

Gender Budget up by 37.5 pc this year, allocations at Rs 4.49 lakh Cr: Govt

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NEW DELHI: The 'Gender Budget' allocation has seen a sharp increase, reaching Rs 4.49 lakh crore, in this year's Union Budget, a 37.5 per cent rise from last year's allocation, the Women and Child Development Ministry said on Sunday.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her budget speech on Saturday, announced that the 'Gender Budget' made up 8.86 per cent of the total budget. Last year's allocation was Rs 3.27 lakh crore, which was 6.8 per cent of last year's total budget.

This year's budget also witnessed a record number of ministries and departments reporting allocations under the Gender Budget Statement (GBS). Forty-nine ministries and departments, along with five Union territories, have included gender-focused allocations, up from 38 ministries and departments in the previous year.

Twelve new ministries and departments have been included in the GBS for the first time, reflecting a broader commitment to gender-responsive budgeting, the ministry said in a statement.

Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Department of Biotechnology, Department of Food & Public Distribution, Department of Financial Services, Department of Fisheries, Department of Land Resources, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, and the Ministry of Railways are the new additions.

The allocations have been categorised into three sections within the GBS.

In Part A, which includes



100 per cent women-specific schemes, Rs 1.05 lakh crore (23.50 per cent of total GBS allocation) has been earmarked. Part B, covering schemes with 30-99 per cent allocation for women, has received Rs 3.26 lakh crore (72.75 per cent), while Part C, which accounts for schemes with less than 30 per cent allocation for women, has been allotted Rs 16,821 crore (3.75 per cent). Among the top contributors to the 'Gender Budget', the Ministry of Women and Child Development leads with 81.79 per cent of its funds allocated to women-centric initiatives.

Other ministries with significant gender allocations include the Department of Rural Development (65.76 per cent), Department of Food & Public Distribution (50.92 per cent), Department of Health & Family Welfare (41.10 per cent), Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (40.89 per cent), Department of Social Justice & Empowerment (39.01 per cent), Department of Higher Education (33.94 per cent), Department of School Education & Literacy (33.67 per cent), Ministry of Home Affairs (33.47 per cent), and the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation (31.50 per cent), the ministry said.

For the move, a new clause would be inserted in the Customs Act "to provide a time limit of two years for finalisation of provisional assessment", according to the Budget documents. The time limit can be extended by the Commissioner of Customs for a further period of one year if sufficient cause is shown. "It further provides that, for the pending cases, the time limit shall be computed from the date of assent of the Finance Bill, 2025," it added. Hailing the move, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said by establishing a clear two-year time, businesses can anticipate the resolution of provisional assessments within a defined period, reducing uncertainty in financial planning and opera-

Govt proposes to set time limit for provisional assessments of trade consignments

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NEW DELHI: The finance ministry in the Budget has proposed to fix a two-year time limit, extendable by one year, for finalising provisional assessments of export and import consignments with an aim to reduce uncertainty and costs for exporters.

Currently, the Customs Act, 1962 lacks a fixed timeline for finalising provisional assessments, causing delays and uncertainties.

The new provision mandates finalisation within two years, extendable by one additional year, ensuring greater predictability for businesses, economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

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tions.

"Timely finalisation of assessments ensures that any refunds or additional duties are settled promptly, helping businesses in managing their cash flows. Implementing a specific time limit aligns India's customs procedures with international standards, potentially enhancing the country's ease of doing business and attractiveness to global traders," Sahai said.

The ministry has also proposed to incentivise voluntary compliances under which exporters and importers can voluntarily declare material facts post-clearance and pay duty with interest but no penalty.

The move is aimed at improving compliances and reducing disputes.

GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said this new voluntary compliance scheme allows importers and exporters to

declare material facts and pay any additional duties with interest after goods clearance, without incurring penalties.

"However, this provision will not apply if an audit or investigation has already been initiated by customs authorities," he said.

Further to enhance export competitiveness, the finance ministry has extended the time limit for utilising imported inputs from six months at present to one year.

Additionally, importers would now only need to file quarterly statements instead of monthly filings, easing compliance requirements.

To boost handicraft exports, the duration for export of handicrafts manufactured from duty-free inputs by bonafide exporters is being increased from six months to one year, further extendable by three months.

Frequent extreme weather events driving food inflation in India: Govt report

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The food inflation rate in India has remained firm over the past two years defying the global trend, and frequent extreme weather events are one of the reasons, the government said in its latest Economic Survey.

Tabled in Parliament on Friday, the report said that the decline in onion and tomato production over the past two years can be partly attributed to frequent extreme weather events in major producing states compared to other regions.

Extreme weather events in 2023-24 damaged crops in major horticulture-producing states, leading to inflationary pressure on horticultural commodities, it said.

"Over the past two years, India's food inflation rate has remained firm, diverging from global trends of stable or declining food inflation. This can be attributed to factors such as supply chain disruptions exacerbated by extreme weather events and reduced harvest of some food items," the report read.

Citing data from the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the report said that the total

crop area damaged in 2024 was higher than in the previous two years due to extreme weather conditions.

The government also referred to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data, which shows a significant rise in the frequency of extreme weather events, especially heatwaves.

Between 2022 and 2024, heatwaves were recorded on 18 per cent of days, compared to 5 per cent in 2020 and 2021, the report said.

The Economic Survey acknowledged that recent shocks like geopolitical conflicts and extreme weather have caused price fluctuations, but their impact has now subsided, leading to more variation in commodity prices.

For long-term price stability, the report suggested developing climate-resilient crops, strengthening data systems to monitor prices, reducing crop damage, and minimizing post-harvest losses.

On Saturday, the government announced a six-year mission to increase pulse production, aiming to achieve self-sufficiency in three widely consumed varieties -- tur, urad, and masoor.

Union Budget paves way for Viksit Bharat: Dr Parneesh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Dr. Parneesh Mahajan, Convenor of the Department of Training, BJP J&K, hailed the Union Budget as a visionary step towards realizing the aspiration of a Viksit Bharat by 2047. The Budget marks a significant commitment by the Modi Government to create a robust, inclusive economy that empowers every citizen, with a special focus on rural prosperity, middle-class empowerment, and economic growth through infrastructure and innovation.

In a press statement issued here today, the senior BJP leader emphasized that the Union Budget is driven by four key engines: Agriculture for rural prosperity; MSMEs for job creation; Investment for infrastructure and innovation, and Exports for global competitiveness. He highlighted that the six-pronged approach to accelerate growth, enhance middle-class spending power, and uplift private-sector investments will set India on a trajectory toward becoming a global economic powerhouse.

He said that the Budget includes significant provisions aimed at empowering the middle class, which has always been the backbone of the nation's development. Tax reforms, such as an increase in the income tax

exemption limit to ₹12 lakh and a rise in tax deductions for senior citizens, reflect the government's ongoing commitment to making financial growth accessible to all. Furthermore, initiatives like the 'SWAMIH Fund 2' and housing for low-income urban groups demonstrate the government's dedication to improving the quality of life for citizens.

Dr. Parneesh also lauded the government's emphasis on agricultural development with the launch of the Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana, focusing on enhancing farm productivity and sustainable practices, which will directly benefit over 1.7 crore farmers. Additionally, the Budget's focus on skilling the youth and creating 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs in schools is a visionary step toward empowering the next generation to lead the nation into a digital future.

The Budget also recognizes the importance of social justice, with provisions for the welfare of gig workers, healthcare facilities, and education, all aimed at creating an inclusive and resilient India.

He reiterated that these initiatives reaffirm the government's vision of a developed India-Viksit Bharat where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive.

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