

# **ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

*Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001*

No. ECI/PN/231/2025

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## **Press Note**

### **ECI marks several firsts in Bye-polls: Mobile Deposit Facility; Upgraded VTR sharing process; 100% Webcasting of Polling Stations**

The bye-polls to five Assembly Constituencies (ACs) held by the Election Commission of India (ECI) today witnessed successful implementation of several major new initiatives launched by the ECI in the past four months, as envisaged by the Chief Election Commissioner, Shri Gyanesh Kumar along with Election Commissioners Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Dr. Vivek Joshi. Bye-polls were held at the ACs of 24-Kadi (SC) and 87-Visavadar in Gujarat, 35-Nilambur in Kerala, 64-Ludhiana West in Punjab and 80-Kaliganj in West Bengal. During these bye-polls, polling was held at 1354 Polling Stations (PS) in the five ACs.

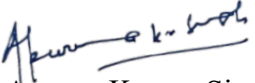
The new initiatives include the provision of mobile deposit facility for the electors at all polling stations, upgraded Voter Turnout sharing process resulting in faster updation of the approximate polling trends by ensuring that the Presiding Officer updates the VTR data at the close of poll before leaving the polling station, webcasting at 100 per cent of polling stations ensuring constant vigil of the entire polling process and individual mock poll training of all Presiding Officers. Also, Special Summary Revision (SSR) of the Electoral Rolls was conducted before the bye-polls for the first time in nearly two decades. The successful implementation of these measures in the bye-polls paves the way for full introduction of all these measures in the forthcoming Bihar Assembly Elections.

For the first time, voters were able to avail the mobile deposit facility provided by the ECI at the entrance of all polling stations. The measure is in recognition of the ubiquity of mobile phones in both urban and rural areas and the challenges faced by the voters particularly the senior citizens, women, and PwD electors as to where to leave their mobile phones before entering the polling station. Simple pigeonhole boxes or jute bags were provided at the entrance door of the polling stations where the voters deposited their mobile phones. Volunteers were deployed at the polling stations to facilitate the process.

The upgraded VTR sharing process was also successfully implemented where the Presiding Officer of each polling station was able to directly enter voter turnout on the new ECINET App every two hours on polling day in order to reduce the time lag in the updation of the approximate polling trends. This was automatically aggregated at the constituency level. The approximate voting percentage trends were published every two hours as before. Also, voter turnout data was entered into the ECINET by Presiding Officers immediately after the close of poll, before they left the polling station to ensure that the approximate percentage of votes polled would be available on the updated VTR App constituency-wise after the close of polls subject to network connectivity. Where mobile networks are unavailable, entries can be made offline and synced once connectivity is restored.

Previously, voter turnout data was collected manually by Sector Officers and relayed to Returning Officers (ROs) via phone calls, SMS, or messaging apps. This information was aggregated every two hours and uploaded to the Voter Turnout (VTR) App. At the close of poll, the Presiding Officer used to update the final VTR data after completing all other statutory responsibilities like filling up of various forms including 17C where he would take the signatures of the polling agents of political parties/candidates and hand over a copy to them, sealing and safe depositing of the EVMs in the strong room as per laid down procedures etc. Thus, the polling percentage trends were often updated hours later i.e. around 10-11 PM, based on physical records arriving late in the night or even the next day. The upgraded system of VTR updation would cut down this delay as now the Presiding Officer would be updating the data in ECINET before leaving the polling station.

The Commission has ensured 100% webcasting of poll-day activities at all polling stations, except one, in the five bye-poll ACs. The webcasting was monitored to ensure that critical activities were taking place smoothly and there was no violation of the poll process. Dedicated monitoring teams at RO, DEO and CEO levels kept a strict vigil on the poll proceedings.

  
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Assistant Director

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