

# BUDGET '24: A COMPREHENSIVE ROAD MAP FOR *VIKSIT BHARAT*



EXPERT  
VIEW

ANANT GOENKA

Respond to this column at  
[feedback@livemint.com](mailto:feedback@livemint.com)

**A**s promised in the Interim Budget 2024-2025 by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, it was heartening to see the detailed and comprehensive road map for *Viksit Bharat* in the full budget. Overall, the Budget 2024 has been an inclusive one, listing nine priorities. In fact, inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (Ficci's) four priority areas—manufacturing (Make in India), farm-led growth, women-led development and sustainability—mirror the thrust areas in the budget. These are areas for further growth and progress as we build a *Viksit Bharat*.

For the first time in the budget speech, we have seen announcements to lay out an economic policy framework for next-generation reforms that include measures for improving productivity of factors of production like land, labour, capital, entrepreneurship and tech, making markets and sectors more efficient.

The government has focused on infrastructure, and significant investment has been made in improving infrastructure. The expenditure has almost doubled in the last six to seven years.

It is important that this focus on infrastructure continues, and Ficci is happy to note the government's endeavour to maintain strong fiscal support for infrastructure over the next five years, in conjunction with fiscal consolidation. This year, the budget has provided record-high allocation of ₹11.11 trillion for capital expenditure, which is 3.4% of gross domestic product.

Further, the budget's focus on manufacturing, MSME and employment will be a decisive factor in our development. Budget incentives for employment, strengthened support for MSMEs and the cost of doing business will help

address these aspects comprehensively.

The role of manufacturing in *Viksit Bharat* is imperative, and this came out loud and clear in the latest budget. A slew of measures announced in the budget for manufacturing, particularly for employment generation and skilling, bode well for the country.

With a \$467 billion size, India's manufacturing sector today stands fifth globally, surpassing traditional superpowers in manufacturing like the UK, South Korea, France, etc. But we need to scale this up fast, as the gap between India and economies like Japan and Germany is more than double and with China it is ten times.

Only 11.4% of our workforce is in manufacturing. The service sector remains a major job creator along with the construction sector, driven by the government's push for infrastructure. But,

**The focus on manufacturing, MSMEs and employment is crucial to *Viksit Bharat* journey**

since construction jobs are largely informal and low-paying, there is a need for avenues for the labour force leaving agriculture. Unfortunately, the manufacturing sector employment creation has been

subdued, as noted in the Economic Survey 2024, though it appears to have rebounded since 2021-22. Prime Minister's Package for Employment and Skilling will help to absorb the labour force in manufacturing and MSMEs.

Lastly, it was quite reassuring for the investors to know that the government aims to reach a fiscal deficit below 4.5% by next year itself, from the current level of 4.9%. This shows the government's commitment to the continuity of reforms and major steps it has taken to provide strong and resilient growth for the economy.

*Anant Goenka is vice-president, Ficci and vice-chairman, RPG Enterprises.*



Scan the QR code to read an extended version of this story.