

Rahul launches 'MIG-19' strike, Cong cheers

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Raipur: The buzz about the government's plan to announce the universal basic income in the interim budget gained traction after the Centre's refusal to rule out the possibility of Piyush Goyal restricting himself to an interim budget on Friday: something which led many to think Rahul's dramatic promise could be a pre-emptive strike mean to steal the government's "populist thunder".

However, the initial response of official sources suggested that the promise of guaranteed minimum income may not be part of the February 1 package. Even as BJP dismissed Rahul's announcement as a gimmick, official sources said Congress had borrowed the idea from the Economic Survey of 2016-17. "It has since remained on the table because you cannot find resources for a guaranteed income support without doing away with subsidies on food, fertilisers and kerosene. A rollback of government assistance on healthcare, education and employment generation will also become necessary. Else, the fiscal deficit will be in double digits, sparking runaway inflation. Is Congress ready for that?" asked a senior government functionary, adding that Congress needed to spell out where it was going to find resources

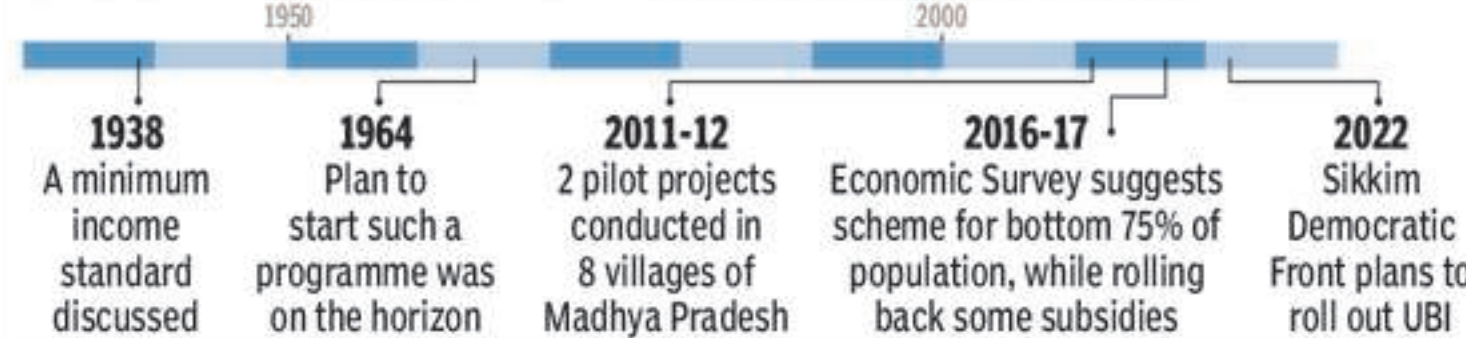
No provision for funding, says BJP

BJP on Monday said Congress president Rahul Gandhi's claim of ensuring minimum income guarantee if his party was voted to power was like "hundreds of other announcements" of the opposition party that were not meant to be implemented. Union minister R S Prasad said Congress governments did not waive farm loans in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh despite promising before the assembly polls, and added Rahul's announcement was the "same kind of sop". "The claim to provide minimum income for the poor is like hundreds of Congress announcements that are not meant to be implemented. His party remained in power for 58 years and made thousands of announcements," Prasad said. He termed Rahul's assurance "off-the-cuff", made "without provision for funding or a proper agenda". **TNN**

from. Economists seemed to share the concern of repercussions for fiscal deficit and negative spinoffs for inflation.

"They have so far followed a rights-based approach. What they are talking now marks a negation of that stance," one of them said. Farm distress and anger over jobs are two dominant themes that Rahul has been flagging and the latest statement is aimed at throw-

INDIA'S TRYST WITH INCOME SUPPORT



UBI ACROSS THE WORLD

Alaska | The Permanent Fund distributes part of the state's oil revenues to all residents on per-capita basis

Stockton, California | Secured funding from private non-profits to launch a small project with about 100 participants receiving \$500 a month for about 18 months

Finland | Scheme started in 2017 to pay 2,000 jobless people assistance of €560 a month stopped last year

Kenya | Largest experiment underway with some villages receiving \$0.50-1 a day

Brazil | Has run experiments

Canada | Ontario plans to test a basic income scheme

France | A senate committee has recommended an experiment

UK & Germany | Studies have been conducted

Scotland | Committed funds to conduct an experiment

Barcelona, British Columbia | Plans to start experiments

Switzerland | Plan to give everyone right to basic income defeated in 2016

ing the challenge to Modi. During its stint, the Congress-led UPA had enacted the employment guarantee law, promising 100 days employment to the poor. "Now, Congress has decided to implement this (guaranteed minimum income) scheme after its government comes to power at the Centre in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections," Rahul said.

Rahul's comments were immediately lapped up by his

party colleagues. "The poor of India have the first charge on the resources of the country. Congress will find the resources to implement the promise of Rahul Gandhi," Chidambaram tweeted. "Assuring minimum guaranteed income will result in reducing the growing income disparity. This will put the poor in the country at the centre of socio-economic policies and governance of

the country," said Bhalchandra Mungekar, economist and member of the Congress manifesto committee. Rahul said Congress walked the talk, pointing out how the Congress government in Chhattisgarh waived short-term farm loans within a day of assuming office when the party had promised to waive agri loans within 10 days of coming to power.

Full report on www.toi.in

75.8% vote for new MLA in high-stakes Jind bypoll

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chandigarh/Jind: Polling for the byelection to the Jind assembly constituency clocked voter turnout of 75.77%, according to figures released by the Election Commission. A total of 1.3 lakh out of 1.72 lakh voters exercised their franchise on Monday.

In October 2014 assembly elections, Jind had registered 75.81% turnout. The counting of the votes would be held on Thursday, January 31.

The Jind constituency by-election is seen as a high stakes battle for the ruling Khattar government that fielded Krishan Midha, son of late INLD MLA Hari Chand Midha. The byelection was held because the two-time MLA died in August 2018. The Midha family, however, switched their loyalty to BJP.

Congress fielded senior leader Randeep Singh Surjewala, who is national in-charge of the party's communication wing. Hisar MP Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) supported Digvijay Chautala, who had to contest as an independent.

The bypoll, however, is being seen as the first test at the hustings for the newly-formed outfit.

Hymns in schools: SC bench sent plea to CJI

► Continued from P 1

The contention, however, was rebutted by solicitor general Tushar Mehta who said while the shlokas in question were indeed derived from Hindu scriptures, they connoted "universal truths" and, hence, could not be categorised as religious in nature. "Everything which is in Sanskrit is not necessarily religious in nature. Tomorrow, someone could claim that the phrase 'honesty is best policy', often taught in schools, being in English should be attributed to Christianity," he said.

This seemed to mirror the Centre's argument that India's culture is steeped in Hindu ethos and this should not be seen from the prism of the secular-communal binary. However, Justice R F Nariman, part of a two-member bench including Justice Vineet Saran, said the shloka '*asato ma sadgamaya*' was from the Upanishads.

Upon finding that the judges had made up their minds to

refer the questions raised in the PIL to a larger bench, Mehta drew the judges' attention to the SC's emblem, which embellishes the wall behind each bench in every courtroom, which has a Sanskrit inscription, '*yato dharma stato jaya*' (where there is dharma, there will be victory).

"That is derived from the Bhagvad Gita and Mahabharat. Does its extraction from Hindu scripture and its inscription in the emblem make the Supreme Court non-secular? These are universal truths which any person would like to emulate in life irrespective of its origin or source; a shloka derived from Hindu scriptures," the SG said.

The bench sent the petition to the CJI for assigning its hearing to an appropriate bench.

The PIL had sought discontinuance of recitation of these shlokas along with Hindu hymns in KV's alleging that these violated the fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 19 (free speech) and Article 28 of the Constitution.

CBSE plans to tweak question paper pattern

► Continued from P 1

The objective is to make exams more relevant and practical-based instead of theory-heavy which promotes rote learning. Therefore, there is a plan to introduce practical or project work in certain subjects. For example, for languages, a student will need to do a project with 30 marks and the rest 70 marks will be a theory ex-

am," said the official. Currently, practicals for board exams are conducted in schools, but the marking is done by an external examiner deputed by CBSE. As per the reforms being considered, school teachers will be allowed to award a certain percentage of marks. CBSE is also likely to tweak the question pattern, increasing the proportion of objective-type questions in the board exams.

EVM-maker set for record revenue before polls

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Hyderabad: Even as opposition parties demand a return to ballot papers for the general election ahead, Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) — the manufacturer of EVMs — is set to record the highest revenue in its 53-year history. Sources told **TOI** that apart from new orders for EVMs and VVPATs, the old EVMs have been replaced with the M3 version ahead of the general elections, which has only added to ECIL's revenue.

In 2017-18 the gross turnover of ECIL was Rs 1,275 crore. In the 2018-19 financial year, the Election Commission gave orders worth Rs 1,800 crore for EVMs and VVPATs, which are likely to boost ECIL's turnover to Rs 2,400 crore. An ECIL official told **TOI**: "The bulk orders are for EVMs and VVPATs for the general and state elections to be held in 2019. Our turnover will touch Rs 2,600 crore this year. As the old machines are replaced with the new version the revenue has increased."

SBI probe clears Aadhaar operative

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One of the SBI's Aadhaar operators, Vikram, had used his ID to generate multiple Aadhaar cards using fake documents, according to UIDAI. It was done using "multiple station IDs" in Vikram's name, which allowed Aadhaar cards to be made from multiple devices — 143, to be precise. Every device, like a laptop, desktop or tablet, used for Aadhaar enrolment is registered with UIDAI and identified by the "station ID".

SBI officials pointed out that as "registrar" (as all banks entrusted with Aadhaar enrolment are), only they could have approved multiple station IDs but they had not done so. The bank's officials in Chandigarh wrote to their corporate office in Mumbai to raise the issue with UIDAI, saying they did not create these multiple station IDs and there must have been lacunae in UIDAI's security system that allowed "someone to hack the system and generate multiple station IDs" in Vikram's name.

Even more baffling was the misuse of Vikram's personal biometrics (finger-



CHOPPY WATERS? SBI officials have alleged that data of the Unique Identification Authority of India has been misused

prints in this case) to generate Aadhaar cards, carry out unexplained transactions at places like the IT department, Maharashtra government, MP government, National Informatics Centre and various banks, and even withdraw money from his personal accounts. All this time, UIDAI did not act against any bank official, which would have been the case had there been a lapse or wrongdoing by SBI officials.

SBI deputy GM B Rajendra Kumar confirmed that he was aware of the "misuse of the biometrics" of Vikram

and problems facing their sub-vendors. "We have, through our corporate office in Mumbai, raised this issue with UIDAI. The authority should be more transparent with us and let us know how this is happening. They should guide us on the issue and, above all, make their database more secure," he told **TOI**.

An internal inquiry by the bank, and also the agency (vendor), cleared Vikram of the charges levelled by UIDAI, and SBI has already requested the authority to remove the penalty and allow

him to return to work. Seeking UIDAI's response, **TOI** wrote a mail to its chief executive officer (CEO) and media in-charge on January 4, 2019. In its reply, sent January 18, UIDAI refused to share the details of the case but admitted that an inquiry was on.

Meanwhile, almost all the operators, except Vikram, were cleared by UIDAI and allowed to return to work. On January 9, the authority finally introduced an additional step in the registration of Aadhaar operators as an extra security measure. "Also, some unscrupulous elements have been attempting to register multiple machines but UIDAI has an inherent system in place to detect any such attempt and appropriate action is taken on a daily basis on operators who err. UIDAI imposes financial disincentives and blacklists errant operators. However, it relooks into the issue if someone is wrongly penalised. It would be pertinent to mention here that divulging details of any specific case under inquiry would not be appropriate in the interest of the case," UIDAI told **TOI** when specifically asked about Vikram's case.

'CBI to quiz ICICI case suspects after scrutiny of seized papers'

New Delhi: Advised by Union minister Arun Jaitley to avoid "adventurism", CBI will start calling suspects in the ICICI Bank case involving its former CEO Chanda Kochhar for questioning after completing scrutiny of documents seized during searches last week, officials said on Monday.

The CBI is carrying out scrutiny of the documents seized during searches at the offices of Videocon Group and Nupower Renewables and Supreme Energy, run by Chanda Kochhar's husband Deepak Kochhar, they said.

It is the prerogative of the investigation officer to decide which premises will be searched, the officials said when asked why the residence of Chanda Kochhar, named an accused in the FIR, was not included in the search operation on January 24. Interim CBI Director M Nageswara Rao had changed the in-charge of the case a day after the filing of the FIR on January 22, and gave the charge of the case to Superintendent of Police Mohit Gupta. **PTI**

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, (U.P.)
Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com

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(A) 1	41/NOIDA/GM-(S)/SM-WC-6/ET/2018-19, Name of Work: D/o Village-Parthala (C/o Drain, Road and Boundary wall of VDS Market) Noida. Cost Rs. 150.10 Lacs
Which can be uploaded by date 05.02.2019 upto 5.00PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 06.02.2019 at 11.00AM.	
(B) 1	44/NOIDA/GM-(K)/SM-WC-10/ET/2018-19, Name of Work: D/o Sector-149 & 150 (C/o Balance drain along 45.00M wide road in front of Sector-150) Noida. Cost Rs. 321.89 Lacs
2	45/NOIDA/GM-(K)/SM-WC-10/ET/2018-19, Name of Work: Development & Maintenance (External development of Barat Ghar in Village-Kondali Bangar) Noida. Cost Rs. 123.77 Lacs
Which can be uploaded by date 11.02.2019 upto 5.00PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 12.02.2019 at 11.00AM. General Manager (K), Noida	

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- These actions are in addition to actions under other laws such as Income-tax Act, 1961.

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