

Debate on 'obsolete' ideas are diversions: Jaitley

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley today slammed the debate on "obsolete" ideas like paper ballot versus electronic voting machines and cash as opposed to digital payment, saying they are diversionary tactics.

Speaking at CII's annual meeting here, he said there is a need to take the debates on use of Unique Identity Number and electronic voting machines (EVMs) head on as the world has moved forward.

"We need to worry about the shrillness and the diversion in the nature of debate," he said, referring to the call by opposition parties against use of EVMs for casting votes in elections.

"In (my) budget speech I quoted (Mahatma) Gandhiji that a right cause never fails. And therefore there is going to be a debate on obsolete ideas that cash is better than digi-

tisation, paper is better than EVMs, arbitrary selection of individuals is better than a unique identity," he said.

These debates "are all diversions of going back to obsolete ideas", he said.

Giving citizens a 12-digit unique identification number or Aadhaar, which can be verified biometrically, is one of the greatest reforms in India, he said.

"We must have broad shoulders to encounter this debate but we must eventually realise that as the world moves forward, it is the unique identity which will be one of the greatest reforms in India," he said.

He said EVM with all its additionalities being preferred over paper ballot would mean "much better proposition and a digitised economy will be much better than a cash economy".

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