

# Rafale: Oppn lauds SC ruling, Rahul says justice has prevailed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

THE CONGRESS, which has been maintaining that the Supreme Court cannot investigate alleged irregularities in the Rafale jet purchase, celebrated and applauded the apex court as it rejected the government's objections to maintainability of the petitions seeking a review of its Rafale judgement and allowed leaked documents to be relied upon by petitioners seeking the review.

Other Opposition parties, too, hailed the Supreme Court decision, arguing that it was a setback to the government which has been claiming that it has got a clean chit from the apex court. Congress president Rahul Gandhi, who filed nomination papers from Amethi on Wednesday, said the Supreme Court has accepted what he has been saying for the past few months that corruption has taken place in Rafale deal. He said if an investigation takes place, names of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Anil Ambani would come out.

"Bahut khushi ho rahi hai ki jo main mahino se keh raha hun ki Hindustan ke Pradhan Mantri ne

*Air Force ka paisa chori karke Anil Ambani ji ko diya hai, us baat ko aj SC ne maan liya hai, I am happy that what I have been saying for months that India's Prime Minister stole money from the Air Force and gave it to Anil Ambani, Supreme Court has validated that point today,"* said Rahul.

Referring to a recent interview of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said, "A few days ago, I saw an interview of Prime Minister, which was like his structured interview, where he was telling the journalist that Supreme Court has given him a clean chit...But today Supreme Court has made it clear that chowkidar chor hai."

Thanking the Supreme Court, he added, "Supreme Court has spoken about justice...justice has prevailed."

Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala told reporters, "The layers of corruption in the Rafale scam are now out in the open. The entire structure of lies built by Prime Minister Modi used to hide behind a self-pronounced clean chit by the Supreme Court. But, today the Supreme Court has demolished that lie of clean chit of the Prime Minister also. To hide

the lies of Rafale, Modi spoke a hundred lies, but the truth is that Rafale ki chori main chowkidar chor hai."

In Lucknow, BSP chief Mayawati demanded an apology from the Prime Minister, accusing him of having misled the nation. "The Modi government's attempts were unsuccessful in hiding discrepancies/ corruption in Rafale deal in the name of national security. The BJP government is trapped in the Supreme Court. PM Modi should apologise for repeatedly lying inside and outside Parliament and misleading the country and the defence minister should resign," she said.

CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury said the Modi government had compromised national security for corruption. "They tried to evade accountability, denied a JPC, hid price from CAG, tried to first mislead, then stall any hearing in Supreme Court. Important that culprits are booked...Modi and his minions have falsely claimed that they have a 'clean chit' in the Rafale scam. But the proof has come tumbling out. It has been the most corrupt and most compromised govt in India's history. Now is the time to throw it out," he said.

## BJP accuses Rahul of contempt of court

New Delhi: Accusing Congress president Rahul Gandhi of gross contempt of court, the BJP on Wednesday said he attributed to the Supreme Court what it had never said in its order on the Rafale case.

Addressing a press conference, senior party leader and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, "The Congress president probably doesn't read even half a paragraph of the court's order, but here, by saying that the court has said 'chowkidar chor hai', it is verging on contempt of court."

The Congress president has shown his frustration by attributing words to the apex which were not uttered, she said.

The minister said the court order was limited to whether it should consider the documents the government said were illegally obtained by petitioners. **ENS**

# In Bihar, Rajnath rejigs speech points as crowds lap up 'lesson to Pak' mantra

LIZ MATHEW  
BANKA, PURNIA, ARARIA,  
MADHEPURA, APRIL 10

## DECISION 2019



Home Minister Rajnath Singh addresses a rally at Banka in Bihar on Wednesday. Liz Mathew

UNION HOME Minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh started his speech at the first pit stop in Bihar on Wednesday by listing what the Narendra Modi government at the Centre has done in five years. He then cited a report by a US think tank to prove that poverty has been reduced in the country.

The response to both was lukewarm. He then said: "Bharat kisi ko chhedta nahin, lekin jo chhedta hai usko chhodega nahin (India does not bother any country, but if any country bothers India, we will not leave that country)." The crowd was ecstatic.

So Singh reversed the order in three other public meetings he addressed at different venues in the state on the day. Be it Shambhuganj in Banka constituency, Dhamdaha in Purnia, Narpatganj in Araria or Alamnagar in Madhepura, much more cheer was in store for the BJP's "nationalistic credentials" and its emphasis on "national security".

"There was an attack on our security personnel (in Pulwama). Prime Minister Modi met some of us and we decided we will not leave it at that. In 12 days, we gave it back - and the reply was not given here, but on Pakistan's territory," Singh said in Dhamdaha, Purnia, where JD(U)'s Santosh Kushwaha is the NDA candidate.

In Araria, where BJP's Premkumar Singh is the candidate, Singh was more eloquent about Modi's "decisive leadership" and India's "daring" act against "Pakistan's assault on (CRPF) security personnel".

The Home Minister criticised the Congress for seeking clarification on the number of terrorists killed in the Air Force's strike at Jaish-e-Mohammed's terror camps in Balakot, Pakistan. "If the death count is 10-20, you can give the number. When the damage is too intense, how can we give a digit to it," the BJP leader asked.

Mission Shakti, India's anti-

satellite test on March 27, also featured prominently in Singh's speeches. According to Singh, India's anti-missile system is so effective that it would "tear into pieces" any satellite, including those of powerful nations that try and break Indian satellites.

But Singh also dedicated equal time in listing achievements of the Modi government in providing what he called is corruption-free good governance with welfare initiatives for the poor. In every speech, he cited a finding reported by Brookings Institute and claimed that many Indians came out of poverty over the last five years. "I am not saying this, a US think-tank has said this," he added.

Of the four places Singh addressed rallies, Araria has a BJP candidate, Premkumar Singh, whose speech dealt mostly with how voting him would be "good of the nation" while supporting his rival would be "backing Pakistan".

## Trend of bias in some media: SC judge in Rafale order

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

WRITING A separate but concurring judgment in the Rafale matter, Supreme Court judge Justice K M Joseph on Wednesday lamented that "in some sections" of the media, "there appears to be a disturbing trend of bias".

Underlining the importance of freedom of press, he wrote, "If freedom is enjoyed by the Press without a deep sense of respon-

sibility, it can weaken democracy. In some sections, there appears to be a disturbing trend of bias. Controlling business interests and political allegiances appear to erode the duty of dispassionate and impartial purveying of information."

The judgment said the "press in India has greatly contributed to the strengthening of democracy in the country" and "will have a pivotal role to play for the continued existence of a vibrant democracy in the country".

"...The visual media in particular wields power", it said adding "reach... appears to be limitless" and "no segment of the population is impervious to its influence".

"It must realise that its consumers are entitled to demand that the stream of information that flows from it, must remain unpolluted by considerations other than truth," Justice Joseph wrote. "I would think that freedom involves many elements. A free person must be fearless. Fear

can be of losing all or any of the things that is held dear by the journalist. A free man cannot be biased. Bias comes in many forms. Bias if it is established as per the principles which are applicable is sufficient to vitiate the decisions of public authorities. The rule against bias is an important axiom to be observed by Judges."

The judgment said "equally the Press including the visual media cannot be biased and yet be free."

# EC pulls up Revenue dept for 'insolent' reply on raids

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10

A DAY after the Election Commission (EC) objected to the Revenue Department's blunt reply to its advice that the action taken by enforcement agencies during polls should be "neutral", "impartial" and "non-discriminatory", the poll panel recorded its "extreme displeasure" in writing.

The Commission wrote to Revenue Secretary AB Pandey Wednesday, reprimanding his department's "casual and trivial" approach. Instead of detailing modalities to implement EC's Sunday advisory, the department "insolently chose to issue a counter advisory", the letter stated.

Responding to the Commission's advice, the Revenue Department said it understood what "neutrality" meant and the Commission should advise its own officers to enforce measures to curb use of illicit money in elections and keep tax officers in the loop.

"The Commission has noted with extreme displeasure, the tone and tenor used for addressing a constitutional authority in stark violation of the established protocol. Therefore, the Commission reprimands the Department of Revenue for making unwarranted remarks and expects that the directions issued by the Commission in the said advisory are followed in letter as well as in spirit," EC's missive stated.

## 'Legitimate action against corruption not vendetta'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 10



Finance Minister Arun Jaitley

STATING THAT Revenue Department acts objectively for carrying out search operations, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley Wednesday said legitimate action against corruption is not vendetta. "It has become a routine practice to call any action against corruption as political vendetta. Claim of vendetta has never been a legitimate defence in corruption. Those who commit such large acts of corruption have to be judged on the merits of the action itself," Jaitley, who is in the US to attend the IMF-World Bank meetings, wrote in a Facebook post.

He said evidence has been found that in Karnataka, allocations made for public welfare to the Public Works Department were being round-tripped by engineers for a political purpose, while in Madhya Pradesh, he alleged, that an institutional mechanism has been created where money meant for development and social welfare of the weaker sections was being channelled into politics.

In the last six months, at least 15 searches by the Income Tax department have been carried out against Opposition leaders and their associates - five in Karnataka, three in Tamil Nadu, two in Andhra Pradesh, two in

Delhi and one each in MP, J&K and UP. During the same period, information available in the public domain shows, searches were conducted at premises linked to one BJP functionary in Uttarakhanda - the party later distanced itself from the individual.

Most recently, the Income Tax Department has carried out searches on premises of aides and relatives of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on charges of suspicious movement of unaccounted money.

The opposition parties, including the Congress, have dubbed the raids as politically motivated.

Taking note of these searches, the Election Commission in its letter to Revenue Department had advised that any action by its enforcement agencies during election time should be "neutral" and "non-discriminatory" and officials of the poll panel should be kept in loop about such actions. The Revenue Department in its response had said it understood what "neutrality" meant - and that the panel should advise its own officers to curb use of illicit money and keep tax officers in the loop.

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