

## **French publication Mediapart alleges new evidence of kickbacks in Rafale fighter jets deal with India**



Paris: “Offshore companies, dubious contracts and ‘false’ invoices” were allegedly used to make payments of nearly 7.5 million euros (approximately Rs 64 crore) in secret commissions to a middleman, French publication Mediapart reported. This eventually helped French aircraft

manufacturer Dassault Aviation clinch a deal to sell 36 Rafale fighter jets to India, the report claimed.

The publication claimed that even though India's Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate had been aware about this in October 2018, they had not started any investigation into the deal.

In 2016, India agreed to pay Rs 58,000 crore for the jets when it signed an inter-governmental agreement with France.

But the Congress accused the Narendra Modi-led government of paying too much for the planes. The party also alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party government had helped a defence firm owned by industrialist Anil Ambani land a major contract under the deal even though it had no experience in the sector.

Documents related to the offshore companies and invoices were discovered during an investigation into the Rs 3,600-crore AgustaWestland VVIP helicopter deal, in which Sushen Gupta, the alleged middleman, has been named as an accused, Mediapart reported.

## **Farmers protests: Modi takes U-turn on controversial farm laws**



New Delhi: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken a stunning U-turn by announcing that his government will repeal three controversial agricultural reform laws that triggered massive protests across the country by farmers.

Thousands of farmers have been camped out on the borders of the capital New Delhi since November last year, posing Modi with one of the biggest challenges since he came to power in 2014.

The rallies became a lightning rod for opposition to Modi's administration in a country where two-thirds of the 1.3 billion population rely on agriculture for their livelihood.

In a contrite address to the nation coinciding with a major Sikh festival — the religion of many farmers — Modi said the laws would be repealed in parliament's winter session, which begins later this month.

"I appeal to all the farmers who are part of the protest... to now return to your home, to your loved ones, to your farms, and family. Let's make a fresh start and move forward," the 71-year-old said.

"Friends, I apologise to the countrymen and want to say with a clean heart and conscience that we must have fallen short in our efforts to explain (the benefits of the farm laws) to a section of the farmers."

The reforms passed in September 2020 aimed to deregulate farm produce markets where state bodies have for decades set guaranteed minimum prices for crops.

Modi's reversal came ahead of important upcoming elections in states such as Punjab — where many of the farmers come from — and Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous with 220 million people.

"Congratulations for this victory against injustice. Hail India, hail the farmer of India," tweeted Rahul Gandhi of the opposition Congress party.

Hartosh Singh Bal, political editor of Caravan magazine, told AFP: "The farm laws were dead in the water and it was always a question of Modi's ego which stood in the way of government repealing them." AFP

## **Kashmiri children worst victims of Indian Illegal Occupation**

by: editor

November 20, 2021

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Islamabad: Children in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOC) are suffering worst kind of persecution at the hands of Indian occupation forces, as the world is observing International Day of Children on 20th November.

Children in Indian Occupied Kashmir are the worst sufferers due to enforced disappearances and extra-judicial killings of their fathers, brothers, grandfathers and other relatives. Such killings have created psychological abnormalities and rendered their lives traumatic haunting their lives forever. Indian troops in their unabated acts of state terrorism have martyred 909 children during the last 32 years.

According to a research report, the killing of innocent Kashmiris by Indian forces rendered 107,849 children orphaned in the territory since 1989. Children in Indian Occupied Kashmir are living in the most militarized zone of the world, with the presence of 700,000 troops, which exposes them to the risk of all six grave violations against children as laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children. Web Desk

**Fourth phase of Khalistan Referendum  
will be held in London on Nov 21**



Islamabad: Despite the fact, Indian National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, protested with British government over Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) holding major Khalistan Referendum events across UK. Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) has followed UK and Europe laws each step of the way and India's protest carries no weight.

In the next phase, voting for Khalistan Referendum will be held in Leicester, Coventry and Derby on 21st November, 2021 (tomorrow).

After 31st October voting, Indian authorities revealed that they have threatened British Sikh NRIs of strict actions such as cancellation of cards and visas to India, to keep them from taking part in SFJ's Khalistan Referendum. Web Desk

**Khurram Parvez is a human rights defender, not a terrorist, UN tells India**



Srinagar: The United Nations have strongly criticised the arrest of a prominent activist in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK) on terror charges, saying he is “not a terrorist”.

Khurram Parvez was arrested late on Monday by India’s federal National Investigation Agency (NIA), an Indian official briefed on the situation told Reuters.

Mary Lawlor, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, called Parvez’s arrest “disturbing”. “He’s not a terrorist, he’s a human rights defender,” she said in a tweet. Reuters

## **Maldives: Indian vessels seen fishing illegally near Ihavandhoo**





Ihavandhoo: Fishermen from Ihavandhoo who had sighted the Indian vessels had reported their activity to the relevant authorities. A fisherman from Ihavandhoo told The Maldives Journal that they had reported the vessels to the Coast Guard and the Ihavandhoo Council. He said that the Coast Guard has not yet responded to the call.

The Maldives Journal has found out that all Maldivian Coast Guard vessels are currently engaged in a joint military exercise run in the central Maldives by India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. The Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) declined to comment. The Maldives Journal

## **Humanitarian protection 20 years into the ‘Global War on Terror’**



Oslo: The Norwegian Centre of Humanitarian Studies (NCHS) annual meeting will take place on 2-3 December and will be organized as a hybrid event.

This year's overarching theme is "Humanitarian Protection 20 Years into the 'Global War on Terror'". Twenty years after 9/11 and the US-led intervention in Afghanistan, what has come to be referred to as the "Global War on Terror" has drastically affected the paradigm of humanitarian protection.

In the wake of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, humanitarian actors, more than ever, find themselves having to navigate sanctions, counterterrorism frameworks, regime changes, politicization, and criminalization. At the Annual Meeting, we will discuss the implications of the global war on terror and the possible ways forward for humanitarian actors in dealing with the challenges of providing protection in this environment.

The NCHS Research Network's Annual Meeting is open to anyone with an interest in the topic, and there will also be an opportunity to learn more about the Network's activities. [Prio.org](https://prio.org)