

## 'Centre studying SC order on poll bonds'

# Sharad Pawar seeks urgent hearing in SC over EC decision

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

A day after the Supreme Court struck down the electoral bonds scheme as unconstitutional, government sources said the order "was being studied". While no precipitate action is being contemplated with the polls around the corner, the scheme had been brought to reduce black money in the electoral system, a source said.

"The election bonds scheme was brought in to reduce the magnitude of black money pre-2017, and inject white money into poll funding. That was the main aim of the scheme. Keeping information of donors anonymous was to provide comfort to the donors," said the source.

Asked if other models of poll funding like trusts that distribute contributions received by individuals to parties, were being looked at, the source said they had their "own challenges".

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"A strange situation is upon us. Sharad Pawar will be subject to the whip of Ajit Pawar when the Assembly starts next week," Mr. Singhvi submitted.

He said the circumstances were "worse" than what the Uddhav Thackeray faction had faced within the Shiv Sena when Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had rebelled with his camp of MLAs.

The Chief Justice assured that he would look into the plea for early listing.

Mr. Sharad Pawar had earlier moved the Supreme Court against the decision of the Election Commission (EC) to recognise Mr. Ajit Pawar's breakaway faction as the 'real' NCP. Mr. Ajit Pawar had joined the BJP-Shiv Sena coalition go-

vernment.

The EC said that it had come to a conclusion in favour of Mr. Ajit Pawar after testing the aims and objectives of the party's constitution, the test of the party's constitution, and the test of majority.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, for the elder Pawar, said his client's faction had still not been allotted a symbol.

# The clear message in the Court's 'no' to electoral bonds

**T**he judgment of the Supreme Court of India, on February 15, 2024, striking down the electoral bonds scheme, is a landmark moment. Democracy requires transparency and the fact is that the electoral bonds scheme was opaque.

Voters in India have no idea who has been funding political parties and the amounts given. In all leading democracies, transparency is the basis of campaign funding. The Court has restored that transparency.

## Funding limits removed

There are other legal issues. The first is the limit on funding by a corporate house or organisation. Again, the world over, this amount is limited to prevent undue influence on the government. We had such a provision in India before electoral bonds were introduced. The judgment says: "The chief reason for corporate funding of political parties is to influence the political process which may in turn improve the company's business performance..."

Electoral bonds also removed the earlier limits on how much of its profits a company could donate to political parties. The scheme even allowed loss-making companies to make donations. This could have opened the door for shell companies to be formed with the purpose of channelling funds to political parties. The Election Commission of India has said, "This opens up the possibility of shell companies being set up for the sole purpose of making donations to political parties." This too has been reversed by the Court.

Democracies went through a phase of crony capitalism, where big money funded political parties. In return, laws, policies, schemes and incentives were made for the benefit of the donors. In a limited way, the Supreme Court's judgement prevents this from happening in India. There was an Amendment to the Finance Bill. In any country, the central bank alone has the authority to issue currency such as notes and bonds. Section 31 of the Reserve Bank of India

(RBI) Act says "only the RBI or the Central Government authorized by the RBI Act shall draw, accept, make or issue any bill of exchange or promissory note for payment of money to the bearers of the note or bond".

"The Government amended the RBI Act using a Finance Act, and allowed under a new clause 31(3), the central government to authorise any scheduled bank to issue electoral bonds. This amendment to the Finance Act too has been struck down.

## A well thought-out plan

We need to pause for a minute to understand a few issues. The Amendment to the RBI Act was passed in a Finance Bill as this does not have to be passed by the Rajya Sabha. At the time of the introduction of the electoral bonds scheme, the ruling party did not have a majority in the Rajya Sabha and wanted to avoid a vote in the Upper House. But can any issue be inserted into a Finance Bill? Electoral bonds have nothing to do with the provisions for a Finance Bill. Again, a number of laws were amended to introduce the electoral bonds such as the RBI Act 1934, the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951, the Income Tax Act 1961, and the Companies Act 2013. It was carefully thought-out. It was in response to a Central Information Commission (CIC) ruling that political parties have to be completely transparent about their funding. The electoral bonds were introduced to bypass the CIC ruling. But why are political parties afraid of transparency?

The legal system remains opaque to the so-called ordinary citizen and voter. When four laws are amended to introduce a scheme that strikes at the root of democracy, namely transparency, layers of obfuscation are drawn over the scheme so that the citizen gives up trying to understand it. But these are not technical issues. These are issues that affect the very basis of democracy.

This also raises fundamental issues in a

democracy. Any government with a majority can



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pass any Bill, which becomes law. There is no concept of an independent vote in India and ruling party members have to vote in favour of the government unlike in the United States. This means that a few people at the top of a ruling party can get almost any law they want passed. In the case of electoral bonds, processes for public consultation, and discussions in Parliament were not followed.

## The essence of the judgment

The Supreme Court's judgment can be summarised as follows. The electoral bonds scheme has been struck down. All Amendments to the RPA, Act, the Finance Act 2017, and the Companies Act 2013 are violative of Articles 19 and 14 of the Constitution. Article 19 refers to the right to information, and Article 14 to the right to equality, where arbitrariness in law is not permissible. These Articles are part of the Fundamental Rights in the Indian Constitution and cannot be violated. The Supreme Court has directed the State Bank of India (SBI), the sole bank receiving funds in exchange for electoral bonds, to stop issuing them. The SBI has to submit the full details of all electoral bonds that have been issued so far, to the Election Commission of India (ECI) by March 6, 2024. In turn, the ECI has to publish this information on its website within two weeks.

We need to note that two constitutional bodies, the ECI and the Supreme Court, have acted in favour of democracy. The power of judicial review of laws passed by Parliament on the basis of the Constitution is precious. We need to applaud the Constitution and those who framed it.

The issue of money in elections, which

includes the use of black money and bribing of

voters using campaign funds and freebies

remains. It is said that the price of democracy is

eternal vigilance. The Supreme Court's judgment

is the outcome of vigilance by citizens. We need

Political parties, but it is up to us to ensure that

they work for the good of society and the nation.

**TIMES OF INDIA**

Dated: 17.02.2024

## False and baseless: CPM on electoral bond funding report

**TIMES NEWS NETWORK**

New Delhi: The CPM on Friday referred to as "false and baseless" reports that it had received funds through the electoral bond route. The Left party which asserted that the scheme was "unscrupulous" and "designed to help the ruling party", said it became a petitioner in Supreme Court against it because it did not accept any contributions through it.

"The party wishes to clarify that these reports are false and baseless. The fact is that the CPM has refused to accept electoral bonds on principle. That is why it did not even open a designated State Bank of India account as required by the law to accept electoral bonds. The CPM had appealed to Supreme Court against the electoral bonds scheme because of this basic opposition," the party said in a statement.

# How To Fix India's Election Funding

Two reforms. Make company donations to parties public regularly & in easy-to-follow data format. Hike funding for EC & change its funding status to that of SC, CAG

Chakshu Roy



Financial support to political parties has a chequered history in India. The striking down of electoral bonds scheme by Supreme Court is opportunity to rethink the framework regulating corporate contributions in our political process. Before this, taking stock of developments over the last 75 years is helpful.

**Old dilemma** | Elections require considerable resources. With rising electoral expenditure that parties could not meet through individual contributions and subscriptions, the issue of companies donating to parties arose in Parliament in 1959. GOI proposed Companies Act be amended to provide the mechanism and a limit (₹25,000) for companies to donate.

Several members of the parliamentary committee that examined the bill opposed corporate donations. Senior parliamentarian Minoo Masani summed up the apprehensions in two points. In his dissent note, he said, "In a controlled economy, government of the day has virtually the power of life and death over fortunes of business and industrial enterprises." There were two possibilities, he said.

**Money & power** | First, GOI could coerce a business house into donating to a party. Second, "selfish and unscrupulous elements in business seek advantages for themselves by getting into the good books of the ruling party in the hope of compensation in the months and years to come."

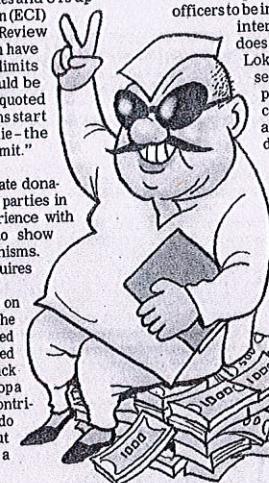
Parliament passed the bill in 1960, but by 1969, GOI had changed its mind. It introduced bill to ban corporate donations. Its statement of objects and reasons stated, "Such contributions have a tendency to corrupt political life and to adversely affect the healthy growth of democracy in the country". Like any ban, it didn't stop donations; the practice went underground and heralded an era of "briefcase politics". In 1985, corporate donations were again allowed.

**Expenditure limits** | Intrinsically linked to political contribution is electoral expenditure. India has a limit on candidate spend on poll campaigns. In 1951, when Parliament was debating the issue, an MP said, "In such a poor country as ours with a very low standard of living, money spent on elections should be rigidly curtailed. That alone will offer equality of opportunity to qualified and meritorious candidates who have not the support derived from wealth."

Expenditure limit in 1951 was ₹25,000 (for single-member constituencies). In upcoming Lok Sabha elections, candidates in large states can spend up to ₹95 lakh and in smaller states and UTs up to ₹75 lakh. Election Commission (ECI) and National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution have held that these expenditure limits are hardly adhered to and should be repealed. Many columnists quoted A B Vajpayee: "Indian politicians start their legislative careers with a lie—the false spending returns they submit."

**Build donor database** | Corporate donations are the resource base for parties in India and abroad. India's experience with expenditure limits has yet to show effective enforcement mechanisms. Regulating electoral finance requires rethinking on two broad fronts.

The first is to shine a light on contributions parties receive. The electoral bond scheme ensured donations received remained opaque. With the scheme struck down, it is opportunity to develop a living database of political contributions. Currently, parties do not share information about donations they receive in a machine-readable format.



**Open it to public** | Parties provide data in scanned PDF files, making it difficult to analyse. Creating this database will bring transparency regarding a party's support and lead better-informed electorate. In countries like US, compliance information provided by parties is in a format that has catalysed several citizen groups to track and make such information publicly accessible.

**Empower ECI** | A second rethink is about strengthening ECI. Its institutional budget is roughly ₹300 crore, with which it tries to fulfil its constitutional mandate of conducting free and fair elections for world's largest democracy.

ECI requires significant infusion of resources and officers to be insulated from political pressure and state interference. For example, currently, ECI does not have an independent secretariat like Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. An independent secretariat would allow it to control its personnel's recruitment and service conditions better. Multiple commissions and ECI itself have made this recommendation.

**Independence is key** | Another way to strengthen ECI's independence is to ensure its expenditure is "charged" to the consolidated fund of India. It would give it parity with Supreme Court, CAG and UPSC. Supreme Court is also hearing the matter regarding constitutional validity of a law Parliament passed last year, per which GOI may dominate selection process of election commissioner, which has implications for the institution's independence.

Transparency of political donations and an independent election commission are key to securing integrity of our elections.

The writer is Head of Outreach at PRS Legislative Research

## Bank rules may impede revealing poll bond info, say govt sources

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Prevailing banking norms could act as an obstacle in revealing the names of subscribers of electoral bonds, govt sources said asserting the scheme was brought to cleanse the system of funding of political parties and bring in white money.

Sources said the authorities were "studying" the order and weighing various options to deal with the aftermath of the order.

There were apprehensions that the order could trigger a flurry of legal challenges to the move to publish the details.

Supreme Court on Thursday had scrapped the electoral bonds and had called them unconstitutional. It had also ordered SBI to stop issuing the bonds and also publish the details of the purchaser of bonds, details of political parties which received

**The sources said the move to bring electoral bonds was undertaken to ensure that black money is wiped out and white money is used for political funding**

such bonds, date of purchase, name of purchaser and denomination.

The Election Commission has been asked to publish the details on its website. The sources said various options to cleanse the system of political funding had been examined in the past and the move to bring electoral bonds was undertaken to ensure that black money is wiped out and white money is used for political funding.

There are apprehensions that "black money" would again find its way in funding political parties in the upcoming general elec-

tions. The govt while issuing the instrument had said that electoral bond would be a bearer instrument in the nature of a promissory note and an interest free banking instrument. A citizen of India or a body incorporated in India will be eligible to purchase the bond, the department of economic affairs had said in a press statement.

**It had said that electoral bond would be issued/purchased for any value, in multiples of ₹1,000, ₹10,000, ₹1,00,000, ₹10,00,000 and ₹1,00,00,000 from the specified branches of the SBI.**

"The purchaser would be allowed to buy electoral bond(s) only on due fulfilment of all the extant KYC (know your customer) norms and by making payment from a bank account. It will not carry the name of payee," the press statement had said.

# 'To consider urgent listing of Sharad plea against EC'

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 16

The Supreme Court on Friday said it will consider early listing of a plea by veteran politician Sharad Pawar challenging an Election Commission order recognising the Ajit Pawar-led faction as the real Nationalist Congress Party.

Mr Pawar sought an urgent hearing of his plea after the faction led by his nephew Ajit Pawar got recognition as the real NCP and the prospect of MLAs loyal to him facing action for possible violations of whip.

The whip may be issued by the faction led by Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, representing the NCP founder, argued before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud to seek



Sharad Pawar t h e

February 15 order of Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narw ekar.

Mr Narwekar held that the NCP faction led by Ajit Pawar was the real NCP and that the anti-defection provisions in the Constitution cannot be used to stifle internal dissent.

On February 6, the Election Commission announced that the Ajit Pawar faction is the real NCP and also allotted the party's 'clock' symbol to the group.

"Now the Sharad Pawar

urgent listing of the plea.

Mr Singhvi contended the plea needed urgent listing in view of

group will be under the party whip when the assembly starts functioning... Our case is worse than Uddhav Thackeray as we have not been allotted any alternate poll symbol," the senior lawyer said and sought a hearing on February 19.

"I will just see," the CJI said. The special Maharashtra Assembly session is beginning on February 20.

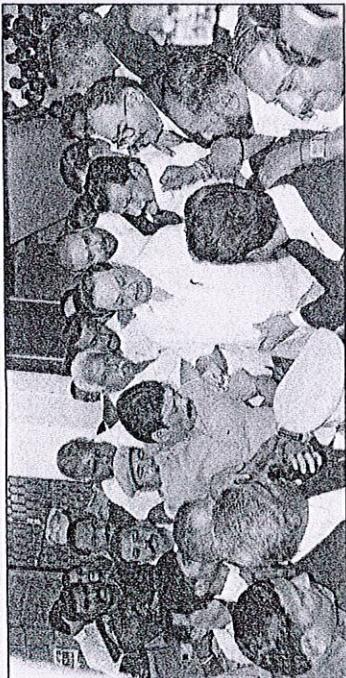
The senior Pawar, who founded the NCP with former Lok Sabha Speaker PA Sangma and Tariq Anwar in 1999 after their expulsion from the Congress, filed the petition.

Earlier, the Ajit Pawar faction had filed a caveat in the Supreme Court to ensure that no ex parte order is passed in favour of the Sharad Pawar group if the latter moves the top court.

## ELECTORAL BONDS SCRAPPED

The unanimous ruling by a 5-judge constitutional bench of the Supreme Court striking down the Electoral Bonds Scheme that allows anonymous and unlimited donations to political parties as unconstitutional and violative of the right to information has struck a blow for transparency and accountability in political funding and, by extension, democracy. There is no such thing as a free lunch. Corporate donations influence the government's policies and decisions. The BJP is the biggest beneficiary of electoral bonds with over 80%. Donations to the ruling party have denied a level playing field. Now that the country's top court has ordered the details of the 'transactions' hitherto be made public, we will come to know who has funded whom and how much.

G.David Milton  
Maruthancode



ஒந்துவேந வூளிக்காலை போன்ற மேற்கொண்டு  
ஒந்துவேந வூளிக்காலை போன்ற மேற்கொண்டு

**କେତେବେଳେ ଅନ୍ଧାରୀରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ମୁହଁକିଳେ ପରିଦେଖାଯାଏ ତୀର୍ପଟକୁଟି  
ପ୍ରିତି, ମାତ୍ରାନ୍ତରେ ମାତ୍ରାଟି, ନେମିମନ୍ତରକ୍ଷିତିରୁଥେ ଚାଲିଯେ ଲଞ୍ଜ ଉଠିଲାଗଣ  
ମାତ୍ରକିମ୍ବା ଅନ୍ଧାରୀରେ ଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ କିମ୍ବା କିମ୍ବା**

நான் அதிகாரியே தாக்கிய வழக்கு

ପରିବହନ କୁଣ୍ଡଳ, ପାରାମ୍ବଦ୍ୟ, ପାରାମ୍ବଦ୍ୟ ପାରାମ୍ବଦ୍ୟ

Sahajan Samaj of Marxist parties refused that no donations were received through election bonds

97 | சென்னை திட்டம்

୨. ଲିଙ୍ଗିନ୍ ଲାଲରୁକ୍ ନାଟାଣ ଅମେରିକାଲିଙ୍କ ମକ୍କଣ  
ତୋଳକୁଣ୍ଡ୍ୟ (୩୪ କୋର୍ଟର୍ ମେୟ ୧୪ ଲୀ-ସମ୍) ବିଲୀ ନମ୍ ନାଟାଣ  
ପାକକାଳୀରୁକ୍ ଲାଲାନୀରୁକ୍କଣକ କିଟ୍ଟକିଟ୍ଟଟ ମାତ୍ରମରୁ ଅନ୍ତିକମ୍.  
ବିନ୍ଦୁଧ୍ୟାଲିଙ୍ ଲାକ୍ଷକାଳୀରୁକ୍ ଲାଲାନୀରୁକ୍କଣକ ୯୬ କୋର୍ଟର୍ ମେୟ ୫୦  
ଲୀ-ସମ୍. ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରିଆ ଆଶ୍ରମକଣ୍ଠୀରୁକ୍ ୪୭ କୋର୍ଟର୍ ମେୟ ୭୦ ଲୀ-ସମ୍: ଲେଜନ୍ଡକଣ୍ଠୀ  
୪୭ କୋର୍ଟର୍ ମେୟ ୧୦ ଲୀ-ସମ୍. ରମ୍ଯନାରାମ ପାଲାନୀରୁକ୍କଣକ ୪୫ ଅଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକକୁ

44 பேர். நாட்டின் மக்கள் தொகையில் 66.8 சுதானிகள் பீர். வாச்சானர்களாக

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ପାତ୍ନୀ



D.5. அடுக்கிரி வெட்டுவை

உதவை செய்து கொடுத்து

மதுரை, பிப்ர-  
2011-ஆண்டு தேர்தலின்  
போது தாசில்தானை தாக்  
கீயதாக பதிகி· செய்யப்  
பட்ட வழக்கில் முன்னாள்  
மத்திய மந்திரி மு.காம்  
கிரி உபா. 17 பேர் விடு  
தலை செய்யப்பட்டனர்.

1. Madurai Court released three M.K. Thagiru along with 17 persons in the case of Arsalat

- on Sabiha D during 2021 elections.  
An article in Daily Tharoor regarding 3 times increase of voters than the population of O.S.A

ମାଝୀ, ଅତେମାଚ୍ଚର୍ଚାକର୍ଣ୍ଣକୁ

ଲୁହ ମାଟ୍ଟାମ୍ ଶାମିପୁର୍ତ୍ତିଳି, ଆ ତ୍ରୀ.  
 ମୁକ୍ତ, କାମିଲ କଣ୍ଠା-ନେ  
 କୁଟ୍ଟାମ୍ ନ୍ଯାନ୍ତକୁ, ତମି  
 ଦ୍ୱାରା ଅରମଶକ୍ତିରେ କଣ୍ଠାଧିତ୍ତ  
 ନିନ୍ତକ କୁଟ୍ଟାମ୍ ନ୍ଯାନ୍ତକୁ,  
 ଛିନ୍ତିଲ୍, ମୁଣ୍ଡଜୋଳିଂ  
 ଅରମଶକ୍ତିରେକେ. ପି.ମୁଣ୍ଡ  
 ଶାମି, ତନ୍ତ୍ରମଣି, ଶିଳ୍ପୀ  
 କଣ୍ଠ, ବିଶ୍ଵବିନ୍ଦମଙ୍କଣ, ଏମ୍.  
 ଆର୍.ବିଲ୍ଲୋପାଳ୍କର୍ ଉଚ୍ଚ  
 ବିଭି.ଟ - ଆ.କ୍ଷି.ମକ., ଲିନାର୍  
 ଟଙ୍କେନ୍ଦ୍ରନେର୍. ଦେବାତୁମକ୍କଣୁକୁ,  
 ପେରାକ୍ କୁ ଵରତ୍ ତୁ କୁ  
 ଛିନ୍ତାୟୁର ଶ୍ରମଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ  
 ଯତାକ, ଅବରକଣୁକୁ  
 ନାତିରାକ ଲୁହକୁ ପତିବ  
 କେବ୍ୟାପଟ୍ଟାତ୍.

**11 பீர்** முத்துராமவேங்கம் மாறுவார். அதில், தாக்கல் செய்தார். குற்றச்சாட்டில் முகந் திரம் இல்லை என்றும் கூறியிருந்தார். நீதிபதி மிம்மனு, நீதிபதி ஆண்ட் வெங்கடேஷ் ஆண்ட விசாரணைக்கு வர்ண முன் விஷயச்சு பெரிய தது. அமைச்சர் பெரிய கருப்பன் உள்ளிட்ட தோற்கொண்டு வர்த்தும் நீதிபதி முன், வெங்கடேஷ் கருப்பன் உள்ள நீதிபதி முன் அமைச்சர்கள் உள்ளார்கள். கோரி நீதிபதி முன் அமைச்சர்கள் உள்ளார்கள். கோரி நீதிபதி முன் அமைச்சர்கள் உள்ளார்கள்.

The Madras High Court Dismissed the case against the former minister Ghirmai Ponniah for campaigning in violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

60,000 லட்ச துணைப் படிக்க கேரந்தலூக்காக வெள்ளுதல்

**ବେଳକଣେ, ପିପ. 1-7-** ତମିଧୁକ ଅର୍କ, ରୋଶଙ୍କ କାଟେକଣିଙ୍କ, ଅରିଚି କାର୍ଦ୍ଦ ତଥାରକଣୁକଙ୍କ 1 କିଲୋତୁମ୍ବ ରୟ ପର୍ଯୁପ୍ତ, ପାମାଯିଲିଂ ଵ୍ୟାନ୍‌କ, କଣ୍ଠକଣେ, ପିପ. 1-7- କଣ୍ଠକଣେ, ଅର୍କ, ରୋଶଙ୍କ କାଟେକଣିଙ୍କ, ଅରିଚି କାର୍ଦ୍ଦ ତଥାରକଣୁକଙ୍କ 1 କିଲୋତୁମ୍ବ ରୟ ପର୍ଯୁପ୍ତ, ପାମାଯିଲିଂ ଵ୍ୟାନ୍‌କ, କଣ୍ଠକଣେ, ଅର୍କ, ରୋଶଙ୍କ କାଟେକଣିଙ୍କ, ଅରିଚି କାର୍ଦ୍ଦ ତଥାରକଣୁକଙ୍କ 1 କିଲୋତୁମ୍ବ ରୟ ପର୍ଯୁପ୍ତ, ପାମାଯିଲିଂ କଣ୍ଠକଣେ, ଅର୍କ, ରୋଶଙ୍କ କାଟେକଣିଙ୍କ, ଅରିଚି କାର୍ଦ୍ଦ ତଥାରକଣୁକଙ୍କ 1 କିଲୋତୁମ୍ବ ରୟ ପର୍ଯୁପ୍ତ, ପାମାଯିଲିଂ କଣ୍ଠକଣେ, ଅର୍କ, ରୋଶଙ୍କ କାଟେକଣିଙ୍କ, ଅରିଚି କାର୍ଦ୍ଦ ତଥାରକଣୁକଙ୍କ 1 କିଲୋତୁମ୍ବ ରୟ ପର୍ଯୁପ୍ତ, ପାମାଯିଲିଂ

Procurement of 60,000 Pairs of Pubs for Ration Shops  
Be free Elections for distributions.

Be fore elections for distributions.

## The Hindu (English)

Dated: 19.02.2024

# The enormity of the Indian electorate and its State-wise variances

The prospect of delimitation based on electorate variances in States will have to grapple with federal questions

### DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan,  
Rebecca Rose Varghese  
& Srinivasan Ramani

With 97 crore voters eligible to register their mandate in the general elections later this year, India will yet again go through a process confirming its status as the world's largest electoral democracy. The electorate will register a 6% rise this year in comparison to the number of eligible voters in 2019.

India's 28 States and eight Union Territories are home to a large number of voters comparable to some of the world's biggest nations. Map 1 shows the countries whose electorate numbers come close to those of the States in India, with the name of the country printed over the respective State.

For example, the electorate size of Uttar Pradesh (14.6 crore) is comparable to that of the world's seventh most populous country – Brazil. Maharashtra's and Bihar's electorates match those of Mexico and the Philippines, respectively. Even Goa's electorate size compares well with that of Bahrain and Cyprus.

There is also significant variance State-wise in the number of electors that the winning Member of Parliament represented in the Lok Sabha from 2019 to 2024. While an elected MP from Delhi, on average, represented 20.5 lakh voters, an MP from Uttar Pradesh represented 18.3 lakh voters, from Andhra Pradesh 15.8 lakh voters, and Tamil Nadu 15.4 lakh voters, the corresponding numbers for Kerala and Tripura were 13.1 lakh each. Map 2 shows the State-wise average number of voters for each MP there.

Table 3 lists out the constituencies that commanded the top five and bottom five electors among major States. Telangana's Malkajgiri (31.5 lakh) and Karnataka's Ban-

galore North (28.5 lakh) had the highest number of electors.

The variance across States in the number of electors that each elected MP represents is also a consequence of the frozen delimitation exercise, last conducted after the 1971 Census, that has not updated the numbers corresponding to the one-person-one-vote principle. This was done to encourage States which controlled the population effectively. But the idea of delimitation in its present form is fraught with consequences. It could affect States that have worked hard to limit their birth and death rates, and who could see their total number of MPs being reduced if the Lok Sabha size is retained in a prospective delimitation exercise or a modest rise in an expanded House compared to some of the most populous States which have not addressed the birth and death rates to the same extent.

A recent paper (Vaishnav et al, Carnegie endowment) pointed to the fact that U.P. and Bihar might gain 11 and 10 seats each if the size of the Lok Sabha is retained as it is, while Tamil Nadu and Kerala will experience a net decrease of eight seats each (Table 4A). On the other hand, if the Lok Sabha size is increased to 848 based on the projected population in 2026, the increase in the number of MPs for U.P. and Bihar will be 63 and 39 each, in comparison to 10 and zero for Tamil Nadu and Kerala (Table 4B).

This is why experts have cautioned against a delimitation exercise that could result in a skewed federal representation hurting the numbers for States that have done the most to address the issue of population explosion. Various ideas ranging from continuing the freeze in delimitation to retaining the size of the Lok Sabha and its representation as it is nationally while increasing the size of the State Assemblies in respective States have been espoused.

### One election, many issues

The maps and tables are based on data collated from the Election Commission of India and Ashoka University's Lok Sabha. Tables 4A and 4B are sourced from Vaishnav et al, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

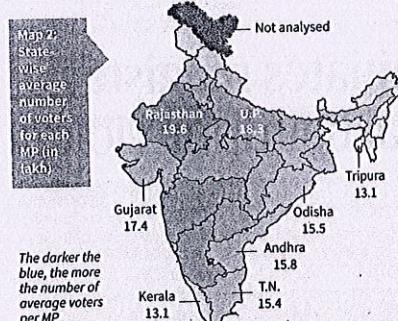


Table 3: Constituencies that commanded the top five and bottom five electors among major States

State	Highest electors per seat		Lowest electors per seat		
	Seat	Voters (lakh)	State	Seat	Voters (lakh)
Telangana	Malkajgiri	31.5	Assam	Autonomous	8.0
Karnataka	Bangalore North	28.5	Assam	Silchar	12.0
U.P.	Ghaziabad	27.3	Jharkhand	Khunti	12.0
Karnataka	Bangalore Rural	25.0	Kerala	Idukki	12.0
Telangana	Chevella	24.4	Kerala	Kottayam	12.1

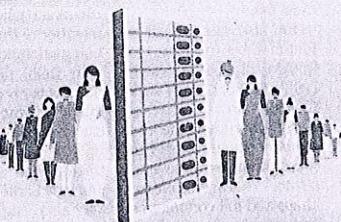


Table 4A: If the number of seats is retained at 543 and reapportioned among States based on the projected population in 2026

State	Seats at present	Seats projected	Net change
U.P.	80	91	+11
Bihar	40	50	+10
Rajasthan	25	31	+6
M.P.	29	33	+4
Tamil Nadu	39	31	-8
Andhra + Telangana	42	34	-8
Kerala	20	12	-8
Karnataka	28	26	-2
Punjab	13	12	-1
Himachal	4	3	-1
Uttarakhand	5	4	-1

Table 4B: If the number of seats is increased to 848 based on the projected population in 2026

State	Seats at present	Seats projected	Net change
U.P.	80	143	+63
Bihar	40	79	+39
Rajasthan	25	50	+25
M.P.	29	52	+23
Tamil Nadu	39	49	+10
Andhra + Telangana	42	54	+12
Kerala	20	20	-
Karnataka	28	41	+13
Punjab	13	18	+5
Himachal	4	4	-
Uttarakhand	5	7	+2

Dated: 17.02.2024

# SC to hear Pawar's plea over EC order on real NCP today

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 18

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea of Sharad Pawar challenging an Election Commission order of recognising the Ajit Pawar-led faction as the real Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

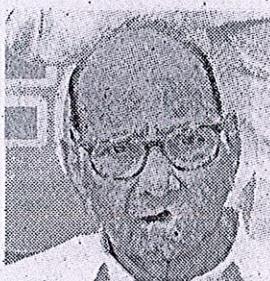
A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and K.V. Viswanathan is likely to hear Mr Pawar's plea.

On February 16, the top court had agreed to urgently list the plea after the NCP founder pleaded that a whip might be issued by the faction led by his nephew and Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar against the MLAs loyal to him.

The veteran leader had sought an urgent hearing of his plea in the wake of the setback by the group following the EC order and his MLAs facing action for violation of whip.

Mr Pawar had sought urgent hearing in view of the February 15 order of Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar, holding that the NCP faction led by Ajit Pawar was the real NCP, and that the anti-defection provisions in the Constitution cannot be used to stifle internal dissent.

On February 6, the



Sharad Pawar

Election Commission announced that the Ajit Pawar faction is the real NCP and also allotted the party's "clock" symbol to the group.

The special Maharashtra Assembly session is beginning on February 20.

The Maharashtra strongman, who founded the NCP with former Lok Sabha speaker P.A. Sangma and Tariq Anwar in 1999 after their expulsion from the Congress, filed the petition through lawyer Abhishek Jebaraj.

Earlier, the Ajit-led faction had filed a caveat in the SC through advocate Abhikalp Pratap Singh to ensure that no ex parte order is passed in favour of the Sharad Pawar group if the latter moves the top court.

Ajit Pawar had walked away with a majority of NCP MLAs in July last year and supported the Maharashtra government led by the BJP-Shinde's Sena alliance.

D.L.NEXT

Dated: 19/02/2024

## SC to hear Sharad Pawar's plea against election panel's order on real NCP today

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea of Sharad Pawar challenging an Election Commission order recognising the Ajit Pawar-led faction as the real Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and KV Viswanathan is likely to hear Sharad Pawar's plea. On February 16, the top court had agreed to urgently list the plea after Sharad Pawar stated that a whip may be issued by the faction led by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. The veteran leader had sought an urgent hearing of his plea in the wake of twin blows suffered by the group led by him and the consequential fear of facing action for possible violations of whip by his MLAs. Sharad Pawar had sought urgent hearing in view of the February 15 order of Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar. Narwekar held that the NCP faction led by Ajit Pawar was the real NCP and that the anti-defection provisions in the Constitution cannot be used to stifle internal dissent.

Deccan Chronicle

Dated: 18.02.2024

## Will go by SC verdicts on poll by ballot, electoral bonds: EC

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO  
BHUBANESWAR, FEB. 17

The Election Commission on Saturday said it would go by the Supreme Court verdict on publishing details on electoral bonds purchased since 2019. Besides, it also said that the poll panel would abide by the verdict of the apex court on the petitions seeking to hold general elections on ballot papers instead of the much criticised electronic voting machines (EVMs).

"The EC will go by the Supreme Court verdict on publishing details of the

electoral bonds. This apart, this body will also abide by the apex court's verdict on the petitions that have been filed demanding the holding of elections on ballot papers," chief election commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar said on Saturday while addressing a press conference here.

On February 15, while striking down the electoral bond scheme as unconstitutional, the Supreme Court issued a direction to the issuing bank (State Bank of India) to stop the issuance of

electoral bonds. Besides, it directed the bank to submit the details of electoral bonds purchased since the interim order of the court dated April 12, 2019 to date.

A team of high officials from the poll panel was in the state for two days to assess the poll preparedness of the state for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections and Odisha Assembly polls.

Mr Kumar said all arrangements had been made for putting in place webcasting facilities in 50 per cent of the polling stations in the state.

The Times of India

Dated: 18.02.2024

# Electoral bond: Cong dares BJP to disclose sources

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Coimbatore:** All India Congress Committee national secretary Szarita Laitphlang on Saturday said the Modi-led government at the Centre had misused the entire machinery to access details about the cash flow to the opposition parties through the electoral bond scheme.

## 'MISUSE OF ED, CBI'

While addressing the media in the city on the day, she also dared the Union government to disclose their sources. "In order to curb black money, the Union government brought in electoral bonds. From 2017 to 2023, the BJP got ₹6,566 crore in electoral bonds, whereas the Congress got only ₹1,123 crore. They knew how much

money the opposition parties were getting and from whom."

She also criticised the Centre for not keeping its electoral promises. "The BJP promised two crore jobs every year, which never happened. The BJP had also promised that black money stashed abroad will be brought back to India in 100 days. When it comes to doubling farmers' income, nothing has been done. Our farmers are protesting in Delhi."

She said the Union government was misusing all central agencies, be it CBI or ED, as per their convenience. "They have converted this country into a country of slaves. Very soon, people of this country will vote them out of power. You can't remove the Congress. The Congress is an ideology and you can't erase an ideology."

The Times of India

Dated: 19.02.2024

# ECI mandates CCTV cams at bars, clubs

**Clubs Across  
TN Rose To  
448 In The Last  
Few Years**

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Chennai:** Ahead of the parliamentary elections, recreational clubs and star hotels have for the first time come under the radar of the Election Commission of India which has instructed prohibition and excise departments to ensure Tasmac bars and FL2 and FL3 licence holders are

**The instruction given by the Election Commission of India is part of measures initiated to keep the expenditure by political parties under watch as well as to check if crimes take place in these places**

under CCTV camera surveillance.

The instruction is part of measures initiated to keep the expenditure by political parties under watch as well as to check if crimes take place in these places. The commissionerate of prohibition and excise has already instructed clubs and hotels to ensure that CCTV cameras are working and Tasmac has asked

its district managers to make sure bars in their districts have CCTV cameras installed.

A Tasmac official, on condition of anonymity, said 90% of Tasmac bars in Chennai and its suburbs already have CCTV cameras as police insist on the outlets obtaining a no-objection certificate. "If election commission flying squads catch someone with

huge liquor, it will be easy to find out from where the liquor was procured if the shops and bars have CCTV cameras," said the official.

It is routine for the ECI to issue such instructions ahead of elections, but inclusion of FL2 licence holders (recreational clubs) and FL3 (hotels) for surveillance for the first time assumes significance.

The number of clubs across TN rose to 448 in the last few years from 125, with Chennai district alone having 104 recreational clubs.

The timings of recreational clubs are from 11am. to 11pm, while Tasmac outlets and bars func-

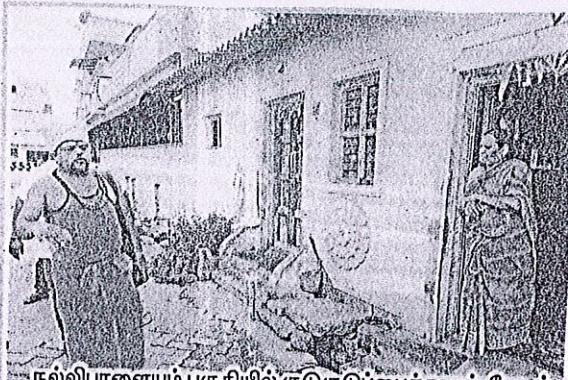
tion from noon to 10 p.m., which can pave the way for the illicit sale of liquor, say industry insiders. Also, several violations have been reported at recreational clubs, such as the serving of liquor to non-members and the retail sale of liquor.

A few months ago, home secretary P Amudha had instructed the directorate of prohibition and excise to initiate action against recreational clubs that violate norms.

When it comes to FL3 licences, TN has 793 licence holders, with Chennai having the maximum number of 175 licences followed by Coimbatore with 115.

Daily Thanthi

Dated: 19.02.2024



நல்லிடாளையம் பகுதியில் குடுகுபைபக்காரன் வேடம் அணிந்து பிரசாரம் மேற்கொண்ட போது எடுத்தபடம்.

யானை வரும் பின்னே... மணியோசை வரும் முன்னே...

## தேர்தல் தேவீ இரண்டிபுக்கு முன்பே ரூரூருப்பைப்பக்காரன் வேட்றில் பிரசாரம்

நாமக்கல், பி.பி.19-

தேர்தல் தேதி அறிவிக்கவில்லை. கூட்டணியில் தொகுதி யாருக்கு என்று முடிவாகவில்லை. ஆனால் அரசியல் கட்சி கணோ பூத்கமிட்டியில் தொடங்கி தேர்தல் முன்னேற்பாடுகளை அடிமட்டத்தில் செய்ய தொடங்கி விட்டன. இதற்கு ஒருபால் மேலாக நாமக்கல் நாடாஞ்சமன்ற தொகுதியில் ஒருவர் இப்போதே நாதன் பிரசாரத்தை ஆளும்கட்சியான தி.மு.க.வுக்கு ஆதாரவாக தொடங்கி விட்டார்.

தி.மு.க. தலைமை கழக பேச்சாளராக இருந்து வருபவர் சௌம் கோவிந்தன். இவர் குடுகுபைபக்காரன் போன்று வேடம் அணிந்து குடுகுபைப் படி அடித்து பொதுமக்களிடம் தி.மு.க.விற்காக நாதன் முறையில் வாக்கு சேகரிப்பில் ஈடுபட்டு வருகிறார். நாமக்கல் நாடாஞ்சமன்ற தொகுதிக்கு உட்பட்ட பல்வேறு பகுதிகளில் பொதுமக்கள் வசிக்கும் இடங்கள், பொதுமக்கள் அதிகம் கூடும் இடங்களுக்கு சென்று குடுகுபைப் பகுதிக்கு 'நாடு நல்லை இருக்க, நல்ல திட்டங்கள் மக்களுக்கு கிடைக்க தி.மு.க.விற்கு ஈடுபடு போடுவகு, ஜக் கம்ம சொல்லா, ஜக்கம்மா சொல்லா' எனக்கூறியது வாக்கு சேகரிப்பில் ஈடுபட்டார். முதலில் அவனர் பார்க்கும் பொதுமக்கள் குடுகுபைபக்காரன் என்று நினைக்கின்றார்கள். ஆனால் அவர் பேசுவதை கேட்டு கவனித்த பின்பு அவர் தி.மு.க.விற்காக பிரசாரம் செய்கிறார் என்பதை அறிந்து கொள்கின்றார். அவர் நாமக்கல் நாடாஞ்சமன்ற தொகுதிக்கு உட்பட்ட நல்லி பாளையம் பகுதியில் பல்வேறு இடங்களுக்கு சென்று குடுகுபைப் பகுதிக்கு பிரசாரத்தை மேற்கொண்டார்.

யானை வரும் பின்னே... மணி ஒசை வரும் முன்னே என்ற ரீதியில் தேர்தல் தேதி, கூட்டணி, வேட்பாளர் எதுவும் அறி விக்கும் முன்பே தேர்தல் பிரசாரத்தை மணியோசை போன்று இப்போதே தொடங்கி விட்டதாக அரசியல் கட்சியினர் கூறுகின்றார்கள்.

A DMK Supporting Speaker Third Guvindan  
Started campaigning in favour of his ruling DMK  
before his announcement of election date.

Daily Thanthi

Dated: 19.02.2024

நாடாஞ்சன்ற தேர்தலையோட்டி

# டாஸ்மாக் பார்களில் கண்காணிப்பு கேமரா பொதுத்தவிட்டால் உரியம் ரத்து

## தமிழக அரசு எச்சரிக்கை

சென்னை, பி.பி.19-  
நாடாஞ்சன்ற தேர்தலை  
யோட்டி டாஸ்மாக் பார்  
களில் கண்காணிப்பு  
கேமரா பொருத்தாவிட்  
டால் உரிமம் ரத்து செய்  
யப்படும் என்று தமிழக  
அரசு எச்சரிக்கை விடுத்  
துள்ளது.

### டாஸ்மாக் பார்கள்

தமிழகம் முழுவதும் 6 ஆயி  
ரத்து 181மதுபானக்கடைகள்,  
3 ஆயிரத்து 76 பார்கள் டால்  
மாக் கட்டுப்பாட்டின் கீழ்  
உள்ளன. இதுதவிர மனமகிழ்  
மன்றங்கள் உள்ளிட்ட தனி  
யார் கட்டுப்பாட்டிலும் பார்  
கள் உள்ளன.

இங்கு சட்டவிரோதமாக  
மது விற்பனை செய்வதாக  
தேர்தல் கமிஷனுக்கு புகார்  
கள் சென்று உள்ளது. இத

எனத்தொடர்ந்து, நாடாஞ்சன்ற தேர்தல் நடைபெற  
உள்ள நிலையில் பார்களில்  
மது விற்பனை நடப்பதை கட்டுப்படுத்தக்கூடும் நடவடிக்கை  
எடுக்க வேண்டும் என்று  
டாஸ்மாக் நிர்வாகத்துக்கு  
தேர்தல் ஆணையம் உத்தர  
விட்டுள்ளது.

### உரியம் ரத்து

அதன் அடிப்படையில்  
டாஸ்மாக் மாவட்ட மேலாளர்கள் அனைத்து பார் உரிமையாளர்களுக்கும் அனுப்பிய சுற்றறிக்கையில் கூறியிருப்பதாவது.-

சென்னையில் உள்ள மது விலக்கு மற்றும் ஆயத்தீர்வைதுறை அலுவலக கடிதத்தின் படி 2024-ம் ஆண்டு நாடாஞ்சன்ற பொதுத்தேர்தலுக்கான தேர்தல் செலவின கண்கா

ணிப்பு குறித்து இந்தியா துணைத்தேர்தல் கமிஷன் கடந்த 2-ந்தேதி அன்று கூட்டம் நடத்தியது. இந்த கூட்டத்தில் அனைத்து மனமகிழ் மன்றம் மற்றும் தனியார் நடத்தும் பார்களான எம். எல்.2, எப்.எல்.3 மற்றும் டாஸ்மாக் பார்களில் கண்காணிப்புகேமராக்கள் பொருத்த வேண்டும் என்று தெரிவிக்கப்பட்டு உள்ளது.

தங்களது மதுக்கட வளர்க்கில் கண்காணிப்பு கேமராக்கள் பொருத்தப்பட்டிருப்பதை உறுதி செய்வதற்காக கண்காணிப்புகேமராக்களை புகைப்பட்ட எடுத்து மாவட்ட அதிகாரிக்கு அனுப்பிவைக்க வேண்டும். தவறும் பட்சத்தில் உரிமம் ரத்து செய்யப்படுவது டன், காப்புத் தொகையும் பறிமுதல் செய்யப்படும் என்று டாஸ்மாக் அதிகாரி கள் தெரிவித்து உள்ளனர்.

Tamil Nadu Government issues instructions that the licenses for TASMAC bors will be cancelled if functioning without Surveillance cameras for general Excisions to Lok Sabha, 2024.

