

VEDHIK

DAJLY NEWS

ANALYSIS

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FOREWORD

We, at Team Vedhik is happy to introduce a new initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" compilations to help you with UPSC Civil Services Examination preparation. We believe this initiative - "Daily Current Affairs_The Hindu" would help students, especially beginners save time and streamline their preparations with regard to Current Affairs. A content page and an Appendix has been added segregating and mapping the content to the syllabus.

It is an appreciable efforts by Vedhik IAS Academy helping aspirants of UPSC Civil Services Examinations. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Babu Sebastian, former VC - MG University in extending all support to this endeavour. Finally I also extend my thanks to thank Ms. Shilpa Sasidharan and Mr. Shahul Hameed for their assistance in the preparing the compilations.

We welcome your valuable comments so that further improvement may be made in the forthcoming material. We look forward to feedback, comments and suggestions on how to improve and add value for students. Every care has been taken to avoid typing errors and if any reader comes across any such error, the authors shall feel obliged if they are informed at their Email ID.

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Financial inclusion

In 2022, all post offices will come on the banking system, enabling financial inclusion and access to accounts, and also provide online transfer of funds between post office accounts and bank accounts



Infrastructure

Four hundred new-generation Vande Bharat trains with better energy efficiency and passenger riding experience will be developed and manufactured during the next three years



Digital currency

Digital Rupee using blockchain and other technologies will be issued by the Reserve Bank of India starting 2022-23. It will lead to a more efficient and cheaper currency management system



Capex

Capital expenditure is being stepped up sharply by 35.4% from ₹5.54 lakh crore in the current year to ₹7.50 lakh crore in 2022-23. This is more than 2.2 times the expenditure of 2019-20

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, presenting her fourth Budget and the second one in a pandemic-hit economy on Tuesday, largely stuck to the broad script from last year, scaling up the wager on public capital spending to revive private investments and job creation through a virtuous growth cycle, while keeping an eye on fiscal health.

This Budget, presented in the 75th year of Independence, sets the stage for an *Amrit Kaal* (time of nectar) over the next 25 years, culminating in a vision for India in 2047 as enunciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address last year, she said.

Beginning her 90-minute speech with an expression of empathy for Indians who grappled with the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Sitharaman invoked a verse from the Mahabharata before placing her tax proposals for 2022-23. "The king must make arrangements for *Yagachhema* (welfare) of the populace by abandoning any laxity and by governing in line with dharma, along with collecting taxes which are in consonance with the dharma," the Minister quoted.

The salaried and the middle class, however, got no direct relief in the form of tax breaks to counter inflation and the COVID impact on in-

comes and jobs; nor was there any significant window to spur private consumption that is likely to end 2021-22 below pre-pandemic levels.

Ms. Sitharaman pointed out that the government has not raised taxes in these COVID-affected budgets, but stressed that several proposals aimed at helping farmers, start-ups, micro, small and medium enterprises as well as affordable housing projects will ultimately benefit the middle classes. "There are times when you can give [relief], there are times when it will have to wait a bit longer," she noted.

Contact-intensive services sectors such as hospitality that are also languishing under 2019-20 levels, did get a helping hand with the expansion of the existing ₹4.5 lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme to ₹5 lakh crore, with the win-

dow to avail this support extended by a year till March 2023.

The Minister conceded that jobs have been affected due to the pandemic's effects around the world, but emphasised that the government has been taking steps to help. Production Linked Incentives for 14 sectors alone have the potential to create 60 lakh new jobs in the coming five years.

Some omissions

While the Budget marked a continuation of strategy adopted last year to lift the economy from the COVID lockdown-induced plunge of

The Budget is full of new possibilities for more infrastructure, more investment, more growth, and more jobs

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

Modi Government's Zero Sum Budget! Nothing for - Salaried class - Middle class - The poor & deprived - Youth - Farmers - MSMEs

RAHUL GANDHI
Congress leader

2020-21, with the Minister reiterating several measures announced previously with fresh outlays, there were some omissions.

For instance, a fresh push was made on creating liveable cities and a better planning framework for urban areas where half of Indians could live by 2047 but there was no talk of the government's existing programmes to build smart cities.

Separately, without mentioning the border with China, the Budget promised a convergence of existing border area development programmes to provide better physical and digital connectivity to villages with sparse populations on the 'northern border'.

While the economy has shown strong resilience over the past year, the Finance Minister said greater capital

spending was needed to sustain the recovery and enhanced the Centre's capex plan to ₹7.5 lakh crore in 2022-23, which she emphasised was more than 2.2 times the outlay in 2019-20.

50-year loan for States

Separately, in a move that should help reduce federal friction, she announced a ₹1 lakh crore 50-year interest-free loan for States to pursue critical capital spending projects, aligned with the PM Gati Shakti programme, digitisation or urban reforms. A similar ₹10,000 crore window announced for 2021-22 has been enhanced to ₹15,000 crore in deference to State CMs' requests, the Minister said.

The Minister said the listing of the Life Insurance Corporation of India was expected shortly, which may well translate into a lower fiscal deficit than the 6.9% of GDP projected for 2021-22. However, the ambitious ₹1.75 lakh disinvestment target for the year was pared to ₹78,000 crore, with the 2022-23 expectations set at a modest ₹65,000 crore.

Moody's Investors Service, reacted with caution to the Budget math that pegs fiscal deficit in 2022-23 at 6.4% of GDP. "This suggests the government is relying on strong economic growth to help drive fiscal consolidation in light of the large bump in capital expenditure," noted Moody's sovereign risk group senior vice president Christian de Guzman.



Agri-tech: drones, start-up fund in focus

A scheme through public-private partnership to be launched for farmers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The emerging agri-tech sector has been enthused by the abundance of digital farming references in the Union Budget speech on Tuesday.

“For delivery of digital and hi-tech services to farmers with the involvement of public sector research and extension institutions along with private agri-tech players and stakeholders of agri-value chain, a scheme through PPP [public-private partnership] mode will be launched,” said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

She added that a fund with blended capital, raised under the co-investment model, would be facilitated through NABARD. “This is to finance start-ups for agricul-



A digital fillip: The FM promised to promote the use of drones for spraying of insecticides on fields. ■PTI

ture and rural enterprise, relevant for farm produce value chain. The activities for these start-ups will include, *inter alia*, support for FPOs, machinery for farmers on rental basis and technology, including IT-based support,” said Ms. Sitharaman.

With a wider focus on drone technology, the Minis-

ter promised to promote the use of “kisan drones” for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, and spraying of insecticides and nutrients on fields. In fact, the Budget speech emphasised the efficient use of land resources via technology. “States will be encouraged to adopt Unique Land Parcel

Identification Number to facilitate IT-based management of records. The facility for transliteration of land records across any of the Schedule VIII languages will also be rolled out,” she said.

“The adoption or linkage with National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) with the ‘One-Nation One-Registration Software’, will be promoted as an option for uniform process for registration and ‘anywhere registration’ of deeds and documents,” said Ms. Sitharaman.

“The expansion of technology focus from just tractors and agri-machinery to ‘kisan drones’ shows a rising interest in the application of IOT in the sector,” said AgroStar CEO Shardul Sheth.

Battery-swapping policy on anvil

Move to address issue of space constraints in urban areas for charging stations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI / NEW DELHI

The Centre is planning to come out with a battery swapping policy with interoperability standards for Electric Vehicles (EVs).

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that considering space constraints in urban areas for charging stations at scale, a battery swapping policy will be brought out and inter-operability standards will be formulated. The private sector

will be encouraged to develop sustainable and innovative business models for ‘Battery or Energy as a Service’. This will improve efficiency in the EV ecosystem, she said.

The Budget aimed at strengthening the EV industry ecosystem, which will spur the demand for green vehicles, such as electric 2-wheelers and 3-wheelers, cars and buses, said Sohinder Gill, Director General,

Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV).

He added that these announcements would help to develop EV infrastructure and increase the use of EVs in public transportation. It would motivate businesses engaged in delivery and in car aggregation to incorporate EVs into their fleet.

Mr. Gill added this would spur companies to venture into the battery-swapping

business. Shamsher Dewan, VP & Group Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA, said if implemented efficiently, these steps were likely to go a long way in reducing range anxiety with regard to EV adoption while also aiding economies of scale in battery production.

“The inclusion of energy storage in the harmonised List of Infrastructure will facilitate cheaper finance for EV battery makers,” Mr. Dewan said.



Budget extends more sops for IFSC

International Arbitration Centre to be set up in GIFT City

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

Taking forward its efforts to further promote the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Gujarat, the government has proposed Income Tax incentives to promote various business activities such as ship leasing and financing, offshore fund management and offshore banking activities at GIFT City. The Union Budget has proposed to provide that income of a non-resident from offshore derivative instru-

ments, or over-the-counter derivatives issued by an offshore banking unit, income from royalty and interest on account of lease of ship and income received from portfolio management services in IFSC shall be exempt from tax, subject to conditions.

Further, it has allowed world-class foreign universities and institutions to offer courses in Financial Management, FinTech, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, free from domestic regulations, except

those by IFSCA to facilitate availability of high-end human resources for financial services and technology in GIFT City, Gujarat.

“An International Arbitration Centre will be set up in the GIFT City for timely settlement of disputes under international jurisprudence,” Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

“Services for global capital for sustainable and climate finance in the country will be facilitated in the GIFT

City,” she added. Manoj Purohit, partner and leader - financial services tax, BDO India, said, the move to allow financial institutions and universities to set up base will give boost to human resources development and expansion in GIFT IFSC.

Tapan Ray, MD & Group CEO, GIFT City, in a statement said, “International arbitration centre will strengthen the dispute resolution mechanism at GIFT IFSC and enhance ease of doing business at GIFT,” he said.

Defence outlay witnesses marginal increase

Finance Minister announces steps to boost domestic manufacturing, reduce imports

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Continuing the push for Make in India in defence, the Government on Tuesday announced additional measures to boost domestic manufacturing and reduce imports, while the total allocation for defence in the Budget has gone up marginally to ₹5.25 lakh crore.

This is 4.43% higher than the revised estimates of last year and 9.8% higher over the Budget estimates of last year.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that defence Research and Development (R&D) will be

opened up for industry, start-ups and academia with 25% of R&D budget earmarked for them. Capital allocation for R&D stood at ₹11,982 crore for 2022-23.

“Private sector will be encouraged to take up design and development of military platforms and equipment in collaboration with DRDO and other organisations under special purpose vehicle (SPV) model,” Ms. Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

“An independent nodal umbrella body will be set up for meeting a wide ranging testing and certification requirements.”

The allocation of ₹5.25 lakh crore constitutes 13.31% of the total Union Budget 2022-23 which envisages a total outlay of ₹39.45 lakh crore, a Ministry statement said. Of the ₹5.25 lakh crore, the revenue allocation is ₹2.33 lakh crore, capital allocation stood at ₹1.52 lakh crore and defence pensions at ₹1.19 lakh crore.

Within this, of the ₹1.52 lakh crore capital allocation which is meant for new purchases and paying for past procurements, 68% or ₹84,598 crore from the allocation for the three Services

would be reserved for procurement from domestic industry, Ms. Sitharaman announced. In last year's Budget, ₹70,221 crore of the capital allocation, which is about 63%, was reserved for the domestic industry.

Last year, the defence Budget saw a major increase in the backdrop of the standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh and the Services had also made several emergency procurements in the second half of 2020.

In contrast, the Budget data show for 2021-22, the Army had returned around

₹11,100 crore while the Navy got an additional allocation of ₹12,767.99 crore compared with the Budget estimates to the revised estimates. Overall, the Navy's capital allocation shows an year-on-year increase of more than 43% going to 47,591 crore which the MoD said is “aimed at acquisition of new platforms, creation of operational and strategic infrastructure, bridging of critical capability gaps and building a credible maritime force for the future.”

The Army got ₹32,015 crore and Air Force ₹55,586 crore for 2022-23 under the capital budget. Overall, the

capital allocation saw an increase of 12% compared with the Budget estimates of last year. Atul Keshap, president U.S.-India Business Council said the 12% increase in the capital Budget expenditure for defence will help support India's border security and Indo-Pacific ambitions.

“Still, increasing targets for indigenisation of production may slow India's access to the equipment it needs to safeguard its security. Making India a more friendly manufacturing environment for international defence companies will be critical if they are to supply India's defence needs in a prompt manner.”

Centre to set up high-level panel on urban policies

Tier 2, 3 cities must cater to future needs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said in her Budget speech that as the “business as usual” approach towards urban planning would not work and a paradigm shift was needed, a high-level panel to give recommendations would be set up.

Half the population of the country would be living in urban areas by 2047, making orderly urban development critically important, she noted.

“This will help realise the country’s economic potential, including livelihood opportunities for the demographic dividend. For this, on the one hand we need to nurture the megacities and their hinterlands to become current centres of economic growth. On the other hand, we need to facilitate tier 2 and 3 cities to take on the mantle in the future,” she observed.

The panel would comprise urban planners, urban economists and institutions who will make recommendations on policies, capacity-building, planning, implementation and governance. She also proposed the modernisation of building bye-laws, town planning schemes and transit-oriented development.

“For developing India-specific knowledge in urban planning and design, and to deliver certified training in these areas, up to five existing academic institutions in

 **For developing India-specific knowledge in urban planning and design, up to five institutions will be designated as centres of excellence and provided endowment funds of ₹250 crore each**

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN
UNION FINANCE MINISTER

different regions will be designated as centres of excellence. These centres will be provided endowment funds of ₹250 crore each. In addition, the AICTE will take the lead to improve syllabi, quality and access of urban planning courses in other institutions,” she stated.

Ms. Sitharaman proposed a ₹76,549.46 crore Budget for the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, an increase from ₹54,581 crore in the Budget Estimate (BE) for 2021-2022 and the Revised Estimate (RE) for 2021-2022 of ₹73,850.26 crore.

Proposed funding for housing under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) increased from ₹8,000 crore in BE 2021-2022 to ₹27,000 RE 2021-2022 to ₹28,000 in RE 2022-2023. The Budget proposed to raise the grants-in-aid to the State governments from ₹18,139.55 crore in BE 2021-2022 to ₹37,824.35 crore in 2022-2023. On metro projects, the Budget proposed ₹19,130 crore expenditure, up from ₹18,998 crore in the BE for 2021-2022.



‘Duty tweaks to spur electronics manufacture’

Some ‘nuisance’ duties remain: ICEA

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced rationalisation of customs duties for certain components to facilitate domestic manufacturing of high-growth electronic goods, wearables and electronic smart meters.

“Electronic manufacturing has been growing rapidly. Customs duty rates are being calibrated to provide a graded rate structure to facilitate domestic manufacturing of wearable devices, hearable devices and electronic smart meters,” she said in her Budget speech. She said duty concessions were also being given to parts of transformers of mobile phone chargers and camera lens of mobile camera modules and certain other items. “This will enable domestic manufacturing of high-growth electronic items,” she observed.

 **Duty calibration for wearables and hearables will bolster growth in 2022. Impetus for Make-in-India will spur job creation**

Ajay Prakash Swahney, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and IT, stating that while basic customs duty (BCD) rationalisation on camera lens for use in manufacture of camera modules from 15% to 2.5% was welcome, “we had asked for revert to the position before February 2021, because even 2.5% is unnecessary”.

“The nuisance tariff on 2.5% on various inductors, eg. ferrite inductors for the PCBA of chargers and inductors for the PCBA for mobiles, continue. Other parts of the camera module like actuator assembly and parts of sensor continue at 2.5%, which is again unnecessary,” it added.

Nikhil Mathur, MD, India, & Head, Data Partnership & Innovation-APAC, GfK, said the government’s growth-oriented goals led by the digital economy and tech-enabled developments would boost the consumer and electronics industry penetration across the country. GfK insights indicated similar positive trends as the consumer landscape was evolving in lower-tier towns.

“The underlying theme of ‘Atmanirbhar’ & ‘Make in India’ will undoubtedly create job opportunities, bringing a positive outlook towards domestic demand of consumer tech products in India.”

‘Long road remains’

The India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) welcomed the calibration of customs duty for wearables and on parts as described in the FM’s speech. However, “a long road remains, especially for the continued high basic customs duty of high-end mobile phones [phones with a CIF value higher than ₹20,000].”

“We emphasise that rationalisation of the BCD is essential to curb the grey market, increase revenue generation, and give a fillip to the industry,” it noted.

The ICEA has written to



Emergency credit line for MSMEs extended till March 2023

Budget provides additional credit to more than 130 lakh units

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

The Union Budget for 2022-23 has announced several measures for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector that included extension of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) till March 2023.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while tabling the Union Budget, said ECLGS had provided much-needed additional credit to more than 130 lakh MSMEs. This helped them mitigate the adverse impact

of the COVID-19. Hospitality and related services, especially those provided by micro and small enterprises, were yet to regain their pre-pandemic level of business.



Considering these aspects, the government extended the scheme by ₹50,000 crore taking the total cover under the scheme to ₹5 lakh crore, with the additional amount being earmarked exclusively for hospitality and related enterprises. Further, the Centre said Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises scheme

will be revamped with the required infusion of funds. This will facilitate additional credit of ₹2 lakh crore for Micro and Small Enterprises and expand employment opportunities. To help the MSME sector become more resilient, competitive and efficient, the Centre will roll out Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme with an outlay of ₹6,000 crore over 5 years.

The Budget document also said that Customs-duty exemption given to steel scrap last year was being extended for another year to provide relief to secondary MSME steel producers.

FM moots ₹19,500-cr. push for solar manufacturing

‘This opens up huge job opportunities and will take the country on a sustainable development path’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre has said it is committed to “facilitate” domestic manufacturing for the solar energy sector by looking to add 2,80,000 MW of installed capacity by 2030. To this end, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government envisioned an “additional allocation” of ₹19,500 crore as a “production-linked incentive” for manufacturing solar modules.

She referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s statements in Glasgow at the COP 26 last November of India striving to achieve ‘net zero’ carbon emissions by 2070. As part of this, India would increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 5,00,000 MW by



Rooftop solar panels installed on buildings at the Cochin Port Trust. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

2030 and meet 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.

“This strategy opens up huge employment opportunities and will take the country on a sustainable development path. This Budget

proposes several near-term and long-term actions accordingly,” she said.

The Central Electricity Authority in its latest assessment has said as of early November, solar accounted for 11.8% of the installed capaci-

ty and had increased from 11.3% from four months ago. In the run-up to COP-26, the U.S. and India agreed to collaborate towards installing 4,50,000 MW of renewable energy by 2030.

India’s installed power ca-

capacity is projected to be 4,76,000 MW by 2021-22 and is expected to rise to at least 8,17,000 MW by 2030.

Observers lauded the references to “climate action”. “By referring to climate action as a sunrise sector and employment generator, the Budget 2022 had sent an important signal to markets, financial institutions and the workforce. We now need the power of government incentives, aggregation and de-risking for clean energy to be complemented by standards for low-carbon materials, skilling for battery recycling, and consultative processes for green infrastructure projects,” said Ulka Kelkar, Director, Climate Programme, World Resources Institute, India.

FM retains tax slabs, allows updated returns

Revised returns may be filed within two years of end of the relevant assessment year

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

The Union Budget 2022-23 has kept income tax slabs unchanged while allowing taxpayers an additional two years to update their returns.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday while presenting budget proposals said the government's objective was to further simplify the tax system, promote voluntary compliance by taxpayers, and reduce litigation.

She introduced the 'Updated return' option to provide taxpayers an opportunity to 'correct errors' while

filing returns or not having reported certain transactions. "I am proposing a new provision permitting taxpayers to file an Updated Return on payment of additional tax. This updated return can be filed within two years from the end of the relevant assessment year," she said.

'Trust reposed in payer'

With this proposal now, there will be a trust reposed in the taxpayers that will enable the assessee herself to declare the income that she may have missed out earlier while filing her return, she said. To bring parity bet-

ween employees of State and central governments, she has proposed to increase the tax deduction limit from 10% to 14% on employer's contribution to the National Pension System (NPS) account of State Government employees as well. This would help in enhancing the social security benefits of State government staff and bring them at par with central government employees.

To establish a globally competitive business environment for certain domestic companies, a concessional tax regime of 15% tax was introduced by our govern-

ment for newly incorporated domestic manufacturing companies.

The FM has prosed to extend the last date for commencement of manufacturing or production under section 115BAB by one year i.e. from March 31, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

She has also proposed to cap the surcharge on long-term capital gains arising on transfer of any type of assets at 15%, from graded surcharge of up to 37% currently. To track transactions involving businesses passing

on benefits to their agents, the budget has proposed to provide for tax deduction by the person giving benefits, if the aggregate value of such benefits exceeds ₹20,000 during the financial year.

It also proposed to reduce customs duty on cut and polished diamonds and gemstones to 5%. Simply sawn diamonds would attract nil customs duty. To disincentivise import of undervalued imitation jewellery, customs duty on imitation jewellery has been imposed.

The Minister proposed to

reduce customs duty on methanol, acetic acid and heavy feed stocks for petroleum refining, while duty is being raised on sodium cyanide for which adequate domestic capacity exists.

"These changes will help in enhancing domestic value addition," she said.

Duty is being reduced on certain inputs required for shrimp aquaculture so as to promote its exports.

To encourage the efforts for blending of fuel, unblended fuel shall attract additional differential excise duty of ₹2/litre from the October 1, 2022.



Natural farming finds fertile ground

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The recent spotlight on zero budget natural farming found an echo in Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget speech on Tuesday, with the banks of the Ganga identified as the next focal point to promote agricultural practices that eschew chemical fertilizers.

"Chemical-free natural farming will be promoted throughout the country, with a focus on farmers' lands in 5-km wide corridors along the Ganga, at the first stage," Ms. Sitharaman said.

The government is also aiming at integrating the chemical-free approach into a long-term policy by including it in the agricultural education curriculum.

Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a zero budget national farming (ZBNF) method to be adopted as a mass move-

ment across the country. The Centre has sanctioned support for converting four lakh additional hectares of farmland in eight States to use the method.

These schemes were sanctioned for financial support under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana scheme, meant to promote organic farming and soil health, Vedic farming, ZBNF and a host of other traditional methods.

However, documents showed that while the scheme had been allocated ₹450 crore under Budget estimates for 2021-22, it had been downgraded to ₹100 crore under the revised estimates.

In the 2022-23 Budget, the scheme has been submerged into an enlarged Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana scheme. So it is unclear exactly how much funds have been allocated to natural farming.

Push for promotion of drones through start-ups

Special purpose vehicle for Air India's debts gets ₹9,259 crore; allocation slashed for Civil Aviation Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Budget pushed for promotion of drones through start-ups and skilling at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).

“Start-ups will be promoted to facilitate ‘Drone Shakti’ through varied applications and for Drone-As-A-Service (DrAAS),” Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

Courses for skilling will also be started in selected ITIs across all States. Drones will also be promoted for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, spraying of insecticides and nutrients.

Barring the mention about drones, there were no new schemes or initiatives



Soaring high: Start-ups will be promoted to facilitate ‘Drone Shakti’ through varied applications. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

announced for the aviation sector. With Air India now privatised, the budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Civil Aviation was slashed to more than half of the current fiscal. It has been allocated ₹4,574 crore for the next fiscal.

The special purpose vehicle (AI Assets Holding Ltd.),

set up by the government in 2019 to clean up Air India's balance sheet to attract private investors, has been allocated ₹9,259 crore.

“The provision is made for repayment of past government guaranteed borrowings, sale and lease back rentals and past dues and liabilities of AI Ltd.” The Minis-

ter said ₹51,971 crore for Air India debts was part of its revised estimate of capital expenditure of ₹6.03 lakh crore for last fiscal. This was for the purpose of “settlement of outstanding guaranteed liabilities of Air India and its other sundry commitments”.

Expectations not met

Budget carrier IndiGo's CEO Ronojoy Dutta rued that expectations of “tax concession to aviation industry in the forms of cut in aviation turbine fuel excise duty and allocation of concessional finance to airlines to help us come of the pandemic” were not met.

The Ministry of Tourism received 18.42% higher allo-

cation at ₹2,400 crore. A major portion of the outlay – ₹1,644 crore – has been earmarked for development of infrastructure for tourism development, while ₹421.5 crore has been set aside for promotion and publicity activities.

A new Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID-affected Tourism Service Sector has been started during the current financial year with an allocation of ₹62.5 crore for five years. It provides guarantee-free loan up to ₹10 lakh each for government-approved travel and tourism stakeholders such as tour operators and travel agents and up to ₹1 lakh to regional-level tourist guides approved by the government.

Record allocation of ₹1.37 lakh cr. for Railways

Focus on capacity expansion, safety; 400 new-generation Vande Bharat trains to be manufactured in next three years

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

The Union Budget has proposed a record budgetary allocation of ₹1.37 lakh crore for the Indian Railways, with capital expenditure outlay of over ₹2.45 lakh crore for the upcoming financial year. With a 14% higher capital expenditure over last year, the national transporter plans to utilise the funds to complete key stalled projects and enhance passengers amenities and safety.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday also announced that 2,000 km network will be brought under Kavach – an indigenous technology developed for safety, in 2022-23, and 400

new-generation Vande Bharat trains with better energy efficiency and ride experience will be developed and manufactured during the next three years.

Terming the allocation as ‘historic’, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters that with the increased allocation, the focus will be on capacity expansion and enhancement of security, along with ‘supercritical’ projects.

98% operating ratio

Mr. Vaishnaw said for the upcoming fiscal, the Railways is targeting a 98% operating ratio, but he is hopeful of bettering this on the back of improved freight performance.

The operating ratio indicates how much the Railways spends to earn a rupee.

“We are targeting 98% operating ratio in the coming year. But I think we should be able to achieve more than this... We are already achieving over four million tonne loading everyday... which is unheard of... We are now targeting freight loading of 4.5 MT everyday consistently and then move on to 5 MT/day gradually,” he said.

To a query on the Vande Bharat trains, he said, “The current Vande Bharat under operation is version 1. For version 2.0, the designing is

complete and testing will begin in April. We plan to start serial production of these September onwards... Today’s target will see even better versions of this train.”

On the proposal to bring 2,000 km network under Kavach, the Minister pointed out that it is SIL4 (Safety integrity level) certified which means there is the probability of a single error in 10,000 years.

Ms. Sitharaman said the Railways will develop new products and efficient logistics services for small farmers and Small and Medium Enterprises, besides taking the lead in integration of pos-

tal and Railways networks to provide seamless solutions for movement of parcels.

One Station-One Product

She also announced the ‘One Station-One Product’ concept will be popularised to help local businesses & supply chains, and 100 PM Gatishakti Cargo Terminals for multimodal logistics facilities will be developed during the next three years.

As per the Budget documents, the Railways expects revenues from passenger, goods, other coaching, sundry other heads etc, to be ₹2.40 lakh crore in BE 2022-23 as against RE 2021-22 of ₹2.02 lakh crore. It expects passen-

ger revenue of ₹58,500 in 2022-23, and goods revenue to be about ₹1,65,000 crore.

Vishnu Sudarsan, Partner, J. Sagar Associates (JSA), added that the railways sector, which boasts a wide-reaching network and is a lynchpin of keeping crucial supply chains operational, can play a clinching role in India’s logistics growth story and meeting the climate change and sustainability goals. “However, in order to ensure a starring role for the railways in the logistics segment, it is imperative that the Railways commence involving the private sector in a meaningful and phased manner that offers a win-win to all stakeholders.”



General Studies Paper I	
A	History of Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times;
B	Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues;
C	Freedom struggle-its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country;
D	Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country;
E	History of the world will include events from 18 th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, re-drawal of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization,
F	Political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.-their forms and effect on the society
G	Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India;
H	Effects of globalization on Indian society;
I	Role of women and women's organization;
J	Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism
K	Salient features of world's physical geography;
L	Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;
M	Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
N	Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent);
O	Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India);
P	Population and associated issues;
Q	Urbanization, their problems and their remedies
General Studies Paper II	
A	India and its neighbourhood- relations;
B	Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate;
C	Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests;
D	Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
E	Indian Constitution, historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure;
F	Comparison of the Indian Constitutional scheme with other countries;
G	Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
H	Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these;
I	Structure, organization and functioning of the executive and the judiciary, Ministries and Departments;

J	Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions;
K	Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional bodies;
L	Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies;
M	Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections;
N	Salient features of the Representation of People's Act;
O	Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;
P	Citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures;
Q	Issues relating to poverty and hunger,
R	Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States, Performance of these schemes;
S	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to education and human resources;
T	Issues relating to development and management of social sector / services relating to health
General Studies Paper III	
A	Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment;
B	Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth;
C	Inclusive growth and issues arising from it;
D	Infrastructure Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc. Government budgeting;
E	Land reforms in India
F	Major crops, cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems;
G	Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints;
H	e-technology in the aid of farmers; Technology Missions; Economics of Animal-Rearing.
I	Issues of buffer stocks and food security, Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping;
J	Food processing and related industries in India – scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management;
K	Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices
L	Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology;
M	Indigenization of technology and developing new technology;
N	Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life;
O	Issues relating to intellectual property rights
P	Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment
Q	Disaster and disaster management
R	Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;
S	Money-laundering and its prevention;

T	Various forces and their mandate;
U	Security challenges and their management in border areas;
V	Linkages of organized crime with terrorism;
W	Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security;
X	Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
General Studies Paper IV	
A	Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions;
B	Dimensions of ethics;
C	Ethics in private and public relationships. Human Values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators;
D	Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.
E	Attitude: Content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour;
F	Moral and political attitudes;
G	Social influence and persuasion.
H	Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service , integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections.
I	Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.
J	Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.
K	Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems;
L	Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions;
M	Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as
N	sources of ethical guidance;
O	Accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding;
P	Corporate governance.
Q	Probity in Governance: Concept of public service;
R	Philosophical basis of governance and probity;
S	Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.
T	Case Studies on above issues.