

Press Note of ECI

In under a month of the assumption of charge as the 26th Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India, ECI led by Shri Gyanesh Kumar along with Election Commissioners Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Dr. Vivek Joshi has put the entire election machinery right up to the BLO level on a path firmly on course for promoting participation of all electors and ensuring a pleasant experience for them at the polling stations. Political parties, being key stakeholders, are also being involved at the grassroot level.

The Commission reaffirms that the nearly 100 crore electors always stand as the pillar of democracy. Technical consultations between UIDAI and experts of ECI are to begin soon. Though an elector can only vote in the assigned polling booth and nowhere else, the Commission has resolved to remove duplicates countrywide in EPIC numbers and end a decades-long issue within 3 months. Regular updation of the voter list shall be strengthened in close coordination with the birth and death registration authorities. In the Commission's interactions with political parties, it was clarified that any inclusion or deletion to the draft elector list is governed by the process of appeals under relevant legal provisions for filing claims and objections, available to all political parties in the Representation of People act, 1950. In the absence of such appeals, the list as prepared by the ERO prevails. It may be recalled that the ECI had on 7th March, 2025 clarified that merely 89 first appeals and just the sole second appeal was filed after the completion of the Special Summary Revision (SSR) exercise as of 6th-10th of January 2025.

Ensuring 100% enrolment of all eligible citizens, ensuring ease of voting and a pleasant voting experience are key objectives of ECI. Steps will be taken to ensure that no polling station has more than 1,200 electors and they will be within 2 Kms of the electors. Even in the remotest rural polling station, basic facilities (AMF) will be ensured. To tackle urban apathy and encourage

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more participation, clusters of high-rise buildings and colonies will also have polling stations within their premises.

In a major step towards comprehensive and continuous capacity building of nearly 1 crore election personnel, a two-day conference of CEOs of all States/UTs at IIIDEM was held in New Delhi on the 4th and 5th of March in which, in a first, DEOs and EROs of each of the State/UTs participated. The conference provided a thrust to energise the entire election machinery with a clear mapping of 28 stakeholders along with their responsibilities as per the framework set by the constitution, electoral laws and guidelines issued by ECI. Electoral handbooks and manuals for instructions will be harmonised with the most recent changes. Digital training kits in multiple Indian languages will be prepared for easy absorption and effective training of frontline functionaries. Animated videos and integrated dashboard will provide a digital push to training. A training module is being devised to train BLOs in days to come.

To ensure full participation of political parties in all aspects of the election processes, CEC Gyanesh Kumar during the CEO conference on 4th March had directed that regular all-party meetings and interactions be held by all the 36 CEOs, 788 DEOs, 4123 EROs. Such meetings across the country will help resolve any outstanding and emergent issues raised by the political parties at the grassroot level itself. This process will be completed pan-India by the 31st of March, 2025. The offer of the Commission to train political party representatives and their appointed BLAs on the due processes as per electoral laws including claims and objections to the voter list has been welcomed by political parties. The ECI has also invited suggestions from all political parties on any and all matters concerning the conduct of elections and they can send these by the 30th of April, 2025. The parties have also been extended an invitation to meet the Commission in Delhi at a mutually convenient time.

These bold and far-reaching initiatives span the entire gamut of elections and encompass all the key stakeholders in a participatory manner.
