



Young India
A diverse and confident group had a lively chat on what they made of the FM's financial plan at the *Hindustan Times* office.



It's a corporate-neutral Budget, targeting the middle-income and agricultural votes.

Sarang Wadhawan
Managing Director, HDIL



The film industry has been ignored again. For five years, we've been fighting against entertainment tax.

Vipul Shah
Filmmaker

Photo: VIJAYANAND GUPTA, LALIT NENE



Nikhil KAUSHIK (28)
Associate Vice-President, BTS Investment

Kaushik's job at the private equity firm involves identifying investment opportunities in the small and medium enterprise sector. This includes due diligence on investment proposals through deal structuring, preparation of term sheets and post investment monitoring of portfolio companies. He has earned a Masters in mechanical engineering from the Texas A&M University, US. He has done his MBA with specialisation in Finance from the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad.

RATING 6/10

Shweta JOSHI (29)
Homemaker

Goa-born Joshi shifted to Mumbai a year ago after marriage. She has taught a variety of subjects ranging from tourism to management and sociology at Goa's MES College of Arts and Commerce and the Mushituf Education Society from 2004-2007. She has worked with the *Gomantak Times* in Goa as a features writer and an assistant editor with *Good Impressions Publishing* in Pune. She has conducted workshops on creative writing, theatre and art techniques and scripted a documentary *Hooked.com* on the excessive Internet usage among the urban Indian youth.

RATING 7/10

Sohail KHAN (32)
Head of Sales, Deal Group Media

With over seven years' experience in the interactive space, including areas like e-learning, application development, multimedia, online advertising, website development, among other things, he is the national head for sales and account management for DGM, a UK-based online advertising and marketing company. He was a part of the core team at Tribal DDB India, an interactive ad agency under Mudra, he set up Digital Direction, RK Swamy's digital advertising division. He is currently pursuing a PhD in marketing management.

RATING 7/10

Devita SARAF (25)
Executive Director, Zenith Computers

Daughter of Raj Saraf — one of the pioneer PC makers in India — Saraf completed graduation from the University of Southern California and joined her father's hardware business in 2005. She has been spearheading Zenith's marketing strategy since last year, and is involved in the brand-building exercise. She has introduced the luxury technology brand, and focuses on research, developing and manufacturing high-end computers and LCD displays. She also helped set up India's first education PCs and laptops. She oversees the customer service department.

RATING 8/10

Purvi SHETH (35)
Vice-President, Shilputsi

Sheth describes herself as a 'people's person'. A self-professed food lover — a regular workout regime helps keep her in shape — the human resource consultant has been working for the last 14 years at the placement consultancy firm that was set up by her mother. After completing her graduation in Economics and Political Science, she did management courses from the US. Sheth aims to take human resource development in India to an international platform and eventually write a book on the subject.

RATING 7/10

Gaurav MISHRA (28)
Assistant General Manager, Indica, Tata Motors

The IIM (Bangalore) graduate has been with the Tatas ever since he stepped out of the campus six years ago. Mishra believes in sticking around and climbing the corporate ladder. He simplifies his complex job profile to one line — 'I sell cars'. And the best part of his job is that his office is located two minutes from his home. When home, he disappears into his library and writes his blog *gauravonomics.com*, which deals with marketing technology. Eventually, Mishra wants to set up "something on his own and create jobs".

RATING 7/10

Vishal INAMDAR (28)
Filmmaker

Inamdar ventured from theatre into Hindi films with *It's Breaking News* last year. He has also made several short films, of which *Pipe Dream* and *I Believe* have gained international appreciation. His passion for reading comes only second to his love for the movies and the art of movie-making. His favourite filmmakers include Charlie Chaplin, Alfred Hitchcock, Shekhar Kapur and Ashutosh Gowariker. And *Swades* and *Masoom* are two of his all-time favourite movies. When not making films, he enjoys playing cricket with his Marathi theatre friends.

RATING 7/10

'A Budget difficult to argue with'

Mumbai's youth deconstruct Chidambaram's plan, say it's populist and aimed at the forthcoming elections

Anita Sharan, Kiran Wadhwa & Barney Henderson
Mumbai, February 29

FINELY TAILORED suits, chic skirts and fancy designations — a perfect picture of corporate India, but without the grey hair. On Friday, young MDs, VPs and filmmakers, representatives of the changing face of corporate India, got together to take part in the Hindustan Times Young India Forum. To discuss, naturally, the Budget presented by Finance Minister P. Chidambaram. As the FM read out the fiscal Budget — his fifth in a row — clad in a pristine white *dhoti*, these designer-clad corporate honchos chuckled, sighed, laughed and gave their perspective on one of the biggest events of the year in India. Put seven Young Turks in a room and it would not take very long for any discussion to heat up. And when the issue is as crucial as the Budget, it takes no time at all. The forum kicked off immediately after Chidambaram's Budget presentation with one big, noisy agreement: that this Budget was aimed clearly at the forthcoming elections. "A feel-good, populist budget. It's very difficult to argue with it," said Gaurav Mishra, assistant general manager (Indica), Tata Motors. An "inclusive budget," agreed Nikhil Kaushik, associate vice-president, BTS Investment Advisors. It was corporate-neutral budget, ac-

ording to Sarang Wadhawan, managing director, Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited, and one of the moderators for the discussion. "It's targeting the middle-income and agricultural votes." Everyone agreed, however, with Devita Saraf, executive director, Zenith Computers, when she said: "Corporate India has had a long bull run so it's good if the FM has decided to let it be and focus on the bottom of the pyramid where there are genuine concerns." Not everyone was happy though. Filmmaker Vipul Shah complained that the entertainment sector, especially the film industry, had been ignored. "We've been fighting against entertainment tax for five years," he said. What attracted everyone's interest was the Rs 60,000-crore wavier of loans for small and marginal farmers. While corporate India agreed that it was worthy to have tackled the agriculture debt crisis, they were wary of its repercussions. "The headlines will be about wiping out farmer debts, and rightly so, but whether Chidambaram has opened a Pandora's Box remains to be seen," said Wadhawan. The initiatives on education also got the thumbs-up. As the second moderator for the debate Purvi Sheth, vice-president, Shilputsi, put it: "We need more IIT graduates and more skilled young people. If we want India to compete on an international stage, we need more high-

grade educational institutes." Shweta Joshi felt that educational incentives would now enable India to focus on research and development. "The boost to technology in education and a knowledge network are good news. Moving to being a knowledge-based society from the current consumption-based society will be good for India," said the former teacher. Introducing himself as an environmentalist, Sohail Khan, head of sales for Deal Group Media, pointed out that environmental issues had been largely ignored, except for the protection of tigers. "Eventually, it's an ecosystem we exist in where everything affects everything, directly or indirectly," he warned. The discussion was not without its unanswered questions. How will all allocations be implemented effectively? How do you let people at the bottom of the pyramid know of the initiatives for them? What's the plan on enhancing agricultural productivity? The forum ended with hearty laughter as Kaushik quipped on Chidambaram's statement that he was a lucky FM. "He's a lucky FM all right! He made an entry when India went into a growth phase; he's going into the election year in a growth phase." No one contradicted Sarang when he ended the session saying it was a budget aimed at "bringing Congress back to power".



HT PHOTOS: PRODIP GUHA, ANAND SHINDE



The discussion evoked serious thought and some smiles.

“It is an inclusive Budget, addressing many fundamental concerns such as health-care and education.”
NIKHIL KAUSHIK

“FM is a master in packaging. It will make a lot of people happy and displease very few. It's a brilliant Budget.”
GAURAV MISHRA

“A lot more people need to be made employable, so encouraging skill development is good. The Budget will benefit the youth.”
DEVITA SARAF