



Hawk-eyed ECI could play spoilsport on districts issue

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SHIMLA, JULY 12

The Election Commission of India's (ECI) hawk-eyed attitude in keeping a close watch on all the announcements being made by the ruling BJP at present could prove to be a spanner in its proposal to create new districts to gain political mileage during the coming Assembly elections.

The two main political parties, the Opposition Congress and the CPM, today lodged formal complaints before Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) V Sampat and Election Commissioner HS Brahma regarding the move by the Dhumal regime to carve out new districts with an eye on the Assembly poll.

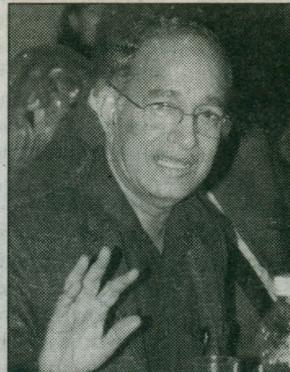
They also brought to the

notice of the CEC the decision of the state government of creating some tehsils and sub-tehsils recently.

"The commission is keeping a close watch on all the announcements of the state government even now, though action will be taken only after the model code of conduct comes into effect," said Sampat.

Representatives of all political parties, the Chief Secretary, the DGP, Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, Divisional Commissioners and Inspector Generals of Police of the three ranges met the CEC.

He along with Brahma made it clear that the commission would also take note of the postings and transfers of officers, especially with elections in mind.



V Sampat, CEC

"We have received complaints that the government has appointed officers of its choice against important posts in view of elections but we will ensure that no officer associated with the holding of elections stay in one place for over three years," he said.

Sampat said directions

had already been issued to the government with regard to transferring officers who had completed three years in one place.

The CEC said the commission would ensure holding of free and fair poll.

He said special attention would be paid towards strengthening of communication network in tribal and far-flung areas during elections to ensure smooth conduct of poll.

Sampat said though the task of preparing electoral rolls in the state had been completed, the commission had decided to give another six days for the same.

"As such, electoral rolls would now be finalised by July 18 and these would be published after giving final touches on August 9," he announced.



Election Commission of India

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NAME OF THE NEWSPAPER

THE HINDU

DATE: 13 JUL 2012

EC team visits Himachal

Staff Correspondent

SHIMLA: A team of the Election Commission led by Chief Election Commissioner V. S. Sampath visited Himachal Pradesh on Thursday and reviewed the election preparedness in the hill State.

They held a series of meetings with State Government officials and various political parties. In a brief media interaction, the CEC stated that various political parties suggested different dates for the coming Vidhan Sabha elections.

Mr Sampath said the date of elections would be decided after taking into account various

criteria like weather, festival season and preparedness on the part of the State Election Commission.

Some of the districts in the hill State receive early snowfall and the election process has to be completed before middle of November.

The BJP wanted the elections in two phases in the last week of December.

The Congress wanted the elections to be held as soon as possible and in one phase. The CPI (M), which is going to head a third front, suggested the dates between the last week of October (Dussehra) and second week of November (Diwali).