ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

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Press Note

EC's crackdown on inducements; seizures cross Rs.1000 Cr in ongoing elections

Seven times higher seizures in Maharashtra and Jharkhand from 2019

Officials to maintain strict vigil on inducements over next two days: CEC

Enforcement Agencies under the Election Commission have seized over Rs.1000 crore worth of cash, liquor, drugs, freebies and other inducements in the ongoing elections to the State Legislative Assemblies of Maharashtra, Jharkhand and bye-polls.

Overall Rs 858 crores worth of seizures have been reported for the states of Maharashtra and Jharkhand, which is 7 times the seizures done during the assembly elections in 2019. In 2019 Assembly elections, Maharashtra recorded seizures worth Rs. 103.61 crores while for Jharkhand it was Rs. 18.76 crores.

State	Cash (Rs. crore)	Liquor (Rs. Crore)	Drugs (Rs. Crore)	Precious Metals (Rs. Crore)	Freebies (Rs. Crore)	Total (Rs. Crore)
Maharashtra	153.48	71.13	72.14	282.49	80.94	660.18
Jharkhand	14.84	7.84	14.84	8.38	152.22	198.12
By Polls- 14 States	13.65	40.86	36.59	11.21	121.60	223.91
Total	181.97	119.83	123.57	302.08	354.76	1082.2

The Commission led by CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar along with ECs Sh. Gyanesh Kumar and Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu during the review meetings with enforcement agencies, central observers briefing and senior officials from neighbouring states had consistently conveyed curbing the role of money power in the elections resulting in increased volume of seizures. CEC Rajiv Kumar has directed all officials including CEO, DEOs, SPs and Observers to continue strict watch over next two days and curb distribution of any inducements till polling is complete.

In Maharashtra, seizures were recorded in all cohorts across all districts, much higher than previous assembly elections. A few noteworthy operations included seizure of Rs. 3.70 crores of cash from a suspicious Jeep in Wada police station area in Palghar District. In another noteworthy incident, in Jamod AC of Buldhana district, 4500 kg of Ganja plants worth Rs 4.51 crores were seized. In Raigad, Rs. 5.20 crores worth of silver bars were seized.

Silver bars and Gold seized in Raigarh district; Heavy cash seized in Hingoli district

Liquor consignment worth Rs 1.02 cr seized in coastal belt of Ratnagiri

Jharkhand also witnessed record seizures and this time focus was also to curb illicit mining activities which resulted in seizures of illegal mining materials and machines involved. In a single incident, Rs. 2.26 crores worth of illegal mining material was seized in Rajmahal AC in Sahibganj district and many such actions included seizures related to illegal mining activities. Another focus area was to have strict vigil over drugs movement from neighbouring state. In Daltonganj, 687 kg of Poppy straw was seized, while in Hazaribagh 48.18 Kg of Marijuana was seized.

Seized illegal mining equipment in Sahibganj district

824 Kg of opium poppy straw consignment in sacks seized from Khunti district

Even in bye-elections, tightened vigil has resulted in significant seizures in all cohorts. Amongst big seizure incidents, in Rajasthan, 449 cartons of liquor consignment was seized at Nagaur while in transit from one neighbouring state to another. The cartons were hidden behind many layers of boxes of potatoes.

Liquor and drugs enroute neighbouring state intercepted and seized in Nagaur, Rajasthan

Background:

The surge in seizures involves an extensive monitoring process, which starts months before the announcement of elections. It included an array of activities like sensitising and reviewing enforcement agencies for more coordinated and comprehensive monitoring, marking of expenditure sensitive constituencies, ensuring adequate field teams, training on expenditure monitoring systems and appointment of experienced officers as Expenditure Observers. Information Technology is also heavily used through inhouse software ESMS (Election Seizure Management System) for real-time monitoring and sharing of information amongst multiple agencies for a wider deterrence.

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