

## ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENT



**B**efore the actual budget was presented, the Government has announced that it will invest over Rs.100,00,000 crore (@US\$ 1.5 trillion) on infrastructure development in the next five years. National Infrastructure Pipeline was launched that consists of more than 6500 projects across sectors. While presenting the budget, the Finance Minister provided plans to boost infrastructure sector with 100 more airports by 2024 to support Udaan scheme: operation of 150 passenger trains through PPP mode: Five new smart cities to be developed: Rs 3.60 lakh crore approved for Jal Jeevan Mission out of which Rs. 11,500 crore is allocated for the current year: proposal to expand PM-KUSUM to provide 20 lakh farmers for setting up stand-alone solar pumps and for another 15 lakh farmers to solarize their grid-connected pump sets: Rs.12,300 crore allocation for Swachh Bharat Mission: accelerated development of highways among other activities that will be undertaken in current financial year.

The Rs. 3.6 lac crore (\$5 trillion) allocations for Jal Jeevan Mission in five years to provide safe drinking water will require large scale infrastructure development to make this mission successful by making clean drinking water available to masses. Rs. 20,000 crore (\$2.8 billion) allocations for the renewable energy sector will help India in reducing carbon emissions. Solar energy generation will be boosted by setting up solar-power capacity alongside the rail tracks as India is having the 4th largest rail network in the world. The concept of prepaid energy meters to save on losses by the distribution utilities may get fixed with the replacement of conventional energy meters with the prepaid 'smart meters' in the next three years. The announcement to strengthen the framework related to contracts act is a good initiative as thousands of contract claims and arbitration cases are pending for realization for a very long period. These steps will indeed help the infrastructure sector to grow in a dynamic manner and can bring economic progress for the country. ■

**SUBHASH SETHI**, CHAIRMAN, SPML INFRA LIMITED



## BOOSTING A POSITIVE DEMAND & GROWTH

**U**nion Budget 2020 has shown positive long-term directions on reviving growth with Rs. 1.03 Trillion spend on Infrastructure, Income Tax Cuts, DDT Exemption and Manufacturing focus.

For the Real Estate Sector, it was a mixed bag. The extension of INR 1.5 lakh tax benefit and approval window for tax holiday on affordable housing are welcome steps. While the Rs. 25,000 crore stressed asset fund by the Government is taking off, specific measures to resolve the liquidity such as restructuring window for stressed projects or further tax benefits to individuals on housing across all segments, would have helped in boosting immediate demand and growth. ■

**RAVINDRA PAI**, MD, CENTURY REAL ESTATE

