

# Beyond EVMs, CWC meet focuses on factionalism; Rahul urges Kharge to act

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Friday meet of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) may have focused on the electronic voting machines (EVMs) and the electoral process but party chief Mallikarjun Kharge bluntly put forth the issue of organisational weakness and factionalism affecting the party.

After Mr. Kharge mentioned how factionalism and the lack of unity was harming the party's prospects, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi is said to have urged him to crack the whip.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Kharge had said, "How can we defeat our rivals if we don't fight the elections unitedly and stop making statements against each other?"

Mr. Kharge also urged party colleagues to focus on "micro-communication" and learn lessons from the recent results to



Mallikarjun Kharge

evolve a strategy on effectively countering "propaganda and misinformation" by rivals.

"How long can you fight State elections, relying on national issues and national leaders," he asked.

The more than four-hour-long CWC meet also focused on the organisational weaknesses and the need to strengthen it at the booth level.

Several leaders talked about the organisational shortcomings in Haryana and Maharashtra, where the party had lost the elections.

Senior leader Mohan Prakash pointed out that

the party fought the Haryana elections without a proper organisational framework and even now, it has not been strengthened. The party is yet to appoint a Leader of the Opposition in the Haryana Assembly.

Senior leaders Pallam Raju and Harish Rawat were also among leaders who spoke about revamping the organisation from the grassroots level.

"The Congress Working Committee expresses its hope and confidence that the Congress president will complete the detailed State-wise reviews soon and take the necessary follow-up action. These matters need urgent attention both at the AICC level as well in all States," the CWC resolution read.

Speaking to presspersons after the CWC meet on Friday, K.C. Venugopal, party general secretary (organisation), said, "Whatever things we have not done so far, we are going to expedite all these decisions."

Dated: 01.02.2024

# BJP dares Cong. leaders to resign over EVM row

SC has endorsed transparency of electoral process on many occasions, says party spokesperson; on Bangladesh issue, Bhatia says it is India's duty to raise its voice when minorities are harassed

**Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI

**T**he Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday slammed the Congress for questioning the electoral process, saying its Chief Ministers and other elected representatives, such as Rahul Gandhi, should resign and declare that they would contest elections only after ballot papers are reintroduced.

"You want elections on ballot papers. First of all, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Revanth Reddy and Siddaramaiah should resign. They should say they were elected through EVMs, which is full of scandals, and that they will not take part in the electoral process till the ballot papers are introduced," BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said.

He said such a stand would underscore the Con-



**Throwing a challenge:** BJP leaders Virendra Sachdeva and Gaurav Bhatia at a press conference in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

gress's trust in the issues raised by its leaders, adding the allegations would otherwise be "empty words".

Mr. Bhatia said the Supreme Court had on multiple occasions endorsed the transparency of the electoral process and the integrity of electoral voting machines (EVMs). He said the voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) had a 100% record in matching the

The BJP leader said it

was ironic that Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge questioned EVMs on a day Priyanka Gandhi Vadra took oath as a Lok Sabha member.

## 'Strong voice'

Speaking on the targeting of Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, the BJP spokesperson reiterated the stand of the Indian government, that of protecting the rights of minorities, and expressed confidence that India's "strong voice" could

not be ignored. Mr. Bhatia said that as the world's largest democracy, it is India's duty to raise its voice when minorities are harassed anywhere.

On the Sambhal violence, he accused Samajwadi Party leader and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav of acting as a "shield" for rioters, and alleged that the party's members, including MPs, were involved in instigating violence rather than showing commitment to the restoration of peace.

Targeting the SP, Mr. Bhatia alleged that riots frequently broke out in Uttar Pradesh when the party ruled the State.

The BJP's reaction came after Mr. Yadav accused the ruling party in Uttar Pradesh of orchestrating violence in Sambhal where protesters opposing a court-ordered survey of a mosque clashed with the police last Sunday.

THE HINDU - ENGLISH  
Dated: 01.12.2024



## TNCC raises suspicions about EVM tampering in Maharashtra

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) president K. Selvaperunthagai on Saturday raised suspicions about possible EVM tampering in the recently held Assembly election in Maharashtra. In a statement, Mr. Selvaperunthagai quoted a recent interview of economist Parakala Prabhakar, who had said that there were unanswered questions about the sudden increase in voting percentage in the State after 5.30 p.m. Mr. Selvaperunthagai also said the BJP-led Central government collected a total of ₹36 lakh crore from people through additional taxes and cesses on petroleum products.

DECCAN CHRONICLE  
Dated: 01.12.2024

## MVA backs activist protesting Maha elections 'irregularities'

*Disbelieving tampering in EVMs was my mistake: Pawar*

SONU SHRIVASTAVA  
MUMBAI, NOV. 30

The MVA leaders on Saturday met and declared support to 95-year-old social activist Dr Baba Adhav, who is protesting against the alleged irregularities in the Maharashtra Assembly election including EVMs.

NCP founder Sharad Pawar, after meeting Mr Adhav, claimed that earlier he used to disbelieve claims of EVM tampering, but it was his mistake. He also alleged mis-

MR THACKERAY, who met Mr Adhav separately, said that even the ruling party leader came to meet the activist, which indicates that the ruling and the Opposition parties did not believe the state elections results

use of power and money in the Assembly elections. State Congress chief Nana Patole also spoke to Mr Adhav over the phone. He alleged that the Congress is not blaming the EVMs, but questioning the fairness of the

Election Commission.

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray along with his son Aaditya and Sanjay Raut also met the social activist. After the loss in the Assembly election, MVA partners have alleged that tampering of EVMs was one of the reasons for their defeat.

After meeting the social activist, Mr Pawar said that the figures of final voters turnout gave a shock to the MVA.

"Some people had given a presentation in connection with the discrepancies in the EVMs."



# EC agrees to review Cong. concerns on Assembly election in Maharashtra

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Saturday said that a transparent process had been followed in the Maharashtra Assembly election, even as it assured the Congress of a review of all legitimate concerns of the party, and invited it for a meeting on December 3.

On Friday, the Congress had raised "serious and grave inconsistencies", which it said were being revealed in the data related to the polling and counting processes for the recently concluded election.

The Congress's chief allegations pertained to "arbitrary deletion of voters and subsequent addition of over 10,000 voters in each constituency" and an "inexplicable increase in voting percentages from 5 p.m. to the final voter percentage declared by the EC at 11.30 p.m. on the day of polling".

In an "urgent memorandum" to the EC, the party had also urged the election body to grant an "urgent in-person hearing" to raise all its issues in detail.

In an interim response to the complaint, the poll body reiterated that a transparent process had been followed with the involvement of candidates and



The Congress had urged the election body to grant an "urgent in-person hearing" to raise all its issues in detail. PTI

their agents at every stage. It also assured the party of further review of all its legitimate concerns.

Regarding the voter turnout data issue raised by the party, the EC said that there had been no discrepancy in the data, which is available with all candidates polling station-wise, and is verifiable.

The gap in the 5 p.m. polling data and the final voter turnout was due to procedural priorities as presiding officers perform multiple statutory duties near the close of the poll before updating voter turnout data, it said.

**CONTINUED ON**  
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## EC agrees to review Cong. concerns on polls

As an additional disclosure measure, the commission's press note at around 11.45 p.m. was introduced during the Lok Sabha election earlier this year, and had been followed in all subsequent Assembly elections, it added.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), consisting of the Congress, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), and Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar), lost the Maharashtra election to the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance. The Congress managed to win 16 seats, while the Sena (UBT) bagged 20 seats, and the NCP(SP) won 10 seats.



# தயார்!

- காங்கிரசுக்கு பதிலளிக்க தேர்தல் கமிஷன்...
- தேர்தல் குறித்து சந்தேகம் எழுப்பியதால் அதிரடி
- வரும் 3ம் தேதி நேரில் வரும்படி அழைப்பு

புதுடில்லி, டிச. 1-

சமீபத்தில் நடந்த மஹாராஷ்டிரா சட்டசபை தேர்தலில் பதிவான ஓட்டுகள் மற்றும் மின்னணு ஓட்டுப்பதிவு இயந்திரம் தொடர்பாக, காங்கிரஸ் எழுப்பிய சந்தேகங்களுக்கு பதிலளிக்க தயாராக இருப்பதாகவும், வரும் 3ம் தேதி நேரில் வரும்படியும் தலைமை தேர்தல் கமிஷன் அழைப்பு விடுத்துள்ளது.

மஹாராஷ்டிரா மற்றும் ஜார்க்கண்ட் சட்டசபைகளுக்கு சமீபத்தில் தேர்தல் நடந்தது. இதில், மஹாராஷ்டிராவில் காங்., பெரும் தோல்வி அடைந்தது. இதையடுத்து, மின்னணு ஓட்டுப்பதிவு இயந்திரங்கள் தொடர்பாகவும், ஓட்டு சதவீதம் குறித்தும் காங்கிரஸ் கேள்வி எழுப்பியது. காங்கிரஸ் கட்சியின் செயற்குழு கூட்டம் டில்லியில் நேற்று முன்தினம் நடந்தது. அப்போது பேசிய காங்., தலைவர் மல்லிகார்ஜுன கார்கே, தேர்தல் நடைமுறை குறித்து சந்தேகம் எழுப்பினார்.

## கமிஷன் காட்டம்

இறுதியாக, செயற்குழுவில் தீர்மானம் நிறைவேற்றப்பட்டது. அதில், 'இதைத் தொடர்ந்து, 'ஓட்டு மொத்த தேர்தல் நடைமுறையின் செயல்பாடுகள் சமரசம் செய்யப்படுவதாக, காங்கிரஸ் நம்புகிறது. 'தேர்தல் கமிஷனின் ஒரு தலைப்பட்சமான செயல்பாடுகளால், நேர்மையான, சுதந்திரமான தேர்தல் என்பது கேள்விக் குறியாகி உள்ளது. 'இதை மக்களிடம் எடுத்துக் கூறும் வகையில், தேசிய அளவில் மிகப் பெரிய அளவிலான பிரசார இயக்கத்தை விரைவில் துவக்கவுள்ளோம்' என, தெரிவிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. ஏற்கனவே, ஹரியானா சட்டசபை தேர்தலில் தோல்வி அடைந்தபோதும், தேர்தல் கமிஷனின்

## 'பொறுத்திருந்து பார்ப்போம்'

தேசியவாத காங்கிரஸ் சரத் சந்திர பவார் கட்சி தலைவர் சரத் பவார் கூறியதாவது: மின்னணு ஓட்டுப்பதிவு இயந்திரங்களில் பதிவான ஓட்டுகளின் எண்ணிக்கையில் வித்தியாசம் இருக்கிறது. ஆனால், இதை நிரூபிப்பதற்கு எங்களிடம் தற்போது ஆதாரங்கள் எதுவும் இல்லை. மஹாராஷ்டிரா தேர்தலில் பதிவான ஓட்டுகளை மீண்டும் எண்ண வேண்டும் என, சிலர் கூறுகின்றனர். இந்த விஷயத்தில் என்ன நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க வேண்டுமோ, அதை எடுக்க வேண்டும். இதில் எனக்கு பெரிய அளவில் நம்பிக்கையில்லை. ஆனாலும், என்ன நடக்கப் போகிறது என்பதை பொறுத்திருந்து பார்ப்போம். இவ்வாறு அவர் கூறினார்.

நடவடிக்கைகளை காங்கிரஸ் கடுமையாக விமர்சித்தது. அதற்கு தேர்தல் கமிஷன் காட்டமாக பதில் அளித்தது. இதனால், கோபமடைந்த காங்கிரஸ் தலைவர்கள், இதுகுறித்து உச்ச நீதிமன்றத்தில் முறையிடப் போவதாக தெரிவித்தனர். இந்நிலையில், மீண்டும் காங்கிரஸ் குற்றம் சாட்டியதை அடுத்து, தலைமை தேர்தல் கமிஷன் அனுப்பியுள்ள பதிலில் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளதாவது: வாக்காளர் பட்டியலில் வாக்காளர்களை சேர்ப்பது முதல் அனைத்து நடவடிக்கைகளும், வெளிப்படையாகவே நடக்கின்றன. அனைத்து நிலைகளிலும், அரசியல் கட்சிகளின் பங்களிப்புடனே நடத்தப்படுகின்றன. ஓட்டு எண்ணிக்கை நடத்தப்படும் போது, ஒவ்வொரு ஓட்டுச் சாவடி

யிலும் கட்சிகளின் பிரதிநிதிகள் இருப்பார். அதுபோலவே, ஓட்டு எண்ணிக்கையின் போதும், கட்சிப் பிரதிநிதிகள் இருப்பார். இவ்வாறு கட்சியினர் பங்களிப்பு இல்லாமல், தேர்தல் கமிஷனின் எந்த ஒரு நடவடிக்கையும் மேற்கொள்ளப்படுவதில்லை.

## காங்கிரஸ் சந்தேகம்

இருப்பினும், மின்னணு ஓட்டுப்பதிவு இயந்திரம், ஓட்டு சதவீதம் குறித்து, காங்கிரஸ் சந்தேகம் எழுப்பியுள்ளது. எந்த ஒரு நியாயமான சந்தேகத்துக்கும் பதிலளிக்க தேர்தல் கமிஷன் தயாராக உள்ளது. வரும் 3ம் தேதி கட்சி பிரதிநிதிகளை அனுப்பி வைக்கலாம். அப்போது உரிய விளக்கங்கள் அளிக்கப்படும். இவ்வாறு அதில் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது.



D.T. NEXT

Dated: 01.12.2024

## Maha poll process transparent; will address Cong's concerns: EC

**NEW DELHI:** The Election Commission on Saturday asserted that all poll procedures it followed in Maharashtra were transparent and assured that it would review all legitimate concerns flagged by the Congress, which alleged serious inconsistencies.

In its interim response to the party, the poll authority invited a Congress delegation on December 3 to discuss concerns expressed by it.

The Congress on Friday raised with the Election Commission "serious and grave inconsistencies" which it said were being revealed in the data relating to the polling and counting processes for the recently-concluded Maharashtra Assembly polls and sought an in-person hearing to present relevant evidence.

In the response, the EC reiterated that the process was transparent with the involvement of candidates or their agents at every stage.

The commission also assured of a review of the Congress' legitimate concerns and a written response after hearing the party's delegation in person.

It asserted that a transparent electoral roll updation process was undertaken with the involvement of all political parties.

Responding to the issue regarding the voter turnout data, the EC asserted that there was no discrepancy in it and the data was available with all candidates polling station-wise and is verifiable.

The gap in the 5 pm polling data and the final voter turnout was due to procedural priorities, as presiding officers perform multiple statutory duties near the close of polling before updating the voter turnout data.

As an additional disclosure measure, an EC press note at around 11:45 pm was introduced during the 2024 Lok Sabha election and followed subsequently during all assembly polls thereafter, the poll body told the Congress.

### BJP dares Congress leaders to resign on EVM issue

**NEW DELHI:** The BJP on Saturday hit back at the Congress for questioning the electoral process, including EVM's integrity, saying its chief ministers and other elected representatives like Rahul Gandhi should first resign and announce that they will contest only after ballot papers are brought back. Such a stand will underscore their trust in the issues being raised by them, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia told reporters, adding that their allegations will otherwise be nothing but empty words. The Congress should move the courts over the issue too, he said, while stressing that the Supreme Court has quite a few times endorsed the transparency of the electoral process and the integrity of Electoral Voting Machines. Congress chief ministers, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should resign as they were elected through the same electoral process the opposition party is questioning, Bhatia said.



TIMES OF INDIA  
Dated: 01.12.2024

# EC to meet Cong team, hear out poll process complaints

## 'Electoral Roll Updation Is A Transparent Process'

Bharti.Jain@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Election Commission, in its interim response on Saturday to concerns raised by Congress regarding "arbitrary deletion and additions of voters" and increase in voting percentages between 5pm and 11.30pm on polling day in the recent Maharashtra and Jharkhand elections, reiterated that electoral roll updation is a transparent process conducted with the involvement of all political parties.

The commission also agreed to meet a Congress delegation to hear the party's concerns regarding the polling process, EC sources said.

While ruling out any discrepancy in turnout data, EC clarified — just as it had when similar doubts were raised by Congress during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections — that the gap



**SHOW OF STRENGTH:** Congress general secretary and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra greets supporters during a meeting on her first visit as a Member of Parliament, at Edavanna, Wayanad on Saturday

in the 5pm data and the final voter turnout was on account of procedural priorities, as presiding officers perform statutory duties near the close of polling before updating voter turnout data. EC underlined in the letter sent to Congress's law, human rights and RTI department, that the poll panel has, starting with the 2024 general elections, made it a standard practice to put out a press statement with updated voter turnout figures as of 11.45pm on polling day, as an "additional disclosure measure".

Even as EC, in its response, tried to allay the concerns raised by Congress, it agreed to

get the issues regarding the addition and deletion of voters examined. It not only agreed to convey its detailed and final reply to the issues raised but also granted an in-person hearing to the party delegation at 5pm on Dec 3. EC sources said the commission has agreed to meet a Congress delegation as it would like to hear what the party has to say on the concerns raised.

In its letter to Congress, EC reiterated that total votes polled at each polling booth were given by the presiding officer, before leaving the polling station, to authorised agents of candidates in Form 17C Part 1.

## Quit and then question electoral process, BJP tells Rahul, Priyanka

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The BJP on Saturday hit back at the Congress for questioning the electoral process, including EVM's integrity, saying its chief ministers and other elected representatives like Rahul Gandhi should first resign and announce that they will contest only after ballot papers are brought back.

Such a stand will underscore their trust in the issues being raised by them, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia told reporters, adding that their allegations will otherwise be nothing but empty words.

Congress chief ministers, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should resign as they were elected through the same electoral process the opposition party is questioning, Bhatia said.



MAHA IRREGULARITIES

# EC invites Cong for poll review

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

The Election Commission has invited a Congress delegation on Tuesday evening for a review of the issues raised by it with regard to the recently concluded Maharashtra Assembly elections. The Congress has raised two issues mainly — one, pertaining to the electoral roll revision and the other with regard to the polling percentage.

The Congress, in its complaint to the EC on Friday, mentioned the "perceived arbitrary deletion of voters and subsequent additions" and the "inexplicable increase in voting percentages from 5 pm to the final voting percentage" declared by the poll body at 11.30 pm on the day of polling as "inconsistent".

The EC, in its response, said roll revision is a continuous exercise. The voter list is prepared and finalised with close involvement of all political parties

## MVA LEADERS BACK ACTIVIST AGAINST EVMS

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
MUMBAI, NOV. 30

The Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders on Saturday met and declared support to 95-year-old social activist Baba Adhav, who is protesting against the alleged irregularities in the Maharashtra Assembly election including EVMS.

NCP founder Sharad Pawar, after meeting Mr. Adhav, claimed that earlier he used to disbelieve claims of EVM tampering, but it was his mistake. He also alleged misuse of power and money in the Assembly elections. State Congress chief Nana Patole also spoke to Mr. Adhav over the phone.

at every stage. However, the commission will still get the issue examined.

Times of India dated: 30.11.2024

# Congress to launch national movement against 'compromised electoral process'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Congress will launch a national movement against the 'compromised electoral process' that includes the EVMS, as the party's working committee on Friday blamed the institutional bias and electoral malpractices for the unexpected defeats in Maharashtra and Haryana polls.

Two days after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the country should junk the voting machines and revert to paper ballots, the Kharge chaired Congress Working Committee discussed the subject in detail and argued that a change in the poll process was necessary.



'ISSUE OF BIAS': Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party president Mallikarjun Kharge and others attend the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting at AICC headquarters on Friday

Sources said there were a couple of voices urging caution on attacking EVMS, even as they agreed on the issue of bias in the EC.

"The CWC believes the integrity of the entire electoral process is being severely compromised. Free and fair elections is a Constitutional mandate that is being called into serious question by the partisan functioning of the Election Commission. Increasing sections of society are becoming frustrated and deeply apprehensive. Congress will take up these public concerns as a national movement," stated the resolution passed by the CWC.

But given the backdrop of electoral setbacks which have punctured the euphoria triggered by a creditable Lok Sabha performance in a tough situation, the CWC urged the workers to not panic and urged them to work with unity.



THE HINDU - ENGLISH  
Dated: 01.12.2024

# A long road from beneficiaries to candidates

NEWS ANALYSIS

Nistula Hebbar  
NEW DELHI

Women voters have emerged as a key bloc in the Assembly elections in States such as Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand. Many direct benefit transfer schemes specifically targeted at them have created a vote category of women beneficiaries over and above caste and community considerations.

But with few women candidates contesting these elections and even fewer emerging victorious, are women meant to be just beneficiaries and not representatives?

In Madhya Pradesh, the BJP is said to have won the 2023 election due to the Ladi Behena income support scheme. However, the



Fighting Gender Gaps: Women showing their ink-marked fingers after casting their votes in Maharashtra Assembly elections. ANI

number of women MLAs went down from 30 out of 230 seats in 2013 to 27. In Maharashtra, despite the Laadki Bahin scheme being a talking point during the campaign, the number of women MLAs saw a decline from 24 in 2019 to 21. Clearly, women as a voting category are on a high, but that has not translated to getting a seat at the decision-making table.

Political scientists and politicians, however, are finding hope in the Women's Reservation Act, 2023. According to political scientist Ashwani Kumar, whose forthcoming book *Last Mile Welfare in India* tackles just such a subject, the rise of women as beneficiaries and a category of voter that surpasses other categories, only means "from a stan-

dard economic perspective, we can't predict women empowerment and representation in India".

"Unlike Mandal reservations and the BJP's non-Yadav OBC (Other Backward Classes) politics or Mandal 2.0, representation of women is being negotiated through universal and secular maternal welfare benefits. Thus, once the Women's Reservation Act, 2023 mandating 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies is implemented, I expect a kind of Keynesian social multiplier effects of maternal social welfare in India in terms of women's representation," he said.

Vinay Sahasrabudhe, BJP leader and former Rājya Sabha member, is of the view that direct benefit transfers to women are not "entitlements" but "empowerment", and that "assertions will rise because of it,

women will seek greater participation on the back of this empowerment".

He added that the Women's Reservation Act would help bridge the gap between women as having represented citizenship as a vote category to becoming representatives in Houses of Legislature.

For all this, however, capacity building within parties for women politicians is required, as is a decision from the top on giving ticket to contest as well, which, in a highly competitive environment such as electoral politics, is a tough proposition.

Mr. Sahasrabudhe has termed reservations for women in electoral bodies "State-sponsored feminism", but the prescription for flooding our legislatures with women requires just that – for women to go from beneficiaries of State benefits to lawmakers.



## Beyond EVMs, CWC meet focuses on factionalism; Rahul urges Kharge to act

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Friday meet of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) may have focused on the electronic voting machines (EVMs) and the electoral process but party chief Mallikarjun Kharge bluntly put forth the issue of organisational weakness and factionalism affecting the party.

After Mr. Kharge mentioned how factionalism and the lack of unity was harming the party's prospects, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi is said to have urged him to crack the whip.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Kharge had said, "How can we defeat our rivals if we don't fight the elections unitedly and stop making statements against each other?"

Mr. Kharge also urged party colleagues to focus on "micro-communication" and learn lessons from the recent results to



Mallikarjun Kharge

evolve a strategy on effectively countering "propaganda and misinformation" by rivals.

"How long can you fight State elections, relying on national issues and national leaders," he asked.

The more than four-hour-long CWC meet also focused on the organisational weaknesses and the need to strengthen it at the booth level.

Several leaders talked about the organisational shortcomings in Haryana and Maharashtra, where the party had lost the elections.

Senior leader Mohan Prakash pointed out that

the party fought the Haryana elections without a proper organisational framework and even now, it has not been strengthened. The party is yet to appoint a Leader of the Opposition in the Haryana Assembly.

Senior leaders Pallam Raju and Harish Rawat were also among leaders who spoke about revamping the organisation from the grassroots level.

"The Congress Working Committee expresses its hope and confidence that the Congress president will complete the detailed State-wise reviews soon and take the necessary follow-up action. These matters need urgent attention both at the AICC level as well in all States," the CWC resolution read.

Speaking to presspersons after the CWC meet on Friday, K.C. Venugopal, party general secretary (organisation), said, "Whatever things we have not done so far, we are going to expedite all these decisions."



Dated: 01.02.2024

# BJP dares Cong. leaders to resign over EVM row

SC has endorsed transparency of electoral process on many occasions, says party spokesperson; on Bangladesh issue, Bhatia says it is India's duty to raise its voice when minorities are harassed

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday slammed the Congress for questioning the electoral process, saying its Chief Ministers and other elected representatives, such as Rahul Gandhi, should resign and declare that they would contest elections only after ballot papers are reintroduced.

"You want elections on ballot papers. First of all, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Revanth Reddy and Siddaramaiah should resign. They should say they were elected through EVMs, which is full of scandals, and that they will not take part in the electoral process till the ballot papers are introduced," BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said.

He said such a stand would underscore the Con-



**Throwing a challenge:** BJP leaders Virendra Sachdeva and Gaurav Bhatia at a press conference in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

gress's trust in the issues raised by its leaders, adding the allegations would otherwise be "empty words".

Mr. Bhatia said the Supreme Court had on multiple occasions endorsed the transparency of the electoral process and the integrity of electoral voting machines (EVMs). He said the voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) had a 100% record in matching the

The BJP leader said it

was ironic that Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge questioned EVMs on a day Priyanka Gandhi Vadra took oath as a Lok Sabha member.

## 'Strong voice'

Speaking on the targeting of Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, the BJP spokesperson reiterated the stand of the Indian government, that of protecting the rights of minorities, and expressed confidence that India's "strong voice" could

not be ignored. Mr. Bhatia said that as the world's largest democracy, it is India's duty to raise its voice when minorities are harassed anywhere.

On the Sambhal violence, he accused Samajwadi Party leader and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav of acting as a "shield" for rioters, and alleged that the party's members, including MPs, were involved in instigating violence rather than showing commitment to the restoration of peace.

Targeting the SP, Mr. Bhatia alleged that riots frequently broke out in Uttar Pradesh when the party ruled the State.

The BJP's reaction came after Mr. Yadav accused the ruling party in Uttar Pradesh of orchestrating violence in Sambhal where protesters opposing a court-ordered survey of a mosque clashed with the police last Sunday.



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## TNCC raises suspicions about EVM tampering in Maharashtra

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) president K. Selvaperunthagai on Saturday raised suspicions about possible EVM tampering in the recently held Assembly election in Maharashtra. In a statement, Mr. Selvaperunthagai quoted a recent interview of economist Parakala Prabhakar, who had said that there were unanswered questions about the sudden increase in voting percentage in the State after 5.30 p.m. Mr. Selvaperunthagai also said the BJP-led Central government collected a total of ₹36 lakh crore from people through additional taxes and cesses on petroleum products.

DECCAN CHRONICLE  
Dated: 01.12.2024

## MVA backs activist protesting Maha elections 'irregularities'

*Disbelieving tampering in EVMs was my mistake: Pawar*

SONU SHRIVASTAVA  
MUMBAI, NOV. 30

The MVA leaders on Saturday met and declared support to 95-year-old social activist Dr Baba Adhav, who is protesting against the alleged irregularities in the Maharashtra Assembly election including EVMs.

NCP founder Sharad Pawar, after meeting Mr Adhav, claimed that earlier he used to disbelieve claims of EVM tampering, but it was his mistake. He also alleged mis-

MR THACKERAY, who met Mr Adhav separately, said that even the ruling party leader came to meet the activist, which indicates that the ruling and the Opposition parties did not believe the state elections results

use of power and money in the Assembly elections.

State Congress chief Nana Patole also spoke to Mr Adhav over the phone. He alleged that the Congress is not blaming the EVMs, but questioning the fairness of the

Election Commission.

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray along with his son Aaditya and Sanjay Raut also met the social activist. After the loss in the Assembly election, MVA partners have alleged that tampering of EVMs was one of the reasons for their defeat.

After meeting the social activist, Mr Pawar said that the figures of final voters turnout gave a shock to the MVA.

"Some people had given a presentation in connection with the discrepancies in the EVMs."



# EC agrees to review Cong. concerns on Assembly election in Maharashtra

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Saturday said that a transparent process had been followed in the Maharashtra Assembly election, even as it assured the Congress of a review of all legitimate concerns of the party, and invited it for a meeting on December 3.

On Friday, the Congress had raised "serious and grave inconsistencies", which it said were being revealed in the data related to the polling and counting processes for the recently concluded election.

The Congress's chief allegations pertained to "arbitrary deletion of voters and subsequent addition of over 10,000 voters in each constituency" and an "inexplicable increase in voting percentages from 5 p.m. to the final voter percentage declared by the EC at 11.30 p.m. on the day of polling".

In an "urgent memorandum" to the EC, the party had also urged the election body to grant an "urgent in-person hearing" to raise all its issues in detail.

In an interim response to the complaint, the poll body reiterated that a transparent process had been followed with the involvement of candidates and



The Congress had urged the election body to grant an "urgent in-person hearing" to raise all its issues in detail. PTI

their agents at every stage. It also assured the party of further review of all its legitimate concerns.

Regarding the voter turnout data issue raised by the party, the EC said that there had been no discrepancy in the data, which is available with all candidates polling station-wise, and is verifiable.

The gap in the 5 p.m. polling data and the final voter turnout was due to procedural priorities as presiding officers perform multiple statutory duties near the close of the poll before updating voter turnout data, it said.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 15

## EC agrees to review Cong. concerns on polls

As an additional disclosure measure, the commission's press note at around 11.45 p.m. was introduced during the Lok Sabha election earlier this year, and had been followed in all subsequent Assembly elections, it added.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), consisting of the Congress, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), and Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar), lost the Maharashtra election to the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance. The Congress managed to win 16 seats, while the Sena (UBT) bagged 20 seats, and the NCP(SP) won 10 seats.