

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. ECI/PN/315/2025

04.10.2025

Press Note

Political Parties significant stakeholder of a strong democracy: CEC Gyanesh Kumar EC reviews poll preparedness for forthcoming Assembly Elections in Bihar

1. Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Shri Gyanesh Kumar along with Election Commissioners Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Dr. Vivek Joshi held a detailed and a comprehensive review of the poll preparedness for the forthcoming Assembly Elections in Bihar in Patna today.
2. During day one of the two-day review visit, the Commission interacted with the representatives of recognized national and state political parties namely Aam Aadmi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Bharatiya Janata Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Indian National Congress, National People's Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Liberation), Janata Dal (United), Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), Rashtriya Janata Dal and Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party and sought their suggestions.
3. CEC Shri Gyanesh Kumar termed political parties as a significant stakeholder of a strong democracy and called upon them to fully participate at every stage of the election process by appointing their polling and counting agents.
4. The Commission encouraged the political parties to whole-heartedly celebrate elections in a festive spirit along with the voters.
5. The Political Parties thanked the Commission for successfully completing the historic Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise and purifying the electoral rolls and reiterated their faith and trust in the electoral processes.
6. To maximise the participation of voters in the elections, Political Parties suggested that the elections be scheduled immediately after the *Chhath* festival and for the elections to be completed in as few phases as possible.
7. The Political Parties particularly praised the Commission's recent initiatives such as limiting the maximum number of voters per Polling Station to 1,200, ensuring that the counting of Postal Ballot votes is completed before the penultimate round of EVM counting and ensuring that Form 17C is distributed by the Presiding Officer (PrO) to the Political Party agents before leaving the Polling Station.
8. All the Political Parties expressed complete faith in the Commission, and in its fulfilment of the mandate to ensure free, fair and transparent elections.
9. Following the interaction with the Political Parties, the Commission held a detailed review with Commissioners, IGs, DIGs, DEOs, SSPs, SPs on every aspect of election planning, EVM management, logistics, polling station rationalisation and infrastructure, training of election staff, seizures, law and order, voter awareness and outreach activities.
10. The Commission also gave detailed instructions to the officers based on the suggestions given by Political Parties. The Commission directed all DEOs, SPs, state administration to act with complete impartiality and ensure prompt resolution of the complaints and grievances of the political parties.
11. All DEOs and SPs were instructed to monitor social media for fake news and to respond swiftly with appropriate legal action, if required.



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