

Marathis too have chance of becoming PM: Fadnavis

VIVEK DESHPANDE  
NAGPUR, JANUARY 4

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF Minister Devendra Fadnavis, responding to a question on the possibility of a Marathi becoming Prime Minister by 2050, Friday said: "Marathis have ruled the length and breadth of the country, up to Attock, in different periods of history. I am sure they stand the chance of prime minister-ship too."

Fadnavis made this remark during a public interview at the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## 29 JOURNALISTS HONOURED FOR WORK IN PRINT, BROADCAST, DIGITAL Stronger journalism becomes, brighter a democracy shines: Rajnath Singh



The award winners with Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Express Group Chairman Viveck Goenka in New Delhi on Friday. Neeraj Priyadarshi

### AND THE WINNERS ARE...

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING**  
PRINT: Vijay Kumar S, The Hindu  
BROADCAST: Anand Kumar Patel, India Today TV

**POLITICAL REPORTING**  
PRINT: Sushant Kumar Singh, The Indian Express  
BROADCAST: Brajesh Rajput, ABP News

**HINDI**  
PRINT: Amit Kumar Singh,

**TheWire.in**  
BROADCAST: Abhisar Sharma, ABP News

**ON THE SPOT REPORTING**  
PRINT: Mridula Chari, Scroll.in  
BROADCAST: Jagwinder Patial, ABP News

**BOOKS (NON-FICTION)**  
Milan Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays: Money and muscle in Indian politics*  
COMPLETE LIST, #METOO DISCUSSION, PAGE 6

## Bofors sank Congress, Rafale will bring back Modi: Sitharaman

KRISHN KAUSHIK  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

MOUNTING A scathing attack on the Congress over its Rafale "campaign... built on falsehoods" to "mislead the nation", Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told Parliament Friday that the Bofors scandal brought down the Congress while the Rafale "decision in national interest" would return the Modi government to power.

In a "point-by-point" rebuttal to Opposition allegations of irregularities in the purchase of 36 Rafale aircraft from France, Sitharaman, speaking in Lok Sabha for two hours, said the



Gives point-by-point reply to Rahul in LS, Anil Sharma

Ministry of Defence "has been functioning without dalals (middlemen) during five years of Modi".

Hitting back at Congress president Rahul Gandhi who had specifically targeted the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### BUSINESS AS USUAL



### THE EDITORIAL PAGE



BAN FREEBIES FOR VOTERS  
BY ARVIND PATAR  
PAGE 14



### 'Not necessary for media to be friends with Govt, but there should be no enmity'

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

UNDERLINING THE importance of credibility and courage in journalism, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said Friday that only "honest journalism" can strengthen the nation and make democracy "brighter and healthier".

"Everyone acknowledges that journalism is the guardian of

democracy, the barometer of democracy... The stronger the journalist and journalism, the brighter and healthier will be democracy. As long as the guardian is vigilant and fearless, democracy shines more," the Home Minister said, delivering the keynote address at the 13th edition of the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards in New Delhi.

Singh was speaking after presenting awards to 29 winners in 18

categories — across print, broadcast and purely-digital — for outstanding work done in 2017. Outlining his roadmap for Indian journalism and the challenges that lie ahead, the Home Minister said: "Only honest journalism does the job of strengthening the nation. It not only strengthens the nation but also India's democracy... I believe journalism should be fearless, unbiased with the national interest in mind.

These should form the basis for the test of journalism." To make his point, Singh referred to the role played by The Indian Express and its founder Ramnath Goenka during the Emergency. "Ramnath Goenka lit a lamp, kept the flame alive in a temple... By opposing the Emergency, the credibility of The Indian Express rose so much that the government felt the need to have the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Now, a woman from Sri Lanka makes it to Sabarimala temple

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 4

AS PROTESTS continued in Kerala over the entry into Sabarimala by two women, 47-year-old Sasikala from Sri Lanka became the third woman to make it to the hill shrine after the Supreme Court lifted the age-linked gender bar.

Sources said that Sasikala, travelling with her husband Saravanan entered the shrine at around 10.45 pm Thursday, minutes before it closed after the day's rituals. Sasikala, however, claimed Friday that police had



At the shrine in Sabarimala, Friday. PTI

turned her away though there were no protests from devotees. Taking a dig at the Sangh Parivar-backed Sabarimala Action Council, which held a hartal on Thursday to protest against the visit by two women CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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