

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi

PRESS NOTE

No.ECI/PN/39/2017

Dated: 12th May, 2017

Subject: Meeting of all Political Parties on issues related to EVM/VVPAT and other Electoral reforms

The Election Commission held a meeting with all recognised National and State Political parties today at Constitution Club, New Delhi to discuss the following issues:

- (i) EVMs and VVPATs.
- (ii) Making Bribery in Elections a Cognizable Offence.
- (iii) Disqualification on Framing of Charges for the Offence of Bribery in Elections
- (iv) Suggestions on VVPAT Recount Rules.

07 National Parties and 35 State Parties attended the meeting.



In his inaugural address, Chief Election Commissioner Dr. Nasim Zaidi, underlined the contribution of all political parties and stated that systemic improvements and progressive measures aimed at improving the electoral processes and systems have been evolved by the Commission in cooperation with all political parties.

CEC referred the queries raised by some political parties about the incidents of alleged EVM manipulation at Bhind and Dholpur during the recently concluded Bye-elections, and reiterated that baseless perceptions were generated about these incidents and there was no case of biased vote results.

Commission highlighted the wide range of technical, administrative protocol and procedural safeguards that fortify the EVMs and VVPATs against any sort of manipulation or tampering. He said that Commission is open to hear suggestions on how to further improve integrity and credibility of EVMs.

CEC also informed the political representatives that the Commission will hold a challenge and offer opportunity to political parties to demonstrate that EVMs used in the recently concluded Assemblies elections were tampered OR that EVMs can be tampered even under the laid down Technical & Administrative Safeguards.

CEC stated that the Commission will ensure 100% coverage of VVPATs in all future election to the Parliament and State Assembly Elections. That VVPATs slips of a percentage of EVMs to be determined by ECI will be counted. ECI will soon evolve a framework in this regard. To make the election process more transparent, the Commission has made proposal for electoral reforms on misuse of money power and bribery during elections. The Commission has also made proposal for amendments in the Income Tax Act and in the RP Act, 1951, for enhancing transparency in the funding of political parties.

Dr. Nasim Zaidi urged the political parties to ensure their continuous and qualitative participation at all crucial preparatory steps for elections like FLC, Randomization of EVM/VVPAT/Polling personnel, EVM Preparation/candidate setting, Mock Poll, EVM Sealing etc. CEC also stressed that continuous involvement is the shared responsibility of all the stakeholders including the political parties.

CEC conveyed neutral stand and equidistance of ECI from all political parties as it has no favourite which has enhanced India's reputation in the eyes of Global Community.

A detailed presentation on EVM was presented by Shri. Sudeep Jain, Director General of ECI explaining therein its secured design feature, development process, stakeholders' participation at various levels, and administrative processes making the EVMs secure.



Representatives of the political parties presented their views & suggestions on each of the agenda items.

Commission assured the political parties that their concerns & apprehensions regarding EVMs have been taken note of and would be duly considered & addressed through forthcoming challenge and further necessary actions. In respect of other Electoral Reforms, their views/suggestions would be examined and further action would be initiated appropriately.

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(Dhirendra Ojha)
Director