

Non-banking Financial Companies
Need to Give Credit
Where it is Due

Steel Industry
Union Minister Calls to Make
2019 the 'Year of Expansion'

Book Publishing
Focussed on Enhancing
India-UAE Cooperation



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Business Digest

Interim

BUDGET 2019

Pragmatic. Progressive.
People-oriented



Vibrant Gujarat 2019
Shaping a
New India



Global Aviation Summit
Accessibility and
Affordability in Flying



Leadership
John WH Denton
ICC Secretary General



Manufacturing Excellence
Building Export
Competitiveness

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FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry, reaching out to over 2,50,000 companies. Established in 1927, it is India's oldest and largest apex business organization. FICCI serves its members from large (domestic and global companies) and MSME sectors as well as the public sector, drawing its strength from diverse regional chambers of commerce and industry.



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We would like feedback/comments from our readers to enable us to improve our offering. Write to us at: george.skaria@ficci.com or sushmita.yadav@ficci.com



From the Secretary General

The government has delivered a pragmatic and progressive Interim Budget, which addresses current challenges and lays out the vision for India for the next decade. As expected, the focus is on farmers, rural economy and the middle class – these are among the most important drivers of India's economy and constitute the biggest bulge of consumers.

FICCI hails and supports the idea that subsidies given to the farmers are converted into Direct Income Support of Rs 6,000 – as the latter is more transparent, efficient, equitable and crop-neutral. The measure is critical as, through this, the government will be able to cover all the small and marginal farmers as against the MSP scheme, which benefits just about 30 per cent of such farmers.

At the same time, the full tax rebate to individuals who have an annual taxable income of up to Rs 5 lakh will provide the much required thrust to the consumption activity.

Risks on account of the possibility of another episode of the increase in crude oil prices and slippage in GST collections – remain to the fore and can impact the deficit numbers adversely in 2019-20. Further, the nominal GDP growth for 2019-20 has been revised downward to 11.5 per cent (from 11.8 per cent announced in the last budget). It is important that the government remains committed to the fiscal consolidation path.

While fiscal rectitude is important, it must also be kept in mind that the country is at a juncture where it needs to push it to a higher growth path on a sustainable basis and one of the most necessary conditions for this would be incurring adequate capital expenditure.

We also partnered last month with the Government of Gujarat to organise Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the summit in the presence of Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, while the Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu presided over the Valedictory Session. The summit witnessed participation from 25,000 plus delegates from more than 100 countries, including 5 Heads of State from Uzbekistan, Rwanda, Denmark, Czech Republic and Malta along with the captains of industry from various sectors and over 30,000 delegates from India and abroad.

To celebrate and focus on the challenges of 'Flying for All', especially the next 6 billion people, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, along with AAI and FICCI organised a Global Aviation Summit in Mumbai. The summit brought 15 transport and civil aviation ministers, 37 civil aviation authorities, 1400 delegates and more than 35 exhibitors from 83 countries across the world on one platform.

We also need to ensure that our exports are competitive on a sustainable basis. In this regard, we released the 'FICCI-PwC India Manufacturing

Barometer 2019: Building Export Competitiveness' report. We have included the highlights of the report in this issue of *Business Digest*.

FICCI, jointly with the Ministry of Steel, also organised the fourth edition of India Steel in January. Over 250 exhibiting companies from 15 countries, over 200 international buyers and large number of delegates held business meetings while more than 10,000 business visitors both from India and abroad visited the event.

On the occasion of the visit of the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa and the accompanying business delegation to India, FICCI jointly with other industry chambers organised the India-South Africa Business Forum. The special plenary session, at the forum, was addressed by Cyril Ramaphosa and Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi.

For this issue, we have interviewed the new ICC Secretary General, John W H Denton, who leads by example in his respective field.

This and much to look forward to in the coming months.

Dilip Chenoy