

NEARBY



SC refuses to stay the release of Modi biopic

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Monday refused to intervene in the release of the film Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleged to be "blatant propaganda" dressed up as a work of art, in violation of the poll code. The Bench has asked the petitioner to list his objections.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Assam man assaulted for selling 'beef'

GUWAHATI
The police in north-eastern Assam's Biswanath district picked up five people after a mob assaulted a 68-year-old man for allegedly selling beef at his restaurant in district headquarters Biswanath Chariali. The incident happened on Sunday afternoon but came to light on Monday after a video on the assault was uploaded on social media.

NATION ▶ PAGE 7

DELHI METRO ▶ 4 PAGES

Indian Air Force presents 'proof' to show F-16 was shot down

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI
The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Monday presented two radar images of the aerial en-

Rafale: Modi govt. gave unprecedented waivers in offset agreements

DPP-2013 provisions relating to arbitration, access to books of accounts, and penalties for the use of influence, commission agents not met

Highlights

- CCS gives **exceptional waivers** to Dassault & MBDA in offset contracts, exempts them from aligning Arbitration (Article 9) & 'Access to books of account' (Article 12) provisions with DPP-2013 Standard Contract
- Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, **uncomfortable with major deviations** from DPP-2013, gets DAC to send unresolved issues up for "final review and approval" by CCS
- DAC drops DPP-2013 provisions on penalties for "Use of Undue Influence" and "Agents/Agency Commission" from offset contracts
- Offset obligations of around **₹30,000 crore** are heavily back-loaded, to be discharged over 7 years, with zero discharge in first 3 years and 57% in 7th year
- INT's efforts on offset issues weakened by parallel NSA talks
- Controversy breaks out **over non-transparent & open-ended** offset arrangements and choice of Reliance Group as Dassault's only publicly known offset partner

N. RAM

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave exceptional and unprecedented waivers to M/s Dassault Aviation and M/s MBDA in the offset contracts they signed with the Indian government on September 23, 2016 as part of the ₹7.87 billion Rafale deal. These waivers, granted on August 24, 2016 at the highest level of political decision-making, were exemptions given to the two private

French companies from having to comply with provisions of the Standard Contract Document of the Defence Procurement Procedure, DPP-2013.

The waivers concerned two key issues – the provisions to be made in the offset contracts for arbitration (Article 9) and access to books of accounts of the industrial suppliers (Article 12).

These had been sent up to the CCS for its "final review and approval" by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence

Minister Manohar Parrikar. He had evidently felt uncomfortable with sanctioning, at his level, major deviations from the Defence Procurement Procedure. But that was not all.

EXCLUSIVE

Two other mandated provisions of DPP-2013 that prohibit the "Use of Undue Influence" and "Agents/Agency Commission", Articles 22 and 23 respectively of the Standard Contract Docu-

ment (http://bit.ly/DPP_2013), and provide for penalties against private industrial suppliers in case of transgressions, had been quietly dropped along the way by the DAC. Curiously, while the deletion of these vital integrity provisions from the Supply Protocols, which were themselves only annexures to the Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA), went up to the CCS for "final review and approval", their deletion from the offset contracts, which had been insisted on by the French in-

dustrial suppliers, did not have to.

These salient facts, which were not disclosed by the government in its submissions to the Supreme Court of India, as well as other aspects of an open-ended and murky set of offset arrangements which were enabled by a major change in offset policy in August 2015, come to light in the final report of the Indian Negotiating Team (INT), dated July 21, 2016, to which *The Hindu* has access.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 13

BJP manifesto keeps focus on national security, farm support

Offers nationwide registry of citizenship

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday released its "Sankalp Patra" or manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha election, keeping national security and its core issues of Uniform Civil Code, abolition of Article 370 and the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya front and centre, welded to welfare schemes like the universal-



PM Modi and BJP president Amit Shah release the party's manifesto on Monday. •PTI

clear through both Houses of Parliament and a nationwide National Registry of Citizenship, and the annulment of Article 35A which the party termed "discriminatory" towards Kashmiri women and non-permanent residents of the State. The insertions on Article 35A and a nationwide NRC were a nod to its ideological pre-occupation with action on illegal immigrants and national identity.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10
'A BUNCH OF LIES' ▶ PAGE 10

sation of the ₹6,000 per annum income support for farmers.

The party also affirmed its commitment to get the Citizenship Amendment Bill

SC increases VVPAT verification

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday increased Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) verification to five random Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in each Assembly constituency.

"It is, therefore, our considered view that... the number of EVMs that would now be subjected to verification so far as the VVPAT paper trail is concerned would be five per Assembly constituency or segment in a parliamentary constituency instead of what is provided by Guideline No. 16.6, namely, one machine per Assembly constituency or segment in a parliamentary constituency," the court ordered.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Advantage NDA, but it may fall short of majority

BJP seems to have overcome mood of anti-incumbency

SANDEEP SHASTRI
SUHAS PALSHIKAR
SANJAY KUMAR

As the nation gears up for the first round of the Lok Sabha election, the ruling BJP and the NDA seem to enjoy a distinct advantage over its opponents. The CSDS-Lokniti Pre-Election Survey indicates that the national mood appears to be to give the ruling party/alliance a second term.

THE HINDU
CSDS-LOKNITI
Pre-poll Survey 2019

Over the last one year, the ruling party appears to have overcome the emerging mood of anti-incumbency and turned the tide in its fa-

NDA favoured

CSDS-Lokniti estimates that both NDA and UPA could better their vote shares in 2019, but NDA's 'strike rate' will be reduced, possibly leaving it just short of a majority



35 Estimated vote share % of the BJP, with its allies to get **6% of votes**, for a total of 41%



23 Estimated Congress share, with its allies set to get another **7%**, for a total of 30%



9 BSP and its allies could secure about **9% of votes**, slightly higher than in the 2014 election

263-283 No. of seats estimated to be won by the NDA

115-135 No. of seats estimated to be won by the UPA

Each region appears to have its own trend and political direction. As things stand in the last week of March 2019, the NDA appears close to the majority

mark, though the BJP itself seems well short of securing a majority on its own.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12
FIGHTING TOGETHER ▶ EDITORIAL