



**PM'S PET UJJWALA EXPANDS LPG COVERAGE FROM 55% TO 90% OF HOUSEHOLDS | 10**

**KERALA CM VIJAYAN SPRINGS A SURPRISE BY WALKING THE TALK ON SABARIMALA | 9**



## Cong gives tape twist to Rafale deal

**This Man Lies & Lies Repeatedly: FM On Rahul**

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/ Panaji: Lok Sabha witnessed a high-voltage drama on Wednesday after Congress president Rahul Gandhi sought the Speaker's permission to play an audio tape allegedly of Goa health minister Vishwajit Rane. The Goa minister is purportedly heard saying that Manohar Parrikar, who had served as defence minister in the Modi government, has taken away Rafale files and is leveraging them to blackmail the BJP leadership.

In the tape, a person who Rahul claimed was Rane can be heard saying that Parrikar had claimed during a meeting of his Cabinet that he has kept all the Rafale files in his bedroom. The person also said that the Goa CM was holding "them to ransom".

Finance minister Arun Jaitley said the tape is "false and fabricated". He challenged Rahul to authenticate it, while also cautioning the Congress chief that he would be liable to face action, including expulsion, if the tape turned out to be a fabrication. The Speaker disallowed Rahul's request to be allowed to play the clip.

Amid an uproar, which caused a brief adjournment of proceedings, Rahul said he would not play it or authenticate it, prompting Jaitley to say that the Congress leader was "scared" as



Goa CM Manohar Parrikar and health minister Vishwajit Rane

he knew it was false. "This man lies and lies repeatedly," Jaitley said. Rane has already termed the tape "fabricated", Jaitley said.

Parrikar also dismissed the tape as a fakery: "The audio clip released by Congress is a desperate attempt to fabricate facts after their lies were exposed by the recent Supreme Court verdict on Rafale deal. No such discussion ever came up during Cabinet or any other meeting."

Speaking to reporters in Panaji, Rane accused Congress of falsely implicating him in the controversy and wrote to Parrikar demanding an inquiry into the "forgery". He said, "I've written to CM Parrikar... It is the Congress game. No such conversation took place at the cabinet meeting. It is not my voice."

The last cabinet meeting

was held on December 20 at Parrikar's private residence and went on for three hours. Rane said he has requested BJP chief Amit Shah for a probe by a national agency. "I am ready to give any explanation if asked, because this is something mischievously planned and planted to target and create instability in Goa," he said. Rane said he won't be filing a complaint since he'd already written to the chief minister to take appropriate action.

Rane, who had initially won the assembly elections on a Congress ticket, quit the party and got re-elected on a BJP ticket, said Congress netas felt threatened by him. "They're afraid more legislators may defect. The party is defunct. They know I have influence in three-four constituencies," he said.

From sympathising with Parrikar to criticising him, Cong changes tune

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Panaji:** Congress's stance on Goa CM Manohar Parrikar seems to have come a full circle. From expressing sympathy over being "forced" to continue in office despite his illness to now charging him with allegedly blackmailing the Centre over the Rafale deal, the opposition party has struck very different chords.

Congress has now claimed that Parrikar is hanging on to office by pressuring the BJP leadership — the opposition party came up with an audio recording purportedly of Goa health minister Vishwajit Rane saying that Rafale files are lying in Parrikar's bedroom. Both Rane and Parrikar have termed the recording fabricated.

Goa Congress chief Girish Chodankar has been accusing BJP of indulging in 'sympathy politics' and forcing work on an ailing CM. At that time, Congress contention was that if Parrikar had to step down, the BJP-led coalition would lose its majority on the floor of the House and Congress would be able to form the government.

BJP, despite having won just 13 seats in the 40-member

House, formed the government in 2017 after getting support from MGP, Goa Forward Party and three independents, all of whom extended support substantially because Parrikar was to be the leader.

As late as on December 16, when Parrikar went on a surprise visit to inspect the construction of the new bridge over the Mandovi, Congress was quick to point it out as a "photo-op" and termed it in "bad taste". But soon after, the party began changing the narrative. Randeep Surjewala, the party's national communications in-charge, said in Goa on December 16 that Parrikar knows a "whole lot of things" about the Rafale deal. He claimed that Parrikar had on several occasions resisted PM Modi's attempts to inflate the benchmark price for the purchase of Rafale jets.

Within a week, former Union minister Jaipal Reddy also played by the same script. He said said that Modi could not ask Parrikar to step down as he knew the Goa CM would spill the beans. He said Parrikar was trying to cling on to power like a leech and ridiculed the moral high ground he adopts in public life.

## BJP ally Sena wants JPC, BJD seeks a white paper on deal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Embarrassing the government, Maharashtra ally Shiv Sena sided with the opposition's demand for a JPC probe into the Rafale deal even as Biju Janata Dal, which has often been pro-government, raised questions about the fighter jet purchase and sought a white paper on lapses.

During a discussion on the Rafale deal in Lok Sabha, Trinamool Congress also shed its inhibition to lambast the Modi government and demanded a JPC probe, capping a day of extraordinary anti-BJP aggression by regional parties which left the saffron party fending off the assault solo.

Sena MP Arvind Sawant stung the government by not only repeating the charges being levelled by the opposition but also bracketing Rafale with Bofors deal — an albatross around Congress's neck for three decades which finance minister Arun Jaitley cited in his speech to blunt Congress chief Rahul Gandhi's attack.

"We are transparent. Our government is good, it is not corrupt. Why should we be scared? Let there be a JPC probe and the truth come out," Sawant said. "People used to say Bofors is good but the deal is bad. Same is being said about Rafale," the Mumbai MP added.

While not mentioning the JPC, BJD MP Kalikesh Deo underlined that issue of pricing and procedures remained critical and should be accounted for. Deo said that foregoing "transfer of technology" in Rafale deal required explanation. "The government should issue a white paper on this," he said.

## Rahul says Modi hiding in office, FM reminds him of Bofors, Agusta

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in an interview that there were no allegations against him personally in the Rafale deal, Congress president Rahul Gandhi said this is not the case and emphasised that it was the PM alone who needs to answer questions about the deal.

In a sensational claim, Rahul also said Goa chief minister Manohar Parrikar "blackmailed" Modi with information related to the Rafale deal, referring to an alleged tape recording. "There might be other tapes of this nature. The entire Goa cabinet heard what Mr Parrikar said," Rahul said, elaborating on the contents of the tape which Speaker Sumitra Mahajan disallowed him from playing without first "authenticating" the contents.

Throwing the gauntlet at PM Modi and challenging him to a 20-minute one-on-one debate on the defence deal, Rahul also accused Modi of lacking the "guts" to face questions and hiding in his office.

In a twin attack on Modi first in Lok Sabha and then at the party headquarters on Wednesday, Rahul also reiterated the demand for a joint parliamentary probe into the Rafale deal, and raised questions on the increase in price of the fighters, procedures being "bypassed" to finalise the deal, and the exclusion of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to accommodate Anil Ambani's Reliance Defence. He also said if Congress is voted to power in 2019, it will order a probe into the offset contract. Media reports



Rahul Gandhi

### Anil Ambani gets a new nickname

Corporate honcho Anil Ambani got a new nickname on Wednesday with Congress president Rahul Gandhi referring to him as "Double A", a reference he coined in jest to skirt around the Speaker's direction that Ambani should not be named in the House since he was not a member. "If not Anil Ambani, Can I say AA, ma'am?", Rahul asked. **TNN**

also quoted party MP Mallikarjun Kharge as saying that if the Congress comes to power, it will prefer that the offset contract is given to HAL in "national interest", thereby implying that the contract to Anil Ambani's company may be cancelled.

The Rafale debate, which has grown more acerbic with time, also saw Rahul accuse the PM and defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman of ducking questions. "The defence minister hides behind AIADMK people (who are protesting in the well)," Rahul said.

Full report on [www.toi.in](http://www.toi.in)

## Amid dogfight, Cong flies paper planes in LS

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Leading BJP's counter to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's allegations on Rafale deal, finance minister Arun Jaitley hit back, pointing to Congress's record of the involvement of its government in defence scams and accusing Rahul of being unable to provide any evidence to back his claims.

Jaitley accused Rahul of a "legacy of lying" and "repeating falsehoods" and alleged that "conspirators" of past defence scams are now raising fingers at others. "There are some people who have a dislike for truth. Every word spoken for the last six months on this subject, including in this House (by them), are false... He has a legacy of speaking falsehood," Jaitley said.

He challenged Rahul's assertion that the government had insisted on businessman Anil Ambani as an off-set partner, saying the leader had "manufactured" his conversation with French president Emmanuel Macron and that the claims were denied by the French government.

Jaitley also targeted Rahul and Sonia Gandhi over the AgustaWestland and National Herald cases, and reminded the House of Bofors middleman Ottavio Quattrocchi's connections with the leaders.

As Congress members protested and flew paper planes, on which a warning was issued by the Speaker:



Arun Jaitley

### James Bond gets quoted in House

Attacking Rahul Gandhi for his repeated allegations on Rafale, finance minister Arun Jaitley quoted from famous screen spy James Bond's 'Goldfinger'. He said, "If it is once, it is a coincidence; if it is twice, it is a coincidence; and if it is thrice, it is a conspiracy." The conspirators of various defence deals today, have the audacity to raise an allegation against others, he added. **TNN**

### Rahul's PM remark exposes his DNA: BJP

BJP on Thursday lashed out at Rahul Gandhi for terming PM Modi's interview to ANI as "scripted" and said he has again "exposed" his DNA of media intimidation. "Rahul can't resist exposing his DNA. World knows the emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi was the worst phase of Indian media," BJP spokesperson Anil Baluni said. **TNN**

## HYDERABAD LAB GOT 112 SAMPLES FROM '14 TO '17

## Just 7% of meat samples tested found to be of cow

U.Sudhakarreddy  
@timesgroup.com

**Hyderabad:** A very small percentage of the meat that police and animal husbandry officials caught across the country between 2014 and 2017 was that of the cow. Most of it was found to be bull (male cattle) and buffalo meat.

This has been established after Hyderabad-based National Research Centre on Meat (NRCM) completed DNA analysis of 112 samples it received from across the country. Only eight samples, or 7%, were cow meat. NRCM is a premier meat research institute under the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) umbrella.

The meat species identification laboratory tested samples sent by the state police

### Cow carcasses found, Bulandshahr tense

A month after Bulandshahr violence over alleged cow slaughter that claimed the lives of police officer and a civilian, police managed to avert a similar situation on Bulandshahr-Aligarh border where carcasses of four cows were found. As the news went viral, Hindu right wing activists started assembling on the spot, leading to tension in the area. Police officials rushed to the spot and hurriedly got the carcass buried with an assurance that tough action would be taken to nab the culprits. **TNN**

and animal husbandry departments of UP, Maharashtra, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Goa, Andhra Pradesh and Te-

langana from 2014 to 2017.

The institute had, in fact, received 139 samples, but only 112 were suitable for DNA extraction. The initial suspicion of the state authorities was that 69 samples were cow meat, in 34 samples there was no clarity on whether to categorise them as "other cattle" or "buffalo", five were buffalo samples, four male cattle and one was suspected to be dog meat.

"Interestingly, three samples suspected to be cow were found to be camel meat and the sample suspected as a dog was found to be sheep," the researchers said in the paper.

The researchers received another 80 samples in 2018, taking the total number of samples to 206. The analysis is yet to be published but the results have followed a similar trend.

## Farmer makes ₹490 from 19t of potatoes, sends money to PM

Deepak.Lavania@timesgroup.com

**Agra:** A potato farmer here sent the paltry profit of Rs 490 that he earned from selling his entire potato produce of 19,000 kg to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to protest the continuous losses he had to suffer.

Pradeep Sharma is a resident of Nagla Nathu village in Baroli Ahir block of Agra district. For four years, he has been repeatedly making losses. This year, he had sown potatoes on 10 acres and harvested 1,150 packets, each weighing 50 kg. Sharma said, "After paying all the charges I got only Rs 46,490. I had paid cold storage centre Rs 46,000 at the rate of Rs 125 per packet of potato. If cost of production is not considered, I made a profit of only Rs 490."

"I have sent a money order of Rs 490 to the PM; perhaps he will understand my troubles. If he cannot help me, at least he can give me permission to kill myself," Sharma said.

## 32 test positive for swine flu in Jodhpur in 1 day

**Jaipur/Jodhpur:** Swine flu has made a comeback in the state with 44 people tested positive for the disease and one person succumbed to the disease in past two days.

On Wednesday, 32 people were diagnosed with H1N1 influenza. In Jodhpur, SN Medical College cancelled leaves of all its doctors.

Jodhpur has reported highest number of swine flu cases. In past two days, 17 people were diagnosed with the disease while one person had died. In Jaipur too, nine people tested positive. Two doctors of Sawai Man Singh medical college were suspected to be suffering from H1N1 influenza. However, SMS medical college principal and controller, Dr Sudhir Bhandari said, "There is no doctor in our hospital, who is tested positive for swine flu, in my knowledge."

Dr Bhandari said, "Noneed to worry as number of swine flu cases are on a decline." **TNN**

## Can't sing Vande, BJP men shout slogans

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bhopal:** Madhya Pradesh BJP leaders assembled at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Park here to recite Vande Mataram on Wednesday but ended up chanting slogans like 'Is Desh Mein Rehna Hai To Bharat Mata Kehna Hoga'. When reporters requested them to sing Vande Mataram, none of them could do so properly.

BJP had a day earlier announced that it would sing Vande Mataram en masse on Wednesday to protest the Kamal Nath government's decision to discontinue the monthly recital.

However, the crowd at Patel Park was rather thin, considering that all the top local leaders — including MLAs Rameshwar Sharma, Vishwas Sarang and Krishna Gaur — were present along with Surendra Nath Singh.

Three women party workers began the recital but some of the prominent leaders had an embarrassing moment when reporters asked them to sing Vande Mataram on

### Will give new look to Vande Mataram: Nath

**Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath** on Wednesday warned BJP not to politicise the Vande Mataram recital issue like Ram temple. Nath, who had issued a statement to confirm that his government was suspending the practice of reciting Vande Mataram at the secretariat on the first day of every month, said, "We will give a new form to the practice of singing Vande Mataram. But, the matter should not be politicised. BJP plays politics in the name of Ram Temple and now in the name of Vande Mataram." **TNN**

their own. All of them failed.

TOI spoke to some of the leaders. "Very few people know the complete lyrics of Vande Mataram. If you ask me to recite the national song on my own, I may not be able to do it. But I respect it all the same. What the media reporters were doing was gimmick sans any seriousness," said Surendra Nath Singh.

## Shah: Stopping Vande recital is like treason

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Terming it akin to "treason", BJP president Amit Shah on Wednesday questioned the Madhya Pradesh government's decision to 'temporarily' stop the recital of 'Vande Mataram' at the state secretariat and asked Congress chief Rahul Gandhi to explain if the decision was taken at his behest.

"The decision of the Congress government in MP to block the recital of 'Vande Mataram' is unfortunate and shameful. 'Vande Mataram' is not only a mere song but is the symbol of India's freedom movement as well as an inspiration to every Indian," Shah said in a statement.

"In any kind of political thinking, insulting the sacrifices of the country's freedom fighters is considered an act of treason by common citizens like me," he said. Shah said by stopping the



Actor Moushumi Chatterjee being welcomed by BJP chief Amit Shah into the party in New Delhi on Wednesday

recital on the first of every month — as has been the tradition for the last 14 years under the BJP regime — Congress had "insulted the sacrifices of freedom fighters. He said it was a betrayal to the people of MP as well.

The BJP chief accused Congress of trying to "appease" one particular community by banning 'Vande Mataram'. "I want to ask Rahul Gandhi if it was his decision to insult 'Vande Mataram'?" Shah asked in a post.

## No need for JPC after SC ruling, says Jaitley

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Amid digs and counter-digs during the debate on the Rafale deal in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi brought up allegations that "failed" businessman Anil Ambani was being benefited and the cost of the plane had escalated three-fold, saying he would refer to the businessman as "AA". Finance minister Arun Jaitley countered, saying it was necessary to remind the Congress leader that he had played in the lap of Bofors middleman Ottavio Quattrocchi as a child.

Jaitley ruled out a JPC probe saying there was no need for such a measure as the Supreme Court has already satisfied its "conscience" on the issue.

"There are some people

who have a natural dislike for the truth. Every word spoken for the last six months on this subject, including in this House (by them) are false... He (Rahul) has a legacy of speaking falsehood," said Jaitley.

Rahul referred to Modi's interview that no personal allegation was levelled against him and said this was not true as the "entire nation" is asking him a direct question on the contract for the purchase of the fighter aircraft.

The finance minister noted that the price of the "bare aircraft" has been revealed and that the price of the "weaponised" version cannot be given as it would help India's adversaries.

He asserted that the bare aircraft was 9% cheaper than the one negotiated by the UPA and the weaponised version was 20% cheaper.

## Verdict enmeshed with falsehood & errors, SC told, urged to recall Dec 14 judgment

Dhananjay.Mahapatra  
@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** Former Union ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie with activist advocate Prashant Bhushan on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court seeking recall of its December 14 judgment, which gave a clean chit to the government on the Rafale deal, alleging that the verdict was enmeshed with "falsehood" and "substantial errors".

On December 15, the Centre had filed an application seeking to correct sentences in the judgment relating to 'report of the CAG has been examined by the PAC'. The Centre had said it had already



shared the price details with the CAG, and that the CAG report is to be examined by PAC.

It had said that the error crept into the judgment "perhaps on account of a misinterpretation of a couple of sentences in a note handed over to the SC in a sealed cover". But, Sinha, Shourie and Bhushan said: "The SC's reliance on CAG report is not an error arising from an accidental slip. The SC applied its mind and

erred in relying on a non-existent fact to render its judgment which is... a 'substantial error'," the petitioners said.

They said it was false on the part of the judgment to record that the CAG report has been examined by the PAC when the CAG is yet to conclude its audit. In addition, they faulted the sealed cover procedure adopted by the SC in dealing with their petition which had sought a direction to the CBI to register an FIR in the Rafale deal. They said their complaint of October 4 disclosed a cognisable offence and under the SC verdict in Lalitha Kumari case, CBI was duty-bound to register an FIR in the Rafale deal.

Full report on [www.toi.in](http://www.toi.in)

## Woman forced to compromise with harasser, shoots herself

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Agra:** A 35-year-old woman shot herself on Tuesday after she was allegedly forced to go for a compromise with a man who had tried to rape her.

A resident of Sadhan village of Achnera block, the mother of seven, including two stepsons, shot herself with her husband's gun and left behind a suicide note accusing her neighbour Munish (36), a father of five, of harassing her for sexual favours. "I was denied justice and insulted in public. Instead of sending the accused to jail, I was forced to compromise with him. He attempted to sexually abuse me," she wrote.

"My neighbour, who is a

**“She was in mental trauma. At a panchayat, my wife demanded that the accused be jailed. Instead, her signature was taken on a paper which mentioned a mutual compromise Victim's husband**

relative of the gram pradhan, attempted to rape my wife on the night of December 29. He had been stalking my wife for over two weeks and was continuously making lewd calls to pressure her to marry him," her husband told TOI.

"She was in mental trauma after the incident. A panchayat

was held and my wife pleaded for justice and demanded that the accused be jailed. Instead, her signature was taken on a paper which mentioned a mutual compromise," he said.

Police arrested the accused and booked him under IPC Sections 306 (abetment to suicide) and 354 (assault on a woman with intent to outrage her modesty). No case was lodged against the panchayat members.

SP (rural west) Akhilesh Narayan Singh said a probe was under way to ascertain who forced the woman to compromise. Sadhan gram pradhan's husband Zameel said, "We are cooperating with the police and will do everything to ensure accused Munish is given stringent punishment."