

## UNION BUDGET

The Union Budget 2024 will be presented on 1 February 2024 will be an interim budget. This budget has special significance because of Lok Sabha elections this year. This will not be the full budget for the financial year 2024-25, although the interim budget also provides an important glimpse of the government's priorities and spending plans. In this budget, the government's focus will be on financial stability, infrastructure investment, inclusive growth, green and sustainable development and strategic tax adjustment measures. According to Article 112 of the Constitution of India, the Union Budget of a financial year refers to the annual financial statement of the Government of the Union and provides details about the estimated receipts and expenditure of the government for that particular financial year. In brief, the National Budget of India provides an accounting statement of the finances of the Government of India for the financial year. Once the Finance Bill and the Appropriation Bill are passed by both the Houses of Parliament, they are presented to the President of India for approval.

## Political Earthquake in Bihar

They say that in politics and war there are no permanent friends and foes and same is today proved by Nitesh Kumar the chief minister of Bihar .He is very ambitious and greedy politician .Nitesh is also opportunistic and for the sake of power ,he can go to any extent and can even have strange bed fellows and can go with the BJP even and in doing this he does not feel any hesitation .Nitesh is famous for turning coats and sometimes he remains with the Laloo Prasad's RJD and at other time he does not feel any difficulty to align with the NDA.As per the understanding with RJD,the JDU and its chairman Nitesh kumar had at the time of formation of the JDU-RJD government agreed to give a chance to Tejshwi Yadva to be the chief minister ,but Nitesh is reluctant to surrender the chief ministers chair to RJD's Jejhswi Yadav. There was tremendous pressure from Laloo Yadav and his RJD to give the chair of chief minister to Tejhiswi Yadav .But the greed of power is so much to Nitesh Kumar and he is intoxicated that he does not like to surrender the chief ministers chair to RJD candidate .Instead he chose to come closer to BJP at the centre level and in the state politics too .Nitesh submitted his resignation to governor from the post of chief minister and thus stepped down to pave way for the new government and his chief minister-ship for the ninth time. Tejhiswi Yadav has said that Khela in the state is still remaining .The governor should also give him the chance to show majority at the floor of the assembly .It is learnt that BJP will give support to Nitesh Kumar and thus it will not be difficult for him to again form JDU government with the help of BJP and in turn he pledges support to NDA at the national level .Politics is a dirty and unique game .Home minister has time and again said that the doors of BJP are closed for Nitesh Kumar but now he is ready to allow him in the fold of NDA for the sake of leeching to power. .Nitesh Kumar was a staunch critic of BJP and NDA and it was he who did much hard work in uniting the non BJP parties and was the co-founder of INDIA alliance to take on the NDA in 2024 Lok Sabha polls. .Nitesh was nursing the dream of being the prime minister and so he wanted to be the primeministerial face of the united opposition called craftily as INDIA.As there was no consensus on naming a PM candidate in the opposition camp and he was neither made the convener nor named as the PM candidate and so he is ready to sever his relationship from the INDIA bloc .The statements ,body language and actions of Nitesh Kumar indicate and suggest that he is ready to go with NDA to satiate his ambition of remaining the chief minister of Bihar .There are enough indications that Nitesh may align with the BJP/NDA and will fight the coming general elections as a partner of NDA .All eyes are on Nitish Kumar as political storm brews in Bihar and it will impact the national politics also .All eyes were trained on Bihar CM Nitish Kumar with the JDU president appearing to be inching towards his second political volte face in less than three years .For Kumar ,who maintained a deafening silence over the turmoil in the 'Mahagathbandhan' ,ignoring pleas from allies RJD ,Congress and the left to clear the confusion ,it was business as usual .The longest-serving CM began by flagging off a number of new fire brigade engines at the city's veterinary college ground ,which saw him address a mammoth party rally earlier this week .He followed it up with a visit to Buxar ,for inauguration of a beautification project of a renowned temple ,a project of tourism department that is held by his deputy Tejashwi Yadav ,who remained conspicuous by his absence .The attendees included senior BJP leader and union minister Ashwani Kumar Choubey ,who is the local MP .However Choubey declined to comment on the ongoing upheaval.BJP state in -charge Vinod Tawde ,who is in Patna to attend a meeting of BJP ,also kept cards close to the chest ,but blamed the congress for the imminent break up of Nitish Kumar with the opposition INDIA bloc ,of which he was seen as the veritable architect .Meanwhile ,JDU political advisor and spokesperson KC Tyagi told the reporters in Delhi that the grand alliance government in Bihar is on the verge of collapse ,and accused a section of congress leadership of repeatedly 'insulting kumar .''The INDIA bloc is on the verge of collapse. The alliance of INDIA bloc parties is almost over in Punjab ,West Bengal and Bihar. "he said. Upon kumar's return to Patna ,top leaders of JDU began pouring in at the official residence of the party president ,who is expected to put in his papers as chief minister and stake claim for the formation of a new government with the BJP's support. Leaders of the RJD also gathered at the residence of national vice-president and former CM Rabri Devi ,who shares her government bungalow with Tejashwi Yadav ,her son ,and husband Lalu Prasad ,who is the party president .All party leaders were made to deposit their mobile phones outside of 10,Cricular Road ,the house situated at a stone's throw from the chief minister's residence .Sources claiming to be in the know of things said the deliberations were about the course of action to be followed in the event of Kumar calling off alliance. While some RJD leaders are said to be in favor of staking claim to form the new government ,hoping to cobble up support of eight MLA's ,the Mahagathbandhan requires to go past the majority mark ,others ,including Tejashwi Yadav ,appear to be impressed with the idea since the JDU and the BJP together have more than 122 members in the 243-strong assembly .There is great political uncertainty in Bihar and the situation is not clear as yet and in two ,three days the whole picture will become clear and thus time will only tell which way the wind will blow but the chances are that Kumar will once again steal the show and will become the chief minister the ninth time in succession .But a fast political development took place in Bihar and Nitish Kumar took oath of office and secrecy on 28th January Sunday. However still there will be political uncertainty in the state as Nitish can change the course of politics as per his political and personal preference as he is most uncertain political figure and most unpredictable.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

# Empowering Tribal Farmers through Dairy Technologies

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

Union Territory of J&K is endowed with large biodiversity and different agro- climatic conditions. Agriculture and allied sectors in Jammu and Kashmir still continue to play a crucial role in sustaining its economy. It is expected that in future also they will be instrumental to maintain the rural livelihood and employment security. Agriculture and allied sectors in J&K contribute approximately 38 percent to the state GDP of which 11 percent is contributed by the livestock sector. Dairy farming in support of agriculture is recognized as an important instrument for the socio-economic development of the tribal farmers of J&K. It is one of the most important enterprises which dominate the economic activities of tribal farmers in the rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir. There is increase in demand for milk and milk products which has intensified dairy farming as a profitable enterprise for the tribal farmers of Union Territory of J&K. As most of the area of J&K is rain fed thus dairy farming can be considered more reliable occupation for the tribal farmers. Livestock receives around 12 per cent of the total public expenditure on the agriculture and allied sector and around five per cent of the total institutional credit flow into this sector.About six per cent of the livestock are insured. Tribal farmers' income can be increased by creating economic viable units like dairy farming in rural areas of J&K.

Dairy sector not only generates income and employment among the farmers but also supplements the varied nutritional requirements of the individual. Dairy farming is an integral part of the tribal farmers of J&K. In Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir the number of animals per 1000 human beings are 882 while at national this number is only 457 as per livestock census2007. Dairying is

a potential source of additional income for the tribal farmers of J&K. There is immense contribution of dairy sector to J&K income. This sector provides insurance against crop failures. This sector helps in increasing the crop production by providing the drag power, organic manure and cash income on a regular basis. Although India ranked first in milk production but the productivity of milk among the farmers in hilly areas is still less. Maximum milk is produced from the selected areas. The low milk production in hilly areas of J&K is mainly due to low level of dairy information sources and less adoption of modern dairy technologies by farmers. In India the milk productivity per animal comes to 987 kg/year whereas worldwide average productivity is 2200 kg per animal per year. There is substantial tribal population in the Union Territory of J&K. In J&K milk production varies to the tune of up to 1700 thousand MTs of which tribal farmers of J&K are having maximum contribution. But still the tribal farmers are lacking the advance knowledge of dairy farming. The tribal farmers of J&K have been confronting to several constraints in this sector which prohibit them for their empowerment. Lack of knowledge of modern technologies among the tribal farmers is one of the reasons for lack of technical knowhow of dairy farming. There is dire need to enhance the knowledge on dairy farming among the tribal farmers in J&K so that they can be empowered. Road connectivity in far flung areas also needs to be improved so that the milk and milk products can be carried smoothly in urban areas. In hilly terrains still there are certain tribal habitations which lack road connectivity. There is need to develop the infrastructure of dairy plants especially in the hilly areas so that milk collection can be increased. Cost-effective nutritious feed should be made by the

researchers.

The tribes of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir primarily function as cultivators, maintaining an essential agrarian livelihood. The Gujjars and Bakarwals are the predominant tribal communities in the intermediate hill zone of Jammu and Kashmir. They together constitute about 20 per cent of the total population of J&K and comprise the third largest ethnic group after Kashmiris and Dogras. They are mostly inhabitants of the border districts of Rajouri and Poonch followed by Anantnag, Udhampur, Reasi and Doda districts. Gujjars and Bakerwals continue to be a unique community with their own social, cultural and linguistic identities. Gujjars are mostly herdsmen of buffaloes, many of them possessing minor pieces of land on the mountain foothills. Bakerwals, who belong to the same ethnic stock, largely depend on sheep and goats for their livelihood. They are predominantly rural as 95.3 per cent of them reside in villages. Adverse terrain conditions, inaccessibility of the areas, absence of all weather roads, lack of infrastructure facilities, unsteady agricultural economy and ignorance added to the backwardness of the tribal population living in far-flung and difficult areas. These factors have affected their cultural, economic and political empowerment which has led to their backwardness. Keeping this in view, the Central Government notified the Gujjars and Bakerwals in Jammu and Kashmir as Scheduled Tribes in 1991. Tribal farmers suffer due to low literacy rate, lack of access to new technologies, lack of inputs, difficult terrains leading to poor living conditions and low production and productivity in dairy farming.

Though many attempts have been made through different schemes for the upliftment of this section of people in J&K, the benefits accrued through such programmes were not

sustainable as they were not trained to improve the land base available at their disposal for integrated farming and allied income generating activities. The government has been prioritizing the education of these nomadic communities at the grass-roots level to arm their children with education and modern knowledge. Acquainting the tribal community with the scientific and sustainable crop and animal husbandry practices can make their traditional practices more profitable. Devising and demonstrating the dairy farming models at community farms can enable them to take up animal husbandry as an enterprise or vocation. Tribal people, If given quality dairy technologies and marketing facilities are provided to the tribal farmers then more employment and income can be generated for them. There is need to popularize scientific and mechanized knowledge of dairy farming among the tribal farmers. There is tremendous scope for improving the dairy farming in the Union Territory of J&K. Also there is good scope to increase in availability of fodder round the year. There is an immense potential for developing dairy industry in the region. Department of Animal Husbandry of J&K and SKUAST-Jammu and Kashmir are collaboratively working to provide the frozen semen of pedigree bulls to the veterinary dispensaries. Animal diseases and parasites need to be managed according to the different agro-climatic zones in Union Territory of J&K. Agricultural universities in J&K including the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and department of animal husbandry can help in guiding the tribal farmers for the modern dairy farming.There is urgent need to give a boost to the dairy farming in J&K so that the livelihood conditions of the tribal farmers can be improved. There is need to have proper linkage between the scientists, extension workers and the tribal farmers.

(The writer is Sr. Scientist & Head of KVK, Reasi).

# Seaweed: Sea of opportunities

■ NEETU PRASAD



Weeds are, plant considered undesirable, unattractive, or troublesome, especially one that grows where it is not wanted and often grows or spreads fast or takes the place of desired plants. So, What comes to your mind, when you hear the word Seaweed? For most of us they are marine version of water hyacinth clogging Indian ponds posing obstruction to navigation. Little is known about the tremendous economic potential of this family of marine algae.

Seaweed has been gaining global recognition as a wonder plant of the ocean. It supports marine biodiversity by acting as breeding and feeding grounds. It absorbs carbon, de-acidifies the ocean and soaks up excess nutrients that could cause harmful algae blooms. It can also be a renewable resource for coastal communities, offering them a more stable income compared to fluctuating fisheries markets that are increasingly affected by climate change. It is anticipated that one tonne of seaweed may absorb 120 kilograms of carbon dioxide (CO2), two kilograms of Nitrogen, (N) and two and a half kilograms of Phosphorous (P). Further, it required practically zero fresh water. Thus, it can be huge force multiplier for Blue Economy and Green Agricultural practices. Owing to its innate properties, seaweed is valued as a natural ingredient in food, medicines, fertilizers, cosmetics, biomaterials, etc. and the current global market is of 17 billion dollars.

Historical background: - Seaweed was first consumed in Japan at least 1500 years ago according to early written records. Until the middle ages, there was only wild seaweed, which limited it as a food source.

During the Tokugawa era (1600-1800 AD), the seaweed cultivation was born

when the fishermen built an offshore fence and started a fish farm to supply the king fresh fish everyday. They also found that seaweed preferred growing on this fence.

In India, the cultivation at seaweed started under the aegis of the Centre for salt and Marine Chemicals Research Institute (CSMCRI) which brought Kappaphycus alvarezii, to India from the Philippines for experimental purposes during the 1980s. It didn't take long for the seaweed to jump from the experimental farms to commercial ones. With the help of CSMCRI, Pepsi co started commercial farming seaweed in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu in the early 2000. Kappaphycus alvarezii is an important source of carrageenans which are used in a variety of foods, such as a stabilising agent in dairy products. Industrial products like chocolates, ice creams, packaged food, toothpaste and even medicines, to name a few, utilize this jelly like agent.

It gave the locals of Tamil Nadu a new farm of employment especially women. In 2008, the Pepsi co-exited the business. An ex-Pepsi co employee, Abhiram Seth, took over the business by setting up a company called Aquagri. Since then, numerous sea weed companies and startups grew to explore the commercial usages of seaweed.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna (PMMSY) was launched by Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in year 2020 which is not only meant for strengthening the infrastructure and value chain in the fisheries sector but also became cornerstone of brand new activities unraveled in the Indian Fisheries segment. PMMSY envisages that artificial reefs, sea ranching along with Seaweed are going to bring a sustainable, climate resilient and profitable model which will not only help in improving the fishermen's income, provide livelihood to coastal women but also, be a perfect way to sustainably manage our fish stocks.

India is endowed with a long coast line of more than 8000 km and traditionally

Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Odisha and Maharashtra have been blessed with various species of naturally growing Seaweed. Rich Seaweed beds occur around Mumbai, Ratnagiri, Goa, Karwar, Uarkala Vizhinjam, Pulikat, Rameshwaram in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Chilika in Odisha.

Present Scenario: Under PMMSY, projects with a total cost of Rs. 193.80 crores with a central share of Rs. 99 crores were approved for the cultivation of seaweed and related activities. Funds are allotted to coastal states, UTs and research institution for establishment of 46,095 rafts, 65,330 mono-lines and development of seaweed park in Tamil Nadu worth 127.7 crores.

This seaweed park aims to provide an enabling ecosystem for researchers, entrepreneurs, startups and SHC women.

The foundation stone was laid last year by the Union Minister Parshottam Rupala Ji and the work is going at a brisk pace.

Future Perfect:

As a wonder plant of the sea, Seaweed can grow at an exponential rate, ready for harvesting in 45 to 60 days. Department of fisheries aims to produce around 11 lakh tons of seaweed annually through wild catch and aqua culture. With increased awareness, the domestic demand for seaweed has grown multifold and we are importing almost 70% of our requirements. Significant steps need to be taken to reverse this trend, attain self-sufficiency and become a net exporter. Towards this end the following can be done;

► Achieve strong collaborations between the states, research institutes (CMFRI, CSMCRI, NIOT) and the Private enterprises/ startups.

► Detailed mapping and identification of potential zones/ areas for seaweed cultivation can be taken up by the coastal states which are clear of fishing zones, tourism activities and trade routes.

► Formulation of water leasing policy for organized growth and better regulation by

the States is important.

► Participation of women SHG groups through the convergence of National Rural Livelihood Mission scheme and upgrading their skills.

► Availability of seed is the biggest issue. Hence development and scaling up of high yielding seed materials by R&D institutes to be taken up with funding from their own source and PMMSY.

► Private sector and entrepreneurs to take up large scale production under schemes (PMMSY, FIDF) and own resources.

► Government should take policy measures to allow import of high yielding planting materials by the private sector. Presently there are some technical problems exist in export and import of seaweed.

► Research institutes should collaborate with Private partners to grow high yielding planting materials of different species of seaweed so dependence upon any specific species can be overcome. Similarly, post-harvest technologies and advanced technology of cultivation are to be adopted.

► To establish a proper integrated ecosystem, more seaweed parks may be approved under PMMSY in all the coastal states on lines similar to Tamil Nadu seaweed park.

► Seed Banks of seaweed may be created at a scale all along the coastline.

Rightly recognizing its potential to transform the way farming is done, honorable Prime Minister has exhorted Self Help Group women and farmers to take up cultivation of sea weed for its pharmaceutical nutritional and other values. Philosopher Goethe said "Whatever you do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it". Our attempt to make India a world leader in seaweed production may be a dream now, but with bold measures and initiatives under honorable Prime Minister's powerful leadership, these beginnings may just bring the magical transformation.

(The writer is Joint Secretary (Marine Fisheries) Department of Fisheries, MoFAHD, GoI).

## YOUR COLUMN

### Force of Habit

Dear Editor,

It is force of habit for Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to address others, not all others, in singular form. Accordingly, in his zeal to blame BJP, particularly with Modi in mind, for not inviting the President Draupadi Murmu for inauguration of the New Parliament building and Ayodhya Ram Mandir consecration ceremony, he called the President in singular form. In the fits of temper against BJP which is political in nature and as is his wont, he has called the President in singular form. His defence that it was not intentional can be accepted. His crocodile tear at not inviting the President to the inaugural ceremony of New Parliament building and Ram Mandir is never out of respect to the President though his usage of singular words due to force of habit against her is not out of disrespect. He has regretted for using the singular form against Murmu. It is okay. But the Presidential nominee of Congress and other parties was Yashwant Sinha against Draupadi Murmu fielded by the Modi government in the Presidential election. Opposition parties including Congress fought tooth and nail against Murmu to defeat her. Times out of number, he has used and has been using singular words against the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He has never regretted for it because it was intentional. Congress top leadership is not mature enough to advise Siddaramaiah not to use singular words against the Prime Minister of India. If

Modi has not responded to the abusive words by Siddaramaiah, it is his strength to tolerate disrespect from Siddaramaiah. If Siddaramaiah takes anything personally, Modi does not harbour personal animosity against him or others. The habit of using singular words was there even when BJP government was in power in Karnataka. No FIR was registered against Siddaramaiah. But when the MP Ananthakumar Hegde used singular words against Siddaramaiah, an FIR was registered against Hegde. Hegde is not in the habit of using singular words against anybody. He has high depth of knowledge in religious matters and cultured person. But he used singular words against the Chief Minister to make him understand the pinch of singular words and also to show that others also can speak in the language Siddaramaiah uses and understands. It is quite common for Siddaramaiah to address the IAS and IPS officers in singular words. When singular words are used, they silently suffer. If a politician is attacked verbally or physically, other politicians come to the rescue of 'victim' of abusive words or physical attack. But a government servant must practice to be mum even when he is addressed singularly by politicians. A Chief Minister should be a role model to others. There were many Chief Ministers in Karnataka who were role model to even the opposition parties. It is unfortunate that the tribe of such leaders is extinguishing.

Acrimony in politics is common. Fight or constructive criticisms should be against the anti-people programmes and policies of the government and constructive suggestions for correcting the mistakes by the government. The political arena is being contaminated by the leaders

flinging abusive words at each other personally. This should be desisted. High command should monitor the behaviour of their party leaders lest the political atmosphere is vitiated.

K.V. Seetharamaiah

## Social Welfare must Act Fast

### Pay pension arrears to Divyangjan, widow & senior citizen

Dear Editor,

Following matter of urgent public importance is submitted to attract the immediate attention of the higher authorities of the Jammu and Kashmir UT administration for early payment of pending arrears to the pension-holders of widows, elderly persons and Divyangjan (PwD) categories.

This is the voice of the voiceless like helpless widows, elderly persons as also Persons with Disability who are already getting pension through the Social Welfare Department in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir but deprived of due arrears so far.

This long outstanding payment is only very meagre but this is of much significance to these desolate and weaker sections of the society. The Lt Governor Manoj Sinha; Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Principal Secretary, Social Welfare Sheetal Nanda and Principal Secretary, Finance, Santosh D Vaidya and all other high authorities must pay their immediate attention and tackle this issue at the earliest to dispense justice to these hard-pressed and disadvantaged sections of our society.

It is felt that the J&K UT Administration will ensure payment of due pension arrears through on-line mode into their respective Bank account as early as possible.

O P Sharma