

Jaitley unveils budget for the Poor: Annual Budget 2016

Avijit Das

Speculations were high throughout the morning before Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was scheduled to table his annual budget of the country's expenditure at the Parliament. The entire nation's glance was fixed upon him as he rose and asked the Speaker's permission to move the annual budget of his ministry for the year 2016-17. Earlier on Sunday, during his 'Maan ki Baat', PM Narendra Modi had quoted that 125 cr people of India will be taking his exam on Monday during the Annual Budget of the Government of India.

Starting off with his speech the Finance Minister declared that the Indian economy has continued to hold its head high despite a global slowdown of economy. He also announced that the GDP growth of the country has accelerated to 7.6% while the CPI inflation has come down to 5.4%. With agriculture as the base of Indian economy and food security, Jaitley sought to double the farmers' income within the next five years and said that in the coming fiscal year 28.5 lakh hectares will be brought under the irrigation scheme and the 'Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna' to bring about 5 lakh acres of land under organic farming. Jaitley allotted the high-

est ever budget of Rs 38,500 crores for rural employment scheme under MNREGA. Also Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream project 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' was allotted a lofty amount of 9,000 crores and 2.87 lakh crores to the gram panchayats as per the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission.

Roads constitute a major part of country's transport system. Jaitley said that the government planned to lay 10,000 kms of National Highways in 2016-17 with a budget allocation of 97,000 crores for all the roads. Also in a goodwill gesture, the government has decided to do away with 13 different cesses levied by various ministries with collections less than Rs 50 crores a year.

Coming to the modes of revenue generation of the Government the Finance Minister kept the income tax rates unchanged with people less than Rs 5 lakh to get a

deduction of Rs 5000 in tax up from Rs 2,000 last year. Also the HRA deduction was raised from Rs 24,000 to Rs 60,000. The corporate IT rate has been lowered for companies not exceeding Rs 5 crores turnover to 25% surcharge.

Now, citizens should be prepared to shed more while withdrawing money at the time of retirement under the National Pension Scheme as only 40% of such withdrawal will be exempted from taxes. If you are planning to buy a new house there is something you must cheer upon, an additional exemption of Rs 50,000 for housing loans have been granted for loans upto Rs.35 lakhs provided that the cost of the house doesn't exceed Rs.50 lakhs.

Car prices are expected to go up with 1% service charge being levied on purchase of luxury cars above Rs 10 lakh and in-cash purchase of goods and services over Rs 2 lakh.



Puffing will now burn a hole deeper in your pocket along with your lungs. The excise duty on tobacco has been raised by 10-15 per cent, indicating a steep rise in such products.

Claiming Fiscal Deficit at 3.5% of GDP in 2016-17, Jaitley revealed the government's plans to spend 19.78 lakh crore with 5.5 lakh cr and 14.28 lakh cr in planned and non planned heads respectively. Jaitley claimed that the government will suffer a loss of Rs 1,060 cr through direct tax proposal but will gain revenue of Rs 20,670 cr through the indirect tax proposals. In all, the Finance Minister claimed that there will be a revenue gain of Rs 19,600 crore in the 2016 budget proposals.

The government aims in winning over the middle class section of the country by introducing a number of schemes which will be beneficial for small and medium entrepreneurs. With India climbing up the 'Ease of doing business' ladder across the globe, it might help the BJP in gaining some grounds in the upcoming elections in five states across the country while the income tax rates might be its cause of concern in times ahead.

JNU: Right to dissent vs freedom of speech

Saptarshi Chowdhury

The Republic of India assures her citizens the liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. Dissent as a right has been recognized by the Supreme Court of India under Article 19(1) (a) which guarantees freedom of speech. The government can only interfere under the provisions of article 19(2) if solitary reasons are there. The reasons cannot be arbitrary, excessive or disproportionate. In a democracy such as ours, dissent is inevitable as well as indispensable, since every citizen has the right to contradict with the authority under the fundamental rights bestowed upon them by the constitution.

Over the past few weeks the country has been witnessing 'Anti-India' slogans in Jawaharlal Nehru University. It was raised avowedly by Kashmir sympathizers, while attending an event on Afzal Guru, who was hanged in 2013 for he being the mastermind behind the parliament attack. This particular event has snowballed into a colossal political controversy in the recent times. Banners were put up all over the campus, as an outcry against the capital punishment given to Afzal Guru and Maqbool Bhatt.

What followed during the course of the event is notable to everyone, anti-India slogans and slogans of 'Azaadi' of Kashmir from India. Next arose the arrest of Kanhaiya Kumar, the JNUSU president on sedition charges. Delhi

Police claimed that the arrest was made on evidence gathered from videos, which later turned out to be doctored. Keeping our faith in the Indian Judiciary, we hope to see that the truth will be uncovered. Strict action will be taken against the culprits and innocents will be given justice. Opinions regarding any topic may differ.



What the BJP thinks about 'Afzal Guru' might not be in sync with what the Kashmiri's or anyone else in this country might think about him. The ruling party may find it offensive but that does not give them the right to arrest anybody who does not toe their line and their "so called definition" of patriotism and nation-

alism. Those lawyers who had physically assaulted journalists in the Patiala house court were certainly not bringing fame to India in the name of patriotism and nationalism. But then again the question prevails- Can the destruction of this country be authorized through the voice of dissent? Being the largest democracy of the world, it is a must for our society to have intellectual freedom. Alternative views are always welcome; the very essence of our democracy lies in the fundamental rights which we enjoy. Recent events such as Rohith Vemula suicide case and the JNU incident highlight how premier education institutes have become political and ideological battlegrounds.

The government was quick to slap the organizers with sedition charges, whether it was legally applicable for the judicial system to decide. The Supreme Court in 1962 clearly pointed out that IPC section 124A of sedition is only applicable if there is an attempt to incite violence or armed rebellion against the state or country. Slogans such as, "Bharat ke barbaadi", "Bharat ke tukre", "tum kitne afzal maroge har ghar se afzal niklega" are seditious and calls for immediate arrest of the culprits who abused the country. Dissent essentially means dissatisfaction but it certainly cannot be used as a tool to incite violence against the state or country.

Need to preserve native tongues

Aaheli Ghose

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes straight to his heart." 21st February, 1999 was declared to be the 'International Mother Language Day' (IMLD) by UNESCO, to "promote linguistic and cultural diversity and to bolster multilingualism".

Most of us are not aware about the International Mother Language Day, nor do we have a clue to why it is celebrated. Interestingly, there is a Language Movement Day celebrated in Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) since 1952, when a number of Dhaka university students were killed by the Pakistani police and army in Dhaka during the Bengali Language Movement. To commemorate their sacrifice, Bangladesh government had erected a huge monument called Language Martyr's

Monument (Shaheed Minar) in Dhaka University. The day is celebrated as a National holiday when millions of people with flowers visit the memorial, to pay their tribute to the long-gone brave hearts.

The theme chosen for IMLD by UNESCO for the year 2016 is 'Quality education, language(s) of instruction and learning outcomes'. This declaration highlights the importance of mother languages for quality education and linguistic diversity.

In contrast, the scenario in West Bengal is quite offbeat. It seems that, the Bengali speaking people in Kolkata are languidly losing interest in promoting their mother tongue. The use of 'Bangla' as a medium of communication is falling in disfavour among a large chunk of middle-class Bengalis and youngsters. "I prefer English medium for my chil-

dren when it comes to choosing a school, as 'Bangla' is losing its hold for communicating in the international scenario" said Swapna Ghose, a Kolkata based Entrepreneur.

Many Bengali school students are even culling 'Hindi' as their second language in their academics. However, we cannot ignore the fact that 'Bangla' is the sixth most widely spoken language in the world and 21 million people speak in 'Bangla'. "Mastery over English language is considered as a ticket to success in academics, career and also gives us more confidence to compete with the world" said Atish Majumdar, an Advocate practising in High Court.

Ignoring one's own mother tongue cannot be a healthy trend. Mother tongue encapsulates the ethos of a race and its history, art and culture. Neglect-

ing it would make one bereft of personal, social and anthropological identity. Also for Bengalis, we are fortunate enough to have inherited, an extremely rich literature written by some of the finest authors, playwrights and poets of the world.

What perhaps is, thus required is to slow down the growing disinterest in 'Bangla' language is gentle nurturing and inculcation of a sense of pride in the richness of 'Bangla' language. Bengali literature and culture should be promoted among school kids by their elders and teachers. 'Bangla' should be used freely for communication at home and in the work place. Improving the standards of Bengali medium schools is equally important as then only, would "Mother Language Day" be a pride and find its true meaning in this city.

News In Brief

Academy Fever 2016

The 88th academy awards saw Brie Larson winning the best actress award. Spotlight won the best film award and Emanuel Lubezki grabbing the best cinematographer's award. The academy witnessed the winning of Leonardo Di Caprio his first ever Oscar after 6 nominations and a career spanning over 22 years.

Smriti Irani's fiery speech

Opposition targets education minister Smriti Irani in both houses of parliament over her statements on the death of Hyderabad central university student Rohit Vemula and JNU controversy. Mrs. Irani's fiery speech had won her much praise from her party with PM Modi congratulating her on twitter. The opposition accuses her to mislead the Parliament with incorrect facts.

Bail Hearing: Kanhaiya

The Delhi police accepted that there was no video in which Kanhaiya Kumar can be seen raising slogans with no independent witness. The Delhi government supported his bail in court saying that there is no proof against him and hence no innocent should be in jail

Freedom 251 scam

Freedom 251, India's cheapest smartphone has turned out to be a big disappointment. Reports claim the company to be a fraudulent one. It is claimed to be one of the most controversial scams with over 6 crores booking so far.

Munnabhai is back

After serving 3.5 years of imprisonment in Pune's Yerwada Jail the renowned superstar Sanjay Dutt was finally released on 25 February. The actor was imprisoned in an arms case related to the 1993 Mumbai Blast.

Campus Buzz!

Yoga session

Special Yoga sessions launched in campus for both students and faculty members. The yoga sessions will aim towards integrating the mind and soul and boost ones physical and mental well-being. The session will be a 20 hour programme mentored by Mrs Marie Antony and comprise of different Asana's ,stretches and yog nidra.

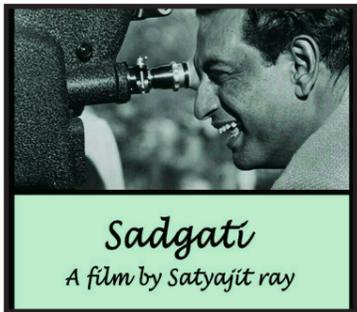
'Dadagiri' auditions

Saloni Dutta Chowdhury from the NCMT department (BCA-2nd year) has qualified the Dadagiri auditions held in the campus on 20th February. She will be featured in the upcoming episode of 'Dadagiri' hosted by our Dada aka Sourav Ganguly next week.

Prof. Roger Lee's visit

Prof. Roger Lee from Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) will be here in campus on 10th March to address management students on "Global Trends of Supply Chain and Logistics." The guest lecture would help students understand the fundamentals of supply chain & logistics.

Screening of Sadgati



Satyajit Ray's "SADGATI" was premiered on 24 February as part of Cinecut's 9th screening. Starring Smita Patil, Om Puri & Mohan Agashe it is the first hindi tele-film based on a short story by Munshi Premchand. The screening was followed by a discussion by Mr. Abhijit Dasgupta, ex-station director of Doordarshan and film director Mr. Ranjan Ghosh.

Workshop on social media

Facebook in association with The Centre for Social Research conducted a day long workshop on 'Social Surfing' on 29th February. The workshop majorly focussed on optimal display of online data, use of social media for social causes, the concept of counter speech etc.

Photography workshop

NIMD's photography club 'CLIXR' and students of BMS2nd year participated in a day long workshop in the 40th International Kolkata Book Fair. The photography workshop attended by all photography enthusiasts were based on themes like street food, friendship, love, slogans, adda at the fair premises.



'Tejas' becomes Prabhu's new 'Humsafar'

Ramyani Mukherjee

All eyes were fixed on him as he entered the parliament clad in a grey sweater and a big smile on his face, perhaps the longest rail budget spanning over an hour. Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu laid down his plans to modernize the ailing Railways over the next 4-5 years luring in traffic from the low cost air-carriers. Prabhu seems to be walking towards fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream by declaring, "My Vision is to make railways backbone of India's progress & economic development."

As expected, there has been no rise in the passenger fares as well as freight charges although he seemed to be keen enough in making up for it with three dedicated freight corridors connecting the entire country for well transmission of goods between Delhi-Chennai, Kharagpur-Mumbai and Kharagpur-Vijaywada.

Although the Railway Minister made no large promises, the introduction of three

new trains will perhaps be the ultimate gain from this year's budget. After dominating the nation's aerial security, the Tejas is now set to dominate India's tracks at a speed of 130km/hr with the latest equipments to make the journey more comfortable. Also fully Air conditioned Humsafar Express and unreserved Superfast Antyodaya Express will run on dense routes to facilitate the low income groups.

Although Prabhu looked quite optimistic, his budget had nothing to offer the overcrowded sub-urban trains which form the life-line of major cities like Kolkata and Mumbai becoming a hassle during the peak hours. These local trains seemed to face the cold ignorance of the railway minister.

The 'Look-East' policy of PM Modi also found place in his cabinet colleague's vision, which looked to connect the north-east in a better manner by broad-gauging the tracks of Manipur and Mizoram. Prabhu

also hoped to make the railways a safe mode of travel by installing a CCTV network across 311 stations and making travel much easier for women by reserving 33% of the seats for them. Also the introduction of Din-Dayalu coaches in every express train is likely to make unreserved travelling much more com-fortable. The Coolies are to be renamed as 'Sahayaks'.

Bengal on the other hand was perhaps the worst gainer from this year's budget with only 517.98 crores for four of its metro projects with Prabhu assuring that he has resolved all issues related to it and Phase I of the East-West Metro will be completed by June 2018.

Now, with elections due in five states across this year, how far will Prabhu's Din-Dayalu rail budget be 'Sahayak' in gaining grounds for BJP is a question which needs to be answered?

"For one's true passion, one can even die"

Interview of Subrata Banerjee

For one's true passion, one can even die" says veteran mountaineer Subrata Banerjee. Mr. Banerjee, a pioneer in mountaineering from Bengal has climbed some of the toughest peaks along with fellow mountaineers from HDMTA. He has been a long time associate of Late Chhanda Gayen, who lost her life while climbing the Himalayas in 2014. Y-NEWS correspondent Souvik Acharya speaks to him and discusses the difficulties in such ice clad mountain peaks.



Picture Courtesy: Mayank

Q. Sir how has been your association with the Howrah District Mountaineering and Trekkers Association (HDMTA)?

I am now 56 years old, my association with HDMTA goes back to the year 1993, when I was a young lad. Whatever I am today, it is because of my association, its support. Without HDMTA, I am very sure my journey would have been a myth."

Q. Which expeditions you have been part of with the HDMTA?

I have been part of many expeditions with my club members since I joined here in 1993, but the most successful ones for me have been Mandani (20,320ft) in 1994, White Sail (21,148ft) in 1996, Ke-dardome (22,410ft) in 1998, Dronagiri (21,492ft) in 2006 and the KUN (23,218ft) in 2012, Ramjak-20,728ft (2014). One of our most recent expeditions has been the Mt. Nandaghunti (20,700ft.) in 2015."

Q. Sir, what are the core difficulties that trekkers and mountaineers have to face in such altitudes?

"See, when we get out on these expeditions

we know that the journey is surely not going to be an easy one, so we always remain prepared with dry foods, medicines and sanitisations as far as possible. But some problem or the other comes up instantaneously without giving any particular indication, we have to face them then only with our experiences and whatever we have with us."

Q. Recently the Indian Army men lost their lives in the mountains due to the avalanches, likewise many trekkers and mountaineers lose their lives in the face of the avalanches which are quite common in those high ice-covered mountains. How difficult it is to cope with natural resistances that you people have to face?

Avalanches are indeed a common phenomenon in the mountains, especially in the heights where we go and trek or climb, and of course Siachen is one of toughest place to be, that too for innumerable days at a stretch. A few months back, we lost one of our fellow mountaineers Chhanda Gayen,

who was in the Himalayas for the expeditions. Likewise my deep condolences are with the family members of those brave warriors who martyred themselves safeguarding us, the people of the nation. Even I myself had to face such an avalanche attack way back in 1995, luckily I survived, and probably it was in Ladakh."

Q. Sir, today many youth are interested in mountaineering and trekking, how can they get help from the HDMTA?

"Yes, of course they can get help and support from us. Our club indeed is meant for creating new champions, as it has always done. Our HDMTA organizes rock-climbing, trekking and mountaineering camps for students and youths so that they can take part and practically learn it from us. They are always welcome to visit our club at Dumurjula Sports complex, Benepole, Howrah anytime they want, and contact us directly. We also organise weekly screening of slide shows about our events, photography and more at our club premises, where young students always take part. We also organise blood donation camps and free medical checkups not only in Kolkata or Howrah but also in distant villages where one cannot reach."

Q. Sir finally I would like to ask you how long can you continue in this sport?

See, it is a passion, and for one's true passion, one can even die." It was indeed wonderful talking to such an experienced individual and a genuine human being. As he rightly said this is a sport where it's all about passion from the very go, till the very end.

Movie Review: Neerja

Aakruti Shah



Cast: Sonam Kapoor, Shabana Azmi, Yogendra Tiku, Shekhar Ravjiani

Director: Ram Madhvani

Writer: Saiwyn Qadras

Rating: ★★★★★☆

"Her loyalties to the passengers of the aircraft in distress will forever be a lasting tribute to the finest qualities of the human spirit". Ashok chakra citation.

Neerja is a biopic based on the incredible story of pan am air hostess Neerja Bhanot who died just two days before her 24th birthday while helping the passengers from the ill-fated pan am 73, hijacked by a group of terrorists. The film recaptures the 17 hour ordeal in an aircraft. Neerja was posthumously awarded the Ashoka chakra, the country's highest award for bravery and valour and also the Tamgha-e-Insaaniyat by Pakistan.

The film begins with Neerja and her zest for life. She is shown as an adored daughter who is a big fan of Rajesh Khanna. Called as "Laado" by her family, she is portrayed as an independent girl who is the apple of everyone's eyes. She gets constant support from her family, be it taking up a career in modelling or walking out of an abusive marriage

Neerja is seen as the heroine who cleverly alerts the pilots, takes care of the passengers. She tries to negotiate with the ill-prepared and

hysterical hijackers, including a superb Jim Sarbh who is a trigger-happy psychopath, comforts a mother whose son is plucked out of the crowd and executed, conceals the passports of the American passengers on board to prevent them from being used as bargaining chips. Opening the emergency door, she helps the passenger escape but sacrifices herself while saving three children from a hail of bullets.

Madhvani remarkably portrays the bond between mother Bhanot (Shabana Azmi) and Neerja, but what completely stands out is the father-daughter relationship. Neerja aims for a lump in the throat rather than full-out bawling. The inter-cutting and inserts of flashbacks balance manipulation and realism. Shabana Azmi's typically assured performance and Sonam Kapoor's brilliant performance makes one reimagine the real life Neerja Bhanot.

Songs like 'Gehra Ishq' and 'Jeete hain chal' are soft numbers whereas the song 'Aankhein milayenge dar se' sets the mood. The song 'Aisa kyun maa', penned by Parson Joshi is a tearjerker. The set design and cinematography and screenplay are remarkable.

The Team: Aaheli Ghose, Aakruti Shah, Avijit Das, Ishani Bhattacharya, Monalisa Mitra, Ramyani Mukherjee, Sagnee Roychowdhury, Saptarshi Chowdhury, Somali Bhowal, Souvik Acharya, Srota Roy Chowdhury

Design Team: Shivangi Pati

Chief Mentor: Dr Buroshiva Dasgupta **Mentors:** Debanjan Banerjee, Reshmi Naskar, Bhaswar Bhattacharyya, Ankita Ash, Barnali Ray, Sourav Basu.