



There was high expectation for rural India, and the budget was not an upset. A specific drift has gone unobserved is that the dialogue has moved from farm output to farm income building the capacity of the farmers, moving beyond traditional farming to becoming farmed entrepreneurs. The country should be assured in terms of agriculture output. The big announcement was that of providing an assured income support to the small and marginal farmers, under the "Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi," is truly historic

AJAY S SHRIRAM, CHAIRMAN AND SR MANAGING DIRECTOR, DCM SHRIRAM LTD

Measures announced for agriculture is aimed to fructify the vision of doubling farmers' income by the year 2022. The PM-KISAN scheme is a significant step and would hopefully ease the burden of the small and marginal farmers to access quality inputs to increase their productivity and income. Another important problem of the farming community has been the relentless cycle of Droughts, Floods and El Nino and the interest subvention scheme announced would hopefully redress their problems to a great extent

SYNGENTA INDIA LIMITED BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY HEAD DR KC RAVI



InfraPush



India fastest highway developer in world: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday announced that the country has attained the fastest growth in highways building at 27 km a day and is all set for a quantum leap in transport infrastructure, including waterways, airways or digiways.

Terming infrastructure as the "backbone" of any nation's development, Finance Minister Piyush Goyal while presenting the interim Budget for 2019-20 said India aspires to be a USD 10 trillion economy in the next eight years, and on the anvil is next generation infrastructure of roads, railways, seaports, airports, urban transport, gas and electric transmission and inland waterways.

"Today, India is the fastest highway developer in the world

with 27 km of highways built each day. Projects stuck for decades like the Eastern Peripheral Highway around Delhi have been completed," he said.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari termed the budget as "historical, revolutionary" budget and allocation for highways sector has been increased to about ₹83,000 crore and the budget takes care of growing infrastructure needs. Congratulating Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a dynamic budget, Gadkari said it is intended for a "New India".

On aviation, Goyal said because of 'UDAAN Scheme', an ordinary citizen is also travelling by air and the number of operational airports has crossed 100 with the commis-

sioning of the Pakyong airport in Sikkim. Domestic passenger traffic has doubled during the last five years leading to large number of jobs being created also, he said.

Mentioning the ambitious Sagarmala initiative of the government, he said India's long coastline has the potential of becoming the strength of the economy, particularly through exploitation of the Blue Economy, to ensure better standards and quality of life for a large number of people living in the coastal areas.

"Our efforts in the Sagarmala programme will be scaled up and we will develop other inland waterways faster," the minister said adding that "for the first time, container freight movement has started on inland waterways from

Kolkata to Varanasi".

He said the government will introduce container cargo movement to the North East as well by improving the navigation capacity of the Brahmaputra river while will develop waterways. As far as Indian Railways is concerned, he said it has experienced the safest year in its history and all unmanned level crossings on broad gauge network have been eliminated.

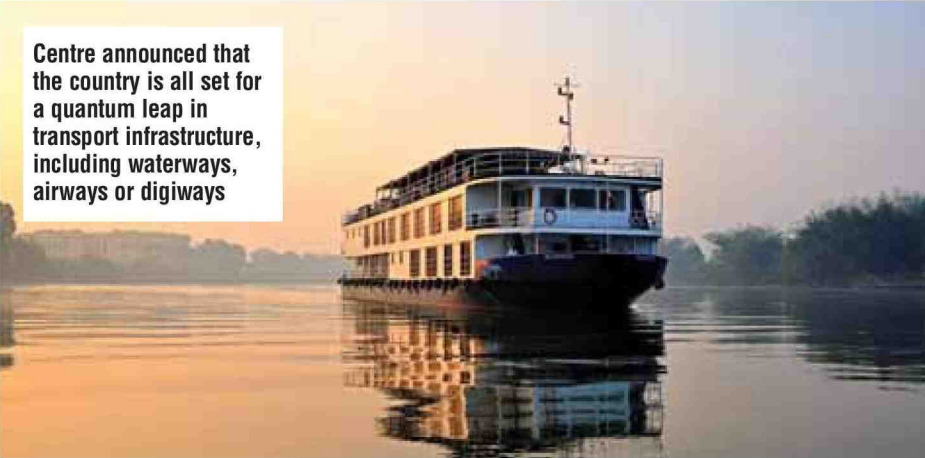
Mentioning infrastructure in the North East, the minister said Arunachal Pradesh came on the air map recently and Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram have come on India's rail map for the first time. Allocation for the North Eastern Areas was increased by 21 per cent to ₹58,166 crore in 2019-20 BE over 2018-19 BE.

Giving stress on digital infrastructure in the villages, including connectivity he announced that "the government will make 1 lakh villages into Digital Villages over next five years". About the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), the Minister said construction of rural roads has been tripled.

"15.80 lakh habitations out of a total of 17.84 lakh habitations have already been connected with pucca roads and work is going on to complete the rest very soon. The PMGSY saw increased allocation of ₹19,000 crore in BE 2019-20 as against ₹15,500 crore in RE 2018-19.

"There was time when a child used to reach school after walking on a foot trail, today the situation has changed

Centre announced that the country is all set for a quantum leap in transport infrastructure, including waterways, airways or digiways



and a bus can reach her/his village During the period 2014-18, a total number of 1.53 crore houses have been built under the Pradhan Mantri

Awaz Yojana," he said. "Infrastructure is the backbone of any nation's development and quality of life. Whether it is highways or rail-

ways or airways or even digiways, We have gone beyond incremental growth to attain transformative achievements," Goyal said.