

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Arms, ammunition seized by CBI during search operation in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali

NEW DELHI, APR 26:

The CBI seized arms and ammunition, including foreign-made pistols, during its searches at multiple locations in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali on Friday in connection with an attack on an Enforcement Directorate team by a mob allegedly instigated by local TMC leader Shajahan Sheikh, officials said.

The team was attacked in Sandeshkhali -- a riverine delta bordering the Sundarbans -- on January 5 when it had gone to raid the premises of Sheikh in connection with an alleged ration scam.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) during its



probe got inputs of a large cache of arms hidden in Sandeshkhali.

On Friday morning, a CBI team started a search operation during which the arms,

including foreign-made pistols, were seized, the officials said.

On the orders of the Calcutta High Court, the central agency had registered three

FIRs related to the incidents on January 5.

The FIRs pertain to alleged attack on ED officers by a mob on the complaint by officers, allegations against ED officials levelled by the guard of suspended TMC leader Sheikh and a suo motu case registered by the Nazat police station about the attack on ED officers.

Sheikh was arrested by the West Bengal Police on February 29 in connection with the attack.

After the attack by a mob of around 1,000 people in which three ED officials were injured, a deputy director of the agency had given a complaint to the superintendent of police, Basirhat.

BJP snatched jobs from youth, failed to generate employment: Akhilesh Yadav

ETAH (UP), APR 26:

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday attacked the BJP over the issue of leaked exam papers in Uttar Pradesh and the alleged rising unemployment, accusing the 'double-engine' government of the party of ruining the lives of youths.

Addressing an election rally here in support of the party candidate, the SP chief said the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh deliberately leaked exam papers to avoid giving jobs to the youth.

"They have snatched your jobs and failed to generate employment. The youth must think seriously about this, the BJP has ruined one-third of your lives," the SP president said.

"Without jobs, the future of the youth is dark and they are facing bleak marriage prospects," he added.

Recalling how question papers of different exams were leaked in Uttar Pradesh recently, the SP chief alleged that the BJP did it deliberately as it did not want to provide jobs to the people.

Had they acted when the first paper was leaked, it would not have happened again. These people had



claimed that the exams would be conducted safely, he said.

He said the 'Agniveer' scheme has put the safety of the country in jeopardy and asked the youth to ensure the victory of the INDIA bloc if it wanted to bring back the earlier system of recruitment to the army.

Pointing at a group of police personnel deployed at the venue of the rally, he said, "Those in khaki uniforms (police) think their jobs are permanent, but if the BJP comes, they will have jobs only for three years."

Attacking the BJP over the issue of farm laws, he said the

farmers are unhappy even today as they are not getting the right price for their produce. Industrialists with huge warehouses are purchasing their produce and controlling the prices, he said.

Yadav alleged that the free ration being provided by the government to the poor is of inferior quality.

On electoral bonds, he said, "It is not donation but extortion. People often help each other with donations but does give Rs 1,000 crore?"

The BJP people do not want to talk about it. This too is a reason behind the rising inflation. If someone gives

you money, will he not realise it?"

The SP president, who saw several of his allies parting ways in the run-up to the elections, said, "Those gone have not left us. We will win the election and bring them to our side."

Promising to waive loans of farmers once the INDIA bloc is voted to power, Yadav said Rs 16 lakh crore loans of capitalists were waived by the ruling party.

"Does it happen anywhere else in the world? I am telling the poor and farmers that when INDIA will come into power, the loans of farmers will be waived," he said.

Describing these elections as 'samvidhan manthan', he said, "On the one side are those who want to save the Constitution and on the other are 'samvidhan bhakshak' who want to abolish the Constitution."

The BJP has fielded Rajeev Singh, son of late former Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, from Etah while the Congress-backed Samajwadi Party candidate is Devesh Shukla. The Voting will be held in the third phase on May 7.

"PM is scared, may even shed tears on stage.": Rahul Gandhi's fresh salvo at Modi

VIJAYAPURA (KARNATAKA), APR 26:

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday took potshots at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his attack on the grand old party, saying he is scared and may even shed tears on the stage.

"You have heard the Prime Minister's speeches. He is scared. It's possible that he may shed tears on stage," Gandhi said addressing a public gathering in this district headquarters town in the party-governed State.

Modi has targeted the Congress on a variety of issues in recent campaign rallies, including "mangalsutra", "redistribution of wealth" and "inheritance tax" charges.

The former Congress chief accused Modi of 'diverting public attention' through various means.

"Modi tries to divert your attention. Sometimes he talks about China and Pakistan, and sometimes he will make you beat plates and ask you to switch on the torch



light of your mobile phones," Gandhi said. He pointed out that there are three to four core issues in India including poverty, unemployment and price rise. Gandhi claimed that only Congress can eradicate unemployment, contain price rise and give people their due share.

"Modi has only snatched money from poor people. He has made some billionaires. There are 22 people who have wealth equivalent to the 70 crore people of the country. Just one per cent people

are controlling 40 per cent of the wealth of the nation," he alleged.

Gandhi said in the present scheme of things, there is "no scope" for Dalits, OBCs, tribals, minorities and poor general category people.

"I will just tell you a clear thing in a simple one line. The wealth Modi has given to those billionaires, the same money we are going to give to the poor people of the country," he added.

The Congress leader also promised the youth that his

party will scrap the 'Agniveer' scheme if it is voted to power.

He dubbed the 'Agniveer' scheme in the armed forces offering three years services to the youth from 18 years to 21 years as an insult to the Army and soldiers.

"Narendra Modi snatched the Army jobs from the youth of India. He brought the Agniveer scheme, which is an insult to the Indian Army and soldiers. We will scrap it," Gandhi said.

Gandhi charged Modi with imposing a faulty GST where he introduced five different types of tax, which are hefty.

Alleging that the PM was doing injustice to Karnataka, he said the Congress will change the GST and rectify the injustice meted out to the people of the state.

According to Gandhi, the ongoing Lok Sabha election was not general in nature. "It is not an election that used to happen earlier because for the first time in the history of India, a party and a person want to destroy the Constitution and democracy."

Don't be swayed by diversionary tactics, come out and vote to protect democracy: Mallikarjun Kharge to voters

NEW DELHI, APR 26:

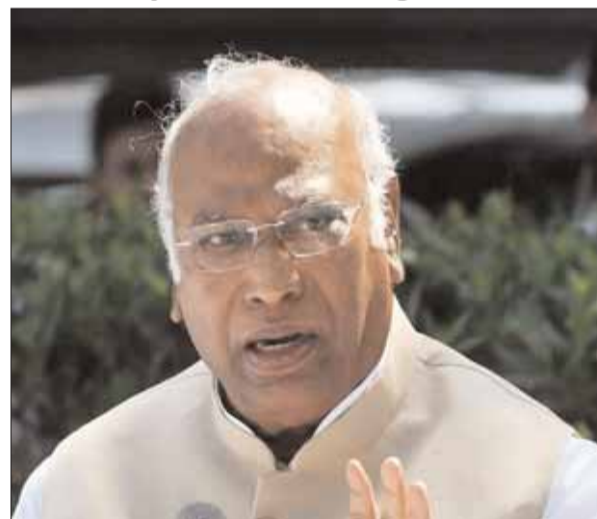
As polling for the second phase of Lok Sabha elections began, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday urged voters to come out and vote to protect democracy from the clutches of dictatorship.

In a fervent appeal to voters, he said this is not an ordinary election and they should not be swayed by any diversionary tactics.

He said the Constitution should reverberate in their hearts before they push to voting button.

Kharge also appealed to first time voters to come out in large numbers and vote as they were the real change-makers in this movement for democracy.

"We, the people of India"



this soul of the Constitution of India, should reverberate in your hearts and minds, before you push the voting button. Do not forget that this is not an ordinary election. It is

an election to protect Democracy from the clutches of dictatorship," he said in his message on X.

"To all my dear citizens, from 89 Constituencies in 13

States and UTs, do not get swayed by any diversionary tactics and lies.

"Always make your vote count. For it may change the lives of 140 crore Indians by bringing the paradigm of Yuva Nyay, Nariman Nyay, Kishan Nyay, Shramik Nyay and Hissedari Nyay," Kharge said.

Imagine a future where justice, freedom, equality and liberty is guaranteed, the Congress chief said, adding future where rapid inclusive growth and transformative policies are guaranteed.

"My dear first time voters, cut the clutter and distance the din, for you are the real changemakers and I welcome each one of you in this movement for Democracy," he added.

Services row: SC to consider listing plea of Delhi govt against central law

NEW DELHI, APR 26:

The Supreme Court on Friday told the Delhi government that it would consider listing its plea challenging the central government's law establishing pre-eminence of the lieutenant governor over the elected dispensation in controlling services in the national capital.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra was urged by senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the AAP government, that the whole administration has come to a standstill and the matter needed to be heard.

The CJI said presently a nine-judge bench matter is going on and he will consider the submission.

Presently, the nine-judge bench headed by the CJI is hearing petitions raising a vexed legal question whether private properties can be con-

sidered "material resources of the community" under Article 39(b) of the Constitution, which is a part of the Directive Principles of State Policy.

Earlier on February 9, the Delhi government had mentioned the plea for urgent listing before the five-judge Constitution bench. On September 27 last year, the top court had ordered that a common compilation of submissions be filed by both the parties in the petition by the Delhi government.

Prior to this, the CJI-led bench had permitted the Delhi government to amend its petition challenging the central government's ordinance establishing pre-eminence of the lieutenant governor over the elected dispensation in controlling services.

Amending the petition became necessary after the ordinance was replaced by a law.

It had taken note of the submissions of Singhvi that earlier the challenge was directed against the ordinance which later became a law after it was cleared by the two Houses of Parliament and got presidential assent.

Parliament cleared the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill 2023, also known as the Delhi Services Bill, that gave the lieutenant governor sweeping control over service matters. After the president gave her assent, the bill became a law.

The top court had earlier referred to a five-judge Constitution bench the Delhi government's plea challenging the Centre's May 19 ordinance which took away the control over services from the city dispensation and set off a fresh tussle between the two power centres.

The Centre had on May 19 last year promulgated the

Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 to create an authority for transfer and posting of Group-A officers in Delhi.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government termed it a "deception" with the Supreme Court verdict on control of services. The matter is still pending in the Supreme Court.

Before the ordinance was promulgated, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by the Chief Justice, in a unanimous verdict, had sought to put an end to the eight-year-old dispute between the Centre and the Delhi government triggered by a 2015 home ministry notification asserting its control over services, holding the National Capital Territory administration is unlike other union territories and has been accorded a 'sui generis' (unique) status by the Constitution.

that the accused persons were delaying the proceedings and that they were not willing to expedite the hearing.

Earlier, the court sent Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and BRS leader K Kavitha to judicial custody till May 7 in the case.

The ED alleged that Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is the major beneficiary of the proceeds of crime generated in the alleged liquor scam.

Excise policy case: Delhi court extends judicial custody of Manish Sisodia, others till May 8

NEW DELHI, APR 26:

A court here on Friday extended the judicial custody of AAP leader Manish Sisodia, co-accused Vijay Nair and others till May 8 in a money laundering case related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

The accused persons were produced before Special Judge Kaveri Baweja through video conferencing on the expiry of their judicial custody granted earlier.

The judge also directed the



Enforcement Directorate (ED) to submit a report on how much time it was likely to take to digitize the documents related to the charge sheet.

During the proceedings, ED's special prosecutors Naveen Kumar Matta and Simon Benjamin alleged