

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

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PRESS NOTE

Special Observers (General and Police) deployed in six states - Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal,

Special Expenditure Observers deployed in five states- Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh

Special Observers to provide critical feedback and vigilant oversight for a level playing field

Recognizing the challenges posed by the influence of money, muscle, and misinformation, the Election Commission of India has appointed Special Observers for the General Elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies 2024 to oversee the electoral process with strict vigilance. Special Observers appointed are former civil servants with a brilliant track record of domain expertise and past experience with election processes. A briefing chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar along with Election Commissioners Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu was held on March 28, 2024 at Nirvachan Sadan, New Delhi.

Special Observers (General and Police) have been deployed in states of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar where the population is more than 7 crores along with States of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha where the simultaneous elections to the Assemblies are to be held. The Special Observers have been entrusted with the crucial task of supervising the randomization of personnel, security forces, and voting machines, thereby thwarting any attempts to subvert the democratic process and a level playing field.

With an unwavering resolve to clamp down on money power in elections and to strengthen the existing election expenditure monitoring, Special Expenditure Observers have also been deployed in States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha. The menace of money power and distribution of illicit liquor and freebies is also a concern for the Commission.

The roles and responsibilities of Special Observers are as follows:

1. Special Observers will station themselves at the State HQs and make a tour, if needed, to the Areas/Districts where sensitivity is high or necessary coordination is required.

2. They can seek requisite inputs from time to time from the Observers deployed in the Parliamentary Constituencies/Assembly Constituencies/Districts in the State, wherever necessary, without interfering in their work.
3. They will have a coordinated approach and make joint efforts in the concerned areas.
4. They will seek inputs and coordinate with Regional Heads and Nodal Officers of various agencies involved in monitoring activities.
5. They will have special focus in border areas and work on border sensitivities in plugging inflow of inducements and also work on seeking inputs on redressal of grievances of the public.
6. They will focus on qualitative monitoring like guidelines being implemented in letter & spirit, inter agency coordination, quick response to counter false narrative, ensure compliance of DOs & DON'Ts and careful monitoring of the last 72 hours before the poll, to ensure free and fair elections.
7. They will also participate in the meetings of DEOs /SPs /Law Enforcement Agencies to be conducted by the Commission or Zonal Deputy Election Commissioners to share their valuable inputs and past experiences.

The General and Police Special Observer deployed in six states are:

General Special Observer Sh. Manjit Singh, IAS (Retd) (RJ:88) and Police Special Observer Sh. Vivek Dube, IPS (Retd.) (AP:81) in Bihar.

General Special Observer Sh. Dharmendra S. Gangwar, IAS (Retd.) (BH:1988) and Police Special Observer Sh. N K Mishra, IPS (Retd.) (SK:88) in Maharashtra.

General Special Observer Shri Ajay V Nayak, IAS, (Retd.) (BH:84) and Police Special Observer Sh. Manmohan Singh, IPS (Retd.) (BH:88) in Uttar Pradesh.

General Special Observer Shri Ram Mohan Mishra, IAS (Retd.)(AM:87) and Police Special Observer Sh. Deepak Mishra, IPS (Retd) (AGMUT:84) in Andhra Pradesh.

General Special Observer Sh. Yogendra Tripathi, IAS (Retd.) (KN:1985) and Police Special Observer Sh. Rajnikant Mishra, IPS (Retd.) (UP:84) in Odisha.

General Special Observer Sh. Alok Sinha, IAS (Retd.) (UP:1986) and Police Special Observer Sh. Anil Kumar Sharma, IPS (Retd.) (PB:84) in West Bengal.

The Special Expenditure Observers appointed in the five states are:

Sh. Rajesh Tuteja, Ex IRS(IT) (1987) in Uttar Pradesh; Ms. Himalini Kashyap, Ex IRS(IT) (1985) in Odisha; Sh. B. Murali Kumar, IRS (Retd.) (IRS:1983) in Karnataka; Ms. Neena Nigam, IRS (Retd.)(IRS:83) in Andhra Pradesh; Sh. B. R. Balakrishnan, Ex IRS(IT)(1983) in Tamil Nadu.

The Commission deploys Special Observers under the plenary powers conferred on it by Article 324 of the Constitution. The Observers are entrusted with the crucial and solemn responsibility to ensure the fairness, impartiality and credibility of elections, which ultimately forms the bedrock of our democratic polity. These Special Observers not only help the Commission in fulfilling its constitutional mandate of conducting free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections but also to enhance the voter awareness and participation in elections. The main objective of Special Observers is to identify areas for improvements and to formulate concrete and operative recommendations.



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