

Parliament approves Finance Bill, completes FY26 Budget exercise

GREEN SIGNAL. Bill to go to President for assent; Budget proposals worth ₹50 lakh cr to take effect from April 1

Shishir Sinha
New Delhi

On Thursday, Rajya Sabha returned the Finance Bill and the Appropriation Bill, marking the completion of the budgetary exercise in Parliament. These bills will now go to the President for assent.

The ₹50 lakh crore Budget will be available for FY 25-26, from April 1. The Lok Sabha had previously passed the Finance Bill on March 25 and the Appropriation Bill on March 21.

Replying to the debate later in the evening, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Finance Ministry would exercise caution and not let go of revenues. "But, here, we wanted to use this opportunity to show our respect for the Indian taxpayer. We have moved towards setting ₹12 lakh as threshold up to which no one will have to pay any tax," Sitharaman said.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaking in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament

BUDGET ESTIMATES

The total capital expenditure proposed for the next fiscal is ₹11.22 lakh crore and effective capital expenditure stood at ₹15.48 lakh crore. It has proposed a gross tax revenue collection of ₹42.70 lakh crore and a gross borrowing of ₹14.01 lakh crore.

Fiscal deficit for FY26 is projected at 4.4 per cent against 4.8 per cent in the

current fiscal. The GDP for FY25-26 is estimated at ₹3,56,97,923 crore, which is 10.1 per cent over the Revised Estimates for FY24-25 of ₹3,24,11,406 crore, per National Statistical Office (NSO).

Earlier, taking part in the debate, Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram asked the government to spell out India's response to US Pres-

ident Donald Trump's threat of tariff war, alleging that no discussion in Parliament or consultation with Opposition parties has been held over the matter. He cautioned that a tariff and trade war would lead to depressed exports, lower FDI, higher inflation and currency depreciation.

THE BIG QUESTION

Referring to Trump's statement that the US will impose tariffs from April 2, the former Finance Minister said, "What is the government's response? What is India's response? There has been no statement of policy, no discussion in Parliament, no consultation with Opposition parties. The government is holding its cards close to its chest, if it has any cards at all."

He said India must stand with saner voices in the world such as Canada, Britain, France, Germany and Japan and collectively do everything to prevent a tariff

and trade war. Participating in the discussion, Sagarika Ghose (TMC) said, "...A Tsunami is coming on April 2. A new round of reciprocal tariffs is about to be announced by the Donald Trump administration and could prove devastating for India's export earnings." Citing a report, she said 87 per cent of total exports could be hit worth as much as \$66 billion. Industries employing lakhs of Indians will suddenly lose market share in the US.

Shiv Sena Member Priyanka Chaturvedi demanded that State governments be given a share in the cess and surcharges collected by the Centre. "There should be justice for all the states. There s

ould be a restriction on the increase of cess and surcharge. Either they should bring restriction or rationalisation or abolish it. If you could not abolish it, then make it a part of State Bill," she said.