

Clarification regarding deployment of EVMs and VVPATs in bye-polls

Posted On: 03 APR 2017 8:54PM by PIB Delhi

Certain baseless observations and allegations have been made by a leader of a political party today in a press conference regarding the use of EVMs. It has been alleged that EVMs as per law cannot be taken out for 45 days from the date of declaration of results but still EVMs for the bye-polls in the Madhya Pradesh were taken out and shifted from Uttar Pradesh where the results have been declared on 11th March, 2017 and hence the 45 days period is still not over.

The Commission would like to clarify the legal position. The EVMs comprising the Control Unit (CU) and Ballot Unit (BU) used in any election shall be kept in a strong room after declaration of results and shall not be accessed by anyone till the period of filing of election petition is over. The election petition has to be filed within 45 days. However, in case of VVPAT machines, the printed paper slips have to be retrieved at the time of counting and sealed in a paper envelope and only these sealed paper slips have to be kept inside the strong room alongwith the EVMs. The **VVPAT machines are not required by the law to be retained in strong room for the purpose of election petition and are available for use in any other election. However, in the on-going bye-polls only VVPAT machines which were kept in reserve and not used during the actual poll, have been redeployed.**

Aspersions have also been cast on the Election Commission of India that EVMs from Uttar Pradesh were moved to Bhind, Madhya Pradesh. The Commission would like to point out that these allegations are completely baseless and made without verifying the facts. **No EVMs have been moved from Uttar Pradesh for the purpose of Bye-polls in Madhya Pradesh.** Required number of VVPAT machines were moved from different States for use in Bye-polls as per the existing policy of the ECI. This is because 53500 VVPAT machines available with the Commission, were deployed during the recently concluded polls in five States, i.e., Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa and Manipur. For the bye-polls scheduled in 12 assembly constituencies in 10 States, the Commission issued orders to the respective Chief Electoral Officers for movement and allotment of VVPAT machines as follows:

S.No.	State	No. & Name of AC	No. of Polling Stations	No. of reserved VVPATs allocated	Shifted from State
1.	Assam	113-Dhemaji AC	273	410	Manipur
2.	Himachal Pradesh	36-Bhoranj AC	99	150	Uttar Pradesh
3.	Madhya Pradesh	09-Ater AC	288	435	Uttar Pradesh
		89-Bhandavgarh (ST) AC	264	395	Uttar Pradesh
4.	West Bengal	216-Kanthi Dakshin AC	258	390	Uttar Pradesh
5.	Rajasthan	79-Dholpur AC	219	330	Uttar Pradesh
6.	Karnataka	214-Nanjagud (SC) AC	236	355	Uttar Pradesh
			250	375	

		224-Gundiupet AC			Uttar Pradesh
7.	Tamil Nadu	11-Dr. Radhakrishnan Nagar AC	256	385	Uttar Pradesh
8.	Jharkhand	04-Litipara (ST) AC	272	410	Uttar Pradesh
9.	Sikkim	28-Upper Burtuk AC	16	40	Manipur
10.	NCT of Delhi	26-Rajouri Garden AC	166	250	Uttar Pradesh

The Commission would like to clarify that in any election a certain percentage of EVMs and VVPAT machines are kept in reserve so that EVMs and VVPAT machines deployed on the poll day can be replaced, if required. The EVMs and VVPATs kept in reserve also go through the stringent protocol of First Level Checking, Randomization and Loading of Symbols during the candidates setting in the presence of representatives of candidates/political parties. Hence, the VVPATs that were sent to Bhind had the previous symbols loaded from Uttar Pradesh. This is a standard protocol and there was nothing amiss in this. According to standard protocol, the old symbols are erased only during First Level Checking before the next poll. However, it was not done when the demonstration was made on 31st March, 2017 at Bhind. As per the Commission's instructions, any training or demonstration is commenced only after completing the First Level Checking which was missed out at Bhind for which Commission has replaced the District Election Officer.

The report of special officer deputed to inquire into allegations of multiple printing of paper slips of a particular political party at Ater (Bhind) is awaited and would be made public.

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