



NEARBY



Mulayam probe was closed in 2013: CBI

NEW DELHI
The Central Bureau of Investigation on Friday made an oral submission in the Supreme Court that a preliminary inquiry against Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav in a case of disproportionate assets was closed in 2013.

NATION ▶ PAGE 5

Army veterans upset with 'politicisation'

NEW DELHI
Over 150 veterans, including eight former Service chiefs, have written to President Ram Nath Kovind expressing anguish at the "politicisation of the Army" in the run-up to the Lok Sabha election and seeking his intervention. On Friday, however, two former Service chiefs denied signing it and Rashtrapati Bhavan sources denied receiving such a letter.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

BJP likely to name Delhi LS candidates today

NEW DELHI
The Bharatiya Janata Party is likely to announce the names of its candidates for all the seven parliamentary seats in the national capital on Saturday.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES

Who bought electoral bonds, SC asks parties

Directs them to provide particulars to EC in sealed covers

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Rejecting the government's plea to steer clear of the electoral bonds scheme for political funding, the Supreme Court on Friday passed an interim order directing political parties to provide complete information to the Election Commission in sealed covers on every single donor and contribution received till date.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, said the issue of electoral bonds and their lack of transparency raised "weighty issues with tremendous bearing on the sanctity of the electoral process in the country."

In-depth hearing

It said the challenge to the scheme would require in-depth hearing and there was very little time for that now as the bonds would stop being issued by May 15 as per a Ministry of Finance schedule.

The court said its interim order was meant to ensure that the balance was not tilted in anybody's favour for the time being. It ordered the parties to forthwith provide the EC with "detailed particulars of the donors as against each bond; the amount of each such bond and the full particulars of the credit received against each bond, namely, the particulars of the bank account to which the amount has been credited and the date of each such credit."

Money Matters

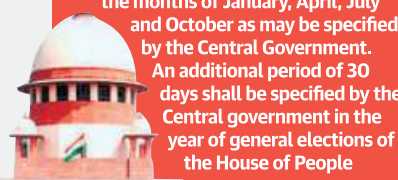
The Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, promulgated the Electoral Bond Scheme, 2018, via a notification on January 2, 2018, under Section 31(3) of the Reserve Bank of India Act

What is an electoral bond?

It is a bond issued in the nature of a promissory note, which shall be a bearer banking instrument and shall not carry the name of the buyer or the payee

What is its periodicity?

Under clause 8 of the scheme, bonds shall be available for purchase by any person for a period of 10 days each in the months of January, April, July and October as may be specified by the Central Government. An additional period of 30 days shall be specified by the Central Government in the year of general elections of the House of People



Details of further transactions made through the bonds till May 15 – the last date of their issuance – should be filed before May 30, 2019.

"The sealed covers will remain in the custody of the Election Commission of India, and it will abide by such orders as may be passed by the court," the court said. The CJI said the dates for final hearing would be announced at an "appropriate" time.

The directions come a day after the government claimed that voters need not know from where funds come to parties.

Lion's share went to BJP

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing the petitioner NGO, Association of Democratic Reforms, argued that 95% of the payments through the bonds had been routed to the BJP. The EC also submitted in the court on Thursday that the lion's share of contributions

through the bonds had gone to the ruling party.

Govt. justifies scheme

The government, however, justified the scheme as an experiment to eradicate the evil of black money.

It claimed that the impact would be known only after the Lok Sabha election. It should, meanwhile, be given a free hand to execute its policy and the court should not pass any order for the present, the government submitted.

The Centre's position was starkly in contrast to the stand of the EC. The EC had expressed reservations about transparency in political funding. It submitted that the electoral bonds legalised the anonymity of political donors and the parties receiving contributions.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

'BJP NEXUS WITH THE MONEYED

WILL BE EXPOSED' ▶ PAGE 8

CPI(M) EXPECTS SOME

ACCOUNTABILITY NOW ▶ PAGE 8

Things will go sour, Maneka warns Muslims

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

Union Minister Maneka Gandhi on Friday set off a political storm when a video clip went viral on social media, showing her telling Muslims that if they did not vote for her, she might not be responsive to their requests later.

"I am winning... But if my victory is without support from Muslims, I won't feel that good. *Dil khatta ho jayega* (heart will become sour). Then when a Muslim comes to me for work, I think let it be, how does it matter?" Ms. Gandhi said at a rally in Turabh Khani.

The District Election Officer has since served notice on Ms. Gandhi, giving her three days to respond. The six-time BJP MP is contesting from Sultanpur in U.P.

"It is all give and take, a negotiation, isn't it? We are not all children of Mahatma Gandhi, are we?" Ms. Gandhi is heard saying at the rally.

"I have already won the election but you will need me. This is your chance to lay the foundation. When the election comes and this booth throws up 100 votes or 50 votes, and then you come to me for work, we will see... do you all understand," Ms. Gandhi said.

The Minister's speech comes just days after the Election Commission issued a notice to Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati following a complaint from the BJP that she had sought Muslim votes during the *mahagathbandhan's* rally in Deoband.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Will go it alone in Delhi if AAP goes back on stand: Congress

Bottleneck after AAP sought seats in Punjab and Haryana

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday officially announced that it will be compelled to go it alone in Delhi if the Aam Aadmi Party wants Lok Sabha seats in States such as Punjab and Haryana.

P.C. Chacko, the All India Congress Committee in-charge for Delhi, however, kept a window open by indicating that the party wants to have an alliance to defeat the BJP.

"We are compelled to go on our own as AAP is going back on its stand," said Mr. Chacko at a press conference.

Three-four formula

Sharing details of the back-room talks that he and AAP leader Sanjay Singh were having, Mr. Chacko said the Congress had agreed to contest three of the seven Lok Sabha seats in the Capital, leaving four for AAP.

But the ruling party in



P.C. Chacko

Delhi then changed its stand and sought seats in Punjab and Haryana, said the Congress leader, describing it as an "impractical stand".

"We are still ready (for an alliance) if AAP is willing to have an alliance in Delhi alone. We want to fight the BJP together," Mr. Chacko said.

Names finalised

Late on Thursday night, the Congress had finalised four names, including former Union Ministers Kapil Sibal for

the Chandni Chowk seat and Ajay Maken for New Delhi. Former Delhi Minister Raj Kumar Chauhan was picked for North-West Delhi constituency and former Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee chief Jai Prakash Aggarwal for North-East Delhi constituency.

The names, sources said, had been finalised after a meeting of the Congress Election Committee on Thursday.

On the remaining seats in the Capital, names of former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit from East Delhi and Olympian Sushil Kumar from South Delhi were being considered. While the former CM and current head of the party's Delhi unit sought time for consultations, the wrestler's consent hadn't been obtained yet. The party had also zeroed in on former MP and Purvanchali leader Mahabal Mishra as its candidate from West Delhi.

SEE ALSO ▶ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

AAP enters into alliance with JJP in Haryana for LS poll

While AAP will contest 3 seats, the remaining 7 go to JJP

NIKHIL M. BABU
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party and the Jannayak Janta Party on Friday formed an alliance for the Lok Sabha election in Haryana and announced that the latter would contest seven of the 10 seats in the State.

The distribution of constituencies and the names of the candidates would be declared later.

The JJP was launched in December 2018 by Dushyant Chautala, grandson of former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala.

Making the announce-

ment at a joint press conference on Friday, Mr. Dushyant Chautala said it would be a long-term alliance and the two parties will fight together in the Haryana Assembly elections as well.

The decision came two days after AAP called off discussions for an alliance with the Congress as the latter was not ready to give AAP seats in Punjab, Chandigarh and Haryana.

"People of Haryana wanted this. Congratulations to the people of Haryana. Together, we will defeat BJP and work for development of Haryana," AAP national conven-

er Arvind Kejriwal said in a tweet.

Coordination panel

Mr. Dushyant Chautala said a coordination committee has been formed with members of both the parties and it will decide within the next two-three days on the seats on which the parties will contest.

"Jhadoo and chappal will come together to overthrow them from the area," Mr. Chautala said in a veiled attack at the Congress and the BJP. He termed it an alliance of "aam" (common) and "jan" (people).

Power of prayer



Kashmiri women praying at the Hazratbal shrine on the outskirts of Srinagar on Friday on the occasion of Mehraj-u-Alam. • NISSAR AHMAD

SC to hear plea against stay on Modi biopic

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear a challenge from the makers of the biopic *PM Narendra Modi* to the Election Commission's stay on its screening.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, said the case would be heard on April 15. The filmmakers argued that the stay violated their fundamental

right to free speech and expression.

"So now it is the other way round," CJI Gogoi remarked. His reference was to a plea by a Congress activist to stop the release of the film.

That petition said the biopic was "blatant propaganda" adorned as a work of art in violation of the model code of conduct. It was rejected on April 9.

Himachal Minister Anil Sharma quits Cabinet

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Himachal Pradesh Power Minister Anil Sharma tendered his resignation from the Cabinet on Friday, days after his son Ashray Sharma was announced as the Congress candidate from the Mandi Lok Sabha constituency.

The Minister was under attack from the BJP and facing an uneasy equation with Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur after he conveyed to the party that he would neither campaign against his son nor



Anil Sharma

canvass for the BJP candidate, Ram Swarup Shrama, in the Mandi constituency. He, however, said he was willing to campaign for BJP candidates elsewhere in the State.

Last week, Mr. Anil Shar-

ma's father, former Union Minister Sukh Ram, quit the BJP and along with his grandson joined the Congress. The Congress then fielded Mr. Ashray Sharma from Mandi.

The Minister told reporters in Shimla that he had resigned from the Cabinet but not from the party. "CM Jai Ram Thakur made some sarcastic remarks about me at the rally in Mandi on Thursday... following that I made up my mind to resign as I felt he has lost faith in me," he said.

DETAILED REPORT ON ▶ PAGE 11