

CASTE MATH While wooing 12% upper castes to counter RJD's support among 15% Yadavs, BJP cautious about not upsetting the MBC support of ally JDU

BJP Brings Quota for Poor Into Play in Bihar

Reservation A Major Poll Issue

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While other states implemented it through executive order, Bihar has decided to implement 10% reservation for EWS through a bill

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BJP leaders have put up hoardings at prominent locations in Patna congratulating PM Modi for bringing poor upper castes into reservation fold

Chief minister Nitish Kumar set up a commission for the upper castes, Swarna Aayog, and launched education scheme benefits to the upper castes with an annual income of less than ₹15 lakh

The bill (on EWS quota) will be tabled in the budget session of the Assembly beginning February 11



Neeraj Kumar JDU spokesperson

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Patna: In the caste-riddled political battlefield of Bihar, BJP has picked up the upper caste quota as its most potent weapon to take on the mighty Yadavs.

The united upper castes, which makes about 12-15% of the electorate, have the potential to counter RJD's strong support base among Yadavs, constituting about 15% of voters. BJP is using the 10% reservation for the economically weaker sections (EWS) in the general category to mobilise these votes.

The quota law is expected to address the dissonance among the upper castes fuelled by the amendment Bill to restore provisions of the SC/ST Act. "BJP had to face embarrassing comments after the SC/ST Act amendment was passed by Parliament. The EWS quota has come as a sigh of relief for BJP in Bihar," a party source said.

While the BJP-led NDA zeroes in on the upper castes, most backward classes (MBC) or thenon-Yadav other backward classes (OBCs) and SC voters, its main rival RJD and its allies are trying to pour into JDU's MBC vote bank, keeping its Muslim-Yadav stronghold intact.

The state government decision to follow the central model for the 10% EWS quota has come as a shot in the arm for BJP in wooing the upper caste voters. "While other states implemented it through executive order, Bihar has decided to implement 10% reservation for EWS through a Bill. The Bill will be tabled in the budget session of the assembly beginning February 11," JDU spokesperson Neeraj Kumar told ET.

In Bihar, the upper castes comprise Brahmins, Kshatriyas or Thakurs and Bhumihars. They are significant in constituencies like Begusarai, Buxar, Patliputra, Munger, Karakat, Madhepura, Muzaffarpur and Aurangabad. It would, however, be hard for BJP to polarise the upper caste votes at its favour without affecting the JDU support base in atipichhara or non-Yadav OBCs at the ground level.

BACK TO MANDAL DAYS

To promote Mandal politics, RJD has launched a campaign, Berojgari Hatao, Aarakashan Badhao (end unemployment, raise reservations)

Tejashwi Targets Nitish on Quota

Patna: Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav on Thursday hit out at CM Nitish Kumar saying he could become the prime minister for not speaking against Central government's 13-point roster to end reservation for SC/ST and OBCs. "Nitish Kumar has been involved in BJP's deep conspiracy to end the reservation. If you don't speak against the roster and wear saffron 'jama' of RSS, you will be rewarded for it... and be made Prime Minister," he said.



BJP has devised a strategy by create clusters of constituencies. One such cluster accommodates Ujjiarpur, Begusarai, Khagaria and Samastipur. Lok Sabha seats, which have a good population of MBC voters. Union home minister Rajnath Singh will address booth workers in this belt on February 9. His presence will help it keep its upper caste support base intact. Similarly, Uttar Pradesh deputy chief minister and BJP's OBC face Keshav Prasad Maurya will address booth workers in the cluster covering Chhapara, Siwan, Gopalganj and Maharanjan, which is a Thakur stronghold.

RJD, on the other hand, is targeting the consolidated OBC votes in line with the 2015 assembly polls, when Nitish Kumar led JDU was part of the grand alliance, with the demand to raise the OBC quota. It has launched a campaign, Berojgari Hatao, Aarakashan Badhao (end unemployment, raise reservations), to promote the Mandal politics. "In Bihar, reservation is a sensitive issue. Opposition parties, particularly RJD, is spreading misinformation about NDA that it has given 10% reservation to the upper castes which is 15% of the population in the state," a source in Bihar BJP said. "We are highlighting the 10% EWS reservation as one among the central government's many achievements. BJP is careful about its image as a party of upper castes in the state."



AMID CITIZENSHIP ROW

BJP Plans Mega Modi Event in Guwahati

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Guwahati: With the northeastern states protesting for a month since the Lok Sabha passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, the ruling BJP in Assam is preparing to make Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public function in Guwahati on February 9 a grand event.

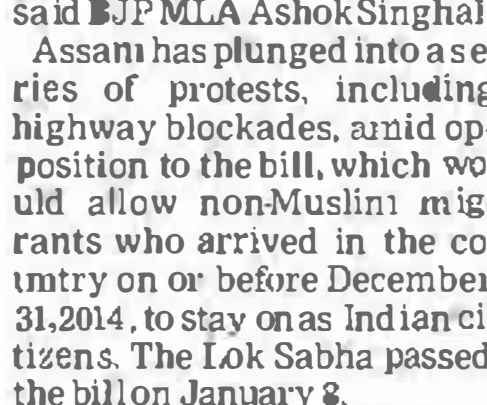
The party expects about 300,000 people to attend the meeting, which it claims will be the largest for a public function at any venue in Assam.

"Preparations for the PM's visit are in full swing and we will see a huge turnout of people at Changari, where the PM will address a public meeting after the bhoomitijan of AllMS centre there," finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

"Over 3 lakh people are expected in the rally, which will be the largest ever rally in Assam. This is a thanksgiving rally for the prime minister who has recently given Assam projects worth ₹37,000 crore," said BJP MLA Ashok Singhal.

Assam has plunged into a series of protests, including highway blockades, amid opposition to the bill, which would allow non-Muslim migrants who arrived in the country on or before December 31, 2014, to stay on as Indian citizens. The Lok Sabha passed the bill on January 8.

The All Assam Students Union and other student organisations in the northeast recently organised a massive rally in Guwahati against the bill.



BJP expects about 300,000 people to attend the meeting in Assam



Rajasthan to Take 2 Yrs to Repay Waiver Amount

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New Delhi: The cash-strapped Rajasthan government started delivering on its poll promise and began rolling out a multi-crore rupee farm loan waiver on Thursday even as it struggles to get its economy on right.

Saddled with its own electoral pledge and the financial burden of the previous BJP government's loan waiver, the Congress government will take two financial years to make good the loss to cooperative banks that advanced the farm loans.

Deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot started the distribution of waiver certificates to farmers at Sirsi in Jaipur. While the farmers get the benefit, the Rajasthan State Cooperative Bank will have to wait till March 2021 to recover the amount, to be paid by the Ashok Gehlot government in two annual tranches.

"The state government would be bearing the expenditure of the loan waiver from its own funds. This would be done over the next two fiscal years," Rajasthan State Cooperative Bank managing director Vidyadhar Godara told ET. "Half the amount would be given in 2019-20 and the remaining would be given in 2020-21 financial year. The apex bank would get the entire amount by March 2021."

The government will waive loans totalling ₹9,513 cr. However, the total amount will exceed ₹15,000 cr because it has to bear the burden of the waiver declared by the previous BJP government under Vasundhara Raje.

The state government was struggling till late Wednesday to work out the finances. After several meetings between the chief secretary, the cooperatives department and Rajasthan State Cooperative Bank officials, it was decided to start with ₹1,668 crore.

Of this, about ₹1,250 cr would be transferred to the Rajasthan State Cooperative Bank towards the loan waiver, and ₹418 cr would be given as grant-in-aid next month. Officials said the state would make a provision in the budget for the waiver and this would be transferred to the Rajasthan State Cooperative Bank.

The Rajasthan government had received flak from the BJP during the previous assembly session over the delay in implementing the loan waiver. A sense of urgency was added after the Modi government announced on February 1 that it would give ₹6,000 crore to farmer families that own up to 2 hectares.

On Day 1, Gehlot Govt Waives ₹27-cr Loans

The Rajasthan government waived farm loans worth ₹27 crore on the first day of its waiver camps. About 6,000 farmers were handed over their waiver certificates in 33 camps across all districts. An additional 9,000 certificates were uploaded on the portal. The government would hold 165 camps till Saturday. So far, 5.09 lakh farmers have registered on the government's portal for the waiver.



The BJP's 'Jalbhara' programme over the waivers will begin on Friday

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Congress and JMM Clinch Jharkhand Election Pact

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: The Congress and the Jharkhand Mukhti Morcha have finalised an alliance for the Lok Sabha and assembly elections in BJP-ruled Jharkhand. The two parties will have Babul Marandi's Jharkhand Vikas Morcha and the Rashtriya Janata Dal in the alliance.

Congress will lead the alliance in the Lok Sabha polls and is likely to contest in 7 out of the 14 L.S. seats. JMM will be the lead party for the assembly polls, which is expected to be held along with the Lok Sabha polls. Hemant Soren will be the claimant for the CM's post. JMM will contest four, JVM 2 and RJD 1 Lok Sabha seat. The deal was struck at a meeting attended by Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Soren and AICC in-charge RPN Singh and PCC chief Ajoy Kumar. AICC general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi and KC Venugopal too were learnt to have been involved in the exercise.

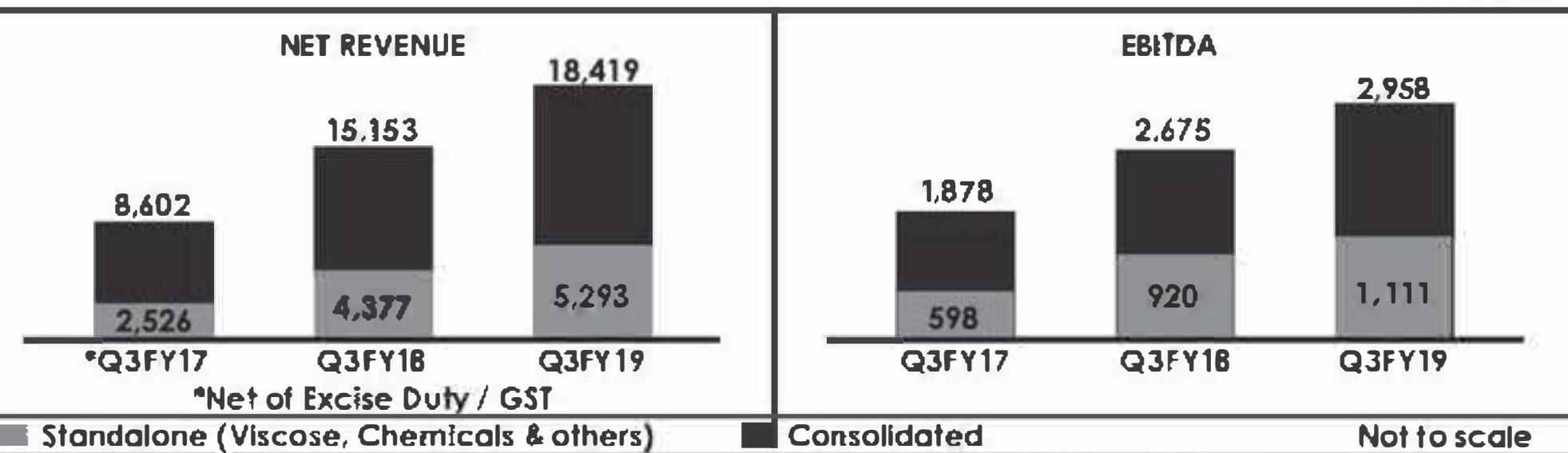
The Congress and JMM "are united in the fight to save democracy", said Gandhi, while announcing the alliance on his Facebook page.



Cong, NCP May Give 8 Seats to Other Allies

The Congress and NCP are considering giving the highest seats to allies in Maharashtra for the parliamentary polls. In all, 8 seats are likely to be given to the allies; the Congress and NCP will each give four seats each from their quota. Eight seats would be given to Prakash Ambedkar's Bharipa Bahujan Mahasangh.

Grasim Industries Limited India's New Growth Story Big in Performance



AN EXTRACT OF THE CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2018

Table with 4 columns: Particulars, Three Months Ending 31/12/2018, Nine Months Ending 31/12/2018, Three Months Ending 31/12/2017. Rows include Total Income, Net Profit, and Earnings per share.

Notes: 1. Exceptional item represents one-time non-cash charge of Rs. 2,277 Cr to Profit and Loss Account. This is relating to fair value of the Company's shareholding in Vodafone Idea Ltd. (VIL) (earlier known as Idea Cellular Ltd.), as VIL ceased to be an 'Associate' of the Company, consequent to reduction of Company's shareholding in VIL to 11.55% on merger of Vodafone India Ltd. with Idea Cellular Ltd. w.e.f. 31st August 2018.

Table with 4 columns: Particulars, Three Months Ending 31/12/2018, Nine Months Ending 31/12/2018, Three Months Ending 31/12/2017. Rows include Total Income, Profit before Tax, and Net Profit after Tax.

3. These results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their meetings held on 7th February 2019.

Place: Mumbai Date: 7th February 2019 Registered Office: Birlagram, Nagda 456 331 (M.P.) | CIN: L17142MP1947PLC000410 Website: www.grasim.com | Email: grasimsecretaria@adtyabirla.com | Tel: (07366) 246760-66 | Fax: (07366) 244114, 246024

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EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY e-Tender Notice. Details regarding tender for supply, stacking and spreading of stone ballast.

Office of Superintending Engineer 1st Circle PWD Almora. NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering) Short Term E-TENDER NOTICE. Details regarding tender for road works.