



2
INDIA'S GLOBAL IM

3
NITIN GADKARI TO MEET OIL COMPANIES FOR ETHANOL PRICE RATIONALIZATION



4
INDIA TO LAUNCH GPU ACCESS PORTAL AMID INTENSE AI RACE

BUDGET, RBI POLICY TO STEER INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NEXT 10 DAYS: UBI

The upcoming Union Budget and RBI policy decisions will be crucial in shaping India's economic trajectory amid slowing growth.

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The next 10 days will be pivotal for India's economic trajectory as the upcoming Union Budget announcement on February 1 and the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting on February 7 will lay down the policy road map to boost the slowing economy, according to the Union Bank of India (UBI) latest report. According to the report, both the government and the RBI are expected to announce crucial steps aimed at stimulating growth in the face of a slowing economy. The Indian economy is facing a slowdown after growing at the rate of over 8 per cent in the fiscal year 2024, recording a slowed growth of 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of the current fiscal.



The report adds that as the country grapples with moderating GDP growth, the government is expected to continue its focus on fiscal consolidation. The report expected that the government will consolidate the fiscal deficit target to 4.5 per cent of GDP in FY26 from 4.8 per cent in FY25.

"The fiscal impulse is expected to be negative with consolidation driven by a fall in expenditure as percentage of GDP rather than pickup in revenues (despite likely repeat of record high RBI dividend in FY26 above Rs 2 lakh cr). More importantly, the quality of spending has come under

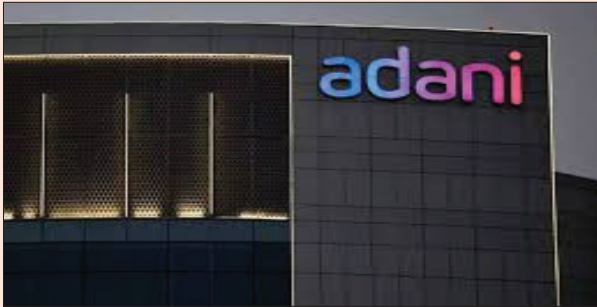
pressure this year on delay in capex post elections with the public spending also hitting absorptive capacity in few sectors leading to calls for diversification in this Budget," the report added. The report played for a greater emphasis on stimulus measures in the upcoming budget to address weak demand and bolster private capital expenditure (capex), which has been a major challenge for recovery. "Focus on stimulus measures will be watched like tax cuts for the middle class, tax rate equalization on bank deposits vis-a-vis other risk assets, boost to capex budget and sector-specific steps like for MSMEs, renewables, tourism etc," added the report. On the monetary front, it said that the RBI is anticipated to take action to ease liquidity constraints and support economic growth.

The MPC is likely to initiate a 50 basis point rate cut, marking the start of a shallow rate-cut cycle to help stimulate demand, as per the report. The RBI's focus on liquidity measures has already been evident, as the central bank has provided liquidity booster shots in recent months to combat slowing growth. The report cautioned that despite these expected moves, concerns remain about the quality of public spending, which has faced pressure in FY25 due to delays in capex and rising subsidy burdens, particularly in the fuel and fertilizer sectors. As a result, the government's fiscal impulse for FY25 is expected to remain negative, with consolidation driven more by a reduction in expenditure as a percentage of GDP rather than an uptick in revenue growth.

Adani Enterprises reports 9M FY25 results: EBITDA up 29 pc to Rs12,377 Cr, PBT rises 21 pc

TBG NETWORK
AHMEDABAD

Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), the flagship company of the Adani Group, reported a 6 per cent increase in revenue to Rs. 72,763 crore for the nine-month period, demonstrating steady growth across its portfolio for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024. The results highlight the company's strong operational performance and continued success in its incubating businesses, particularly in energy transition and infrastructure sectors. AEL Consolidated EBITDA surged by 29 per cent to Rs. 12,377 crore, driven primarily by the performance of the Adani New Industries Limited (ANIL) Ecosystem and Adani Airports. Additionally, profit before tax (PBT) rose by 21 per cent to Rs. 5,220 crore, underscoring the resilience of AEL's business model. Commenting on the performance, Gautam Adani,



AEL Consolidated EBITDA surged by 29 per cent to Rs. 12,377 crore, driven primarily by the performance of the Adani New Industries Limited (ANIL) Ecosystem and Adani Airports.

Chairman of the Adani Group, stated, "This exceptional nine-month performance underscores Adani Enterprises Ltd's position as a powerhouse for nurturing transformative infrastructure and energy transition sectors. Strong growth across our incubating businesses, from energy transition to logistics and adjacencies, highlights the immense potential of our core plus portfolio."

He added, "These results are a testament to our focus on execution, operational excellence, innovation and sustainability as we continue to set new benchmarks across sectors. With each milestone, AEL reaffirms its commitment to creating long-term value for its stakeholders while contributing to India's progress and global competitiveness."

P2

TOP OF THE DAY

INDIA'S CONSUMER MARKET BOOMS

New Delhi : India's consumer market is on track to expand 46 per cent by 2030, making it the second-largest globally, according to the Edelweiss Mutual Fund report. Rising incomes, a young workforce, and rapid urbanization are expected to drive consumption growth across the country. According to projections, consumer spending in India will rise to USD 4.3 trillion by 2030, up from USD 2.4 trillion in 2024. This growth is largely fuelled by India's expanding middle and upper-middle-income population, which is leading to higher purchasing power and increased discretionary spending. India's median age of 28 years is significantly lower than China's 39 years and the US's 38 years, positioning it as a major driver of global consumption. By 2030, India's working-age population (15-64 years) will reach 100 crore, making up one-fifth of the global workforce. The dependency ratio—which reflects the proportion of dependents to the working-age population—will decline from 47 per cent in 2023 to 31 per cent by 2031, allowing for higher disposable income and increased consumer spending.

BHAJA GOVINDAM BY ADI SHANKARACHARYA

New Delhi : A good beginning in 2025 Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman, Aditya Birla Group and Nitin Mukesh launched Bhaj Govindam, at Aditya Utsav 2025 celebrated at Sangeet Kala Mandir, Kolkata. The softly rendered lyrical presentation by Anuradha Paudwal enables everyone to understand this prayer. Bhaj Govindam is a devotional lyric in the form of a prayer seeking attention of the God while stating our own shortcomings in reaching Him. Bhaj Govindam states that as a human being I am ignorant about the manner of prayer and only You as the supreme being can understand the meaning of my nonsensical words. Even with a touch of divinity, Bhaj Govindam has a human backdrop about its creation. Once, Adi Shankaracharya was moving along the streets of Kashi, on the banks of holy River Ganga and the highest abode of knowledge along with some of his disciples. On the way he found an old man studying Sanskrit grammar. Explaining the reason, the man admitted that he had not praised Bhagwan his entire life and even as he spoke he was unable to understand Sanskrit grammar.

*Agencies

Microenterprises seek faster loans, simpler rules, and higher GST exemption in budget 2025

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

the Union Budget 2025 nears, India's microenterprises comprising 98.5 per cent of the MSME sector are calling for easier access to credit, reduced compliance burdens, and a more supportive policy environment. Given their significant role in employment generation, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, microenterprises are seen as key drivers of India's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision and the goal of a USD 5 trillion economy. Lakshmi Venkatesan Venkataraman, Founding and Managing Trustee, Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust, said, "One of the key concerns for microentrepreneurs is access to timely and adequate credit. While fintech firms and NBFCs process loans in a few days, banks still take



2-3 months, causing delays." She added, "The current loan size under the MUDRA scheme, particularly in the Shishu category, averages Rs 37,000, which is insufficient for microentrepreneurs to expand and sustain their businesses effectively. Increasing loan amounts, providing up to 4 per cent interest subvention, lowering margin money re-

quirements from 25 per cent to 10 per cent, and reducing processing fees will ease financial stress on micro businesses. Additionally, loan processing and credit guarantee fees should be reduced to 0.25 per cent." The GST exemption limit should be increased from Rs. 40 lakh (goods) and Rs. 20 lakhs (services) to Rs. 1 crore.

P2

Adani Ports Reports 32% Net Profit Growth in First Three Quarters of FY25

TBG NETWORK
AHMEDABAD

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd on Thursday reported a 32 per cent growth in its net profit in the first three quarters of 2024-25. The net profit for the period -April to December 2024-- was Rs 8038 crore versus Rs 6089 crore in the year-ago period, the company's earnings data showed Thursday. In the October-December quarter, the Adani Group's ports business reported 14 per cent growth in net profit at Rs 2518 crore, as against Rs 2208 crore a year ago quarter. Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) today announced its results for the quarter and nine months ending December 2024. Also, the company closed Gopalpur and Astro Off-



shore transactions worth over Rs 4,600 crores in the October-December quarter. In a piece of good news, S&P Global CSA ranked Adani Ports SEZ among the Top 10 most sustainable global companies in the transport and transport infrastructure industry. Ashwani Gupta, Whole-time Director and CEO, APSEZ, said he was "excited to share the fantastic momentum we

have achieved during 9M FY25, driven by exceptional execution across 3 key areas of our business" -- market share gains coupled with volume-price mix increase, traction in logistics vertical, and operational efficiencies along with technology-led gains. "On the logistics front, in line with our commitment earlier in the year, we launched a new trucking platform, which is being integrated

across the rest of the logistics value chain and will make us a true integrated Transport Utility. We have also upgraded our FY25 EBITDA forecast to Rs 18,800-18,900 crores," Gupta added. "This prestigious recognition (by S&P Global CSA reflects our focus on imbining sustainability across our operations," said Ashwani Gupta, Whole-time Director and CEO, APSEZ. "Our domestic ports saw year-on-year revenue growth of 11 per cent, along with 80 points increase in EBITDA margin. Overall, India cargo market share increased to 27.2 per cent, while container market share went up to 45.2 per cent. Logistics revenue grew by 22 per cent, driven by double digit growth in container and GPWIS volumes," he said in a video message separately.

Union Budget aims to consolidate the fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by FY26, says UBI report

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Government will focus on fiscal consolidation and growth in the Union Budget, says a research report by the Union Bank of India. The report says government will aim to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Financial Year 2026 (FY26), down from an estimated 4.8 per cent in FY25. "We expect absolute fiscal deficit to increase from RE of Rs.15.7 lakh crore to Rs.16.2 lakh crore in FY26," added the report. The fiscal target is in line with the government's roadmap for achieving macroeconomic stability and ensuring manageable public debt dynamics. Government is likely to remain



committed to its fiscal consolidation path, with a steady reduction in the fiscal deficit over the coming years. This comes as part of a

broader effort to control inflationary pressures, manage borrowing costs, and maintain investor confidence amid a slowing economy.

In FY25, the fiscal deficit has been under pressure due to lower-than-expected capital expenditure (capex) and

rising subsidy burdens because of geo-political reasons. The report highlighted that while the government's spending on infrastructure has lagged behind budgeted targets, fiscal consolidation is expected to exceed the target primarily because of the reduction in expenditure as a percentage of GDP rather than a significant pickup in revenue growth. At 4.5 per cent of GDP, the fiscal deficit target for FY26 is considered a key step toward returning to a more sustainable fiscal path after the pandemic-driven surge in government spending. The UBI report notes that this fiscal tightening is likely to be balanced by targeted reforms aimed at stimulating growth, such as potential tax cuts, ca-

pex boosts, and sector-specific incentives. The government's push for fiscal discipline has garnered mixed reactions, with some experts calling for more aggressive stimulus measures to support the slowing economy. However, the report suggests that the government is likely to continue prioritising fiscal prudence, even as it balances the need for growth-boosting measures in the upcoming Union budget. As the government prepares for the budget and the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy decisions in the coming weeks, the UBI report emphasises that the next steps will be critical in determining the trajectory of India's economic recovery and its ability to manage fiscal health while supporting growth.

ALL-PARTY MEETING BEGINS AT PARLIAMENT BEFORE BUDGET SESSION

An all-party meeting began at the Parliament Annexe in New Delhi ahead of the Budget session to discuss the upcoming parliamentary proceedings.

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

An all-party meeting has commenced at the Parliament Annexe building in New Delhi ahead of the Budget session of the Parliament. The meeting is chaired by Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Kiren Rijju, JP Nadda, Arjun Ram Meghwal and L Murugan. Leaders from the different political parties, including Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh, K Suresh and Gaurav Gogoi and TMC MPs Sudip Bandyopadhyay and Derek O'Brien are present in this meeting. Along with them, RSP MP NK Premachandran, BJD MP Sasmit Patra, DMK MP TR Baalu, SP MP Ram Gopal Yadav, JMM MP Mahua Maji and several other MPs are present in the meeting.



Before the commencement of the meeting, RSP MP NK Premachandran said that this is a routine meeting which is conducted before the parliamentary session, adding that the opposition is ready to have a smooth func-

tioning of the Parliament. "The budget session starts tomorrow, so it is the usual practice of having an all-party meeting...The opposition is ready to have a smooth functioning of the Parliament if the govern-

ment cooperates. But the government has to take the initiative for this...We are planning to raise so many issues including the economic slowdown, price rise, unemployment..." Premachandran told ANI.

The budget session of Parliament will begin on January 31 and, according to schedule, will end on April 4. The budget will be presented on February 1. President Droupadi Murmu will address the joint sitting of both houses of Parliament on January 31. Parliament will have an inter-session break from February 14, and the two Houses will resume their sittings on March 10. On Monday, the Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Kiren Rijju announced that the government has called an all-party meeting on January 30. On the upcoming Budget session of Parliament, Rijju told ANI, "On 31st January, the Budget session of Parliament will start. Before it, on 30th January, we have called an all-party meeting."

Jaishankar Highlights Civic Issues Ahead of Delhi Polls

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Ahead of high-stake assembly polls, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday criticized the state of civic infrastructure in Delhi and urged the youth to make a choice keeping their future in mind, emphasising "Viksit (developed) Delhi, is central to Viksit nation. Speaking at Delhi University's Hansraj College, Jaishankar highlighted the stalled progress in key areas such as housing and water supply, stressing that Delhi, as the national capital, should set a benchmark for development. "Delhi carries a very important responsibility because it is the capital of the country. When the world thinks about India, they look at Delhi. Whatever they experience here, they take it with them," he said, at an interactive programme



on 'Youth for a Viksit Bharat' at Hansraj College. "Viksit Rajdhani, Viksit Delhi is central to Viksit nation. From Delhi, we set a standard. It should be a model for the country," he added. Jaishankar lamented the lack of progress in infrastructure, stating that many key initiatives had not materialized in the city. "I am really troubled by the fact that key programs have not happened in Delhi. Housing has not happened in Delhi. Water connections have not happened in Delhi," he said. "We are supposed to be an example for the world and the

rest of the country, so it's important for people to take an interest in their own future," he added. Reiterating the need for robust infrastructure, he underlined the importance of ensuring basic amenities for all. "Viksit Delhi is important. All houses should get water, all people should have houses, and people should be entitled to good health and infrastructure," he said. Urging students to be politically aware, Jaishankar stressed: "You should take an interest in politics not necessarily as a politician, but when it comes to political decisions."

52 cybercriminals arrested across 8 States, Rs 88.32 cr fraud exposed

TBG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

A cybercrime crackdown, led by DCP Cybercrime Kavitha, has resulted in the arrest of 52 individuals across 8 states, including three identified masterminds. Hyderabad Commissioner of Police, CV Anand, confirmed the operation's success in a detailed briefing. In a statement, CV Anand revealed that the operation covered the states of Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Bihar. "52 cyber criminals were caught and 3 of them were masterminds. 33 cases were detected in Hyderabad city, 74 cases in Telangana state, and 576 cases were detected in the entire country. Main-



ly they are trading frauds, digital frauds, investment frauds, and digital arrests... In these cases, a total amount of Rs 88.32 crores was lost," said Anand. However, the police were able to freeze only about Rs 3 crores. "We could freeze only about Rs 3 crores through the banking process. Many mobile phones, cheque-

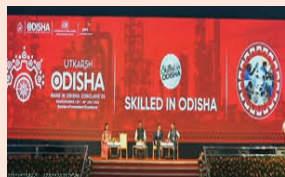
books, PAN cards, and other such paraphernalia have been seized," Anand said. The authorities' focus was not only on apprehending the criminals but also on seizing evidence, including mobile phones and financial documents, that were integral to the fraudulent activities. Further investigations revealed that some of the

frauds were facilitated by the involvement of bank officials. "Out of the 33 cases, three cases involve the activity of bankers. With the connivance of bank officials, fraudulent people could open accounts and then siphon off the money through mule accounts," CV Anand explained. As a result, three bank officials were arrested: Shubham Kumar Jha, a deputy manager at RBL Bank in Bangalore; Harun Rashid, an assistant vice president at Axis Bank, Bangalore; and Kata Srinivas, a sales manager at Kotak Mahindra Bank. "With the connivance of bank officials, fraudulent people could open accounts and then they could syphon off the money through mule accounts," said Anand.

MoUs signed for key sectors at Utkarsh Odisha conclave

TBG NETWORK
BHUBANESWAR

With the conclusion of 'Utkarsh Odisha - Make in Odisha Conclave 2025', state's deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida and Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari highlighted how multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the government and investors. Odisha Deputy CM, Pravati Parida told ANI that MoUs worth Rs 8,153 crore regarding the tourism sector were signed on the second day of the conclave. A total of 121 projects have



been discussed to develop all sectors of tourism, modifying various subsidies given for the sector and also looking at temple weddings in the state. "MoUs worth Rs 8,153 crore, were signed today, covering 121 projects to develop all sectors of tourism... As per the advice of the panellists, we are planning to modify the subsidies that the Odisha government used to give (for tourism). We were not paying attention to temple

weddings before. Odisha will work on it as well," DyCM Parida told ANI. Meanwhile, state minister Suresh Pujari mentioned that a total of 54 MoUs have been signed concerning industries of food processing, petrochemicals, and heirlooms and textiles. "Investors of national importance have joined the conclave. 54 MoUs have been signed which include a steel plant in Keonjhar and industries of food processing, petrochemicals, and heirlooms and textiles. This conclave will be a turning point for the development of Odisha," he told ANI. Further praising the in-

frastructural development in the state, he added how land water and air connectivity, along with power have been provided to facilitate investors. "We have made a one-window system so land, water, road and railway connectivity, ports, and power are made available to successfully launch any industry. We will leave no stone unturned for facilitating the investors so they invest huge amounts in Odisha and generate employment opportunities for the youth in Odisha," he added. Utkarsh Odisha Conclave, was organised in Bhubaneswar.

Indian Railways to mark 100 Years of electrification on February 3

TBG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Indian Railways is set to celebrate 100 years of electrification on February 3, marking a historic milestone in the nation's journey toward a more sustainable rail network. The event will commemorate the first electric train that ran in India, highlighting the progress made in railway electrification over the past century. Swapnil Nila, Central Public Relations Officer (CPRO), emphasized the significance of this achievement, noting the transformation of Indian Railways into a greener and more efficient transportation system. The first electric train in India operated on February 3, 1925, from platform 2 of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT), formerly known as Victoria Terminus, to Kurla in Mumbai. This marked a pivotal moment in the history of Indian Railways, coming just 72 years after the country's first train journey on April 16, 1853. The inaugural electric train was an early version of the Electric Multiple Unit (EMU), which later became a staple of suburban railway networks. Speaking about the centenary celebrations, CPRO Nila stated, "The first electric train ran between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, then known as Victoria Terminus, to Kurla. This



particular train was an early version of the EMU. It was introduced from platform number 2, signifying a new, greener initiative aimed at long-term change. Now, Central Railway and Indian Railways are celebrating 100 years of this historic electrification milestone." Alongside celebrating the centenary, Central Railway has achieved another major accomplishment—100% electrification of its network. The completion of full electrification represents a crucial step toward sustainability, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering carbon emissions. The CPRO highlighted this achievement, stating, "During this period, Central Railway has successfully completed 100% electrification, and to commemorate this, we are launching celebrations starting from Febru-

ary 3." A series of events have been planned to honor the centenary, including a special commemorative run, multiple seminars, and immersive 3D projection shows. The celebrations will commence with a morning run, symbolizing the railway's commitment to sustainability and progress. Later in the day, a formal ceremonial event will be held at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, followed by technical and educational seminars aimed at discussing the evolution and future of railway electrification. "There are multiple activities planned, beginning with a run in the morning, followed by a ceremonial commemoration. At the same time, technical and other seminars will be held at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus. We will also continue to

organize various planned events, including special projections and three-dimensional shows," Nila elaborated. Additionally, Central Railway has planned several interactive sessions with school children to educate them on the rich history and heritage of Indian Railways. These sessions aim to instill a sense of pride and awareness about the transformative role of railways in India's development. By engaging young minds, the initiative seeks to inspire future generations to appreciate and contribute to the nation's transportation advancements. The centenary celebrations not only pay tribute to the pioneering efforts in railway electrification but also underscore Indian Railways' commitment to modernization and sustainability.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Adani Enterprises reports

AEL made significant strides across its business segments. Navi Mumbai Airport successfully conducted its first commercial flight validation test, marking a crucial step toward operational readiness. Additionally, Phase I of the Hyderabad Data Center, with a capacity of 9.6 MW, is now fully operational. In the renewable energy sector, ANIL's wind business saw the listing of its 3.3 MW Wind Turbine Generator (WTG) model in the RLMM (Revised List of Models and Manufacturers), bringing the total listed models to four. AEL also made remarkable progress in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance, ranking among the top five companies globally in the S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assess-

ment (CSA) for 2024 out of 180 sector peers. AEL's incubating businesses reported stellar growth, contributing 62 per cent of the consolidated EBITDA. The ANIL Ecosystem reported a 121 per cent increase in EBITDA to Rs. 3,666 crore, while PBT surged by 125 per cent to Rs. 3,033 crore. The airports segment also witnessed impressive performance, with passenger movement increasing by 7 per cent to 69.7 million and cargo volumes rising by 11 per cent to 8.2 lakh metric tonnes in the nine-month period. AEL's 9M FY25 financial performance reflects its strategic focus on high-growth sectors, operational efficiency, and sustainability initiatives. With ongoing developments in airports, data centers, renewable energy, and infrastructure, the company remains committed to delivering long-term value to its stakeholders. As AEL continues its growth trajectory, its incubation model positions it at the forefront of India's energy transition and infrastructure development.

Microenterprises seek

"Microenterprises currently file 13 GST returns annually, adding to their administrative burden. A single-window clearance system for licensing and compliance can further help streamline operations. Additionally, sole proprietorships and partnerships should receive the same three-year tax holiday as Pvt. Ltd. companies and LLPs." Women entrepreneurs face additional challenges, with 85 per cent struggling to secure loans, according to a recent survey. To support digital growth, microenterprises are seeking subsidies for digital adoption, e-commerce integration, and cybersecurity training. The removal of transaction fees for digital payments up to Rs20,000 and additional funding for platforms like ONDC will help small businesses scale digitally. Sustainability is another area where microenterprises need support. Experts recommend green financing schemes and incentives for using re-

cyclable materials, enabling microbusinesses to adopt ESG best practices and operate sustainably. Infrastructure development is also crucial. A 25 per cent increase in infrastructure spending, particularly in Tier 3 and Tier 4 towns, will improve logistics, reduce costs, and enhance market access. Additional support for agriculture, education, and healthcare, including increasing public health spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP and lowering GST on health insurance policies, will further benefit microentrepreneurs and their workforce.

Adani Ports Reports

"Our international operations revenue increased by 16 per cent driven by Astro and Tanzania operations. We commenced operations at Vizhinjam Port. Vizhinjam both more than 140 vessels during the trial period and has handled 70,000 TEUs in its first month of operations. We also closed the acquisition of Gopalpur Port and Tanzania concession," he added.

NITIN GADKARI TO MEET OIL COMPANIES FOR ETHANOL PRICE RATIONALIZATION

Nitin Gadkari announced plans to meet with oil companies post-Delhi elections to discuss rationalizing ethanol prices and explore new opportunities for ethanol and lignin use.

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Nitin Gadkari, Union minister for roadways, Thursday said he would hold a meeting with oil marketing companies after the Delhi elections, where they will discuss ways and means to make retail ethanol prices reasonable.

Speaking at the 4th Edition of Sugar-Ethanol and Bio Energy India Conference (SEIC) 2025, organised by ChiniMandi, the Union Minister cited the example of Indian Oil, which had decided to open 400 ethanol pumps.

Gadkari said that the OMC had priced per litre ethanol at Rs 110 in the retail market, higher than the market price of petrol.

The pricing was kept that way, apparently to disincentivise the green alternative fuel sales.

“After the Delhi assembly polls, possibly on February 6 or 7, we will hold a meeting. Petroleum minister (Hardeep Puri) has told



“After the Delhi assembly polls, possibly on February 6 or 7, we will hold a meeting. Petroleum minister (Hardeep Puri) has told me that the rate of ethanol at which the government procures and the selling price will be rationalized at a reasonable level (so that they are not retailed at elevated prices),” Gadkari said, speaking in Hindi.

Gadkari further said there is a huge potential for setting up a large number of ethanol pumps similar to that of the pumps that sell blended fuel provided ethanol prices

are substantially lower than gasoline prices. He also suggested that if sugar factories could open ethanol pumps in their respective places, it would add a new avenue for income.

Further, the Union minister also suggested that lignin (a residue when rice straw biomass is converted into bio CNG) can be used in bitumen along with rubber powder.

An experiment has been done in a small stretch of the Nagpur-Jabalpur highway, he said, stressing that this breakthrough could help farmers become contributors in the bitumen space. India has a huge shortage of bitumen, used in road making.

“Our requirement is 90 lakh tonne, and our refinery capacity is 45-50 lakh tonne. We are running 50 per cent in short supply (in bitumen). I have called all oil companies on February 6, and I will suggest they procure lignin just like they procure ethanol,” the minister said at the event today.

Air India, Kenya Airways enter into codeshare partnership

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Air India and Kenya Airways have entered a codeshare partnership, aimed at boosting seamless travel between India and Africa, and beyond. The codeshare partnership complements the existing “interline agreement” between the two carriers. The codeshare and interline partnerships together allow passengers of both airlines to enjoy convenient access to a wider range of destinations across regions, leveraging a single ticket and a unified baggage policy for a hassle-free travel experience.

As part of the codeshare agreement, Air India will place its ‘AI’ designator code on twice daily flights between Nairobi and Mumbai operated by Kenya Airways, which will seamlessly connect passengers via Mumbai on Air India-operated flights to or from Bangkok (Thailand), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Male (The Maldives), Melbourne (Australia), and Singapore.



These are in addition to existing connections that passengers from Nairobi can take to several other destinations within and outside of India via Delhi, when flying Nairobi to Delhi with Air India. The new agreement also enables Kenya Airways to place its ‘KQ’ designator code on Air India-operated flights

between Delhi and Nairobi, enabling Kenya Airways passengers from across Africa to travel to Delhi via Nairobi. “Deepening our partnership with Kenya Airways aligns perfectly with Air India’s strategic vision of expanding our global footprint and strengthening our position in key markets”, said Nipun Aggarwal, Chief Commercial Officer, Air India. “Our codeshare partnership will provide significant benefit to guests of both airlines, and also contribute to the overall growth of air travel

between India and Africa,” he added. The interline agreement between Air India and Kenya Airways enables passengers to seamlessly travel on a single itinerary between any of 28 points in Africa (Accra, Addis Ababa, Dar Es Salaam, Harare, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Victoria Falls, Seychelles, Kilimanjaro, Mombasa, and Zanzibar to name a few), and any of 15 points in India (Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Jaipur, Kochi, Kolkata, and Hyderabad to name a few).

Forever’s Radiance Range: Skincare Crafted for Diverse Skin Needs

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Elevate your skincare rituals with Radiance by Forever, a premium beauty lifestyle brand that captures the richness of nature with the precision of science. Designed to transform everyday skincare into a luxurious self-care experience, Radiance by Forever is a part of the globally trusted Forever Living Products family, known for its commitment to both quality and innovation. Radiance by Forever is more than a skincare range; it’s a celebration of beauty, diversity, and nature. Thoughtfully

crafted for the unique needs of Indian skin, this collection embodies Forever Living Products’ commitment to inclusivity, sustainability, and effective solutions. With over four decades of expertise, the brand brings together nature’s finest ingredients to create products that hydrate, nourish, and rejuvenate. “At Forever Living, our mission is to craft high-quality skincare solutions that are both natural and inclusive,” shares Harish Singla, CSM, Forever Living Products. “The Radiance Range represents our dedication to addressing diverse skin concerns with



carefully selected ingredients that deliver visible results.” The Radiance Range combines the deeply hydrating and soothing properties of Aloe Vera with other powerful natural actives like Licorice, Bamboo, Moringa Oil, and CICA. Together, these ingredients create a skincare line that addresses dryness, irritation, redness, and uneven tone, ensuring

every individual can experience soft, radiant skin. Radiance Face Wash This gentle, hydrating cleanser is more than just a face wash—it’s a refreshing start to your skincare routine. Featuring Aloe Vera for hydration, Licorice Extract to calm irritation, and Bamboo Extract for a natural glow, it effectively cleanses without stripping the skin’s natural oils. The inclusion of Apple Extracts further enhances cell renewal, leaving the skin feeling soft, clean, and revitalized. Designed for all skin types, this face wash is your first step toward radi-

ant, healthy skin. Price- ₹748 Radiance Moisturizer Designed to lock in hydration and restore the skin’s natural glow, the Radiance Moisturizer combines the soothing properties of Aloe Vera with the nourishing benefits of Moringa Oil. CICA, a sought-after skincare ingredient, reduces redness and soothes sensitive skin, while Neem Extracts provide antibacterial support. Lightweight yet deeply hydrating, this moisturizer is perfect for daily use, leaving the skin plump, smooth, and protected from environmental stressors.

Erawat Pharma selects batch Master ERP to boost production efficiency

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

BatchMaster Software is proud to welcome Erawat Pharma, one of central India’s most prestigious pharmaceutical manufacturers, to its growing family of distinguished clients. Headquartered in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, Erawat Pharma ranks among the top capsule manufacturers globally and is the second-largest capsule manufacturer in India, serving a robust customer base both locally and internationally. Erawat Pharma was previously using Tally to manage its operations. However, as the company experienced rapid growth, its operational complexities outgrew the capabilities of the existing system. This resulted in several challenges, including increased idle time of work-in-progress (WIP), which led to delays and errors in order deliveries. The manual nature of their processes created challenges in routine operations and made it difficult to address



production, quality control (QC), and compliance requirements. The need for a more advanced ERP system became evident, one that could automate and streamline operations while handling tasks such as generating system-wide labels--including raw quarantine labels, QC release labels, intermediate stage labels, and shipping labels. Furthermore, the company sought a solution that would seamlessly manage its processes, from raw material procurement to production scheduling and delivery. After evaluating several options, including NetSuite, Erawat Pharma found the perfect match in BatchMaster ERP with

Tally Integration. The software stood out for its ability to address their specific needs, including accurate costing, automated production scheduling and planning, precise traceability, superior formulation management, and compliance with all regulatory requirements. These functionalities not only ensured improved operational efficiency but also enabled the company to achieve better control over its production processes. Sanjay Panjwani, Managing Director of BatchMaster Software Pvt. Ltd., expressed his gratitude for this new partnership. He remarked, “We are thrilled to collaborate with Erawat Pharma, a leader in the pharmaceutical industry.

Microenterprises seek easier loans, GST exemption in budget 2025

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

As the Union Budget 2025 nears, India’s microenterprises comprising 98.5 per cent of the MSME sector are calling for easier access to credit, reduced compliance burdens, and a more supportive policy environment. Given their significant role in employment generation, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, microenterprises are seen as key drivers of India’s Atmanirbhar Bharat vision and the goal of a USD 5 trillion economy. Lakshmi Venkatesan Venkataraman, Founding and Managing Trustee, Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust, said, “One of the key concerns for microentrepreneurs is access to timely and adequate credit. While fintech firms and NBFCs process loans in a few days, banks still take 2-3 months, causing delays.” She added, “The current loan size under the MUDRA scheme, particularly in the Shishu category, averages Rs 37,000, which is insufficient for microentrepreneurs to expand and sustain their businesses effectively. Increasing loan amounts, providing up to 4 per cent



interest subvention, lowering margin money requirements from 25 per cent to 10 per cent, and reducing processing fees will ease financial stress on micro businesses. Additionally, loan processing and credit guarantee fees should be reduced to 0.25 per cent.” The GST exemption limit should be increased from Rs. 40 lakh (goods) and Rs. 20 lakhs (services) to Rs. 1 crore. “Microenterprises currently file 13 GST returns annually, adding to their administrative burden. A single-window clearance system for licensing and compliance can further help streamline operations. Additionally, sole proprietorships and partnerships should receive the same three-year tax holiday as Pvt. Ltd. companies and LLPs.” Women entrepreneurs face additional challenges, with 85 per cent struggling

to secure loans, according to a recent survey. To support digital growth, microenterprises are seeking subsidies for digital adoption, e-commerce integration, and cybersecurity training. The removal of transaction fees for digital payments up to Rs20,000 and additional funding for platforms like ONDC will help small businesses scale digitally. Sustainability is another area where microenterprises need support. Experts recommend green financing schemes and incentives for using recyclable materials, enabling microbusinesses to adopt ESG best practices and operate sustainably. Infrastructure development is also crucial. A 25 per cent increase in infrastructure spending, particularly in Tier 3 and Tier 4 towns, will improve logistics, reduce costs, and enhance market access. Additional support for agriculture, education, and healthcare, including increasing public health spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP and lowering GST on health insurance policies, will further benefit microentrepreneurs and their workforce.

JK Cement and GMDC Form Long-Term Limestone Partnership in Gujarat

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

JK Cement Ltd., one of the leading building materials company, announced its successful bid for 250 million tonnes (MnT) of high-quality limestone reserves for the next 40 years in Lakhpat Punrajpur, Kutch, Gujarat, with the Request for Proposal floated by Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. (GMDC). This marks a strategic milestone for JKCement and further strengthens its growth trajectory and operational footprint in Gujarat. Speaking on the development, Amit Kothari, Group President - Group Strategy & New Business Development, JK Cement Ltd., said,

“The successful bid for the Lakhpat limestone block underscores our commitment to driving growth and operational excellence in Gujarat. This strategic partnership not only strengthens our resource base but also highlights our focus on ensuring a steady supply of premium raw materials for high-quality cement production. Moreover, this milestone aligns with our vision of sustainable development, enabling us to contribute meaningfully to Gujarat’s industrial ecosystem and economic growth.” The strategic partnership of limestone block positions JKCement for long-term resource security. The reserves guarantees a steady supply of high-quality



limestone, that will enable JKCement for consolidating its presence in the West market in the near future. JK Cement Ltd. is among India’s top manufacturers of Grey and White Cement and home-building

solutions globally. For over five decades, JKCement has contributed to India’s infrastructure through product quality, customer focus, and technology leadership, beginning with its flagship grey

cement unit in Nimbahera, Rajasthan, in May 1975. The Company’s Grey Cement capacity is 24.2 MTPA, making it a leading manufacturer with a strong presence across 15 states, especially in Rajas-

than, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh. With a total White Cement and Wall Putty Capacity of 3.05 MTPA, JK White Cement is sold in 36 countries around the globe. The Company has a strong international presence with two subsidiaries, JK Cement Works Fujairah FZC and JK White Cement (Africa) Ltd. In 2023, JKCement launched JKMaxx Paints, offering wall, wood, and metal finishes. In the same year, JKCement expanded into construction chemicals with JK Profix, a waterproofing line, and also entered the Ready-Mix Concrete segment with JK Super Concrete, serving Delhi NCR and set for nationwide growth.

IndiGo Increases Prayagraj Capacity for Mahakumbh

TBG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

With rising demand for Prayagraj flights, IndiGo airline has further increased its flights and seat capacity significantly to/from the Sangram city during the period in which the city hosts the Mahakumbh Mela 2025. Maha Kumbh commenced on January 13 and will continue until February 26, 2025. As per various travel aggregators, a one-side Mumbai to Prayagraj flight dated January 31 would cost about Rs 24000. From Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, and Hyderabad, it would cost Rs 21000, Rs 17000, Rs 30000, and Rs 28000, respectively. As one opts to travel in early or mid Feb-

ruary, one-side ticket costs fall but still remain elevated at Rs 20000-25000. Initially, IndiGo had already planned a significant capacity increase, however, given the unprecedented demand for air travel on the Prayagraj route, more flights have been added. For this special period, the airline will now operate more than 165,000 seats to/from Prayagraj, which is more than double its normal capacity to the airport. During this period, IndiGo will connect Prayagraj to 10 locations in India, adding connectivity from Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Jaipur, over and above existing connectivity from Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Raipur, and Bhubaneswar.

India to launch GPU access portal amid intense AI race

China's DeepSeek has challenged narrative that entities need large amounts of GPU for building models

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The government is going to host Open Source model like Deepseek on Indian servers soon said Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday.

"We are going to do this very soon. Already, the team has worked the details the servers are required, how much capacity is required. All those details have been worked out. We will very soon be hosting those open source models on Indian servers," says Vaishnaw.

This comes at a time when Chinese startup DeepSeek with their open source reasoning model R1 has challenged the narrative that entitles need access to large amounts of GPU for building frontier models.

The Indian government is working on the portal



from which startups and researchers can access GPUs. Through this portal, startups and researchers can access the highly valued GPUs necessary for training AI models at much lower prices.

The Union Minister further added that the govern-

ment will be giving 40 per cent subsidy to the student on common compute facility so the cost to student will come down below Rs 100/hour. He highlighted that India has roughly 10,000 GPUs are ready in India, out of 18000 GPUs. He said out of 18693 GPUs, total 15000

High end GPUs has come in entire process.

As per the Union Minister DeepSeek was trained with more than 2000 GPUs, while the Chat GPT version was trained with about 25000 GPUs.

The technical partners who wanted to participate in this (AI) mission, they have started working, and investing.

"Our focus will be on utilising the power of AI for solving population scale problems. That is a very important focus. And in that we had said that a major pillar of the India AI mission will be to have series of applications which are useful for our people, healthcare, education, Agriculture, logistics, weather forecasting, flood forecasting, snow forecasting, Glacier measurement which are effecting karhe number of people," the Minister said.

The Union government

will provide subsidy on artificial intelligence (AI) compute power for the next four years.

"In its currently approved form we'll be able to provide subsidy for 4 years... it's a very sustainable period and we believe that as we have more empowerments. The prices will actually go down significantly below what they have already come," The Union Minister said in a press conference.

The move aims to make cutting-edge technology accessible to students, researchers, startups, and academic institutions across the country.

As part of the vision of 'Making AI in India' and 'Making AI Work for India,' the Union Cabinet has already approved the comprehensive national-level India Artificial Intelligence mission with a budget outlay of Rs 10,371.92 crore in March last year.

DeepSeek to be hosted on Indian servers soon, says Vaishnaw

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Central government on Thursday said Deepseek: ce model will soon be hosted on Indian servers to address data security and privacy concerns over the Chinese AI platform.

Chinese company Deep-Seek made headlines after its AI model R1 overtook ChatGPT as the top-ranked free app on Apple's App-store, challenging the AI dominance concentrated so far with the US firms, particularly Silicon Valley frontrunner Open AI.

AI chipmaker and Wall Street superstar Nvidia shed USD 590 billion in market capitalisation on Monday, suffering the single greatest one-day value wipeout of any firm in history.



Critics, however, have raised concerns about data security and privacy as Deepseek is based in China.

On Thursday, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw asserted that every app or system, which needs to be tested on security parameters will be tested, and decisions will be taken. "The good thing is that

Deepseek is an open-source model, and we are very soon going to host DeepSeek on Indian servers, the way we have hosted Llama (large language model/generative AI) model developed by Meta AI) on India servers.

"Everything that is open source can be taken and hosted on our server so data privacy parameters can be addressed, and that we are going to do soon," the minister said. Already, teams have worked out the nitty-gritty - details of how many servers are required, how much capacity would be needed, etal "....all those details have been worked out by the team and we will be hosting those open-source models on Indian servers. That will address concerns regarding privacy of data," Vaishnaw said

MANY ECONOMIC AND POLICY BILLS LIKELY TO BE TABLED IN BUDGET SESSION

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Following the presentation of the Economic Survey on January 31 and the Union Budget on February 1, the Budget Session 2025 is poised to address a range of significant legislative matters.

This year's session will not only include the introduction and passage of key bills but also crucial financial discussions that will shape India's fiscal landscape.

A series of important bills are likely to be taken up during the session. These include the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, aimed at strengthening banking regulations and oversight, and the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which focuses on enhancing the operational efficiency of the Indian Railways.

Another notable proposal is the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which seeks to improve disaster response mechanisms across the country.

Additionally, the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill, 2024 will propose updates to the laws surrounding oil explo-



The Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants for 2025-26 is an essential aspect of parliamentary procedures, allowing for approval of government spending for the upcoming fiscal year

ration and extraction, while the Boilers Bill, 2024 is set to introduce new safety and operational standards for boilers in industrial applications.

Among other bills likely to be introduced is the Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in Assembly Constituencies of the State of Goa Bill, 2024, which will address the reallocation of assembly constituencies to better represent scheduled tribes in the state.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 and the Muslim Wakf (Repeal) Bill, 2024 are also expected to bring reforms to the management of religious endowments.

Maritime laws will see several updates, with the Bills of Lading Bill, 2024, Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2024, Coastal Shipping Bill, 2024, and the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024 all set to modernize shipping regulations.

Above all, the Finance Bill, 2025 will be central to implementing the budgetary proposals and tax reforms which will be announced by the finance minister on February 1.

Other key bills include the Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025, which will safeguard financial interests related to aviation, and the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, which will bring changes to immigration and foreigner regulations in India.

In terms of financial business, the session will see the discussion and voting on Demands for Grants for 2025-26, followed by the introduction, consideration, and passage of the related Appropriation Bill.

The Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants for 2025-26 is an essential aspect of parliamentary procedures, allowing for the approval of government spending for the upcoming fiscal year while promoting accountability and transparency.

Demands for Grants are essentially requests made by the government to Parliament, specifying the amount of money it needs to meet its

expenses for a given year.

These expenses cover a wide range of areas, such as infrastructure, healthcare, defence, education, welfare programs, and more. Each ministry or department submits its own Demands for Grants, detailing the specific amounts needed to fund its activities and programs.

Additionally, the Second and Final Batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2024-25 will be reviewed, along with the introduction and passage of the relevant Appropriation Bill.

The Second and Final Batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2024-25 refers to additional funds that the government seeks to allocate after the presentation of the annual budget for the fiscal year. These supplementary demands arise when there are changes in the government's spending needs, which were not anticipated during the initial budget preparation.

The session will also address the Demands for Excess Grants for 2021-22, which will require discussion, voting, and the introduction of a related Appropriation Bill.

IndiGo ramps up Prayagraj capacity to meet Maha Kumbh rush

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

With rising demand for Prayagraj flights, IndiGo airline has further increased its flights and seat capacity significantly to/from the Sangram city during the period in which the city hosts the Mahakumbh Mela 2025.

Maha Kumbh commenced on January 13 and will continue until February 26, 2025. As per various travel aggregators, a one-side Mumbai to Prayagraj flight dated January 31 would cost about Rs 24000. From Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, and Hyderabad, it would cost Rs 21000, Rs 17000, Rs 30000, and Rs 28000, respectively. As one opts to travel in early or mid February, one-side ticket costs fall but still remain elevated at Rs 20000-25000.

Initially, IndiGo had already planned a significant capacity increase, however, given the unprecedented



demand for air travel on the Prayagraj route, more flights have been added.

For this special period, the airline will now operate more than 165,000 seats to/from Prayagraj, which is more than double its normal capacity to the airport.

During this period, IndiGo will connect Prayagraj to 10 locations in India, adding connectivity from Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Jaipur, over and above existing connectivity from Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Raipur, and Bhubaneswar. Additionally, the airline has also increased capacity deployed on existing routes to/from Praya-

graj through the addition of frequency and operations of A321, its larger aircraft.

Overall, the airline will operate around 900 flights to/from the city, up from 490 regular services.

IndiGo said it is committed to supporting the efforts of the government by ensuring smooth travel for pilgrims.

Besides the additional capacity that the airline has already activated, it is working on reallocating capacity from other parts of its network to add more flights, to cater to the influx of passengers.

The airline has also ensured to stabilise airfares and is committed to providing the best possible travel experience to all its customers. IndiGo said it remains dedicated to providing safe, reliable, and affordable air travel, and this capacity increase from Prayagraj underscores the airline's commitment to connecting people and places, especially during significant cultural and religious events.

Ethanol rates: Gadkari to discuss with oil companies

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI



Nitin Gadkari, Union minister for roadways, Thursday said he would hold a meeting with oil marketing companies after the Delhi elections, where they will discuss ways and means to make retail ethanol prices reasonable.

Speaking at the 4th Edition of Sugar-Ethanol and Bio Energy India Conference (SEIC) 2025, organised by ChiniMandi, the Union Minister cited the example of Indian Oil, which had decided to open 400 ethanol pumps. Gadkari said that the OMC had priced per litre ethanol at Rs 110 in the retail market, higher than the market price of petrol. The pricing was kept that way, apparently to disincentivise the green alternative fuel sales. "After the Delhi assembly polls, possibly on February 6 or 7, we will hold a meeting.

'Budget, RBI policy to steer India's economic growth in next 10 days'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The next 10 days will be pivotal for India's economic trajectory as the upcoming Union Budget announcement on February 1 and the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting on February 7 will lay down the policy road map to boost the slowing economy, according to the Union Bank of India (UBI) latest report.

According to the report, both the government and the RBI are expected to announce crucial steps aimed at stimulating growth in the face of a slowing economy.

The report adds that as the country grapples with moderating GDP growth, the government is expected to continue its focus on fiscal consolidation.

The report expected that the government will consolidate the fiscal deficit target to 4.5 per cent of GDP in FY26 from 4.8 per cent in FY25. "The fiscal impulse is expected to be negative with consolidation driven by a fall in expenditure as percentage of GDP rather than pickup in revenues (despite likely repeat of record

Both the government and the RBI are expected to announce crucial steps aimed at stimulating growth in the face of a slowing economy.

high RBI dividend in FY26 above Rs 2 lakh cr). More importantly, the quality of spending has come under pressure this year on delay in capex post elections with the public spending also hitting absorptive capacity in few sectors leading to calls for diversification in this Budget," the report added. The report played for a greater emphasis on stimulus measures in the upcoming budget to address weak demand and bolster private capital expenditure (capex), which has been a major challenge for recovery. "Focus on stimulus measures will be watched like tax cuts for the middle class, tax rate equalization on bank deposits vis-a-vis other risk assets, boost to capex budget and sector-specific steps like for MSMEs, renewables, tourism etc," added the report.



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets young winners of the Mann Ki Baat Quiz Competition from Kerala, in New Delhi on Thursday. (ANI Photo)

Andhra approves investment projects worth Rs 44,776 crore

AGENCIES
AMARAVATI

The 3rd meeting of the State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) under the chairmanship of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu was held on Thursday.

As per a statement from the CMO, the Board gave approval for investments

worth Rs 44,776 crore for 15 projects. With this, the total value of investments approved by SIPB has surpassed Rs 3 lakh crore.

These investments are expected to create nearly 20,000 jobs across the state.

The Board also reviewed the status of projects approved in the previous two meetings.

The CM directed that con-

tinuous discussions with industry leaders should ensure speedy grounding of projects. Besides, CM emphasized that officials and ministers must track investments efficiently to deliver quick results.

In today's highly competitive environment, the "Speed of Doing Business" should be implemented effectively, CM instructed officials.

'20% capex growth crucial for boosting India's GDP'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The upcoming union budget should increase the capital expenditure (Capex) by at least 20 per cent to revive domestic demand, private consumption and ensure sustainable GDP growth says the EY Economy Watch January 2025 report.

It says the government is expected to continue on its fiscal deficit reduction path, bringing it down to 4.4 per cent of GDP in FY26. A strategic focus on investment and spending reforms will help balance fiscal prudence with economic expansion.

DK Srivastava, Chief Policy Advisor at EY India, said, "As we navigate a challenging economic landscape, the upcoming budget must balance fiscal prudence with growth-oriented measures. Increasing capital expenditure and putting more disposable income in the hands of consumers, particularly urban consumers, will be pivotal to uplifting growth

"Increasing capital expenditure and putting more disposable income in the hands of consumers, will be pivotal to uplifting demand growth

in domestic demand."

Despite global economic uncertainties and currency depreciation pressures, Srivastava noted, "With the right fiscal policy initiatives and reforms, India can continue progressing toward its long-term targets. With an average annual nominal GDP growth of 10.5 per cent, and even assuming a relatively higher annual depreciation rate of the INR/USD at close to 3.5 per cent, India would still achieve the USD 5 trillion economy milestone by FY30."

DEFENCE BUDGET TO BE REDEFINED TO ACHIEVE STRATEGIC TARGET OF DEVELOPED MILITARY OF 2047

OPINION

MAJOR GENERAL
J.K.S. PARIHAR



Indian Armed Forces is undergoing the biggest transformation and restructuring in its functional and operational capabilities since independence. Over and above the emerging geopolitical challenges, to remain a compatible and major force to be reckoned with in 2047, the dynamic doctrine deserves major consideration and planning in the mode of self-reliance and budget allocation with broad perspectives.

India has the third-largest military in the world and is the sixth-largest spender in defense. However, the defence budget allocation for FY 2024-25 is around USD 72.2 billion which is much lower than USD 849 Billion by the USA and 237 billion USD by China (excluding around estimated opaque expenditures of USD 300 Billion). Pakistan's defence budget is USD 7.64 billion for the current FY whereas the defence spending of Russia is close to \$145 billion, which amounts to 6.33% of GDP. In contrast to the defence expenditure

by these countries,

Even though defence expenditure by India has been showing a rising trend of an average of 8 to 10% per annum since the last decade. However, considering the average inflation rate of around 6% and the altered parity of the rupee compared to the USD, the budget allocation remains more or less standstill, rather marginally less compared to the effective value of the previous years. The defence expenditure in all heads was around USD 47.22 billion in 2013-14, approximately 1.79 % of GDP and 12.23% of total government expenditures in the financial year. Whereas the expenditure has climbed up to INR 6.21 trillion (USD 75.2 billion) during the current financial year 2024-25. This amount is around 12.9% as compared to the 13.33% of total government expenditure as compared to the FY 2023-24 and just 1.89 percent of the estimated GDP and likely to be in the range of 1.9 to 2% of the GDP in the FY 2025-26.

The allocation to the defence budget is under two important major heads of Capital and Revenue expenditures. Expenditure under the Revenue head comprises military pay and allowances inclusive of civil defence employees from Ordnance Factories and other defence establishments. The revenue allocation for defence pay allowances and pension amounts to almost 60% of the total defence budget

(30.66% for Pay and allowances and 22.70% for Defence Pension). The major share of revenue funds contributes towards payment of salaries and pensions including to the civil defence employees. Since ordnance factories have been converted into government-owned public companies, liabilities of their salaries are out of the defence budget now. However, payment of their pension will continue from the defence budget. It is recommended that the pension of these categories should be delinked from the defence budget to the general budget. These measures will reduce revenue liabilities and will provide additional funds in the current account for modernization.

Gradual implementation of the Agniveer scheme in armed forces will further reduce the pace and share of pay and allowances of uniformed defence personnel to less than 40 percent of the total defence budget in the future.

The Capital expenditure contributes towards expenses on procurement of arms, ammunition, and weaponry as well as to create infrastructure. The capital head was allocated INR 1.72 trillion (27.66% of the defence budget) where as 14.82% was earmarked for revenue expenditure on sustenance and operational preparedness in the current financial year.

The first budget of independent India was presented on November 26, 1947, by Finance Minister R.K. Shanmukham Chetty. The FM had allotted around 50% total budget expenditure to cope with the significant deficiencies that arose due to the partition. Later on, the defence budget continued to have a share of 2 to 3% of GDP. The Capital expenditure remained less



The allocation to the defence budget is under two important major heads of Capital and Revenue expenditures. Expenditure under the Revenue head comprises military pay and allowances inclusive of civil defence employees from Ordnance Factories and other defence establishments.

than 9% of total defence expenditures to sharply increase up to 33% in the current financial year.

The procurement of weaponry is based on the principle of developing futuristic gadgets, acquiring modern technology, maintaining existing assets, and gradually replacing aging and obsolete equipment. The prevailing defence expenditure under the current head is highly inadequate to sustain this vital process. The target can be achieved by enhancing allocation under the current head, imposing fiscal discipline, Rationalization the quantity as well as the mandatory cap on the budget allotment to sup-

porting services including medical for 5 to 7 years. The outsourcing of facilities and manpower not engaged directly with combat and operational roles is also a viable option.

Hence the Government must consider enhancing the capital budget to the level of 2% of GDP from the present level of around 0.6% to lay a strong foundation in the field of modernization, research, and development in the armed forces as a step towards achieving target 2047.

A total of 68% of the capital procurement budget was earmarked for domestic industries during the last three years. It is suggested that

the domestic share should be at least 80%. Hence the total procurement needs to touch INR 1,40,000 Crore from the existing value of INR 70,000 Crore. This target is very much possible by thrust and adopting Since defence technologies are highly complex and clubbed with time-consuming research and development processes, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in the defence sector was enhanced in 2020 by up to 74% through the Automatic Route for companies seeking new defence industrial licenses, and up to 100% through the Government Route to facilitate Inflow of the modern technology. This FDI policy has accelerated cumulative inflow to the tune of US\$21.74 million from April 2000 to September 2024 which deserves higher inflow.

DAP 2020 has further galvanized the process of "Buy (Indian - Indigenous Design, Development, and Manufacturing)," "Buy and Make (Indian)," and "Make I and II." The 2023 amendments to India's

Defense Acquisition Procedure have directed the promotion of Indigenous content, the Introduction of Innovations for Defense Excellence, Simplified Make-II process, Leasing provisions, Digitalization of processes, and Strategic partnerships. However, the major hurdle in adopting and revolutionizing new technology remains direct transfer of complex technology by the OEM. Despite thrust to the defence manufacturing system, the vital components of higher-end weaponry, ships, fighter aircraft, missiles, radar, and navigation systems have to be imported. Although there is rapid engagement and procurement of an Indianized system in the armed forces, the major deficiency in this regard remains with the services and, sub-branches of communication, UAV, transport, consumables, ordnance, laser devices, medicines, higher-end medical equipment, devise and implants. There is a strong need to rationalize the procurement policy by a decisive approach to

make it 100 percent mandatory to procure Indianized products of the latest design rather than importing, acquiring, and dumping old and phasing out technology, except items that are not produced in India. In the same way, combat-oriented and operationally viable medical, communications, and logistics setups should have the highest priority to ensure and enhance their role in the proposed theaterization and integrated battlefield grouping.

Development of infrastructure and facilities by non-military sources for the dual purpose, massive thrust in research and innovation as a joint effort with the major share from the non-defence setup both private and government will not only improve capabilities but also reduce the burden on the defence budget.

Till now the military doctrine of India has been Pakistan and China-centric to safeguard the territorial boundaries of the nation as a preemptive defence. With the changing scenario in Southeast Asia, political instability in the Bangla Desh and Myanmar raises security concerns. The growing influence of trade, and the security of financial establishments from any threat from Space and Cyber technology has widened the domain of defence forces. India has to transform its forces into ultra-modern futuristic forces to enable them to discharge duties in a newer perspective where the application of AI, UAV, Lasers, and Space warfare are newer threats.

Major General J.K.S. Parihar, Sena Medal, Bar to Vishisht Seva Medal (Retd.), Former Additional Director General, AFMS and Expert on Defence and International Strategic Affairs

Politicking of incomprehension and misinterpretation: India's National Education Policy

OPINION

DR. SHADAB AHMED



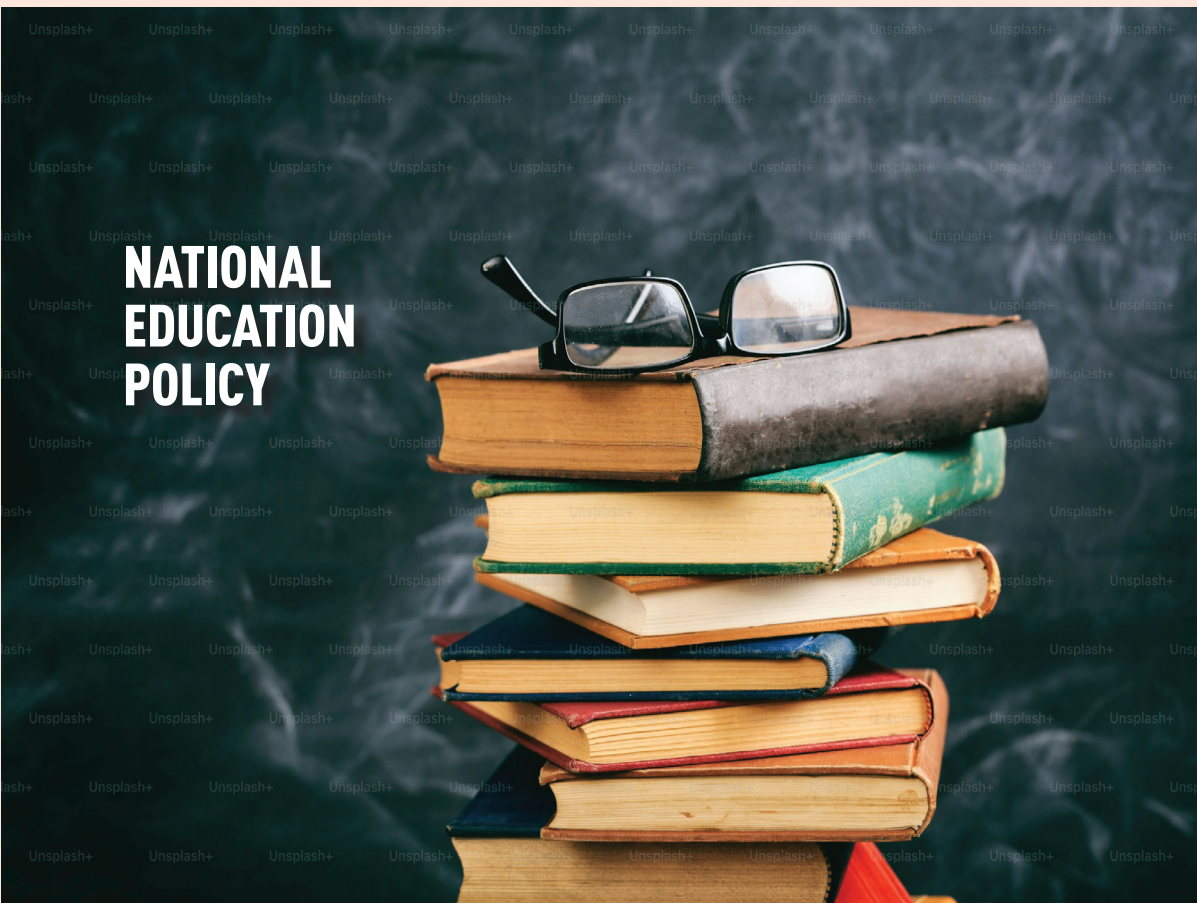
The Indian National Education Policy (NEP) outlines, guidelines and advises the vision for the country's education system, incipiently approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2020, thereby transfiguring the previous National Policy on Education of 1986, and aspiring to making sweeping changes in school and higher education. The NEP prepared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, sought rigorous consultations and deliberations in its drafting, pitching both the empirical and reasonable imputations from the districts, municipalities, gram panchayats and other Urban and Local bodies, based on the exigent needs

of the Indian education in contemporary times.

The National Education Policy 2020 proposed prima facie to increase the state expenditure on education from around 3% to 6% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It further mandated to make education universal, holistic, inclusive, assessment, conceptual, analytical, multi-lingual, multi-disciplinary, investigative and innovative, with practical implementation on access to education and ease of examination operations. It additionally clarified that the mode of instruction in education will be the mother tongue till Grade 5 and beyond to improve Learning-Outcomes, though stressing and accentuating on the connotation of Sanskrit and foreign languages. The Policy recommended a "Tri-Language Formula" anticipating that all students will learn three languages in their school, under which at least two should be native to India. It also asserted and insisted that no language will be imposed on the students.

After the concurrence of the said policy, the Union Government deemed the language in NEP as a broad guideline, and mandated that it was up to the states, institutions and schools to decide the implementation of the policy.

Several states of India, consequently, implemented the provisions of NEP 2020 successfully. But the problem arose when some regional states of the Indian Union controversially saw this Policy as the Union's attempt to impose Hindi on school students. They also found the provisions of this Policy over-ambitious, in the bold declaration to the utilization of 6% of India's Gross Domestic Product for education, at a time when the National Exchequer itself is choked meeting the current expenditure requirements in healthcare, infrastructure and national security. The recalcitrant states further argued that a healthy education system must comprise of a diversity of institutions, not a forced multi-disciplinarily one. Students should have a choice for different kinds of institutions. The policy was found risking an institutional isomorphism mandated by the Centre, without accounting for diversity. NEP provocatively also maintained a stoic silence on the issue between skill and availability of matching jobs, due to emergent tech-



nological fields like Artificial Intelligence, Cyberspace and Nanotechnology.

When the National Education Policy 2024-2025 has been given the imple-

mentation license, it has evolved with the most radical change in enriching and personalization of the school education, replacing the 10+2 model with the

5+3+3+4 model, developmentally aligning the educational age to Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary stages. Another big advantage is the mitigating of pressure and increased flexibility on taking up examinations by way of allowing board exams to be taken twice a year. The rigid segregation of academic streams into Arts, Science, and Commerce is proposed to be demolished. Students will be free to choose subjects that cut across disci-

plines which not only makes education relevant to the job market but empowers students with a set of skills required for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

The policy at the outset tried to please all stakeholders. The emphasis on Continuous Professional Development, requiring Teachers to undergo regular certified courses and professional training programmes to gear up and mobilize with updated superior teaching skills and new concepts

in education is very much desirable in the modern Indian education system. The insight to make education student-centred and foresight to make education qualitative with enhanced lingual diversity and preservation of the rich cultural heritage of India is substantial and perceptible.

How to effectively guide the misguided and provoked factions into wilful submission remains the challenge for the policy makers and the Union Government. Due tact and consideration must be employed to pacify and lucidly elucidate the slant and sentiment of the aggrieved parties, preventing any academic and instructional Balkanization of the states in the implementation process. Notwithstanding the emotional tinge between the Centre and the States, all parties should come to a mutual consensus. The States must have faith in Governmental intention and implementation, the Government too has to recalibrate their stand and realise that the wont and custom of Indian ethnic regional languages does not in any manner whatsoever hamper the cultural identity and ethnic diversity of Indian Union.

Dr Shadab Ahmed is an Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon, and a translator of several books on Historical & Ethnic poetry

THE GAME CHANGER UNION BUDGETS

India's game-changing Union Budgets include 1991's liberalization, 2000's IT boom, 2005's rural growth, 2017's GST, and 2021's post-pandemic revival, transforming the economy and driving progress.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's economic journey has been shaped by several transformative Union Budgets. From the 1991 economic liberalization that ended the License Raj to the 2017 GST implementation and 2021 post-pandemic recovery, these budgets have driven growth, innovation, and structural change. Each of these game-changing budgets addressed the economic challenges of their time and laid the foundation for India's continued progress as a global economic powerhouse.

As India continues to evolve, future Union Budgets will play a crucial role in addressing new challenges, fostering innovation, and ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth.

Here are details on five Game-Changing Union Budgets in India's History:

The Union Budget of India is more than just an annual financial statement—



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Union Budget in 2021. File Photo

it is a policy roadmap that shapes the country's economic trajectory. Over

the years, some budgets have stood out as transformational, introducing

reforms that reshaped industries, strengthened the economy, and improved

the lives of millions. This article explores five of the most impactful Union

Budgets that proved to be game changers in India's economic history.



THE LANDMARK 1991 BUDGET – DR. MANMOHAN SINGH'S ECONOMIC REFORMS

Date: July 24, 1991
Presented by: Dr. Manmohan Singh (Finance Minister)
Prime Minister: P.V. Narasimha Rao

The 1991 Union Budget is often considered the most significant economic milestone in India's history. It laid the foundation for economic liberalization, paving the way for India's transformation into a market-driven economy. Presented in the backdrop of a severe balance of payments crisis, this budget introduced sweeping reforms that dismantled the socialist-era "License Raj" and integrated India into the global economy.

KEY GAME-CHANGING REFORMS:

- **End of License Raj:** The budget abolished the restrictive licensing system that stifled private sector growth, allowing business-

es to operate more freely.

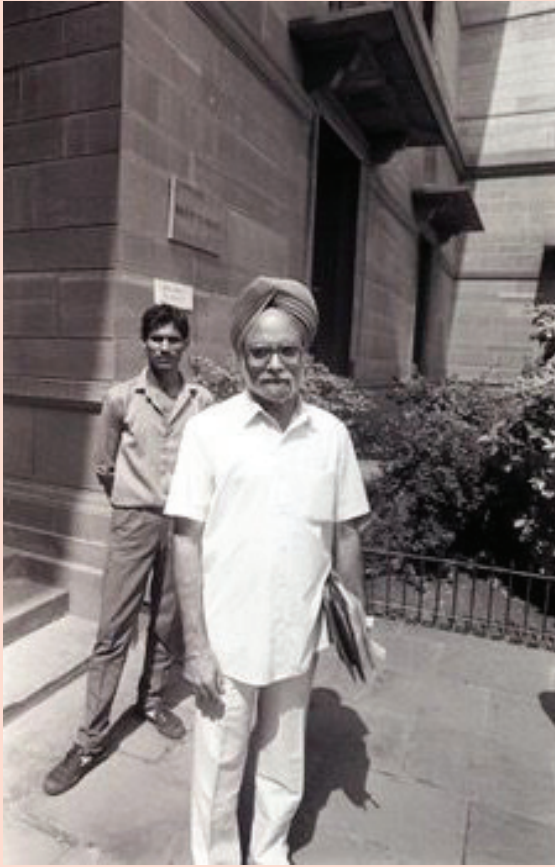
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** It opened up multiple sectors to foreign investment, attracting global capital and expertise.

- **Devaluation of the Rupee:** To boost exports and address the forex crisis, the rupee was devalued, making Indian goods more competitive globally.

- **Tax Reforms:** Reduced customs duties and rationalized income tax structures to promote a more business-friendly environment.

IMPACT:

The 1991 reforms set India on a path of rapid economic growth, leading to the rise of IT, telecom, and automobile sectors. Today, India is one of the world's fastest-growing economies, thanks largely to this budget's visionary policies.



Former Finance Minister Manmohan Singh in the Parliament in 1991. File Photo

THE 2005 BUDGET – P. CHIDAMBARAM'S FOCUS ON RURAL GROWTH

Date: February 28, 2005
Presented by: P. Chidambaram (Finance Minister)
Prime Minister: Dr. Manmohan Singh

While previous budgets focused on economic liberalization, the 2005 budget prioritized inclusive growth, particularly rural development and poverty alleviation. Recognizing that India's growth must benefit all sections of society, this budget introduced significant measures for agriculture and employment.

KEY GAME-CHANGING REFORMS:

- **Launch of MGNREGA:** Allocated funds for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, providing employment opportunities in rural areas.

- **Increased Rural Credit:** Expanded credit availabil-

ity for farmers to boost agricultural productivity.

- **VAT Implementation:** Replaced the inefficient sales tax system with Value Added Tax (VAT) to improve tax compliance and revenue collection.

- **Focus on Infrastructure:** Enhanced public investment in rural roads, irrigation, and electrification.

IMPACT:

The 2005 budget significantly improved rural employment and helped reduce poverty levels. MGNREGA, one of the world's largest employment schemes, lifted millions out of extreme poverty. The introduction of VAT streamlined taxation, laying the groundwork for the later implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).



Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram while going to present the Union Budget in 2005.

The Pro-Growth 2000 Budget – Yashwant Sinha's IT Boom

Date: February 29, 2000
Presented by: Yashwant Sinha (Finance Minister)
Prime Minister: Atal Bihari Vajpayee

The early 2000s marked India's emergence as an IT powerhouse, and the 2000 Union Budget played a crucial role in accelerating this transformation. With a focus on economic liberalization and fostering the technology sector, this budget laid the foundation for India's digital revolution.

KEY GAME-CHANGING REFORMS:

- **IT Industry Boost:** Removed tax on software exports, allowing India's IT sector to thrive and become globally competitive.

- **Reduction in Corporate**

Tax: Encouraged private investment by lowering corporate tax rates.

- **Telecom Sector Reforms:** Laid the groundwork for privatization and growth in the telecom industry, leading to affordable mobile services.

- **Strengthening Infrastructure:** Announced incentives for infrastructure development, especially in roads, power, and railways.

IMPACT:

The 2000 budget fueled the rapid rise of IT giants like Infosys, TCS, and Wipro, helping India become a global leader in software services. It also led to increased internet penetration, setting the stage for the digital economy.



Then former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha while going to present the Union Budget in 2000. File Photo

THE 2017 BUDGET – ARUN JAITLEY'S GST AND DIGITAL PUSH

Date: February 1, 2017
Presented by: Arun Jaitley (Finance Minister)
Prime Minister: Narendra Modi

The 2017 budget was one of the most impactful in recent history, introducing major structural reforms such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the push toward a cashless economy. It marked a shift in budget presentation dates and merged the Railway Budget with the General Budget.

KEY GAME-CHANGING REFORMS:

- **Goods and Services Tax**



Former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley during 2017 Union Budget. File Photo

(GST): Although implemented later in July 2017, the budget laid the foundation for the new indirect tax regime, replacing multiple state and central taxes with a unified system.

- **Demonetization Aftermath Measures:** Introduced steps to promote digital payments, reduce cash transactions, and increase financial transparency.

- **Increased Capital Ex-**

penditure: Boosted public spending on infrastructure, including highways, railways, and rural electrification.

- **Reduction in Income Tax for Middle Class:** Lowered tax rates for individuals earning between 2.5 lakh to 5 lakh, benefiting the middle class.

IMPACT:

GST became one of the most significant tax reforms in India's history, simplifying compliance and reducing tax evasion. The push for digital transactions helped increase financial inclusion and formalize the economy.

The 2021 Budget – Nirmala Sitharaman's Post-Pandemic Revival Plan

Date: February 1, 2021
Presented by: Nirmala Sitharaman (Finance Minister)
Prime Minister: Narendra Modi

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented economic downturn, making the 2021 budget crucial for India's recovery. This budget focused on healthcare, infrastructure, and economic revival while

avoiding new taxes to ease the burden on businesses and individuals.

KEY GAME-CHANGING REFORMS:

- **Boost to Healthcare:** A 137% increase in healthcare spending, including Rs.35,000 crore for COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

- **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes:** En-

couraged domestic manufacturing in key sectors like electronics, automobiles, and pharmaceuticals.

- **Disinvestment and Privatization:** Announced plans to privatize key public sector enterprises, including two public sector banks.

- **Increase in FDI Limit in Insurance:** Raised the foreign investment cap in the insurance sector from 49%

to 74%.

IMPACT:

This budget helped stabilize India's post-pandemic economy by prioritizing health and infrastructure. The PLI schemes boosted domestic manufacturing, reducing dependency on imports and strengthening India's global competitiveness.

SUPREME COURT TO DECIDE: CAN PROPERTY OF PERSON ACCUSED UNDER PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION ACT BE SEIZED OR FROZEN UNDER SECTION 102 OF CRPC?

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *The State Of West Bengal Versus Anil Kumar Dey Sarkar* observed and is set to decide the issue as to whether Section 102 of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC, which deals with police officer's power to seize certain property, shall apply to a criminal case registered under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The bench comprising of Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice PK Mishra was hearing the present matter.

The bench in its order passed in the petition filed by the State of West Bengal stated that the petitioner

has raised an interesting issue with regard to the exercise of the power by the enforcement agencies under the provision of section 102 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC, in cases arising out of the provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act.

The court in the case also stayed the operation of the impugned order passed by the Calcutta High Court, which set aside freezing of bank accounts of the accused-respondent on the basis that the same was done by invoking Section 102 of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC.

The present matter relates to a person accused under provisions of the Prevention of Corruption



Act, whose assets including fixed deposit accounts were frozen by authorities by invoking Section 102 of Code of Criminal Procedure CrPC.

Aggrieved with the same, the accused challenged the freezing of bank accounts before the Calcutta High Court, where the authorities took a stand that the

bank accounts had only been seized (and not attached) and as such, Section 18A of the PC Act was not applicable.

The High Court referred

However, the respondent's bank accounts were frozen by invoking Section 102 of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC, it set aside the impugned order and directed de-freezing of the said accounts.

to the decision in the case *Ratan Babulal Lath v. The State of Karnataka*, wherein the court observed that Section 18A of PC Act envisages that attachment, administration of attached property, execution of order of attachment and confiscation of money or property procured by means of an offence under the Act shall be governed by Section 18A.

However, the respondent's bank accounts were frozen by invoking Section 102 of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC, it set aside the impugned order and directed de-freezing of the said accounts.

The High Court stated that, 'Since admittedly the bank accounts of the petitioner were frozen by the opposite party by invoking

section 102 of the Code and not by procedure under section 18A of the Act, the said freezing cannot be sustained.'

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that the diverse views have been taken by the High Courts of Madras and Patna with regard to applicability of Section 102 of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC in seizure and freezing of bank accounts in a criminal case registered under the PC Act.

While the Madras High Court has held in favor of such application, the Patna High Court has held that such seizure and freezing can be made only under Section 18A of PC Act.

Supreme Court questions Calcutta High Court practice, seeks report: Why 2-judge benches hear bail applications?

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Mahatab Ali v. State of West Bengal & Anr* observed and has questioned the practice of the Calcutta High Court wherein the court was hearing a regular and anticipatory bail applications before Division Benches instead of Single Judges, as is the norm in other High Courts.

The court in the case stated that, 'When there is a huge filing and pendency of the bail applications, we wonder why regular bail applications and anticipatory bail applications are being heard by the Division Bench of this High Court especially when in case of all other High Courts, the bail matters are being heard by the learned Single Judges. The question being whether two Hon'ble Judges of the High Court should be devoting time for dealing with regular bail applications.'

The bench comprising of Justice Abhay Oka and Jus-



tice Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing the present matter.

The bench sought a report from the Registrar (Judicial) of the High Court explaining this practice and directed the submission of data on bail applications filed in 2024 and their pendency.

Further, the bench direct the Registrar (Judicial) of the High Court of Calcutta to place on record a report why regular bail applications or anticipatory bail applications are being heard by the Division Bench. He is directed

to furnish the data of bail applications and anticipatory bail applications filed in 2024 and pendency of such applications.

The court gave the said directions wherein the court issued notice in a Special Leave Petition, SLP challenging the High Court's order granting bail in a murder case.

However, as per the National Judicial Data Grid, 1039 bail pleas are pending before the Calcutta High Court, with 1 bail plea from 2019, 102 from 2022, 127 from 2023, 711 from 2024

Further, the bench direct the Registrar (Judicial) of the High Court of Calcutta to place on record a report why regular bail applications or anticipatory bail applications are being heard by the Division Bench. He is directed to furnish the data of bail applications and anticipatory bail applications filed in 2024 and pendency of such applications.

and 98 from this year.

The case before the High Court involved the petitioner Safiar Hossain, who had been in custody for over one year and eleven months.

The High Court in the case noted that only eight out of 43 charge-sheeted witnesses had been examined, and there was no likelihood of the trial concluding soon.

On the other hand, the State opposed the bail application, citing the recovery of a gun and six rounds of ammunition from the petitioner, as well as forensic evidence linking the ammunition to the bullet

found in the deceased's body.

It has been argued by the prosecution in the case that the petitioner's bail had previously been rejected twice. However, the High Court observed that prolonged incarceration without trial violated the accused's fundamental right to a speedy trial and personal liberty.

The court in the case observed and has granted bail which being on the grounds of trial delay, the High Court directed the petitioner to furnish a bond of Rs. 10,000 with two sureties.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case of *H. Anjanappa And Ors Versus A Prabhakar And Ors* discussed the circumstances under which a third party to a suit can seek leave to appeal against the decree.

The bench comprising of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice R Mahadevan was hearing the present matter.

The court in the case made the said observations wherein an appeal is filed by a lis pendens transferee, who was aggrieved by the High Court's refusal of leave to appeal against a decree for specific performance of sale agreement.

The bench in the case summarised the principles governing the grant of leave to appeal as follows : 1.The section 96 and section 100 of Civil Procedure Code, CPC respectively provide for preferring an appeal from an original decree or decree in appeal respectively; 2.The said provisions do not enumerate the categories of persons who can file an appeal; 3.It being a settled legal proposition that a stranger cannot be permitted to file an appeal in any proceedings unless he satisfies the court that he falls within the category of an aggrieved person. 4.It being only where a judgment and decree prejudicially affects a



The court in the case made the said observations wherein an appeal is filed by a lis pendens transferee, who was aggrieved by the High Court's refusal of leave to appeal against a decree for specific performance of sale agreement.

person who is not a party to the proceedings, he can prefer an appeal with the leave of the court;

5.A person who is aggrieved, to file an appeal, must be one whose right is affected by reason of the judgment and decree sought to be impugned; 6.The expression "person aggrieved" does not include a person who suffers from a psychological or an imaginary injury; 7. It would be improper to grant leave to appeal to every person who may in some remote or indirect way be prejudicially affected by a decree or judgment; and 8.Ordinarily leave to appeal should be granted to persons who, though not parties to the proceed-

ings, would be bound by the decree or judgment in that proceeding and who would be precluded from attacking its correctness in other proceedings.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed that a lis pendens transferee though not brought on record under Order XXII Rule 10 CPC, is entitled to seek leave to appeal against the final decree passed against this transferor, the defendant in the suit. Therefore, whether to grant such leave or not is within the discretion of the court and such discretion should be exercised judiciously in the facts and circumstances of each case.

Kerala High Court: Family pension not subject matter of testamentary disposition, husband cannot exclude wife and children from it by filing application

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Kerala High Court in the case *Union of India and Others v S. Sathikumari Amma* observed and has held that an employee cannot make a representation that his legally wedded wife or other dependents are not entitled to claim the family pension.

The Division bench comprising of Justice Amit Rawal and Justice K. V. Jayakumar was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed that family pension is not an estate or property of the employee and cannot be disposed of as per the will of the employee.

The bench stated that, 'Family pension unlike the other pensionary benefits like provident fund, gratuity etc could not be a subject matter of testamentary disposition by the employee during his lifetime. Therefore, in other words, an employee cannot bequeath his family pension in favour of another nor he can nominate some other person for receiving family pension other than the one who is entitled to it.'

In the present matter, Gopalakrishna Pillai who retired as a Postal Assistant



The Court referred to the Supreme Court decision in the case Jodh Singh v Union of India, wherein the court held that what is not payable during the lifetime of the deceased, over which he has no power of disposition cannot form part of his estate. A family pension can be claimed after the death of the employee – therefore it cannot form part of the employee's estate.

while making the application for pension expressed his intention to not include his wife as a family member.

Therefore, he had also

made a representation to strike the name of his wife and daughter from his service book and other records and to declare that nomina-

tion made in favour of them for pensionary benefits stands cancelled. Later, he filed another application saying that he had divorced his wife.

After the death of Gopalakrishna's, his wife approached the Central Administrative Tribunal claiming the family pension along with interest.

The Tribunal allowed the request and asked the Union to pay the family pension to her until her death or remarriage.

Against the said order, Union of India approached the High Court.

The High Court in the case affirmed the decision of the Tribunal wherein it is stated that an employee has no right to direct how to

dispose the family pension.

The Court referred to the Supreme Court decision in the case *Jodh Singh v Union of India*, wherein the court held that what is not payable during the lifetime of the deceased, over which he has no power of disposition cannot form part of his estate. A family pension can be claimed after the death of the employee – therefore it cannot form part of the employee's estate.

In *Violet Issaac and others v Union of India* the Supreme Court held that employee cannot dispose family pension by testamentary disposition as it is not part of his estate. This view was upheld by the Supreme Court again in the case *Nitu v Sheela Rani & Ors*.

Further, the court stated that family pension is not a debt or security and therefore the authorities cannot insist on the production of a succession certificate for the grant of family pension.

Accordingly, the court dismissed the plea.

The counsel, Adv. T. V. Vinu (CGC) appeared for the Petitioners.

The counsel, Advocates Sajith Kumar V., Vivek A. V. represented the Respondent.

Allahabad High Court allows withdrawal of PIL against appointment of SP Gupta as State Information Commissioner

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Allahabad High Court in the case *Ashish Kumar Singh vs. Union Of India Thru. Secy. Deptt. Of Personnel And Training New Delhi And 4 Others* observed and has dismissed the Public Interest Litigation, PIL filed as withdrawn, challenging Swatantra Prakash Gupta's appointment as the State Information Commissioner.

In the present matter, the Public Interest Litigation, PIL is filed filed by the petitioner in person, Ashish Kumar Singh, challenged Gupta's appointment as the SIC, contending that it violates Section 15(6) of the Right to Information Act, 2005, a provision that bars the pursuit of any profession by an appointee.

The section 15 (6) states that the State Chief Information Commissioner or a State Information Commissioner shall not be a Member of Parliament or Member of the Legislature of any State or Union territory, as the case may be, or hold any other office of profit or connected with any political party or carrying on any business or pursuing any profession.

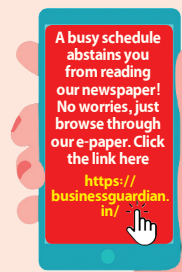
The petitioner in the plea argued before the court that Gupta is an advocate by profession and, thus, per the above-mentioned provision of the 2005 Act, should not have been appointed as the SIC. On the other hand, the Chief Standing Counsel Prashant Singh Atal defended his appointment as he contended that the said provision states that the appointee must

not practise any profession after his appointment as such, and in this case, there was no proof that Gupta had filed any Vakalatnama in any case after was appointed to the said post. The court in the case noted that that Gupta's appointment as an SIC in March 2024 was questioned for his previous association with the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP).

The bench comprising of Justice Attau Rahman Masoodi and Justice Subhash Vidyarthi was hearing the present matter.

In March 07, the press release issued by the UP government, Gupta was identified as a "senior advocate."

However, he admitted to serving in several "high posts" in the BJP and denied holding any "direct responsibility" at the time of his appointment.



THE BUSINESS GUARDIAN

FRIDAY | 31 JANUARY 2025 | NEW DELHI

SHAH CHAIRS MEET ON THREE CRIMINAL LAWS' IMPLEMENTATION IN GUJARAT

In a meet with Gujarat CM Shah discussed in detail about progress

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday chaired a review meeting on the implementation of three new criminal laws in Gujarat with state Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

The Home Minister discussed in detail about the progress on the implementation of the three new laws - the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) that replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

In the review meeting, the Home Minister assessed the Gujarat's preparedness for implementing these laws in step by step.

Shah suggested that the Chief Minister of Gujarat should review the progress of implementing the three new laws monthly, the Chief Secretary every 15 days, and the Director General of Police (DGP) weekly, along with officials from all relevant departments.

He also directed the DGP

ASSESSES GUJARAT'S PREPAREDNESS



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan during a review meeting on the implementation of three new criminal laws, on Thursday. ANI

- Shah suggested that the Chief Minister of Gujarat should review the progress of implementing the three new laws monthly, the Chief Secretary every 15 days, and the Director General of Police (DGP) weekly, along with officials from all relevant departments.
- He also directed the DGP to sensitize all police personnel, emphasizing that delivering timely justice should be their top priority.
- The meeting reviewed the implementation and current status of various new provisions related to police, prisons, courts, prosecution, and forensics in Gujarat

to sensitize all police personnel, emphasizing that delivering timely justice should be their top priority.

The meeting reviewed the implementation and current status of various new provisions related to police, prisons, courts, prosecution, and forensics in Gujarat.

Gujarat Home Minister Harsh Sanghavi, chief

secretary Raj Kumar and Director General of Police Vikas Sahay also attended the meeting along with other senior officers of the state. Director General of BPR&D, the Director General of NCRB, and several senior officials from the Union Home Ministry and the state government attended the meeting.

During the discussion in the meeting, Union Home Minister noted that the essence of the three new criminal laws lies in the provision of delivering justice within three years, from the filing of an FIR till the verdict comes from Supreme Court.

Appreciating the efforts made so far by the Gujarat

government in implementing the new criminal laws, the Home Minister emphasized the need for their 100 per cent implementation in the state at the earliest.

Shah mentioned that before registering cases under sections related to terrorism and organized crime, senior police officials should examine whether the case qualifies for the application of those sections. He emphasized that any misuse of these legal provisions would undermine the sanctity of the new criminal laws.

The Minister emphasized the need for continuous monitoring of conversion of ZERO FIRs into regular FIRs. He also suggested establishing a system to enable the transfer of FIRs between two states through CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems).

Shah also stressed upon ensuring the availability of more than one forensic science mobile van in every district. Additionally, he underlined the importance of constructing an adequate number of cubicles in hospitals and jails to facilitate evidence recording through video conferencing.

29 Naxals surrender in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur

TDG NETWORK
NARAYANPUR

In a significant turnaround, as many as 29 naxals of the Kutul area Committee in Chhattisgarh surrendered before Narayanpur SP Prabhat Kumar on Wednesday, officials said.

As per the officials, 22 men and 7 women were among the surrendered Naxals. Narayanpur SP, Prabhat Kumar, said that the administration is conducting a movement against Naxalism.

He further stated that a social change can be witnessed as an impact of this development work.

"We are conducting a movement against Naxalism... Effective operations have been conducted under this and development works have also been done... In the Kutul area, we are witnessing a social change as an impact of this development work. People who were involved in naxal activities are surrendering... 29 people who were actively involved in naxal activities have surrendered today. They are affected by the development work," said Prabhat Kumar.

Earlier, security forces took control of a Maoist training camp in the core area of PLGA Battalion No. 01 in the dense forests of Bhattiguda, Bijapur district. The camp



According to officials, 22 men and 7 women were among the surrendered Naxals in Kutul area

was left abandoned by the Maoists, who fled during the army's search operation.

The joint operation was carried out by CoBRA units 201, 204, and 210. Security personnel on Tuesday, where security forces stormed their camps and demolished the Naxal martyr memorial. The Naxal's training camp had tall trees prepared for training purposes, trenches, and various other resources. It also housed permanent barracks and huts used by the Maoists. Officials have called the operation a major blow to Maoist activities in the region and a step towards dismantling their infrastructure. Security forces have reaffirmed their commitment to ensur-

ing peace and stability in the region.

Meanwhile, a recent encounter in Chhattisgarh's Garia-band took place where bodies of 16 Naxals were recovered following an encounter with the security forces. The Chhattisgarh Chief Minister highlighted the achievements of the security forces and their success in dealing with the Maoist threat, emphasising the government's commitment to eliminating Naxalism in the state.

The operation, which was started on Sunday, also saw senior cadres of Maoists dead and a large quantity of weapons, including automatic weapons like SLR rifles, recovered.

Karnataka CM calls for enhanced efficiency in revenue services in state

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah urged the state's Revenue Department to build on its progress and further enhance efficiency, ensuring faster and more citizen-friendly services. He commended the department's advancements in digitisation and public service delivery while emphasising the need for continuous improvement to make services more seamless and accessible.

During a review meeting held on Wednesday, CM Siddaramaiah discussed multiple issues in the state, includ-



ing faster land mutation and conversion processes, having regular master plan updates for better urban planning, swift resolution in revenue court, strengthening land records management and many other issues.

The Chief Minister directed officials to expedite land mutation and conversion cases to benefit citizens. He high-

Siddaramaiah orders officials to ensure faster and more citizen-friendly services in review meet

lighted that the automation system has significantly improved the speed of land mutation, with 65pc of cases now being completed within a day. "Let's work towards making the process even more efficient so that people receive timely services," he said.

He further stressed that land conversion should be completed within a month

and clarified that areas covered under a Master Plan do not require conversion. "A formal directive must be issued to ensure smooth implementation," he added.

Siddaramaiah underscored the importance of updating Master Plans in a timely manner to facilitate planned urban development. "A well-maintained Master Plan prevents public inconvenience and supports sustainable growth," he noted.

Further emphasizing timely justice, the Chief Minister called for faster disposal of revenue court cases, particularly at the Tahsildar and Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) levels.

52 cybercriminals held after crackdown across 8 states

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

A cybercrime crackdown, led by DCP Cybercrime Kavitha, has resulted in the arrest of 52 individuals across 8 states, including three identified masterminds.

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police, CV Anand, confirmed the operation's success in a detailed briefing. In a statement, CV Anand revealed that the operation covered the states of Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Bihar.

NCP (Sharad) MP Supriya Sule visits GBS-affected area in Pune

TDG NETWORK
PUNE

NCP-SCP MP Supriya Sule visited GBS (Guillain-Barre Syndrome) affected area at Sinhgad Road in Pune on Thursday morning.

She inspected the water sources that supply water to locals. She also interacted with the people, listening to their complaints.

The total number of suspected cases of GBS in Pune and other districts of the State is 127 with 72 confirmed cases, the Maharashtra Public Health Department said in a press release on Wednesday.

"As of today, 127 suspected cases of GBS have been



identified, with 2 suspected deaths. Out of these, 72 patients have been confirmed as having GBS. 23 patients are from Pune Municipal Corporation, 73 from newly added villages in the PMC area, 13 from Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, 9 from Pune Rural, and 9 from other districts. Among the affected individuals, 20

Maharashtra has recorded so far 127 suspected cases with 2 deaths

are currently on ventilator support," the press release said.

On Tuesday, the Director General Indian Council of Medical Research Dr Rajiv Bahl said that the cases are under investigation as a team of experts has collected various samples.

"Samples of stool and blood of those infected are being tested at the NIV Pune lab, but yet to get any definite leads on the cause behind the spread," Dr Bahl said.

PAINTINDIA North edition 2025 brings together Industry Leaders in New Delhi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The second edition of PAINTINDIA North Edition 2025 commenced today at the India International Convention Centre (Yashobhoomi), Dwarka, New Delhi, and will continue until 31st January, concluding at 5 PM. Bringing together over 250 exhibitors and key industry stakeholders, the event serves as a vital hub for business growth, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. With free entry for visitors, it offers professionals from the



paints, coatings, and allied industries a unique opportunity to network, explore cutting-edge innovations, and unlock new business prospects. Building on the overwhelming response to its inaugural North Edition, PAINTINDIA 2025 saw strong participation from companies across

sectors, including paints, coatings, printing inks, adhesives, sealants, and construction chemicals. The exhibition floor was a vibrant hub of activity, where businesses showcased cutting-edge technologies, sustainable solutions, and product innovations tailored to meet the demands of a rapidly expanding market. With North India's infrastructure and manufacturing sectors witnessing significant growth, the event offered valuable opportunities for network-

ing, industry insights, and new business partnerships. The event was inaugurated in the presence of distinguished leaders from the coatings and allied industries, setting the stage for two days of meaningful discussions and engagement. The participation of key industry figures underscores the importance of the North Indian market, with its booming housing, construction, transportation, and packaging industries creating new avenues for expansion and investment.

Baba Siddiqui murder case: Non-bailable warrants against accused Bishnoi

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

A special court in Mumbai issued non-bailable warrants against Anmol Lavindersing Bishnoi, alias AB Bhai, in connection with the murder of National Congress Party (NCP) leader Baba Siddiqui.

BD Shelke, a special judge under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), after hearing submissions from the police, concluded that there was sufficient material on record regarding the complicity of



the wanted accused, Anmol Bishnoi, in this case.

"After hearing submissions of ACP Kishorkumar Shinde and Ld. PP, I have gone through the chargesheet, investigating papers submitted alongwith the chargesheet, from which it reveals that

there is sufficient material on record in respect of complicity of this wanted accused-Anmol Bishnoi in this case. The document placed on record demonstrates that this accused has provided firearms to the arrested accused in this case," the order read.

The order further stated that the competent authorities in the United States of America (USA) have been requested to deport the accused, who remains absconding to avoid his arrest in the Baba Siddiqui murder case. "Even, request

Indian Railways to celebrate 100 years of electrification on February 3

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Indian Railways will be celebrating 100 of electrification on February 3, highlighting the first steps the Indian Railways took towards a greener rail system, said Swapnil Nila, Central Public Relations Officer.

The first electric train in In-

dia operated from platform 2 of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (earlier known as Victoria Terminus) to Kurla in Mumbai on February 3, 1925. The railways had started electrification just 72 years after the first ever Indian train launched on April 16, 1853. "The first electric train ran between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus,



then known as Victoria Terminus to Kurla. This particular train was EMU (Electric Multiple Unit) trains original version. It was run from plat-

form number 2, and this was a new initiative, a greener initiative for a long lasting change. And now Central Railway and Indian Railway

are celebrating 100 years of completion of this electrification," said the CPRO. Apart from celebrating the centenary since the start of electrification, Central Railway has also completed 100 pc of electrification.

"In this particular period, Central Railway has completed its 100% electrification also, and for this we are

initiating the celebrations which will be starting from 3rd of February..." CPRO added. Multiple events have been planned to celebrate the centenary, including a run, multiple seminars, and 3D shows. "There are multiple activities planned starting from a run in the morning. Followed by a ceremonial commemoration

and at the same time technical and other Seminars will be organised on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj terminus on that day. Afterwards, we will continue to organise the various events which have been planned, including the projections, including the three-dimensional shows," Nila added about the planned programs.

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Prof. M.D. Nalapatt
MANAGING EDITOR Pankaj Vohra
EDITOR Joyeeta Basu
Printed and Published by Rakesh Sharma for and on behalf of Good Morning India Media Pvt. Ltd. at 275, Piccadilly house, Floor -1, Captain Gaur Marg Srinivasapuri, New Delhi-110065.
Printed at: Good Morning India Media Pvt. Ltd., Khasra No. 39, Village Basai Brahuddin Nagar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, (U.P.-201301).
The Editorial offices: 275 Captain Gaur Marg Srinivasapuri Okhla New Delhi - 110065
Mumbai Office: Juhu Hotel, Juhu Tara Road, Santa Cruz-West, Mumbai-400049.
Chandigarh Office: SCO-7, Sector 17-E, Chandigarh- 160017
RNI REGISTRATION NO. DELENG/2022/83224
TITLE CODE DELENG19835
For Subscriptions and Circulation Complaints Contact: DELHI Vinod Kumar Rana Mobile: +91-7011055010
The views expressed by the columnists do not necessarily represent those of The Sunday Guardian.