

BELOW THE LINE

Housing over hospitality

After 'affordable housing' received the status of an 'infrastructure industry', tourism and hospitality began clamouring for the same. At the post-Budget meeting between Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and industry representatives, former Ficci president Jyotsna Suri made her best pitch and even called for a "sympathetic" hearing from the Government. Unfortunately, nothing came of it except for Jaitley saying "We will take note of it." It's pretty clear where the Government's sympathies lie.

Chin up, tough job

This year, the task of holding post-Budget interactions with the media has not been restricted to the finance minister. Orders are that ministers from all key ministries and departments must hold press conferences highlighting the bounties showered on them in the

Budget. While the job might not be so difficult for ministries such as agriculture and energy where there are some instances of benefits; for others such as commerce and industry and the social sectors, which have made minimal gains, if any, it could be a tough assignment. Keeping the chin up is a good motto for life, but it may not always work when facing questions from the media.

Shaktikanta in CAG race

Whether he likes it or not Shaktikanta Das, secretary in the department of economic affairs, is always in the news. Das, whose term was to end this month and had been given a three-month extension by the appointments committee of the Cabinet and will now retire in May, has been a front-runner for all the key positions that fall vacant. Be it Governor RBI or SEBI Chairman, Das's name has always



Secretary Shaktikanta Das

emerged at the top of the charts in the corridors of power. The buzz is that Das may be one of the contenders for the post of Comptroller & Auditor General of India, which falls vacant in September.

UIDAI declares war

Tired of constant attacks on its credibility, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has taken stern action against unauthorised agencies/websites and got 12 websites and 12 mobile applications available on Google Playstore shut down. It has also

directed the closure of 26 more such fraudulent and illegal websites/applications.

"It came to the notice of UIDAI that these websites and mobile applications downloadable through Google Playstore were providing unauthorised Aadhaar-related services such as downloading online Aadhaar card, providing status of Aadhaar generation, PVC Aadhaar Card, etc, to residents and in that process they were illegally obtaining the Aadhaar number/enrolment details from the residents. UIDAI has not authorised the owners of these mobile applications or websites to extend any Aadhaar-related services on its behalf," said Ajay Bhushan Pandey, CEO, UIDAI.

Better beware

That's not all. UIDAI has cautioned people not to fall for the ploys of unscrupulous entities charging anything between ₹50 and ₹200

plus for printing the Aadhaar card on plastic in the name of smart card, as the Aadhaar letter or its cutaway portion or downloaded version of Aadhaar on ordinary paper is perfectly valid. "The Aadhaar card or the downloaded Aadhaar card printed on ordinary paper is perfectly valid for all uses. If a person has a paper Aadhaar card, there is absolutely no need to get his/her Aadhaar card laminated or obtain a plastic Aadhaar card or so-called SMART Aadhaar card by paying money. There is no concept such as smart or plastic Aadhaar card," said Pandey.

Tail Piece

Modi has a new mantra. Addressing a public meeting at Aligarh, the Prime Minister said, "Our focus is on VIKAS — Vidyut (electricity), Kanoon (law), Sadak (proper connectivity)."

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