

Jaitley rules out JPC on Rafale deal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The government rejected on Wednesday Congress president Rahul Gandhi's demand for a JPC on the Rafale deal, with finance minister Arun Jaitley hitting out at the opposition leader, saying a parliamentary probe cannot be set up to satisfy the ego of "an ill-informed gentleman".

Hours after NSA Ajit Doval and defence secretary Sanjay

Mitra's presentation on the deal to the Council of Ministers, Jaitley dismissed Congress's allegations of favouritism in the aircraft deal. "Congress

► **IAF vice-chief defends Rafale deal,**

► **No need to panic on oil prices and rupee: FM**

has proved that in dynastic parties, ignorance is contagious. If one person lacks understanding, then the whole party

lacks it," Jaitley told a media briefing, adding that the NDA government had moved from a policy of defence equipment import to one where local manufacturing is encouraged.

"If somebody is naive about facts, then his ignorance comes to be subscribed by a dynastic party as a whole. Nothing can be more unfortunate," the FM said.

Now, Jan Dhan for all eligible adults

The government has decided to expand the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana to enable every adult member in an eligible household to open a no-frills bank account that will be topped up with a free insurance of Rs 2 lakh. Overdraft facility has also been doubled to Rs 10,000.

Jaitley calls Cong's import-led model backward

FM Arun Jaitley alleged that it was the "backwardness" in Congress's thinking that favoured an import-led model, which is also prone to kickbacks like in the Bofors deal. On the other hand, the Modi administration's decision to allow up to 100% FDI soon after assuming office had resulted in alliances between private sector giants such as Tatas, Mahindras, Bharat Forge and L&T and overseas players like Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

"Thirty-six (Rafale) planes would be made there (in France). There is no scope for any private firm. Not a screw is to be fitted in India," said Jaitley, who has been sparring with Rahul Gandhi on the aircraft deal. "Large firms are coming to India now... manufacturing has started for the first time... Our policy is that defence PSUs keep getting sufficient orders. They followed a policy where you buy from foreign private players, but not involve an Indian player. We disagree with Congress on this."

The FM's statement and the presentation by Doval and the defence secretary, which highlighted crucial issues related to the deal, signalled the government's intention to take on the opposition, which has been trying to put pressure on the Modi government, accusing it of favouring Anil Ambani in offset contracts.

During the over two-hour meeting, the Council of Ministers was told that it was a deal between two governments that did not involve a private party, leaving little scope for corruption. Besides, the aircraft's capability was showcased.