, accountability, and responsiveness from the

government to address the challenges facing the economy and ensure inclusive growth and development for all segments of society.

They expressed apprehensions over the government's fiscal deficit targets, questioning the feasibility of achieving them given the ambitious spending plans outlined in the budget. Some critics raised concerns about the potential impact of high fiscal deficits on inflation, interest rates, and overall macroeconomic stability.

The opposition highlighted the need for effective implementation of the proposed measures and raised doubts about the government's capacity to deliver on its promises. Questions were raised about the timeline for execution, allocation of resources, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the budgetary allocations translate into tangible outcomes on the ground.

Certain opposition parties criticised the allocation of funds across different sectors, arguing that the budget did not adequately prioritise key areas such as agriculture, rural development, job creation, and social welfare. Some critics pointed out perceived disparities in resource allocation and called for a more equitable distribution of funds to address the needs of all sections of society.

Opposition parties raised concerns about certain taxation policies proposed in the budget, questioning their impact on different segments of the population and the overall economy. Criticisms were directed towards specific tax reforms, incentives, and exemptions, with some parties calling for a more progressive and inclusive tax regime.

Some opposition leaders criticised the government for not

engaging in sufficient consultation with stakeholders, including state governments, industry bodies, and experts, during the budget-making process. They argued that a more inclusive and participatory approach could have led to better-informed decisions and more effective policy outcomes.

## Vox Populi

Below is the compilation of some quotes capturing different perspectives and reactions to various aspects of the budget, reflecting the diverse opinions and insights shared by stakeholders, experts, and commentators in response to the financial roadmap presented by the Finance Minister.

"This budget is a comprehensive roadmap towards economic recovery, growth, and social welfare, laying the foundation for a stronger and more inclusive India."

"The focus on healthcare and infrastructure in this budget reflects the government's commitment to building a resilient and sustainable future for all citizens."

"By promoting education, skill development, and innovation, this budget aims to empower the youth and drive India towards a path of prosperity and progress."

"The proposed taxation reforms are designed to simplify the tax system, promote compliance, and create a more conducive environment for businesses to thrive and expand."

"Investments in healthcare, education, and social welfare underscore the government's vision of a more equitable and inclusive society, where every citizen has the opportunity to succeed."

"The budget strikes a balance between short-term stimulus measures and long-term structural reforms, setting the stage for sustainable growth and development in the years to come."

"While there are positive aspects in the budget, effective implementation and monitoring will be key to realising the intended outcomes and maximising the impact of the proposed initiatives."

"The government's focus on infrastructure development is a welcome move that will not only create jobs but also enhance connectivity, productivity, and overall economic competitiveness."

"This budget sends a strong signal of the government's commitment to enhancing healthcare access, promoting research, and strengthening pandemic preparedness in the wake of global health challenges."

"As we navigate through uncertain times, the budget's emphasis on fiscal prudence, inclusive growth, and social welfare sets a positive tone for India's economic recovery and future prospects."

The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt.

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**BUDGET 2024-25**

# A BLUEPRINT FOR INDIA'S FUTURE UNDER NDA 3.0



MANOJ DUBEY

**B**udget Day is an eagerly awaited event in India, with both businesses and general public waiting with bated breath to understand the schemes and initiatives that could potentially benefit them. This year, due to elections, budget 2024-25 has been presented later than usual, i.e. Feb 1. The Union Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman on 23rd July presented her 7th consecutive budget and the first one by the BJP led NDA government of the third term. The budget reflected the changed political landscape with the BJP no longer enjoying a sole majority in the Lok Sabha. She laid down nine priorities of the budget with the focus on four major castes- Annadata (Farmers), Garib (Poor), Yuva (Youth) and Mahilayen (Women) with the theme based on employment, skilling, MSMEs and middle class.



## Productivity and resilience in agriculture

**S**he announced initiation of farmers into natural farming involving one crore farmers across the country, achieving self-sufficiency in pulses and oilseeds, 109 new high-yielding and climate resilient varieties of 32 field and horticulture crops will be released for cultivation by farmers. Financing of Shrimp farming processing and export will be facilitated through NABARD. Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) will cover farmers and their lands in three years and a digital crop survey in 400 districts will be conducted.

## Employment and Skilling



**S**he announced three new employment linked schemes, providing internship opportunities in 500 top companies to one crore youth in five years with an allowance of Rs 5000 per month along with one time assistance of Rs 6000 through CSR funds. Government will reimburse EPFO contributions of employees and employers up to Rs 3000 per month for first four years, expected to benefit 30 lakh youth. In a support to employers, govt will reimburse EPFO contributions for employers up to Rs 3000 per month for two years for all new hires. Over 20 lakh youth will be skilled in next five years, and 1000 industrial training institutions will be upgraded. The students who have not been benefitted from any govt. scheme will get education loan up to Rs 10 lakh at 3% interest.

## Inclusive Human Resource Development and Social Justice

**P**lan for endowment of rich states in eastern parts covering Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh titled 'Purvodaya' is being proposed for the generation of economic opportunities. Bihar alone will receive about Rs 56,000 crores for roads, airports, medical colleges, sports facilities etc. Under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, funds of Rs 15,000



crore will be provided to support basic infrastructure. These two major allies JDU and TDP have been suitably rewarded for their support to the government. A sum of Rs 3 lakh crore has been allocated for schemes benefiting girls and women. Over 100 branches of Indian Post Payment Bank will be setup in North East region.



## Manufacturing and Services

The Mudra loan limit has been enhanced to Rs 20 lakh from current Rs 10 lakh. The credit support to MSMEs during stress period is promised along with credit guarantee scheme in the manufacturing sectors. 12 industrial parks under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme will be setup.

## Urban Development

States have been encouraged to lower stamp duty on property purchased by women. Scheme has been announced to develop 100 weekly haats for street food hubs in select cities to encourage street markets. A programme to promote water management including sewage treatment and solid waste management projects for 100 large cities has also been announced. The construction of houses under PM aawas yojana will continue.



## Infrastructure



Provision of Rs 11.11 lakh crore (3.4% of GDP) for infrastructure along with Rs 1.5 lakh crore to states as long-term interest free loans to support resource allocation has been made.

## Irrigation and flood mitigation

Financial support for the flood management and related projects in Bihar, Assam, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh will be provided.



## Energy Security

Setting up of Bharat small modular reactor and newer technology for nuclear energy have been announced. A joint venture between NTPC and BHEL will be setup for a full scale 800 MW commercial plant, and financial support for shifting of micro and small industries to cleaner form of energy. Over one crore households will obtain free electricity under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

## Innovation, Research and Development



Anusandhan National Research Fund for basic research and prototype development will be operationalized. Private sector driven research and innovation with the financial support of Rs one lakh crore and a venture capital fund for Rs 1000 crore will be set up.

## Tourism

Comprehensive development of Vishnupad temple corridor and Mahabodhi temple modelled on Kashi Vishwanath temple corridor, development of Rajgir, a religious place for Hindus, Buddhists and Jains, development of Nalanda as tourist centre besides reviving its glorious university stature. The scenic beauty of Odisha, temples, monuments, wildlife and beaches to be improved to attract tourists.

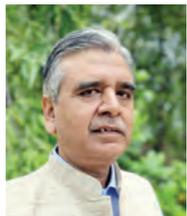
Standard deduction for salaried class has been hiked from current Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000 and with minor changes in the tax slabs. The highest tax slab for salaried person is 30% whereas in corporates it is 25%, this needs to be reconsidered. The hike in the tax in STCG and LTCG, albeit minutely, has not been well received by investors in the share market. During farmers agitation, the government promised to purchase pulses, maize and cotton crops, without quantity limitations, at MSP. This was the high time for the government to announce it in this budget to satisfy the farmers to some extent. The customs duty on gold has been reduced from 15% to 6%, which would lead to lower input cost, cut down smuggling, stimulate domestic manufacturing and boost exports. The total expected revenue will be Rs 31.3 lakh crore against the projected expenditure of Rs 48.2 lakh crore, the fiscal deficit is 4.9% of the GDP. The controlled fiscal deficit reflects healthy economy of the country.

The input cost of agriculture needs to be reduced, the equipments required by the farmers must be made free from all taxes. The country needs one more green revolution. The government's efforts in positioning India as a global tourist destination will create jobs, stimulate investment, and unlock opportunities in other sectors. The specific actions and reforms will help realize the goal of Viksit Bharat. Overall this is a good budget focusing on the key requirements of the country.

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# Budget: Where bureaucracy blocks good intentions



RAKESH KUMAR

Few months ago, I reviewed the election manifestos of both congress and BJP and given a thumbs up to BJP manifesto. Despite it the election results were below average and 400 seats remained a dream. The budget which attempts to realise the promises made in the manifesto has failed to evoke the public response in line with expectations. Industry and share market have responded reasonably well, then why the public is not cheering up FM for the budget.

I analysed the income tax in our neighbouring countries and found that we are not too heavily taxed nor we are least taxed country. Instead of doing research I opted for interviewing the people and listen to what is hurting them.

I chose senior citizen, common man and the students. Surprisingly they were angry yet not anti-establishment. Their grievances are more about insensitivities and anomalies. Solution suggested were simple and implementable. The gist of these suggestion reminded of the great strategist our own Chanakya who said,

“Just as one plucks fruits from a garden as they ripen, so shall a king have the revenue collected as it becomes due. Just as one does not collect unripe fruits, he shall avoid taking tax that is not due because that will make the people angry and spoil the very sources of revenue,” Arthashastra.

The senior citizen I interviewed first is 86 years old ex pub-

The budget may stimulate economy, industry or stock market but it has remained insensitive to the needs of the common man. Proposals are being implemented in such a way that basic tenet which were offered by the PM in first term are drown in the complex language of the bureaucracy.

lic sector executive with meagre pension to support. I knew him for a long time and he along with his friends, is a strong nationalist and a great admirer of our prime minister. The gist of our question and answers is given below.

**Author:** you are a well-versed person with personal finance, how you rate this year's budget proposals?

**Senior citizen:** The budget may stimulate economy, industry or stock market but it has remained insensitive to the needs of the common man. Proposals are being implemented in such a way that basic tenet which were offered by the PM in first term are drown in the complex language of the bureaucracy.

**Author:** India has improved on the ease of doing business index. Your comment is not in harmony with this fact. Will you elaborate more to make me understand?

**SC:** Ease of doing business and ease of managing personal finance are two different things. The budgets have made life easier for businessman but have taken away too many things from individual tax payers.

As a senior citizen my pain is limited to my **health insurance, investment income and long-term** gains being taxed and I will explain these issues only.

**Insurance:** Providing Social security is the job of the government. If government fails to do this, it should provide incentives to people for taking suitable insurance at their own.

It is the height of killing an initiative that on one hand insurance premium is eligible for tax deduction under section 80 C but the same is taxed with heavy GST. While the deduction has lots of restriction and limits, the taxing is for each premium paid.

The saddest part is that buying insurance is being taxed at the higher level along with luxurious items.

As I am getting older, my insurance premium is increasing and so is increasing the tax collection of the government. I never expected this cruelty.

**Author:** you are very right here minister Mr Nitin Gadkari has taken up this cause yesterday.

“Withdraw 18% GST on life and medical insurance premium” Gadkari writes to FM Sitharaman

**SC:** It surprises me, IRDAI might be recommending the same for years, then why two departments of the same ministry are not in harmony?

My next grievance is on dividend tax. Initially it was tax free, then It was taxed at source at the rate of 10 percent. Even though it jeopardised my 40 years old investment plan-



ning for retirement I accepted it. But the business houses and FII were unhappy as they could have saved this tax owing to other losses to be set off. So, they were arguing against it. The government listened and then tax deduction at source was changed to tax collection at the hands of the receiver.

**Author:** you are appreciating the move where is the problem?

**SC:** The problem is in implementation, the babus did not keep it at 10 percent but it is being taxed at the rate of whatever slab my income is qualified for. In my case it is being taxed at 30 percent. This is how Babus kill the good initiative.

Author then what should be the solution.

**SC:** the best solution was to allow credit for tax deducted at source as done in GST, then any body eligible to set of it with other losses would have done so.

The common man would have been saved from complication it is causing in filing tax return.

**Author:** It would be amazing.

**SC:** Long term capital gain tax is another issue created by Babus, reading the economic survey this year I could sense the worry of the FM about the extra ordinary growth of stock market and possibility of the creation of bubble there. I expected the government to come heavily on speculation. I never expected them to kill the long-term investors by increasing the long-term capital gains tax. Taxing is not the right way to control speculation else heavy taxation on horse racing would have killed the betting. The better way would have been increasing the lot size and the margin requirement for the future and option trading.

**Author:** you have made a valid point, but what is the harm in taking this route as well.

**SC:** equity investment is not a safe investment every profit is preceded by many losses. Masses are not educated in prudent investing and the regulators are always failing in controlling the fraudsters. Scams after scam like Mundhra scam, Harshad Mehta, Ketan Parikh and recent lapses at NSE, had put ordinary investor at disadvantage. Indian investor should

# Budget 2024



be given better treatment, at present the rules favour DII and FII more. Even if one wants to tax long term capital gains in equity it should be at a lower rate. Kindly tell me what can justify increasing it by 25 percent in a short period of one year. To my mind it is the helplessness of the investor which is being exploited by the babus. There is no rationale to increase it so fast to so high level.

**Author:** what about long term capital gain tax on other instruments?

**SC:** again, here the reason given for changing the rules, is to simplify. If that is the case then why not provide both options, as being done for filing of income tax return. In my case it is very painful change. I was in the process of selling my house as I plan to live with my daughter as now it is difficult to manage alone but due to some reason the process got delayed and my tax liability under new regime is much more. Hence it is not for simplicity but to extract the last pound of flesh.

**Author:** Don't you think that there is a bubble being

formed in real estate market which needs intervention?

**SC:** you may be right but the real culprit is black money not the lower middle class or upper middle class. Rules framed to curb the black money or hoarding of properties should not hurt common man. Had there been right thinking they would have excluded one house owners or people above 60 years selling their houses. It is the job of the Babus to study, identify and mitigate the pain being caused due to anomalies.

**Author:** Before I leave, I will like to ask, "you are frustrated yet I do not see anger towards the government, why it is so"?

**SC:** The basic spirit behind the working of the government is good. Corruption has definitely reduced in central government, terrorism is in control, area under the control of Mao Vadis, is reducing, infrastructure has improved. There are reasons to be happy.

The harsh fact is that beneficiaries may not vote in favour but the annoyed one will definitely leave. It may not hurt the

Babus but the leadership should remain in touch with their vote bank and listen carefully. The listening ear is not visible these days that is what is hurting people. There should be another "Man ki Baat" where citizen speak and the leaders listen.

The conversation ended but not the introspection. The next interview was with an MBBS student and luckily his father was also there. I expected the student to be happy for the concession given in the budget but the response was not as expected. Language is bit harsh but not the content!

**Author:** This budget is Kind to you as it has appreciated the hardship being faced by the students perusing higher studies, please respond.

**Students:** I am sorry to say that the person who wrote this benefit for FM to read in her budget speech as, "E-vouchers for this purpose will be given directly to 1 lakh students every year for annual interest subvention of 3 per cent of the loan amount" has no idea of the ground realities and does not have a sensitive mind.

**Author:** your response has surprised me; will you explain

it in simple terms!

**Student:** I don't have full data but my friends and myself competed for engineering, medical and management studies and there the total seats available in 2022 were; 15lacs, 91000 and 3.2 lacs which adds to 19.1 lacs and the courses are for 2 to four years hence we can multiply this number with 3 at least making it 57 lacs plus. I hope there are more professional courses in other fields as well. Which may take this figure to 75 lacs at least. So, the wizards of our finance ministry have made the minister to take the cause of one student for every set of 75 student that too if he or his parents qualify for loan. One will either pity on the wisdom or laugh at the most.

**Author:** it is easy to mock any initiative but very difficult to come out with solution! Being young you are future of India! Do you have any suggestion which can be implemented with ease.

**Student:** GST of 18 percent has been imposed on the fee. It is unfair to tax higher education. No sensible leader can put education at par the luxurious items. Only the civil servants living in AC room can think so. Every well-educated person will pay huge taxes once he starts earning then what is the reason to overburden the students with this tax. Our group feels that there should not be any GST on educational expenses. You remove it or not but don't fool the youth with statistical 'bhool bhulaiyya'. If you are really serious replace this provision with 3 percent reduction in GST on our fee. It will help every student. Why force higher loan and then pay part of interest. Why direct transfer of subsidy is not implemented here. It will save administrative cost, and hassles. Why students should waste their time for a benefit which 74 out of 75 are not going to get.

**Author:** you seem to be very angry! May I ask, whom did you vote in last election!

**Student:** Who else then present leadership!

**Author:** surprise, why it is so despite this anger?

**Student:** These anomalies will go sooner or later, moving from free ration to free education is not impossible. Eliminating terrorism is more important one of my friends is studying in Shillong now, which was impossible to think a decade ago.

I listen to man ki bat of PM. Some day he will also listen to my man ki bat as well.

I was speech less but not sure that the red tape and babus will take note. People have started believing that only voice being listened by the leadership or courts, is of alleged terrorists who win election from prison, Rohingyas who get houses despite not being citizen even! or that of protestors taking the nation to ransom. The loyal middle class is facing the music by paying taxes for these anti national forces. The common man is sleeping despite pain, when awakened it brought the Na Khaunga Na khane Dunga" man as Prime Minister. Now the only worry is, whether implementation of the pious intention,"na khane dunga" will lead to common man not able to eat until he qualifies for free ration?

Time to simplify, time to be caring to the middle class.

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# A Comprehensive Analysis

**F**inance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently presented the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, laying out the government's financial roadmap and policy direction for the coming year. This budget, like every year, aims to balance economic growth, social welfare, and fiscal prudence. However, the focus on specific measures and their impact on various segments of the population, particularly the salaried and middle-class, is of significant interest. This article delves into the main features of the budget, evaluates its implications for the salaried and middle-class, and compares the new tax slab with the old one.



NILABH KRISHNA

The Union Budget 2024-25 has earmarked a substantial portion of funds towards infrastructure development, a move aimed at stimulating economic growth. The budget emphasizes the development of roads, highways, railways, and urban infrastructure projects, which are expected to not only improve connectivity but also generate employment opportunities. In line with global trends, the budget also prioritizes green energy initiatives, with increased investments in solar,

wind, and hydroelectric power projects. This focus on renewable energy is intended to position India as a global leader in green energy and reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

For the agriculture and rural sectors, the budget continues to support reforms and initiatives aimed at improving productivity and sustainability. Increased funding has been allocated to crop insurance schemes, irrigation projects, and rural infrastructure. Additionally, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has received a higher budgetary allocation to provide more job opportunities in rural areas, helping to alleviate rural unemployment and boost rural incomes.

Healthcare and education are two critical areas that have received significant attention in the budget. There is a substantial increase in healthcare spending, with a focus on improving public healthcare infrastructure, setting up more primary health centers, and enhancing the National Health Mission. These measures aim to provide better healthcare access to the population, particularly in rural and underserved areas. In the education sector, the budget has allocated funds for the establishment of new schools, colleges, and skill development centers. This investment is aimed at improving literacy rates and employability, ensuring that the youth are equipped with the necessary skills for the job market.

Social welfare and women empowerment have also been key focuses of the budget. There is increased funding for various social welfare schemes targeting vulnerable sections of society, including senior citizens, differently-abled individuals, and economically weaker sections. For women empowerment, the budget has introduced new initiatives to support women entrepreneurs, increased funding for women's health and education programs, and measures to enhance women's safety.

Tax reforms and fiscal policies form a significant part of the budget. The introduction of a new tax regime with revised tax slabs aims to simplify the tax structure and provide relief to taxpayers. The new regime offers lower tax rates and is intended to reduce the compliance burden on taxpayers. Additionally, the budget includes indirect tax reforms, such as the rationalization of GST rates on certain goods and services, which is expected to boost consumption and support small businesses.

For the salaried class, the budget offers several benefits. The new tax regime provides revised tax slabs with lower rates, potentially leading to higher disposable income for those opting for the new regime. The standard deduction has been increased, offering additional relief by reducing taxable income. Furthermore, enhanced exemption limits for House Rent Allowance (HRA) and other allowances could benefit those living in rented accommodations. The budget's emphasis on infrastructure and industrial development is also expected to create more job opportunities, potentially benefiting the salaried class by providing better employment prospects.

The middle class, often considered the backbone of the economy, looks for budgetary measures that address their concerns related to taxation, cost of living, and social security.

**The Union Budget 2024-25 has earmarked a substantial portion of funds towards infrastructure development, a move aimed at stimulating economic growth. The budget emphasizes the development of roads, highways, railways, and urban infrastructure projects, which are expected to not only improve connectivity but also generate employment opportunities. In line with global trends, the budget also prioritizes green energy initiatives, with increased investments in solar, wind, and hydroelectric power projects. This focus on renewable energy is intended to position India as a global leader in green energy and reduce dependency on fossil fuels.**

The new tax regime with its lower tax rates and simplified structure aims to reduce the tax burden on the middle class. However, the decision to opt for the new or old regime depends on individual financial situations and preferences. The budget's focus on controlling inflation through various fiscal measures could help stabilize prices of essential goods and services, positively impacting the middle class's cost of living. Enhanced funding for social welfare schemes and healthcare initiatives provides a safety net for the middle class, ensuring better access to health services and financial security during emergencies.

The budget introduces a new tax regime while retaining the old one, allowing taxpayers to choose between the two. Under the old tax regime, the tax slabs were as follows: up to ₹2.5 lakh: Nil; ₹2.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh: 5per cent; ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh: 20per cent; and above ₹10 lakh: 30per cent. Taxpayers could claim various deductions and exemptions, such as Section 80C (up to ₹1.5 lakh), Section 80D (health insurance premiums), HRA, and standard deduction. The new tax regime for FY 2024-25 presents revised slabs: up to ₹3 lakh: Nil; ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh: 5per cent; ₹5 lakh to ₹7.5 lakh: 10per cent; ₹7.5 lakh to ₹10 lakh: 15per cent; ₹10 lakh to ₹12.5 lakh: 20per cent; ₹12.5 lakh to ₹15 lakh: 25per cent; and above ₹15 lakh: 30per cent. The new regime does not allow most deductions and exemptions, aiming for a simplified tax structure with lower rates.

Choosing between the new and old tax regimes depends on individual financial situations. The old regime is beneficial for those who have significant investments and expenses qualifying for deductions and exemptions. On the other hand, the new regime is suitable for those preferring a straightforward tax calculation with lower rates and minimal paperwork.

### Abolition of Angel Tax: A Watershed Moment for Indian Start-ups

On July 23, 2024, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-2025 in Parliament. Among various notable measures, the abolition of the Angel Tax stands out as a significant move aimed at fostering a more robust and dynamic start-up ecosystem in India. This decision is expected to bring about substantial changes not only for start-ups but also for the broader Indian economy. Today, we will delve into the concept of the Angel Tax, the reasons for its abolition, the anticipated benefits for start-ups and Indians, the role of start-ups in the Indian market, and other key highlights from the recent budget.

#### Understanding Angel Tax

The Angel Tax was introduced in 2012 as a measure to curb money laundering through unaccounted-for investments. It refers to the tax levied on the capital raised by unlisted companies through the issuance of shares where the share price is considered to be in excess of the fair market value. This "excess" is treated as income and taxed under the head "Income from Other Sources."

While the intention behind the Angel Tax was to prevent money laundering, it inadvertently created significant hurdles for genuine start-ups. Entrepreneurs often had to deal with complex valuation norms and arbitrary assessments by tax officials, leading to prolonged litigation and financial strain. The tax was seen as a deterrent to attracting investment, especially from angel investors who play a crucial role in providing early-stage funding to start-ups.

#### Abolition of Angel Tax: A Game-Changer for Start-ups

The abolition of the Angel Tax is expected to make the Indian start-up ecosystem more attractive to both domestic and international investors. By removing this tax, the government has eliminated a major pain point that was deterring potential investors from funding start-ups. This is likely to result in an increase in the flow of capital into the start-up sector, enabling start-ups to scale their operations and innovate more freely.

The removal of the Angel Tax sends a positive signal to aspiring entrepreneurs, encouraging them to take the plunge into the start-up world. With fewer regulatory hurdles and a more supportive environment, individuals are more likely to pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions. This could lead to the creation of more start-ups, fostering innovation and generating employment opportunities.



The abolition of the Angel Tax simplifies the taxation process for start-ups. Entrepreneurs can now focus more on growing their businesses rather than dealing with complex tax regulations and disputes. This will lead to a more efficient allocation of resources and a reduction in compliance costs.

#### Benefits for Indians and the Economy



Start-ups are known to be significant job creators. By facilitating the growth of start-ups, the abolition of the Angel Tax is expected to lead to the creation of numerous job opportunities across various sectors. This will contribute to reducing unemployment and improving the standard of living for many Indians.

#### Economic Growth

A thriving start-up ecosystem can drive economic growth by fostering innovation and competition. Start-ups often introduce disruptive technologies and business models that can transform industries and contribute to productivity gains. As start-ups grow and succeed, they generate wealth, which in turn boosts consumer spending and stimulates economic activity.



#### Attracting Global Talent

The abolition of the Angel Tax is likely to enhance India's reputation as a favorable destination for start-ups. This can attract not only investment but also global talent. Skilled professionals from around the world may be more inclined to work in India's vibrant start-up ecosystem, contributing to knowledge transfer and furthering the country's innovation capabilities.

#### Start-ups: The Backbone of the Indian Market Innovation and Disruption

Indian start-ups have emerged as key drivers of innovation and disruption across various industries. From fintech and e-commerce to healthtech and edtech, start-ups are leveraging technology to address pressing challenges and create new market opportunities. Their agility and willingness to experiment have positioned them at the forefront of digital transformation in India.

#### Economic Contribution

Start-ups contribute significantly to the Indian economy. According to various reports, the Indian start-up ecosystem has generated billions of dollars in value and has the potential to reach even greater heights. Successful start-ups often grow into large companies, contributing to GDP growth, generating tax revenues, and attracting foreign direct investment.



### Social Impact



Many Indian start-ups are focused on addressing social and environmental issues. For instance, start-ups in the renewable energy sector are working towards sustainable solutions, while those in the healthcare sector are improving access to quality medical services. By tackling these issues, start-ups are playing a crucial role in driving positive social change and improving the quality of life for millions of Indians.

#### Other Key Highlights of the Budget Focus on Infrastructure Development

The budget has allocated significant funds for infrastructure development, including roads, railways, and urban infrastructure. This is expected to boost economic activity, create jobs, and improve connectivity across the country.

#### Incentives for Manufacturing



To further strengthen the 'Make in India' initiative, the budget includes various incentives for the manufacturing sector. This includes tax breaks and subsidies aimed at encouraging domestic production and reducing reliance on imports.

#### Support for Agriculture



Recognizing the importance of the agricultural sector, the budget has earmarked substantial funds for agricultural infrastructure, irrigation projects, and farmer welfare schemes.

This is expected to improve productivity and income levels for farmers.

#### Healthcare and Education

The budget also places a strong emphasis on healthcare and education. Increased funding for healthcare infrastructure, medical research, and educational institutions is aimed at improving access to quality healthcare and education for all citizens.



#### Digital India Initiatives

In line with the vision of a digitally empowered India, the budget includes measures to promote digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and digital literacy. This is expected to accelerate the digital transformation of the economy and enhance the delivery of public services.

#### Conclusion

The abolition of the Angel Tax marks a significant milestone for the Indian start-up ecosystem. By removing a major barrier to investment, the government has created a more conducive environment for start-ups to thrive. This move is expected to drive innovation, create jobs, and contribute to economic growth. Coupled with other progressive measures in the budget, such as infrastructure development, incentives for manufacturing, support for agriculture, and investments in healthcare and education, the abolition of the Angel Tax reflects the government's commitment to fostering a vibrant and inclusive economy. As start-ups continue to emerge as the backbone of the Indian market, the benefits of these reforms will be felt across the entire spectrum of society, paving the way for a prosperous and dynamic future for India.

The Union Budget 2024-25 presents a mixed bag for the salaried and middle-class segments. On the positive side, the new tax regime with revised slabs provides an option for lower taxes, the increased standard deduction and enhanced allowances offer additional relief, and the focus on employment generation and infrastructure development promises better job prospects and economic growth. However, there are concerns as well. The new tax regime's lack of deductions and exemptions may not suit everyone, particularly those with high investment in tax-saving instruments. Additionally, the middle class might feel the pinch if inflation control measures do not effectively stabilize prices.

Overall, the budget aims to balance economic growth with social welfare, providing opportunities for both the salaried and middle-class to benefit. However, the actual impact will depend on how effectively the proposed measures are implemented and how individuals adapt to the new tax regime.

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## The Kargil War

# A Testament to Valour and Strategy

■ UDAY INDIA BUREAU

The Kargil War, fought between India and Pakistan from May to July 1999, remains etched in the annals of military history as a remarkable example of bravery, strategic acumen, and the indomitable spirit of the Indian Armed Forces. The war, which took place in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir, saw Indian soldiers reclaiming strategic peaks infiltrated by Pakistani troops and militants. This conflict, marked by high-altitude warfare, extreme weather conditions, and intense artillery bombardments, culminated in India's resounding victory on July 26, 1999, celebrated annually as Kargil Vijay Diwas.

The origins of the Kargil War lay in the long-standing territorial disputes between India and Pakistan, primarily over the region of Jammu and Kashmir. The Line of Control (LoC), established after the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971,

served as a de facto border between the two nations. However, in early 1999, Pakistani soldiers and militants, under the guise of Mujahideen, infiltrated the Indian side of the LoC, occupying key heights in the Kargil sector. Their objective was to cut off the crucial link between Srinagar and Leh, disrupt Indian supply lines, and internationalize the Kashmir issue.

In May 1999, local shepherds reported suspicious activities in the Kargil region, leading to initial reconnaissance by the Indian Army. Upon confirmation of large-scale intrusions, the Indian Army launched "Operation Vijay" to evict the infiltrators. The task was formidable, as the intruders had occupied well-fortified positions at altitudes ranging from 16,000 to 18,000 feet, providing them a significant tactical advantage.

## Artillery: The Game Changer

One of the pivotal factors in the success of Operation Vijay was the extensive use of artillery by the Indian Army. Artillery regiments played a crucial role in softening enemy positions, destroying bunkers, and providing covering fire for advancing infantry units. The Bofors FH-77B howitzers, in particular, proved to be highly effective, delivering accurate and devastating firepower.

Daily, approximately 3,300 artillery rounds were fired at Pakistani-held positions, totaling around 293,600 rounds over the course of the three-month-long conflict. This relentless bombardment created chaos and disarray in the enemy ranks, significantly degrading their combat capabilities. The psychological impact of constant shelling also caused severe stress and sleepless nights for the Pakistani soldiers, further undermining their morale.

## The Bravery of Indian Soldiers

While artillery played a critical role, the ultimate success of Operation Vijay was a testament to the bravery and determination of the Indian soldiers. Despite the challenging terrain, adverse weather conditions, and the enemy's entrenched positions, Indian troops launched numerous daring assaults to reclaim the occupied peaks.

Heroes emerged from the ranks, displaying extraordinary courage and selflessness. Captains VikramBatra, AnujNayyar, and Manoj Kumar Pandey, among others, led their men in ferocious battles, often engaging in close-quarters combat to oust the intruders. Their valor and sacrifices became legendary, inspiring the entire nation and earning them the highest military honours.

## Political Leadership and Military Strategy

The political leadership of the time, under Prime Minister AtalBihari Vajpayee, played a crucial role in the successful prosecution of the war. The government adopted a measured and strategic approach, providing the armed forces with the necessary autonomy and resources to execute their operations effectively.

Prime Minister Vajpayee's decision to give the military a free hand allowed the Indian Army to plan and execute operations without undue interference. This autonomy was instrumental in enabling rapid decision-making and dynamic responses to evolving battlefield conditions. The government also ensured that diplomatic efforts complemented military actions, isolating Pakistan internationally and garnering global support for India's stance.

## The Endgame: Victory at Kargil

By mid-July 1999, Indian forces had successfully recaptured most of the infiltrated positions. The decisive phase of the conflict saw intense fighting in key areas such as Tololing, Tiger Hill, and the Dras and Batalik sectors. Each victory was hard-fought, involving meticulous planning, precise execution,



and immense sacrifices.

The turning point came with the recapture of Tiger Hill, a strategic peak that had provided the enemy with a commanding view of the surrounding areas. The Indian Army's determined assault on Tiger Hill, backed by relentless artillery fire, culminated in its liberation on July 4, 1999. This victory marked a significant blow to the enemy's morale and operational capabilities.

Subsequent operations continued to clear remaining intrusions, and by July 26, 1999, Indian forces had regained control of all the occupied territory. The war officially ended with Pakistan withdrawing its remaining troops under international pressure, and Kargil Vijay Diwas was declared to commemorate this hard-fought victory.

The Kargil War was a defining moment in India's military history, showcasing the resilience, bravery, and strategic acumen of the Indian Armed Forces. The relentless artillery bombardment, coupled with the indomitable spirit of Indian soldiers, proved decisive in reclaiming the occupied heights and securing victory.

The political leadership's decision to grant the military a free hand, along with effective coordination between diplomatic and military efforts, played a pivotal role in the successful outcome of the conflict. As the nation commemorates Kargil Vijay Diwas, it pays tribute to the courage and sacrifices of the soldiers who fought valiantly to protect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Their legacy continues to inspire future generations, reminding us of the price of freedom and the valor required to defend it.

# Modi 3.0's First Budget and Climate Action My Perspective



The budget's proposals represent a robust commitment to addressing climate change and advancing green energy initiatives. These measures are expected to significantly impact India's environmental sustainability and position the country as a leader in the global push towards a greener future.



VIRAL DESAI

A few days ago, our Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented a significant and impactful budget for the third term of the Modi government. This budget is also highly important from the perspective of environmental protection. In her latest budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a series of ambitious initiatives aimed at combating climate change and fostering green energy. These measures represent a significant advancement in India's pursuit of sustainable development and environmental protection. This article analyzes the key proposals introduced in the budget, emphasizing their potential impact on climate change mitigation and the advancement of renewable energy sources.

## Increased Allocation for Renewable Energy Projects



The budget proposes a substantial increase in funding for renewable energy projects. Specifically, the allocation has been raised by 30% compared to the previous year, amounting to INR 50,000 crore. This significant boost is expected to expedite the development of solar, wind, and other renewable energy infrastructure, thereby reducing dependence on fossil fuels. This investment not only promotes sustainable power generation but also supports job creation in the green sector and encourages technological advancements.

## Promotion of Electric Vehicles (EVs)

Several incentives are included to drive the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). The budget introduces a new tax rebate scheme offering up to INR 1 lakh for EV purchases and provides subsidies to manufacturers investing in EV technology. These measures aim to lower vehicular emissions, a major source of urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The focus on EVs reflects a global trend and positions India as a front-runner in transitioning to cleaner transportation alternatives.

## Support for Green Hydrogen Initiatives

The budget highlights green hydrogen as a pivotal element of its climate strategy. An allocation of INR 15,000 crore is dedicated to research and development in green hydrogen technologies and pilot projects. Green hydrogen, produced from renewable energy sources, holds promise for decarbonizing energy-intensive industries like steel and cement. This focus on green hydrogen demonstrates India's commitment to advancing innovative, sustainable technologies.

## Enhanced Afforestation and Conservation Efforts

Significant resources are allocated for afforestation and conservation efforts, with INR 10,000 crore earmarked for these projects. This funding is aimed at enhancing carbon sequestration, preserving biodiversity, and maintaining ecological balance. By prioritizing reforestation and habitat protection, the government addresses climate change and environmental degradation, contributing to the long-term health and resilience of India's ecosystems.

## Introduction of Green Bonds

To finance green projects, the budget proposes the issuance of green bonds worth INR 20,000 crore. These bonds will attract investments from domestic and international markets, directing funds towards environmentally friendly initiatives. This strategic move seeks to mobilize financial resources for sustainable development while offering investors opportunities to support climate-positive projects.

## Focus on Energy Efficiency

The budget outlines plans to implement stricter energy efficiency standards and promote energy-saving technologies across industries, buildings, and households. By enhancing energy efficiency, the government aims to reduce carbon emissions and decrease the overall environmental footprint. The proposed measures include incentives for adopting energy-efficient appliances and technologies, contributing to reduced energy consumption.



## Support for Climate-Resilient Agriculture

Addressing the impact of climate change on agriculture, the budget allocates INR 5,000 crore to support climate-resilient farming practices. This funding will be used to provide farmers with knowledge and tools to adapt to changing climatic conditions, ensuring food security and sustainable agricultural growth. The emphasis on climate-smart agriculture reflects a comprehensive approach to tackling climate change, addressing both mitigation and adaptation challenges.



Overall, the budget's proposals represent a robust commitment to addressing climate change and advancing green energy initiatives. These measures are expected to significantly impact India's environmental sustainability and position the country as a leader in the global push towards a greener future.

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## Transforming Manipur's Economy

# With Renewable Energy

■ DR ATOM SUNIL SINGH

Considering the recent economic crisis and happenings in general, there is a pressing need to take up serious consideration of how to generate income in Manipur. In doing so, one seeks new ways; at this juncture, the instance of China efficiently harnessing the powers of wind and solar energies is very encouraging. It became self-sufficient in energy and generated substantial income out of the excess renewable power sold by it. Like China, Manipur can also adopt the same roadmap towards economic independence and stability by tapping its renewable energy potential.

### Vision for Renewable Energy in Manipur

Manipur is a place where these natural resources are easily exploited to meet both wind and solar power generation. Here, a movement towards locating projects that previously failed due to hydroelectric assets can provide the economic fillip the state badly needs. Not only are renewable projects like these sustainable and eco-friendly, but they also have a local employment effect, driving economic growth from the ground up.

The geographical location of Manipur works as an added advantage. Sun rays are abundant for most part of the year and the varied terrain could be used for both wind and solar energy generation. But, the road from potential to reality needs to be tread carefully. The failure of the hydroelectric project in the past has undoubtedly scarred this region; thus, any new venture must have a judicious mix of caution and ambition. And, if neurotically learned from past fiasco, adopting new technologies may let Manipur translate its potentials

at renewable energy into a cornerstone of economic revival.

Li Daxiong, a wind energy specialist from Hunan, China and extensive researcher on Manipur, is quite illuminating on the feasibility of generating wind power in the region. Li Daxiong feels that despite being cheaper than wind power, solar alone may not be able to meet the vast energy requirements of Manipur. He suggests that this large requirement of energy could be more reliably and robustly met by mixing wind and solar power.

### Steps to Develop Wind and Solar Power in Manipur

An in-depth feasibility study regarding the identification of optimal sites for wind and solar farms has to be conducted. It involves analysing the pattern of winds, solar irradiance, and geographical factors so that the maximum efficiency with least environmental impact is ensured.

The assessment will be broad in nature and comprehensive. It must include a review of meteorological data to identify the areas with the highest wind speeds and solar irradiance. It must go further to review the terrain in terms of its ability to host wind turbines and solar panels. It has to address environmental impact assessments so that it does not harm local ecosystems or biodiversity.

In addition, it should also consider the social impacts of the projects respecting communities and social impacts concerning the changes of land uses and benefits and associated risks for local population in the long term. This phase would also need to engage stakeholders to address their

concerns and present oneself as considerate to gain support of the community.

Li Daxiong said that Manipur currently consumes 700 million kilowatt-hours of electricity each year, and the current Loktak Hydropower Project cannot support a quarter of the demand in Manipur, the rest of the electricity is most likely to be purchased by the people of Manipur from elsewhere. So, the first phase of the 25 4.0-megawatt wind turbines installed in Manipur will guarantee more than 2,000 usable hours of wind power in areas with abundant wind power, which means that the total annual power generation will exceed 200 million kilowatt hours. This is a huge guarantee for Manipur power generation, and the wind power generation will last for 20 years. Calculated at 0.5 yuan / kWh, the project will pay off in 8 years, making the project a net profit for the next 12 years.

### Investment and Funding

Ensuring there is enough finance is vital. The funds can come from government grants, international aid, and private investments. Collaboration with some renewable energy companies with experience would be able to provide the finance and technical expertise needed.

Of course, renewable energy investments, like any other infrastructure, are capital-intensive but long-term beneficial much more than the cost one incurs to put them up. The role that would probably be most important is providing subsidies, fiscal incentives, and low-interest loans to attract investors, from which governments have the biggest share. Although international organisations and development banks also can do it, the projects might contribute significantly to global climate goals.

Public-private partnerships can attract private investment. By partnering with existing renewable energy companies, Manipur can take advantage of skills and resources. Such partnerships can be resorted to, in order to share the risks and ensure the completion of the project within time and budget.

The total budget for the wind power project is estimated by Li Daxiong at around 675 million RMB, or about Rupees 800 crore. This includes the cost of the wind turbines (375 million RMB), the transportation cost of Rupees 173 Crores, a labour cost of Rupees 58 crores, and the installation cost of Rupees 116 crores. Taking its total to be very high, this area seriously needs to be probed with various funding options, which may include governmental support, private investments, and international aids. Li Daxiong also hints that smaller-scale projects might be more accessible for private investments, taking into consideration very low costs and quicker returns on investments.

Li Daxiong further explains that individual entrepreneurs or smaller investors may be more interested in setting up small-scale wind power projects. These small projects take a capital investment of merely about 20 million RMB—roughly Rupees 23 Crores—which can repay their investment in the first 10 years, and subsequent to this, they are pure profit. Doing so can guarantee an independent reliable power supply for self-use and, subsequently, sell excess power for added profit.

### Infrastructure Development

This is followed by infrastructure construction, ranging from installing wind turbines to solar panels. Equally significant is the

Manipur is a place where natural resources are easily exploited to meet both wind and solar power generation. Here, a movement towards locating projects that previously failed due to hydroelectric assets can provide the economic fillip the state badly needs. Not only are renewable projects like these sustainable and eco-friendly, but they also have a local employment effect, driving economic growth from the ground up.

development of infrastructure grids able to carry and distribute the power generated.

Infrastructure construction commences with site preparation to setting equipment in place. In wind power, the erection of such structures is for the purpose of turbine setting and establishing access roads. Solar power projects involve placing photo-voltaic panels, inverters, and mounting systems.

A robust grid is a key element in an effective power distribution infrastructure and should include, wherever necessary, upgrading transmission lines and constructing new lines. Smart grid technologies must be integrated into it. In addition to dealing with intermittency, grid stability and reliability are basic to the idea that more and more use of renewable energy sources is made. Further, energy storage helps smoothen out fluctuations in supply and demand.

According to Li Daxiong, transportation and installation of wind turbines are likely to be substantial cost factor drivers. Transport logistics of large wind turbine components to various sites in remote areas of Manipur and building of access roads and other required infrastructure can increase project costs considerably. This again underlines the great importance of proper planning and efficient implementation in order to cost efficiently make the project realistic.

Energy storage power stations could play a very critical role in ensuring that the renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar, are stable and reliable. Such stations can store excess energy generated during high production periods to later release it when generation is low, hence offering a constant flow of energy and avoiding reliance on fossil fuels at peak periods. Implementing energy storage solutions like batteries or pumped hydro storage can significantly enhance the efficiency and resilience of Manipur's renewable energy infrastructure.

### Regulatory Framework

Of paramount importance for establishing a supporting environment for renewable energy projects is the enactment of policies and regulations that are supportive of such projects. Collaboration with local and national governments can ensure compliance with environmental and safety standards while providing incentives for renewable energy investments.

An unambiguous and empowering regulatory framework is very important for the success of these projects. The development of policies encouraging investment may be subject to fast

track permitting and pre-estimating adherence to environmental and safety standards. Some the measures that the government can put in place in order to promote renewable energies include setting of targets for renewable energies, feed-in tariffs, and net metering policies.

Besides community involvement regulations, other regulations should pertain to land use and zoning. Transparent and inclusive decision-making processes can help in building trust and attaining support for the development and implementation of renewable energies. In the process of establishment, enforcement of mechanisms for monitoring and compliance should be in place to ensure that the projects meet all the related laws and regulations.

Li Daxiong says it is all about government support and partnership. By policies and incentives set by the government, investments are attracted into projects and make it certain that a renewable energy project will be a success. On top of that, he indicates that if to meet the objective of energy independence and sustain developmental plans of Manipur, then the government has to play an active role in terms of support and resources required to make this happen.

#### Training and Employment

Providing training programmes in the renewable energy sector to the local employees will help develop the workforce with skills, hence creating jobs. The local value from this goes not only to the local economy but also empowers the communities in a big way.

Training and education are much required to create the workforce required for the renewable energy sector. These will include technical and vocational programmes, apprenticeships, partnership with institutions of learning, and the necessary training opportunities. Manipur shall acquire a workforce with relevant operation and maintenance skills in renewable energy installations.

Employment opportunities in renewable energy fall under areas such as engineering, construction, operations, and maintenance. The construction of renewable energy projects in the mentioned areas serves to provide a way in which jobs can be created within the local economy and can be regarded as a solution to high unemployment. The development further creates an experienced workforce that, in turn, attracts increased investment and innovation.

Li Daxiong emphasises that wind power projects in Manipur can provide a significant opportunity for local communities in terms of employment. Opportunities for employment either can be in terms of construction, installation, maintenance, and services over the life of these projects. Human resources development in form of extending training opportunities may even be associated with educational institutions.

#### Community Engagement

It is more and more crucial to still engage with local communities, involve them in the process, and reassure them with their concerns. Emphasizing the benefits, like job creation or caring for the environment, maybe, coupled within a way, harbour a sense of ownership and spontaneous cooperation.

Community engagement is a cornerstone of any renewable energy project. The process includes open and transparent



communication, participatory decision-making, and addressing concerns from the community. Engaging local communities early on in a process can help projects build trust and gain a social license to operate.

By emphasising the areas of benefits that shall be derived from the renewable energy projects, such as creation of opportunities for employment, development of infrastructure, and environmental cleanliness improvement, the people can support the projects. Involvement of communities in these planning and implementation phases will bring a sense of ownership and cooperation.

Li Daxiong believes in community participation so that the local communities are brought on board, and their concerns are heard. A lot of benefits come with renewable energy projects for communities, including opportunities in employment, infrastructure development, and sustainability. Proper engagement may create a sense of ownership and cooperation contributing to the success of the projects in the long run.

#### Marketing and Sales

What is more important adding salt to the income is the need to develop selling strategies for this excess energy either to the neighbours or integrating it into the national grid. Export opportunity may also be checked further with an intention of increasing the revenue.

Effective marketing and sales strategies are key for generating income from renewable energy projects. This will help in identifying potential buyers while negotiating on the power purchase agreements (PPAs) and getting around export ventures. Infusing the generated power in the national grid will allow Manipur to sell excessive electricity to other regions, thus earning money and contributing to enhanced national energy security.

Exporting renewable energy also makes a good area for tapping, especially where the neighbouring region is an energy deficit area or has renewable energy targets. Creation of cross-border transmission lines to foster regional collaboration will

help Manipur tap into enhanced revenue streams and bigger markets.

Li Daxiong remarks that selling surplus power can bring huge revenue for Manipur. He suggests such sale can be done by assimilating the generated power into the national grid or even exporting power to neighbouring states. Proper marketing and sales strategy build-up is required to finalise these modalities to realise substantial benefits and make the project financially viable.

#### Learning from China's Success

The major factors behind these achievements made by China in the renewable energy sector comprise strong support from the government in terms of policies and incentives. In Manipur, strong government support through subsidies, tax breaks, and favourable tariffs will definitely help.

The growth of China in renewable energy is faster. Strong support from the government and strategic plans assists in this growth. Implemented policies and strategic national plans established on that basis.

There are incentives, which materialise in the forms of subsidies, tax concessions, and preferential tariffs for attracting investments in renewable energy; Manipur stands to gain by formulating nil policies to this effect, so it can start attracting investments and energies which will be part of the Growth process of renewable energies.

Secondly, China has channelled its efforts towards R&D, leading to technological innovations and cost reductions in renewables. Expenditure on R&D should give Manipur access to newer technology, with more efficient and economical improved structures for projects related to renewable energy.

The scale at which China operates on mega-sized projects derives economies of scale from that scale, which decreases costs and ensures efficiency. Manipur can also scale up smaller projects initially for the development of necessary infrastructure in the state till it becomes able to compete with the rest of the world in the renewable energy market.

#### Meeting the Challenges of Manipur

The need to have sustainable economic solutions for Manipur has just cropped up, especially tied to the very recent violence on May 3rd, 2023. Much economic activity and community involvement in peacemaking and stability will come with projects on renewable energy sources. Lastly, with these projects placed at the local level, community ownership and engagement will be developed, putting a clear sign of improved development and stability.

The current state of violence and instability in Manipur is putting a challenge to find long-term economic solutions to tackle social economies. Such renewable energy projects can be definitely proved very effective since they draw lots of jobs and also stimulate the local economy, with lots of community participation.

Such economic opportunities brought by projects in renewable energy sources can reduce the poverty that normally fuels instability. Renewable energy projects offer jobs and the stimulation of local economy so that they can lead to peace and stability.

This will also include community involvement in developing renewable energy projects. With this, the participation of the local community will make a sense of ownership and cooperative spirit with the projects. For this, it may go a long way in improving overall support and trust in the projects; thus, participation could result in better development activities that cement homeostasis for long-term development and stability.

#### Conclusion

With the success of China, strategic steps for implementation, and facing the local problems head-on, at last, light at the end of a tunnel offers a sustainable green and prosperous future. Renewable energy projects provide a beacon, a way toward economic independence, environmental sustainability, and social stability.

Renewable energy projects open avenues for a stream of income that is sustainable and creates jobs for Manipur. By harnessing the potentials of wind and solar power, Manipur can bring change, bring in an income stream, and create jobs and promote environmental sustainability. Following China's lead and taking strategic actions will allow Manipur to tap into its renewable energy potential.

The success of renewable energy projects in addressing local challenges, such as the recent violence and instability, is very important. Projects based on renewable energy can contribute to the creation of peace and stability in this region due to the economic opportunities and community presence among its people.

Such renewable energy projects bring new hope into Manipur and light the way into economic independence, environmental sustainability, and social stability. If Manipur turns towards renewable energy, the economic landscape will be transformed and sustainable, and a prosperous future would begin to be carved out.

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# Tap into the numbers

## Budget insights on WASH

**The budget allocation for the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation reflects a steady upward trajectory, underscoring the importance of scaling financial commitments to meet the growing demands of the WASH sector.**

■ CENTRE FOR BUDGET AND GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

The Union Budget 2024–25 of India outlines key priorities and financial allocations aimed at improving the nation's social and economic conditions. This article focuses on the critical area of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), drawing insights from the detailed budget analysis conducted by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) titled "Revisiting the priorities: An analysis of Union Budget 2024–25."

The WASH sector continues to be a central focus in the Union Budget 2024–25, with substantial financial resources allocated to enhance access to clean water and sanitation facilities. The Ministry of Jal Shakti, through its flagship programs, the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), remains at the forefront of efforts to

provide safe drinking water and improve sanitation infrastructure.

Within this framework, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DoDWS) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) have made significant strides in expanding access to safe drinking water and enhancing sanitation infrastructure across both rural and urban India.

An analysis of the budget reveals a consistent increase in funding for the DoDWS, which accounts for 1.61% of the total budget. This aligns with the overall trend observed over the past five years. However, the challenge of scaling up financial commitments to meet the growing demands of the WASH sector persists, as the allocation for water and sanitation as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product

(GDP) has remained relatively unchanged. The sustainability of this budgetary trend beyond the achievement of JJM targets remains to be seen.

### Access to clean water: Continued budgetary commitment to Jal Jeevan Mission

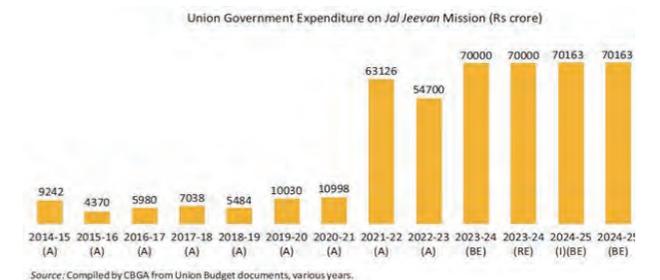
The Jal Jeevan Mission, initiated in 2019, has as its primary objective the provision of functional household tap connections (FHTCs) to every rural dwelling in India by the year 2024. This ambitious endeavour, aligned with the government's 'Har Ghar Jal' vision, has witnessed significant progress.

According to the latest data from the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation's Management Information System, the number of rural households with FHTCs has surged from 32.36 million in August 2019 to 139.69 million by December 2023. While states such as Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Telangana, and certain Union Territories have achieved complete coverage, states like Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and West Bengal are yet to reach this milestone. The national average stands at 72.5% coverage.

This substantial increase of 67% in rural households with access to tap water connections since the mission's inception translates to approximately 139.7 million households enjoying the convenience of in-premise tap water supply.

Reflecting its continued priority, the Jal Jeevan Mission has secured a modest increase in allocation within the Union Budget for 2024–25. While the majority of these funds are directed towards constructing the infrastructure necessary for delivering piped water to households, the critical challenge lies in ensuring the sustained availability and safety of this water supply once the infrastructure is in place.

The Standing Committee on Water Resources' 2022–23



report highlighted a significant discrepancy between the allocated funds for the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and the actual expenditure. This underutilisation of funds is evident in the gap between budgeted estimates, revised estimates, and the project's on-ground performance. Furthermore, the inconsistent utilisation of funds across different states, influenced by varying infrastructural and institutional capacities, complicates the issue. To ensure that substantial investments in the drinking water sector translate into tangible improvements in access to clean water and sanitation for all, particularly the most vulnerable populations, addressing these disparities is crucial.

### Beyond tap connections: Fostering sustainability and community engagement in the Jal Jeevan Mission and Atal Bhujal Yojana

The Jal Jeevan Mission is crucial to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 6, ensuring universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation. However, JJM's objectives extend beyond household tap connections, emphasising groundwater management and water quality. Community engagement in water management is essential, especially in water-scarce regions, making integration with schemes like the Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY) vital.



A comprehensive strategy involves integrating data for water usage, metering consumption, debating pricing for usage beyond limits, and empowering local stakeholders through capacity building and social mobilisation. Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) and community resource persons, like Anurakshaks in Bihar and Jal Sahiyyas in Jharkhand, exemplify effective community participation.

The ABY, launched in 2020 with a Rs 6,000 crore outlay, aims to enhance groundwater management in water-stressed regions. However, budget allocations have decreased, with Rs 1,778 crore allocated for 2024–25, highlighting the need for higher funding and strengthened capacities. Efficient water supply monitoring requires precise data and measurement, but challenges in water availability and quality data persist. The eJalShakti dashboard shows an average water supply of 250 litres per capita per day (LPCD), far exceeding JJM's recommended 55 LPCD, underscoring the need for rigorous data collection and analysis.

Fund Allocation, Release and Expenditure on Atal Bhujal Yojana (in Rs Crore)

State	Funds Allocated 2023-24	Funds Released 2023-24	Expenditure 2023-24	Funds Allocated 2024-25
Gujarat	334.92	285.89	191.68	286.3
Haryana	307.98	489.66	272.03	163.52
Karnataka	251.01	406.88	489.73	234.5
Madhya Pradesh	137.88	58.92	81.31	143.45
Maharashtra	355.87	242.66	304.2	302.16
Rajasthan	473.33	144.64	176.89	563.43
Uttar Pradesh	302.43	92.66	71.47	397.37

Source: Atal Bhujal Yojana Dashboard, accessed on July 23, 2024.

Water tariffs to reduce overuse have emerged as crucial for effective management. The Standing Committee on Water Resources (2022) highlighted subsidies for electricity and fer-

tilisers, which encourage water-intensive crops even in water-scarce regions, calling for policy attention and sustainable agricultural practices. These measures should align with environmental conservation efforts, addressing the intricate connections between agriculture, water management, and sustainable development.

**Transforming sanitation: The journey of the Swachh Bharat Mission and the challenges ahead**

Launched in 2014, the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) has fundamentally transformed India's sanitation and hygiene landscape. Evolving from toilet construction to ensuring their sustained use, functionality, safety, and environmental sustainability, SBM has entered its second phase (SBM 2.0) since 2020. This phase aims to maintain the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status achieved in the first phase while addressing comprehensive solid and liquid waste management in all villages.

A significant budget is essential for this complex sanitation scenario, aiming to sustain and enhance the ODF status. According to the SBM dashboard, 442,574 villages still need to reach the ODF Plus category, emphasising the need for financial investment not only in infrastructure but also in maintaining community toilets. Despite this, the Union budget for 2024–25 has not increased SBM's funding from the previous year. SBM-Urban saw a 54% increase in 2023–24, but the current year's allocation remains static, even as Phase II strategically focuses on Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM).

The government plans to promote water supply, sewage treatment, and solid waste management projects in 100 bankable towns, yet this could exclude smaller towns. Funding for SBM-Gramin has been reduced by over 50%

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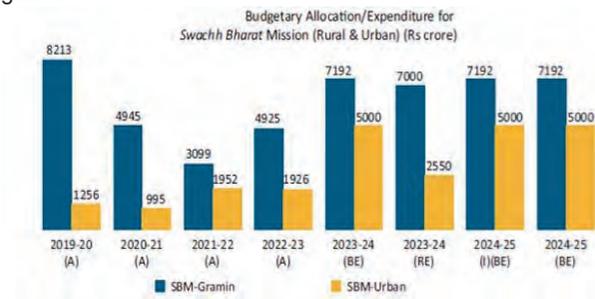
Urban sanitation issues are exacerbated by disparities in service delivery between formal settlements and informal slums, where reliance on inconsistent water supplies undermines sustainability. In SBM-R Phase II, new SLWM interventions face capacity-



building and inter-departmental coordination challenges, with funds divided between water and sanitation. Despite support for mechanical desludging and waste management, manual scavenging persists. The

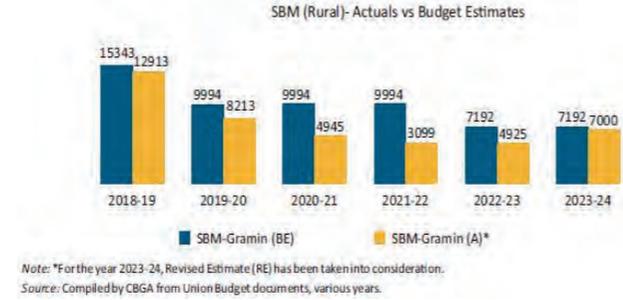
National Action Plan for Mechanised Ecosystem (NAMASTE) aims to abolish manual cleaning and support affected workers, yet gaps remain between initial budgets and revised figures.

from 2016–17 to 2022–23. Actual spending has consistently fallen short of budgeted estimates, highlighting a gap between planned commitments and execution. The static budget allocation could signal a de-prioritization of implementation, which is concerning given SBM II's ambitious goals.



States face challenges, particularly in Scheduled areas, where local government departments struggle to convince

institutions. This indicates a need to realign funding strategies to support the mission's critical objectives, especially in waste management. The SBM has exhibited variation between budget estimates and allocations, calling for better planning and forecasting. Underutilization of allocated funds underscores the necessity of refining operational strategies to meet the mission's ambitious objectives.



Key challenges include a lack of robust awareness within communities, capacity building, and training for local implementing bodies. Cultural barriers, particularly around menstrual hygiene and toilet usage, hinder behavioural change. Overcoming these barriers requires sustained community engagement and education campaigns. Geographical challenges further complicate SBM-II's implementation, especially in remote areas where consistent water supply is crucial.

Urban sanitation issues are exacerbated by disparities in service delivery between formal settlements and informal slums, where reliance on inconsistent water supplies undermines sustainability. In SBM-R Phase II, new SLWM interventions face capacity-building and inter-departmental coordination challenges, with funds divided between water and sanitation. Despite support for mechanical desludging and waste management, manual scavenging persists. The National Action Plan for Mechanised Ecosystem (NAMASTE) aims to abolish manual cleaning and support affected workers, yet gaps remain between initial budgets and revised figures.

The discontinuation of the Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) last year is a setback for marginalised sanitation workers. Effective water resource management and the success of SBM Phase II depend on a unified WASH strategy and financing, considering India's geographical diversity. This requires substantial investments in water management infrastructure, community training, and water treatment facilities. Enhancing capabilities, encouraging cross-departmental collaboration, fostering cultural sensitivity, and tailoring interventions to specific needs are essential. Empowering local communities and governments is crucial to achieving sustainable water management, improved sanitation, and hygiene across India.

(<https://www.indiawaterportal.org/articles/tap-numbers-budget-insights-wash>)

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## Police Should Undergo Training On UP Gangsters Act Procedure : Allahabad HC

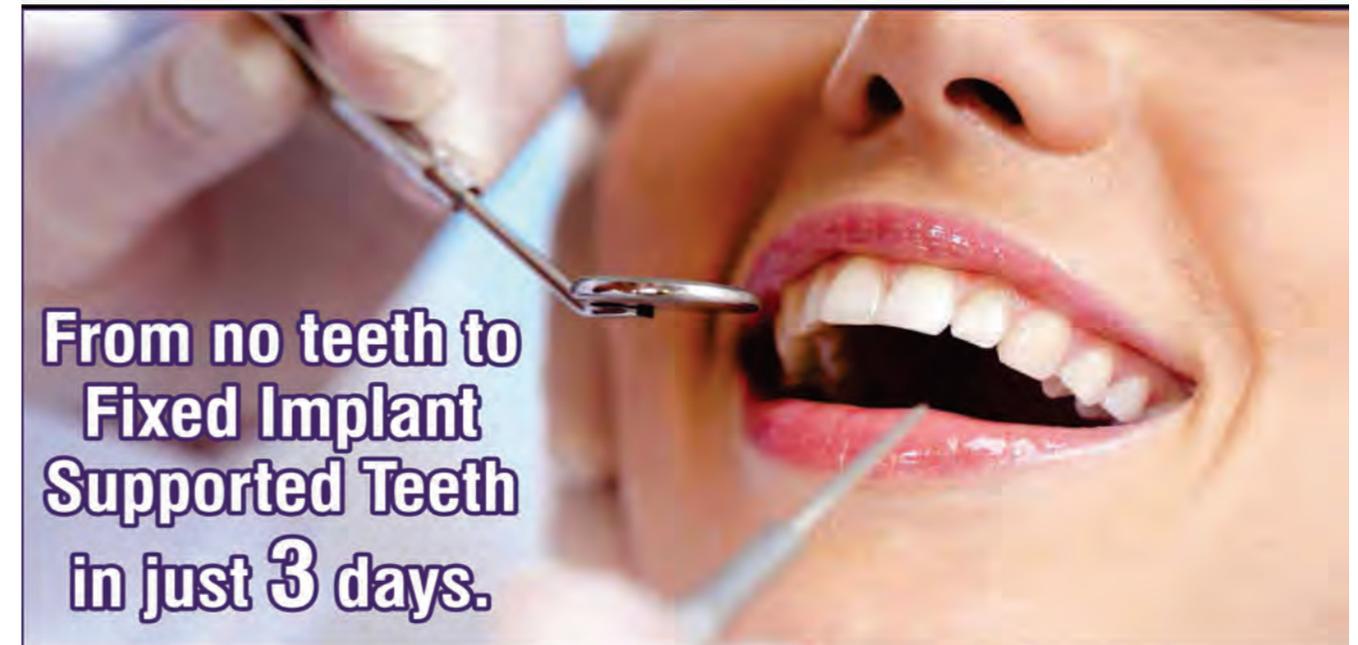
■ SANJEEV SIROHI

It is most significant to note that Allahabad High Court has in a most learned, laudable, landmark, logical and latest judgment titled Abdul Lateef @ Mustak Khan vs State of UP and 2 Others in Criminal Misc. Writ Petition No.: 9930 of 2024 with 10379 of 2024 with 10852 of 2024 with 10916 of 2024 and with 10968 of 2024 and cited in Neutral Citation No. - 2024:AHC:119716-DB that was reserved on 15.7.2024 and then finally pronounced on 26.7.2024 has directed the Uttar Pradesh State Government to send its police officials, district magistrates and nodal officers under the UP Gangsters and Anti Social Activities (Prevention) Act for training so that they learn to act in accordance with the law. We need to note that the Division Bench of Hon'ble Mr Justice Siddhartha Varma and Hon'ble Mr Justice Arun Kumar Singh Deswal flagged the rampant violation that was mushrooming of the procedure in preparation of the gang chart under the UP Gangsters and Anti Social Activities (Prevention) Rules, 2021. It must be also noted that the notable judgment was

passed on a batch of five writ petitions that were challenging the preparation of gang charts against the accused by the authorities. The Division Bench made it absolutely clear that such laws must be tested on the old saying that "99 accused may be acquitted, but one innocent person should not be punished."

At the very outset, this remarkable, robust, rational and recent judgment authored by Hon'ble Mr Justice Arun Kumar Singh Deswal for a Division Bench of the Allahabad High Court comprising of Hon'ble Mr Justice Siddhartha Varma and himself sets the ball in motion by first and foremost putting forth in para 1 that, "As a common question is involved in all the above five writ petitions, all the writ petitions are being disposed of by a common judgement."

To put things in perspective, the Division Bench envisages in para 2 that, "Basic issue in all the above writ petitions is preparation of gang chart in accordance with the U.P. Gangsters and Anti Social Activities (Prevention) Rules,



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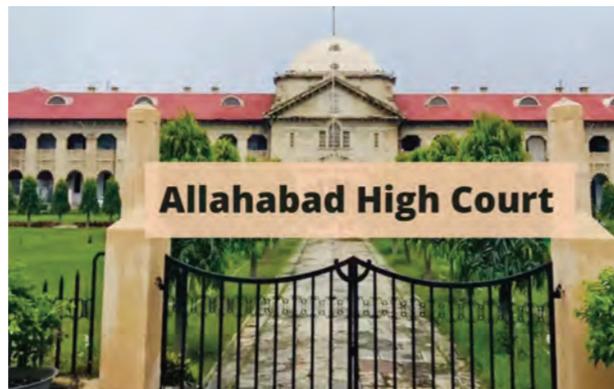
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The Allahabad High Court has in the fitness of things very rightly, rationally and robustly directed the State authorities and police to undergo training on UP Gangsters Act procedures. It was without doubt the crying need of the hour also!



2021 (hereinafter referred to as "Rules, 2021"). In all the above writ petitions first information reports, under the U.P. Gangsters and Anti Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986 (hereinafter referred to as "Gangsters Act"), have been challenged on the ground that while preparing the gang charts of the FIRs in question, the competent authorities have not applied their minds and prepared gang charts in violation of the Rules, 2021 as well as several directions issued by this Court in the cases of Sanni Mishra @ Sanjayan Kumar Mishra vs. State of U.P. and others; 2024 (1)ADJ 231 (DB) as well as other judgements."

Most significantly and above all, we need to note that the Division Bench mandates in para 32 postulating that, "For ready reference, guidelines, issued by this Court in several judgements regarding preparation of gang chart as well as for invocation of Gangsters Act, are being summarised as under:-

(i). While forwarding or approving the gang chart, the competent authorities must record their satisfaction as required by Rule 16 of the Rules, 2021 by writing in clear words and not by simply signing printed/pre-typed satisfaction.

(ii). Satisfaction of the competent authorities should reflect that they have applied their minds not only on the gang chart but also the documents/forms annexed with the gang chart.

(iii). Date of filing the charge sheet under the base case must be mentioned in Column-6 of the gang chart except in cases under Rule 22(ii) of the Rules, 2021 where Gangsters Act can be imposed during investigation.

(iv). Before approving the gang chart, the District Magistrate should conduct due discussion for invocation of the Gangsters Act in a joint meeting with the District Police Chief as per Rule 5(3)(a) of the Rules, 2021 and minutes/resolutions of the meeting must be recorded in a register maintained for that purpose. That register should be made available to the court for its perusal if it so requires.

(v). While signing their satisfaction competent authorities (District Police Chiefs, District Magistrates and Nodal Officers) should mention the date just below their signatures.

(vi). While approving the gang chart, the District Magistrate/Commissioner of Police should also verify whether the Nodal Officer and District Police Chief have properly recorded their satisfaction as per the Rules, 2021 as well as the guidelines issued by the State Government in pursuance of the directions issued in several judgements by the High Court.

(vii). Before invocation of the Gangsters Act, competent authorities should also record satisfaction that offence of base

case/cases has/have been committed by a person who comes within the definition of "Gangster" as per Section 2(c) of the Gangsters Act and there must be material for such satisfaction. This satisfaction must be mentioned in the minutes of the joint meeting conducted as per Rule 5(3)(a) of the Rules, 2021."

Most fundamentally, the Division Bench propounds in para 8 that, "Before proceeding on the factual aspect as well as legal question, involved herein, it would be appropriate to discuss the basic object of the Gangsters Act. The Gangsters Act was enacted to deal with those criminals who commit crime by forming a gang or who assist or abet illegal activities of a gang which are mentioned in Section 2(b) of the Gangsters Act. The Gangsters Act can be invoked only against the persons who are termed as gangsters as per Section 2(c) of the Gangsters Act. Therefore, the Gangsters Act can be imposed only on those persons who are members of any gang and commit offence mentioned in Section 2(b)(i) to 2(b)(xxv) of the Gangsters Act or who assist such persons in any manner. Definition of the word 'gang' has been given in Section 2(b) of the Gangsters Act, providing group of persons either acting singly or collectively with the object of disturbing public order or gaining any undue temporal, pecuniary or material advantage for himself of any other person through violence, or threat, or intimidation, or coercion, or other similar activities by indulging in illegal activities mentioned in Section 2(b) of the Gangsters Act. Section 2(b), defining the word 'gang' is quoted as under:-

"2(b). "Gang" means a group of persons, who acting either singly or collectively, by violence, or threat or show of violence, or intimidation, or coercion or otherwise with the object of disturbing public order or of gaining any undue temporal, pecuniary, material or other advantage for himself or any other person, indulge in anti-social activities."

On the whole, we thus see that the Allahabad High Court has in the fitness of things very rightly, rationally and robustly directed the State authorities and police to undergo training on UP Gangsters Act procedures. It was without doubt the crying need of the hour also! No denying or disputing it!

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<h3 style="color: blue;">Engineering &amp; Technology</h3> <p>Polytechnic Diploma (Chemical, Civil, CSE, ECE, Electrical, Mechanical, Mining, Automobile, Petrochemical, Plastic Engineering) 3 Years</p> <p>B.Tech. (Chemical, Civil, Mechanical, Mining, Petrochemical, EE, ECE ) 4 Years</p> <p>B.Tech. (CSE, Data Science, IT, AI) 4 Years</p> <p>B.Tech. (Aeronautical, Aerospace) 4 Years</p> <p>M.Tech. (AI, Data Science, CSE, Digital Comm., VLSI, Power System, Renewable Energy, Structural, CTM, Transportation, Manufacturing, Thermal, Polymer, Chemical, Cement &amp; Ceramics, Environmental) 2 Years</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Agriculture, Veterinary &amp; Forestry Sciences</h3> <p>B.Sc. (Agriculture, Forestry, Horticulture) 4 Years</p> <p>M.Sc. (Silvi Cultural, Agro-forestry, Vegetable Science, Fruit Science, Soil Science &amp; Agriculture Chemistry) 2 Years</p> <p>DAESI 1 Years</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Yoga &amp; Naturopathy</h3> <p>Diploma 2 Years</p> <p>B.Sc./B.A. 3 Years</p> <p>M.Sc./M.A. 2 Years</p> <p>PG Diploma 1 Year</p> <p>Certificate 6 Months</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Science &amp; Technology</h3> <p>B.Sc. (General) (Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Biotech, Microbiology) 3 Years</p> <p>B.Sc. (Hons.) (Aircraft Maintenance ) 4 Years</p> <p>M.Sc. (Chemistry, Physics, Maths, Zoology, Botany, EVS, Statistics, Biotech, Microbiology) 2 Years</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Mass &amp; Media Communication</h3> <p>B.A. (Journalism &amp; Mass Comm.) 3 Years</p> <p>M.A. (Journalism &amp; Mass Comm.) 2 Years</p>	<h3 style="color: blue;">Education &amp; Psychology</h3> <p>D.El.Ed. (BSTC) 2 Years</p> <p>B.Ed. 2 Years</p> <p>B.A. (Psychology, Education) 3 Years</p> <p>M.A. (Psychology, Education) 2 Years</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Alternative Therapy</h3> <p>Diploma 1 Year</p> <p>B.A. (Astrology, Vastu Shastra) 3 Years</p> <p>M.A. (Astrology, Vastu Shastra) 2 Years</p> <p>Certificate Course 6 Months</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Health Sciences</h3> <p>Diploma (MLT, ECG, Radiation Technology, Operation Theater Technology, Orthopedic) 2 Years</p> <p>BPT (Bachelor of Physiotherapy) 4.5 Years</p> <p>MPT (Master of Physiotherapy) 2 Years</p> <p>BMLT 4 Years</p> <p>B.Sc. (Cardiac, Respiratory Care, Dialysis Care, Ophthalmology, MLT, Dietetics &amp; Food Nutrition, Blood Transfusion Technician) 4 Years</p> <p>M.Sc. (MLT) 2 Years</p> <p>GNM 3.5 Years</p> <p>B.Sc. (Nursing) 4 Years</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Pharmaceutical Sciences</h3> <p>D. Pharma 2 Years</p> <p>B. Pharma 4 Years</p> <p>B. Pharma (Practice) 2 Years</p> <p>M. Pharma 2 Years</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Computer Application</h3> <p>BCA, B.Sc. (IT) 3 Years</p> <p>MCA/M.Sc. (IT, SE) 2 Years</p> <p>PGDCA 1 Year</p> <p>Certificate 1 Year</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Legal Studies</h3> <p>LL.B. 3 Years</p> <p>BA + LL.B. 5 Years</p> <p>BBA + LL.B. 5 Years</p> <p>LL.M. 2 Years</p> <p>PG Diploma (Cyber Law) 1 Year</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Fire Safety &amp; Hazard Management</h3> <p>Diploma 1 Year</p> <p>B.Sc. 3 Years</p> <p>PG Diploma 1 Year</p> <p>Certificate 1 Year</p>	<h3 style="color: blue;">Management and Commerce</h3> <p>BBA 3 Years</p> <p>MBA 2 Years</p> <p>BBA + MBA 4 Years</p> <p>B.Com 3 Years</p> <p>M.Com 2 Years</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Humanities, Social Sciences &amp; Fine Arts</h3> <p>B. A. 3 Years</p> <p>(Eco., Eng., Hindi, History, Geography, Political Science, Public Admin., Social, Sanskrit, Urdu, Arabic, Farsi, Fine Arts &amp; Music) 2 Years</p> <p>(Eco., Eng., Hindi, History, Geography, Political Science, Public Admin., Social, Sanskrit, Urdu, Arabic, Farsi, Fine Arts &amp; Music) 2 Years</p> <p>MSW 2 Years</p> <p>(Family &amp; Child Welfare, Urban &amp; Rural Community Development, Personnel Management and Industrial Relations) 4 Years</p> <p>BVA/BPA 2 Years</p> <p>MVA/MPA Certificate 6 Months</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Vocational Sciences, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship</h3> <p>B.Sc. (Fashion Design) 3 Years</p> <p>B.A. (Fashion Design, Gems &amp; Jewellery) 3 Years</p> <p>B.Voc. (Agriculture, Applied Computer Technology, Building Construction &amp; Technology, Accounting &amp; Taxation, Fire Safety, Traditional Arts and Crafts) 3 Years</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Tourism &amp; Hospitality Management</h3> <p>BTTM 4 Years</p> <p>BHM 4 Years</p> <p>MTTM 2 Years</p> <p>MHM 2 Years</p> <h3 style="color: blue;">Physical Education</h3> <p>Diploma 1 Year</p> <p>B.P.E.S 3 Years</p> <p>(Bachelor of Physical Education and Sports) 2 Years</p> <p>B.P.Ed (Bachelor of Physical Education)</p>
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Scholarship/Rebate to merit - cum need based Students belonging to SC/ST/OBC (BPL)/Minority/EWS/General

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

## Paving The Way For Viksit Bharat

The Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 has been unveiled, marking a significant stride towards the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' or developed India. Designed to propel economic growth, enhance infrastructure, and foster inclusive development, the budget outlines several key measures aimed at transforming various sectors and ensuring sustainable progress. Central to the budget's agenda is bolstering economic growth through strategic fiscal measures. The allocation of substantial funds towards infrastructure development, healthcare, education, and technology reflects the government's commitment to laying a robust foundation for sustainable economic expansion. By focusing on enhancing productivity and efficiency across sectors, the budget aims to attract investments and stimulate job creation, thereby boosting overall prosperity. A pivotal component of the budget is the emphasis on infrastructure development. Significant allocations have been earmarked for the construction and modernisation of highways, railways, airports, and urban infrastructure. These investments not only aim to enhance connectivity but also to reduce logistical costs, thereby improving the ease of doing business and fostering regional development. Recognising the pivotal role of human capital in national development, the budget prioritises investments in healthcare and education. Increased funding towards healthcare infrastructure, vaccination programmes, and the expansion of medical facilities aims to enhance public health outcomes and strengthen the resilience of India's healthcare system. Similarly, initiatives aimed at promoting quality education, skill development, and research are

expected to equip India's youth with the necessary capabilities to thrive in a competitive global environment.

Here it is worth mentioning that the budget lays a strong emphasis on digital transformation and innovation as catalysts for economic growth. Initiatives such as expanding digital infrastructure, promoting digital payments, and fostering a conducive environment for startups and innovation hubs are aimed at harnessing India's demographic dividend and promoting entrepreneurial spirit. By leveraging technology, the government seeks to drive efficiency, transparency, and inclusivity across various sectors, thereby unlocking new avenues for growth and development. In line with global sustainability goals, the budget underscores the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable development. Measures such as promoting renewable energy sources, incentivising green technologies, and implementing eco-friendly practices across industries aim to mitigate climate change impacts and ensure a cleaner, greener future for generations to come. In conclusion, India's Union Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 represents a comprehensive roadmap towards achieving the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat.' By prioritising economic growth, infrastructure development, healthcare, education, digital transformation, and sustainable practices, the budget sets the stage for India's transformation into a developed nation. As the government continues to implement these initiatives, their impact is expected to resonate across the economy, driving inclusive growth and positioning India as a global economic powerhouse in the years to come.



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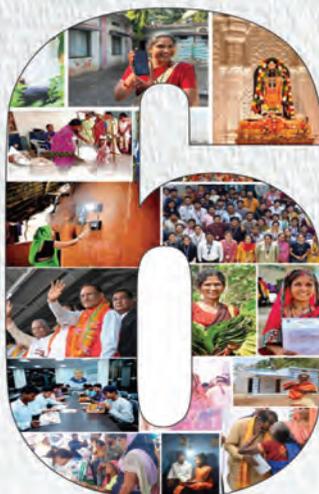


**Vishnu Deo Endeavours**  
**Chhattisgarh Flourishes**

# Good Governance of



**Shri Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister



# months



**Shri Vishnu Deo Sai**  
Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh

## New Path to Development

- FARMERS prospering with 'Krishak Unnati Yojana', Paddy Procurement at Rs 3100 per quintal
- Disbursement of Pending bonus of Rs 3716 crores to FARMERS
- Over 18 lakh POOR Families now own Pucca houses under PM AWAS YOJNA
- Free grains for welfare of the POOR, over 1 crore families receive free ration for 5 years
- Financial assistance of Rs 12,000 annually through 'MAHTARI VANDAN' for Empowerment of WOMEN
- Increase in honorarium to tendupatta collectors to Rs 5500, TRIBALS now actually reap Green Gold
- Age relaxation of 5 years for YOUTH in Government Vacancies
- Ensuring a Transparent and Corruption free recruitment process, YOUTH assured of impartial recruitment process
- Effective steps for complete solution of Maoist Terrorism problem- Niyad Nellanar Campaign: Two-pronged strategy of Development & Effective Policing
- Quick Decisions: Strict Administration- 129 Maoists killed, 488 arrested, 431 surrendered in last 6 months
- DEVOTEES benefit from free visit to Ayodhya through 'RAMLALA DARSHAN YOJNA'

सबका साथ, सबका विकास, सबका विश्वास और सबका प्रयास