

Loksabha Elections 2019 & more



OPPN RAISES DOUBTS OVER EVMS, CALLS FOR PAPER TRAIL



New Delhi LEADERS from 21 opposition parties announced on Sunday they will approach the Supreme Court to demand a minimum of 50% of votes cast in the ongoing general elections be verified with a paper trail, ratcheting up criticism of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) that has become a political flashpoint.

Andhra Pradesh chief minister and Telugu Desam Party chief N Chandrababu Naidu talks to media after meeting with Election Commission of India (EC) in New Delhi on Sunday.

At a press conference in Delhi, representatives of the Congress, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Samajwadi Party (SP), Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Left parties, among others, said that a large number of EVMS had malfunctioned during the first phase of polling on April 11, and that to restore the credibility of the electoral system, at least 50% of votes cast had to be checked with the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) system.

"We are going to politely seek politically in the country through a campaign and legally in the court that at least a 50% sample check is of vital importance. Otherwise a serious question mark arises on the process," said senior Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi, adding that the top court had "in principle" accepted the opposition's arguments.

Under VVPAT, a paper slip is generated showing the serial number, name and symbol of the candidate a voter has chosen, and displayed through a transparent screen for seven sec-

onds before getting cut and deposited in a box. In a ruling last Monday, the Supreme Court had asked the Election Commission (EC) to increase random matching of EVMS to VVPAT slips from one to five in a constituency. The decision had come on a petition by leaders from 21 opposition parties that had demanded 50% VVPAT verification.

Currently, a five-member team including the returning officer select the EVMS, where the vote count will be matched with paper slips.

The EC has come under heavy political fire from opposition parties since the end of the first phase last Thursday, especially from Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu, whose Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is fighting to retain control of Andhra Pradesh, the state with the largest chunk of Lok Sabha seats in the first phase.

The state is also holding simultaneous assembly elections. Naidu claimed that 25% to 30% of the EVMS malfunctioned during the initial part of the day, which led to polling going on till the early morning hours of Friday in some booths. "Is this democracy?" Naidu asked. On the day of voting, several people had taken to social media saying they were unable to vote because of EVM malfunction or because their names had allegedly been deleted from the voter rolls.

He said that the opposition parties would go for a fresh petition or a review petition. He said the results should be announced after counting 50% of VVPAT. "Why are the BJP and its allies

opposing the decision? They have to answer now. Why is the election commission not acting impartially? Ultimately, We are left with the court. Again, we will appeal to the court. We will ask the Supreme Court to do justice, to save democracy," Naidu said.

To be sure, in a press conference the night of April 11, the poll watchdog had said the percentage of EVM units replaced was 0.73%, the percentage of EVM control units replaced was 0.61% and the percentage of VVPATS replaced was 1.70%. In the Supreme Court, the EC had said that increasing the number of VVPATS would increase the role of manual counting, thereby leading to errors, and that it would lead to a logistical delay in counting and declaring the results.

"If you can see your cell phones, every six months you change it because the technology is changing. But here, for the last so many years, the same EVMS (have been used)," added Naidu. "We are raising doubts about the EVMS. The confidence of the voter can only be restored through paper trail machines."

He had met chief election commissioner Sunil Arora on Saturday but indicated that the meeting had not yielded a resolution. EVMS were first used for a nationwide election in the 2004 Lok Sabha polls.

"Questions were raised after the first phase of elections, we don't think the EC is paying adequate attention. If you press the button before X party, vote goes to Y party. VVPAT displays only for 3 seconds, instead of 7 seconds," Singhvi said.

Kejriwal accused the EC of not paying heed to the complaints of EVM manipulation. "The machines are not faulty but they are programmed like that. When they are detected, it is said the machine was faulty. It cannot be that every time a machine was found faulty, the votes invariably go to BJP. I am an engineer, understand technology. Have you ever seen TVs or refrigerators developing faults on such a scale?"

Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal said EVMS could be manipulated and it could even be demonstrated. "We will need a machine for it," he said.

Naidu also accused the EC of inaccuracies in its affidavit to the apex court, and pointed out that a number of developed countries – such as Germany and the Netherlands – had gone back to paper ballots.

"They are saying (it will take) six days to count an assembly segment. Is it fair? We were in paper ballot. It used to take 12 hours to 18 hours, or maximum 24 hours. I contested first election in 1978, only paper ballots. It is very simple also. It is a simple slip, at the top name of the candidate and symbol. You want to segregate, it is not much time. You can also count at the same time, it is very easy."

PM MUST SAY WHAT PROMISES WERE FULFILLED IN 5 YRS: GEHLOT



Jaipur Chief minister Ashok Gehlot said on Sunday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should talk about fulfilment of promises he made in last five years and achievements instead only speaking about nationalism and surgical strike.

"The entire country is proud of surgical strike. The country was also proud when Indira Gandhi divided Pakistan into two

and liberated Bangladesh; when 90,000 forces with arms had surrendered. Atal Bihari Vajpayee had to say that Indira is face of Durga," Gehlot said. "The Congress never took political mileage out of it, as there is a protocol. The country is proud of soldiers' valour."

He suggested that Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath should be booked for sedition for labelling the military as PM Narendra Modi's army.

"Yogi ji is saying, 'this is Modisena'. There should be a case of sedition on Yogi ji. If someone criticises the government, the person is directly called anti-national. But the anti-national person is he who, while being the chief minister, says 'Modijikisena' (Modi's army)," Gehlot told reporters here.

At a rally in Ghaziabad on March 31, Adityanath had dubbed the Army 'Modijikisena', triggering a political firestorm with the Opposition attacking the Uttar Pradesh chief minister for "insulting and humiliating" the armed forces.

"Where do you want to take the nation? What will happen in the country when soldiers will have their interference here like Pakistan?" Gehlot asked. He said Pakistan had military rule several times, but the defence forces were kept separate

from politics in India for the past 70 years. "Our Army protects the nation and fulfils duties," the Congress leader said, claiming that it was the first time the armed forces were being politicised.

The chief minister said recently some people wrote to the President of India that what is happening in the country should be taken seriously. He cautioned that the youth should be aware of the political propaganda on social media. "Our countrymen, particularly the youth, should not be misled. Modi and his team are brainwashing youths through social media. If you are misled, this will be dangerous for the country," he said.

Gehlot said citizens suffered during demonetisation. "They were asked to stand on queues, 300-350 people were killed. What wrong had they done? Black money changed to white from back doors of bank; naxalism and terrorism are still not curbed."

BJP spokesperson Mukesh Pareek said his party is talking of development of villages, farmers and the poor. In last five years efforts of inclusive development have been made; schemes made in last five years, be it Aayushman Bharat or Ujjwala, have focused on uplift of the poor, farmers' income has doubled; and MSP increased.

Focus on home districts, Congress tells ministers

Jaipur The Congress central leadership has asked the ministers in Rajasthan to focus on their home districts, instead of those under their charge, for better electoral prospects of the party in the Lok Sabha polls, said a senior leader familiar with the party's campaign strategy.

MLAS and the candidates who lost the assembly elections have been given the responsibility of publicity and management of voters till the booth level, the senior party leader said on condition of anonymity.

The high command has taken the decisions after discussions with the state leaders, he said. "Independent MLAS have also extended support to the party formally at a recent meeting of AICC president Rahul Gandhi; this is also a part of the party's election strategy. Most of the independent MLAS are party rebels; they have been given responsibilities for publicity and management till booth level."

The ministers have been asked to ensure coordination between the MLAS, those who lost assembly polls and the organisation, the leader said. "The ministers and MLAS have been told that performance will be the parameter to retain or get space in the government," he said, adding the Congress is geared up to achieve its Mission-25. Rajasthan has 25 Lok Sabha seats but the BJP swept all of them in the 2014 general election.

AICC secretary and Rajasthan co-incharge Vivek Bansal said, "Target for everyone has been set; all have to work and ensure

victory of party candidates in all 25 Lok Sabha seats. Everyone is accountable; Rahul Gandhi has told the ministers that candidates from their region should win and then only their place will be certain." He added, "The MLAS who want to get a place in the government should work hard and ensure candidates' win in their areas."

He said same parameter has been fixed for workers and leaders in the organisation.

"Those who will perform will get important role in the organisation and also political appointments," Bansal said.

Economic disparity increased at fast rate in BJP rule: Tiwari

Jaipur Congress leader Ghanshyam Tiwari on Wednesday said the Bharatiya Janata Party



favoured crony capitalism, and that 73% of the wealth generated in the country benefitted only 1% of the population. Addressing the media at the state Congress office, he said,

"Leading agencies have revealed that economic disparity has increased at a fast rate in the past five years... 67 crore people got only 1 per cent wealth generated in the country whereas 73 per cent went into the hands of 1 per cent people." He said for the making of the Congress manifesto, people from across the society, including experts and professionals

were consulted, and discussed with NRI representatives from over 12 countries. "Congress manifesto is based on peoples' expectations and it's not what a single person thinks. BJP has released its manifesto but there is no account or details of their work in last five years." Tiwari said Congress has promised Rs. 72,000 annually to 20% of the country's poorest. "BJP is opposing it but people have to understand that of the country total assets 75% is in possession of 10% people. The financial instability in the country has increased in last five years," he said. He said Congress Nyas scheme will allow the poor to get the amount directly in their bank accounts. He said the Congress promises an employment revolution for youth – half of the posts at the Centre are lying vacant and that the process of filling them will be started in one year. In addition, 10 lakh new posts of Sewa Mitra will be created at every Panchayat, no exam fee will be charged for government exams, and no government permissions will be required for three years to run a new business.

Tiwari said the Congress has announced that in one year, the 33% reservation for women bill will be passed in the Lok Sabha as well as the assembly.

"People are asking BJP of their promises but their leaders are trying to escape out and misguiding through new catch phrases. People have understood that BJP – what they say and do is different, and we are hopeful that Congress will win all 25 Lok Sabha seats in Rajasthan," he said. BJP spokesperson Mukesh Pareek said the Congress manifesto shows that they have no concern for the country and its security. "They want to weaken our armed forces, but for BJP it's nation first, and

accordingly the manifesto has been made. I believe now that Tiwari is in Congress, he can say anything, but if he asks his conscience, he will realize the reality," Pareek said.

SC directs parties to furnish receipts of electoral bonds

New Delhi The Supreme Court has directed all political parties to furnish receipts of political funding received through electoral bonds and details of identity of donors in a sealed cover to the Election Commission.

In an interim order, the apex court also directed all political parties to provide details of the amount of the bond and bank account of donors by May 31 to the poll panel. The apex court said it would examine in detail changes made in Income Tax law, electoral law and banking laws to make them in consonance with the electoral bond scheme and ensure balance does not tilt in favour of any political party.

BJP releases its manifesto "Sankalp Patra" for Lok Sabha polls

New Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party on Monday released its manifesto "Sankalp Patra" for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls scheduled to begin from April 11. Prime Minister Narendra Modi spelling out the three pronged vision that drives the BJP's Sankalp Patra. A document that spells out governance in continuity taking forward the achievements of the Government so far and spelling out the road ahead not just till 2022 but beyond.

Sachin Motors enters the 20th year

Udaipur A conference of private garage owners were



organized in Hotel Golden Tulip, on the occasion of entering the 20th year of Sachin Motors Pvt., An Authorized dealer of the Piaggio Bikes Vehicle Company. In which more than 40 garage

owners of the city participated

On this occasion, the service area manager of the company, Bhawanand Jha, told the garage owners about the low-down-payment scheme giving information about Four Wheeler Porter 1000 and Passenger and loading vehicles. Finally, Sachin Motors Director Subhash Singhvi expressed his gratitude. Piaggio Company is the most prominent in the country in the country and has made more than 2.5 million satisfied customers in the country.

Senior citizens dance on Holi songs

Udaipur Holi

meet ceremony was organized for senior citizens on behalf of Senior Citizen Club Muskan.



150 senior citizens, including 60 women, attended. The Club's General secretary Shyam Sundar Rajora said that on this occasion, senior citizens missed the days of their youth by presenting dance on Holi songs. KG Gattani & Shradha Gattani released Madhur Muskan, in this ceremony.

In the program, Ramesh Nagda and Sachin Bhandari, the artists of Fundamental Organization Creative and Performing Art, staged a posthumous short play and made a lot of laughter. The organization's Sachin Anil Dadhich, Director Shivraj Sonwal also attended this occasion. In the play, Shakuntala Saruparia was honored.

'BJP poll strategy moves around nationalism, Modi'

Jaipur After losing the Rajasthan assembly elections, the BJP faces the challenge to retain all 25 Lok Sabha seats it won last time. The party is betting on the issue of nationalism and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strong leadership to win the election.

The BJP's campaign is woven around the theme of national security and to projecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a strong and resolute leader, said the party leaders.

Rajasthan BJP incharge Avinash Rai Khanna, in an interview to HT, said that the election has become about nationalism. In this election people have to choose between a nationalist party and anti-national party. BJP is talking of uniting the country, while the Congress is talking of breaking up the country, he said. A BJP leader said after the Pulwama terrorist attack and Balakot air strikes, the party feels the mood in the country is in BJP's favour. The party's campaign is focused more on the issue of national security and development and other issues have taken a back seat. Another BJP leader said the party wants to keep the focus on national security and on the Prime Minister.

"This election is all about Modi. People want to vote for him as he has proved to be a resolute leader. Our aim is to highlight Modi's strong governance," he said.

He said keeping the focus on Modi also helps the party ward off anti-incumbency. "The issues of weak candidates, infighting, anti-incumbency will get submerged under the Modi wave. All workers are enthusiastic about working to ensure Modi's win," said the leader. At the organisational level, the party is focusing on strengthening the booth and on social engineering. Asked about the strategy, Khanna had said that the party had only one strategy win the booth, win the election.

The party right after the assembly election began a series of programmes such as bike rallies, youth meets, 'kamal diya abhiyan', 'merapariwar BJP parivar' to motivate workers and reach out to voter. Various units such as women's cell, Yuva Morcha, SC Morcha, ST Morcha and OBC Morcha too had different activities chalked out. Leaders are constantly holding meetings with booth incharges and workers.

With issues of dissidence and infighting coming to the fore on some seats, the party has tasked senior leaders to hold parleys with all parties and broker peace. Rajasthan election incharge Prakash Javadekar, Rajasthan incharge Avinash Khanna, state party president Madan Lal Saini, general secretary (organisation) Chandrashekhar, former chief minister Vasundhara Raje, leaders of opposition Gulabchand Kataria, deputy leader of opposition Rajendra Rathore among others are making tours of constituencies and stamping out dissidence.

The party has also appointed election incharges and coordinators for all 25 constituencies who are helping them with campaigning, logistics and voter outreach.

Election campaign by all political parties in full swing

New Delhi Electioneering by various political parties is continuing across the country for the second phase of Lok Sabha elections.

Top leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP Chief Amit Shah, Congress President Rahul Gandhi and BSP Chief Mayawati, are holding public meetings to garner support for their candidates.

Prime Minister Modi campaigned in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka yesterday, while Rahul Gandhi also addressed rallies in Karnataka. Amit Shah and Mayawati held public meetings in Uttar Pradesh.

Polling for the second phase will take place on Thursday. 97 constituencies, spread over 13 States and Union Territories, will go to polls in the second phase. Polling will be held in all 39 constituencies of Tamil Nadu.

Other Parliamentary constituencies where polling will be held in the second phase are: 14 in Karnataka; 10 in Maharashtra; 8 in Uttar Pradesh; five each in Assam, Bihar and Odisha; 3 each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal; two in Jammu and Kashmir and one each in Manipur, Tripura and Puducherry.