

# If women can fly Rafale in IAF, why fewer of them in Army legal branch? SC asks Centre

NEW DELHI, May 14 (PTI)

IF A woman can fly Rafale fighter jet in the Indian Air Force, then why are fewer women officers in gender neutral posts of Judge Advocate General (legal) branch of the Army, the Supreme Court wondered recently and questioned the Centre's rationale on a 50-50 selection criterion.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan on May 8 reserved its verdict on the plea of two officers Arshnoor Kaur and Astha Tyagi, who despite securing 4th and 5th ranks respectively -- higher in merit than their male counterparts -- weren't selected for the JAG department due to fewer vacancies earmarked for women.

The officers challenged the disproportionate vacancies for men and women and said they could not be selected as there were only three vacancies for women out of the total six posts.

"Prima facie, we are satisfied with the case set up by the petitioner 1 Arshnoor Kaur," the bench noted while reserving its verdict.

The top court went on,

"Accordingly, we direct the respondents to initiate whatever action is required for the purpose of her induction in the next available training course for appointment as Judge Advocate General (JAG)".

The bench referred to a newspaper article that a woman fighter pilot would be flying Rafale aircraft and said in such a scenario she could be taken as a prisoner of war.

"If it's permissible in the Indian Air Force for a lady to fly a Rafale fighter jet, then why is it so difficult for the Army to allow more women in JAG?" Justice Datta asked Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, who was appearing for the Centre and the Army.

The bench was informed that the second petitioner Tyagi joined the Indian Navy during the pendency of the proceedings.

The top court then questioned the Centre for earmarking fewer posts for women despite claiming the posts to be gender



neutral.

Bhati submitted the induction and employment of women officers in the Army including JAG branch was a progressive process keeping in view its operational preparedness.

"To say the policy of intake of men and women officers from 2012 to 2023 in the ratio of 70:30 (or now being 50:50) as discriminatory and volatile of fundamental rights would not only be incorrect but will also transgress into domain of executive which is the only competent and sole authority for deciding the intake of men and women officers in Indian Army," she said.

The top court further asked why the posts were termed gender-neutral when women candidates with higher merit were not qualified owing to the vacancies still being bifurcated on gender. Justice Manmohan observed if 10 women qualified for JAG on the basis of merit whether all of them would be appointed as officers JAG branch.

# 52nd CJI Justice B R Gavai takes oath

■ Delhi Bureau  
NEW DELHI, May 14

**JUSTICE** Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai, who has been part of several benches that delivered landmark rulings including the one upholding the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 bestowing Special Status to Jammu and Kashmir, was on Wednesday sworn in as the 52nd Chief Justice of India.

The 64-year-old was administered oath by President Droupadi Murmu at a brief ceremony at the Ganatantra Mandap in the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

He succeeds Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who demitted office on Tuesday on attaining the age of 65. CJI Bhushan Gavai, who was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on May 24, 2019, will have a tenure of over six months and would demit office on November 23. He took the oath of affirmation in Hindi.

Soon after he took oath, CJI Gavai sought blessings of his mother Kamal Tai Gavai by touching her feet. He was greeted by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers and former judges. PM Modi lat-

er posted pictures of the swearing in on his social media handle, wishing him the very best of his tenure." the Prime Minister wrote on X. Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, J P Nadda and Arjun Ram Meghwal attended the swearing in ceremony along with former President Ram Nath Kovind. Born on November 24, 1960, in Amravati, Justice Gavai was elevated as an additional judge of the Bombay High Court on November 14, 2003. He became a permanent judge of the High Court on November 12, 2005.

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**CJI Gavai will have a tenure of over 6 months, would demit office on November 23**

President Droupadi Murmu looks on as Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai greets the audience after he took oath as 52nd Chief Justice of India at Rashtrapati Bhawan on Wednesday. (PTI)



# Balochistan is not Pakistan

## Baloch leader Mir Yar declares 'independence'

**Baloch seeks support from India and global community**

BALUCHISTAN, May 14 (ANI)

**BALUCH** representative Mir Yar Baloch on Wednesday declared independence from Pakistan, citing decades of violence, enforced disappearances, and human rights violations in the region.

In a post on X, he said, the people of Balochistan have given their "national verdict" and that the world must no longer stay silent.

"Tum Maroge Hum Neklengy, Hum Nasal Bachany Nekly Hain, Aao Hamara Sath Do. Baloch people across Pakistan Occupied Balochistan are up on streets and this is their national verdict that Balochistan Is Not Pakistan and world can't be a silent specta-



tor any more," he said.

He also urged Indian citizens, especially media, YouTubers, and intellectuals, to avoid calling Balochs "Pakistan's own people."

"Baloch Narrative!! Dear Indians patriot media, the YouTube comrades, the intellectuals fighting to defend Bharat are suggested not to refer to Balochs as 'Pakistan's Own People.' We are not Pakistani, we are Balochistani. Pakistan's own people are the Punjabi who never faced air bombings, enforced disappearances and genocide," the Baloch leader said.

Mir Yar Baloch also expressed full support for India's stand on Pakistan-occupied

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# Indian tourists boycotting Turkey and Azerbaijan

VARANASI, May 14 (ANI)

INDIANS are boycotting Turkey and Azerbaijan due to their support for Pakistan after Operation Sindoor, a military operation launched by India in response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

Over 15,000 bookings from Uttar Pradesh to Turkey and Azerbaijan have been cancelled, with travel agencies and airlines offering full refunds.

Dr Ajay Singh, National Convenor of the Tourist Guide Federation of India and Chairperson of the Varanasi Tourism Organisation, expressed that during Operation Sindoor, India saw unprecedented national unity, with people from all backgrounds standing together in patriotism. However, Turkey and Azerbaijan's support for Pakistan during this critical time has angered the Indian public, prompting travellers to cancel their tours to these nations.

Ajay Singh explained that the cancellations primarily affect outbound tourism to Turkey and Azerbaijan, with two-thirds of



bookings now cancelled.

The boycott is driven by national sentiment, with many Indians expressing outrage over Turkey and Azerbaijan's stance on the India-Pakistan conflict.

**RSS AFFILIATE CALLS FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST TURKEY:** RSS-affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) on Wednesday urged the Government to impose economic sanctions, suspend civil aviation links, discourage outbound tourism and re-evaluate diplomatic engagements

with Turkey due to its "unholy alliance" with Pakistan which directly compromises India's security.

**"NATION FIRST, BUSINESS LATER": EASEMYTRIP:** EASEMYTRIP Co-Founder Prashant Pitti on Wednesday said the national interest comes first and the business interest later, echoing the call for boycotting Turkey and Azerbaijan, after these countries openly supported Pakistan during the recent conflict with India.

## JNU suspends MoU with Turkey

NEW DELHI, May 14 (PTI)

**JAWAHARLAL** Nehru University has suspended an academic memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Turkey's Inonu University, citing national security considerations, officials of the university here confirmed on Tuesday. The MoU was inked on February 3 for a period of three years.

"We have suspended the MoU with Turkey's Inonu University. Under the pact, there were plans for faculty exchange and student exchange programmes, among others," a senior JNU official said. Inonu University, at Malatya in Turkey, had entered into the academic partnership with JNU as part of efforts to boost cross-cultural research and student collaboration.