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To Pay or Not to Pay

Madhav Dutt comments on the 2013 Budget which was presented recently.

No matter what anyone says about the budget, one thing is for sure, it was a move well made. The Union Budget for the year 2013 cannot be broken down and explicated without providing a background of the current political scenario in our country.

One final year separates us from the 2014 General Elections, and it is fair to say that the next residents of Race Course Road are still un-decided. The UPA's second term has been marked with scandals, corruption and futile debates in Parliament. UPA President Sonia Gandhi has used the budget to pave the path towards her party's re-election. One fact still remains: the party that wins the General Elections will enter a parliament with no decisive opinion or stand on key issues.

There have been myriad reactions to this budget. After the budget speech, the Leader of the Opposition expressed her extreme opinions, calling it 'unimaginative' and bland. Many have said that the common man has been left out of this budget. After all, at the end of the day, the common man just worries about the bare necessities: food, electricity, water, fuel and a roof to sleep under.

This was the Union Government's 82nd Budget. Drafting and formulating a national budget for any country is a herculean task, and for a country as populous and large as ours, it is infinitely harder. This is precisely why Chidambaram was made the Union Finance Minister in the Cabinet re-shuffle. A Harvard Business School graduate, Palaniappan Chidambaram has been involved in active party politics since 1989. With this presentation, P Chidambaram has completed his 8th Budget, the second highest number ever presented.

The current economic scenario is disappointing, to say the least. The three axes of statistics (GDP growth, inflation rate and fiscal deficit) numerically prove this disappointment. Compared to the 9% growth our country galloped at in 2008, the past year saw our GDP growing at a slow rate of 5.5- 6%. The Inflation rate increased steadily till mid-2012, reaching a shocking 7.4%. In the recent past, fortunately, the inflation rate again began falling, slowly, and is currently at 6.2%. In an interview with Reuters at the G20 Summit, Chidambaram was rather optimistic, saying the inflation will reduce to 5.3% by the end of this fiscal year.

The fiscal deficit is the loss at which the country runs (revenue received minus the expenditures incurred). Our current deficit stands at around 5.2%, which is an 'unacceptable' amount, according to Chidambaram himself. By the end of this year, Chidambaram believes his plan will reduce the deficit to 4.8%. The plan to reduce our 75 billion dollar deficit includes the usual measures such as expenditure cuts etc.

This year's rate changes are a cause of surprise as well. The investment allowance for companies with a net worth exceeding one billion dollars has increased by 15%, which means more capital can be injected into projects, to boost the country's fiscal state. Along with investment allowance there are some additional provisions as well, provided to these companies by the government.

If we look at the borrowing side of this year's budget, the government has a busy agenda ahead. The net, gross and market borrowing for the year has been increased, while a plan for purchase of 500 billion rupees worth of foreign bonds has been drafted. These plans affect our country's fiscal welfare on the international scale, as foreign bonds determine other countries' economies.

When it comes to the budget, subsidies have always been a contentious point. This year, all the sectors: petroleum, fertilizer and food were re-evaluated taking the deficit into account. In conclusion, petrol was given a budget of 650 billion rupees and food 900 billion.



(contd. on Page 2)

BLAZERS

Tanmay Kapoor has been awarded the **Games Blazer**. Udbhav Agarwal, Kunal Kanodia, Mehak Sharma and Arnav Joshi have been awarded the **Scholars Blazer**. Congratulations!

BIRDIE

The School was represented by Zahaan Qureshi and Sumer Sehgal at the **8th Madhav Rao Scindia Golf Tournament** in **New Delhi** on March 3, 2013. The team emerged victorious, beating **The Scindia School, Gwalior** by eight strokes. Fateh Khanna and Tejveer Kohli also took part in the **1st Governer's Cup** held at the **Indian Military Academy** on 3 February 2013. Well done!

CRICKET

The **Doon School Junior Cricket Team** played a match against **Lawrence School, Sanawar** and won by 141 runs, and lost to **YPS, Patiala** and **PPS, Nabha**. Well tried!

MUSIC

There was a concert of Carnatic music by eminent violinist R Kumoresh; accompanied by Pramath Kiran on marchhang and R Sankaranarayanan on March 3 at the Music School. A report runs in a issue.

The Week Gone By...

Devansh Agarwal

The one statement that every Dosco will admit to is that, the week before test week is one of many hardships. it takes students incredible amounts of willpower to think of trying to study, and for the very few who are capable of going beyond the thinking, they try but sadly they too fail miserably. The week has gone by and indeed it did have its dose of entertaining moments. Hockey seems to be trying its level best to acquaint itself with the ways of the new schedule but, similar to cricket, it too will have a hard time adapting, especially to the unforgiving heat when summer sets in. Shifting our attention from the sports field to the assembly podium, a rather interesting talk was given to the school community about how an interesting talk should be given to the school community. Needless to say it not only enlightened our senses of public speaking but it also helped us catch up on the latest 'doordarshan' that many had missed. The school seems to have become very concerned about its IT policies and the growing cyber crime involved with the same, their course of action is unclear however a talk regarding cyber crime is not exactly an auspicious sign, is it? I believe that it would be best to sign off with a warning, for we should brace ourselves because test week is approaching sooner than anyone had imagined.



Around the world in 80 Words

While the pope is about to be chosen, the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, died. In England her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II has been discharged after being treated for symptoms of gastroenteritis. The U.N. Security Council is meeting on Tuesday to discuss North Korea. Finally, there is hope for a cure of HIV after the first child was 'functionally cured' in Africa and people believe that the end of the AIDS epidemic is within sight for the entire world.

Opinion oll

Do you think Test Week has come too early this term?



(352 members of the School community were polled)

Next Week's Question: Have you seen the 'Harlem Shake' video?

(contd. from Page 1)

Sources of revenue will be similar to those of last year's budget. Through indirect and direct tax proposals, the government has projected a total revenue of about 180 billion rupees. Besides this, 500 billion rupees are going to flow in through the stake sales of state firms. In addition, 400 billion rupees will come from sale of FM airwaves and spectrum sales (a poor example of this is the infamous 2G Spectrum sale scam).

Taxes are a crucial subject of discussion after a budget is announced. Much to Azim Premji's disdain, a 10% surcharge has been planned for citizens with an annual income that exceeds 1 crore rupees. Even companies with a net worth of 100 million rupees are to be charged a 10% surcharge on their sales. Foreign companies, that already have a higher corporate tax to pay, will be charged 5%, in comparison to last year's 2%.

The defence budget is always famous, usually because of its astronomical price. The government certainly didn't disappoint this year, with the allocation of 2 trillion rupees for defense purposes. Other noteworthy components were the heavy investments in welfare schemes. The gold allowance was also increased to 50,000 rupees for men and 1 lakh rupees for women. The Delhi Metro was given a boost from last year's 4,500 crore rupees to 5,100 crore rupees for the coming year. This increase covers an ambitious expansion scheme for the rapid-transit system.

There were many other crucial parts of the budget that I haven't been able to include simply because of the sheer size of the budget document. As mentioned earlier, a task like this is humongous in every way. However, on a more humorous note, air conditioned eateries are now charged higher tax rates, which means their food prices will rise, which in turn will lead Doscos to demand more money for Private outings! With a total expenditure tag of 16.65 trillion rupees this budget was, as phrased by Gautam Adani, 'a fine balance between populist measures and hardnosed reform'. On one end of the spectrum, people buying smartphones witnessed a price hike, while on the other end, first time home loan borrowers were given a deduction of rupees 1 lakh. Our country is in the middle a multi-faceted confluence. In the circus that we call national politics, our geriatric leaders are resistively giving way to the new and more assertive leaders of the next generation. Economically, we are witnessing the emergence of an 'upper' middle class that forms the crux of our output. The budget may have satisfied some, but what our leaders do with it in the coming year is going to make all the difference.

Physical Education

The Doon School Weekly interviewed Jitender Tiwari and Inderjit Singh, who joined School this term as Physical Education masters.

Doon School Weekly (DSW): What got you inclined towards sports?

Jitender Tiwari (JTR): Since I was a student I always loved to play sports. I started with cricket and later I started playing soccer and finally I decided to pursue basketball and I became a coach.

Inderjit Singh (IDS): In my school days PE teachers were my role models. I realized sports keep you fit and healthy especially sports like athletics.

DSW: What do you think about the level of sports in School?

JTR: Facilities here are very well maintained and all students take sports seriously, but I think we need to work on their technique.

IDS: Keeping in mind the amount of time the students get to play particular sports in a year, the boys are very good. The number of competitions they have gives them much more experience.

DSW: What do you think the School is placed overall?

JTR: It's tough to say but I think our students need more exposure before I can say anything.

IDS: I would like to train the junior forms well as they are the future of the School.

* * *

Ek Tha Writer

The Doon School Weekly interviewed Neelesh Misra, Author, Lyricist and Script-Writer.

Doon School Weekly (DSW): Could you please give a brief introduction about yourself?

Neelesh Misra (NLM): Well I am a writer for movies and I like to consider myself a storyteller. I have also written five books. The first was on the Indian Airlines hijacking, the second on the massacre of the royal family of Nepal. I then turned to fiction writing a book called 'Once upon a time zone'. After which I wrote 'The Absent State'. Finally I wrote a book with my father titled, 'Dream Chaser. I have also edited magazines and written lyrics for songs.

DSW: Once you had finished writing the script of *Ek Tha Tiger* did you ever think about becoming a director?

NLM: The thought has crossed my mind, but I believe I do not have the required knowledge yet to become a director. So, I should probably begin by assisting someone. I love being a writer and being a director is one of those creative adventures I will get to do at some point.

DSW: The narrative that you gave us revolved around how the role a teacher plays is such an integral part in people's life, and especially students. Do you believe that in a nation like ours, the gap between student and teachers is beginning to increase? Also can you give us a few solutions to this problem?

NLM: I do believe that the gap is increasing and I think it is a reflection of our time because; there isn't investment in paying teachers. Teachers should be paid much more. It should be the prime occupation of this country, and the results of that would show in the progress our nation would make. Sadly, we do not find it a lucrative occupation. The idealism which used to be associated with this profession is now waning. This relationship has always been turbulent, yet filled with love and respect. Students used to trouble them and it used to be like a game. Sadly, I feel that now that bond of respect is slowly being lost. It all comes down to the fact that in this transforming nation what is happening to the families. People are earning a lot of money but a father who used to come home by five is now returning at eight or nine causing them to spend less time. However at the core of it that sense of patriotism survives and thrives. If we could communicate more, I believe it solves a part of this problem.

DSW: You spoke a lot about journalism, now can you briefly tell us about this profession?

NLM: I started writing in my school days when I was in class eleven. One day there was an offer for a post in a newspaper and so I went there and spoke to the first person I saw. Who happened to be the Editor-in-Chief, and I expressed that I wanted to write. The first thing you need to learn as a journalist is how to walk up to a complete stranger and gain their momentary support, for them to open up to you. Why the hell should he tell you about his life he doesn't gain anything by telling you stuff? So why should he share? There is this need to convince a person that you feel for them and want to simply help them.

DSW: You have been part of Bollywood which is a very glamorous industry. So is the amount of hard work that you have to put in this field worth the glamour you receive?

NLM: Well writers are very unglamorous people in fact a lot of people don't know about us. Before I started my radio show most people did not know about the songs that I had written. This includes a lot of music directors and so a lot of us writers are backroom boys. There was a time when stations like 'All India Radio' used to announce the names of lyricists as well as composers before the songs. That doesn't happen now on radio stations; a song has become like a soap advertisement. Sometimes they announce the singer and this is why we aren't known. Though the glamour may not be that much, when writers talk with directors, singers and actors we are treated as equals and people hear our inputs and what we have to add to the production.

| Interview |

The Wild Wild East

The Doon School Weekly interviewed Kunal Verma (ex 182-H, 76) who gave a talk in School regarding the wildlife of the northeast.

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): The feeling of alienation created in the North east, is it the citizen's fault or the government's?

Kunal Verma (KNV): It all boils down to knowledge, if you don't know anything about a region there are bound to be misconceptions. For example, when the government of India gave the Chinese a map with 500 square kilometers in the Northeast as free territory, how can India ask the Chinese to return what they had given? That actually throws light on the loopholes in our system Who has heard of Lachit Borphukan? Nobody, but everyone has heard of Shivaji and his leadership skills that is no comparison to what Lachit Borphukan did as a military chief. We citizens simply have not focused on the North-east historically or otherwise.

DSW: Do you think most of the problems that occur in the north east take place because of the heterogeneous society?

KNV: If you were to look at the North-east the Himalayas are the closest to the Indian Ocean. At that point, the diversity of plant, animal and human life is really heavy and everything is a mish mash with people coming from everywhere including Bangladesh. So it's a nonstop thing. It all boils down to understanding each other. Every one there is suspicious of each other.

DSW: If a political law is to be established in the North east, there will be extreme disagreements amongst the clans. What would you do in a case like that?

KNV: Over there everyone is passionate about what they talk about. However they don't look at the larger picture, so it comes down to awareness of each other. Nobody there knows anything about each other and is not even keen to learn.

DSW: What do you think students like us can do to help in a situation like this?

KNV: Learn about the area, keep your eyes wide open. Nobody knows everything about the North east. Life is about learning things. And as students, I think your generation holds the key to the future because our generation has failed to make a dent in "narrow domestic walls". Your generation has the means; you have the internet, which we never had. All you need now is the will because you have everything else at your fingertips.

DSW: What do you think about the ecology of Dehradun itself?

KNV: Dehradun is a beautiful location for a School like yours. Being next to the Himalayas, Ganges and the Yamuna is a big advantage as the wildlife and birdlife here is so varied.

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| Junior Poetry |

Mirror, Mirror, On The Wall!

Varun Sehgal

I looked into the mirror
To find a stranger.
How was he there?
He seemed like danger.

I rubbed my eyes,
So did he,
I thought to myself
It couldn't be!

He had not shaved,
He was dirty,
His clothes were torn,
Who was he?

His hands were red,
So was his body.
I looked at him,
He stared back at me.

I tilted my head,
He copied me.
He was driving me to
Insanity.

And then I realized
What he had done
The situation's gravity
Weighed a ton.

I took out the pistol
I had used that night
Right outside
I held it tight.

I pointed it at him
Ready to kill,
My finger on the trigger,
It gave him a shrill.

I shot
And the mirror shattered
Into thousands of shards,
But that's not what mattered.

I looked at my chest,
Which had begun to bleed.
And I soon realized
That would be the last thing I would see.