

Message of Hon'ble CEC on the eve of National Voters Day 2021

1. On this occasion of 11th NVD, I convey my respectful regards to all the voters of India. We are now beginning a new decade - full of Hope, Healing, Recovery and Faith. Election commission has always reiterated to ensure that **Each and every vote counts** and it has been our consistent endeavor to ensure that **No Voter is Left Behind.**
2. This day reminds us of the rights and responsibilities of the voters. Accordingly, the leitmotif/theme for NVD 2021 is '**Making Our voters Safe, Empowered, more Informed and, much more Vigilant.**
3. Many of you would be aware that ECI was set up on 25th Jan 1950, one day prior to India constituting itself into a Republic. It has been more than 70 years since then. Seventeen General elections have been conducted besides several elections to state assemblies.
4. Elections in India have been conducted in a manner that is free, fair, participative, inclusive and accessible. Covid 19 pandemic added another dimension to this- **Safe Election.**
5. It was a tough challenge indeed for the Commission as we sought to balance the health and safety of the voters with the safety of their constitutional right to Vote. After consultations with CEOs and all stakeholders, special protocols and Guidelines for conducting election amid a pandemic situation were evolved.
6. The faith of ECI in the voters and the trust of the voters in ECI as an institution was recently amply displayed in the recent

Bihar elections where , despite Covid, voters came out in large numbers to vote and the voter turn out exceeded that of previous assembly elections and even the 2019 general elections.

7. The successful conduct of election during such unprecedented times was made possible by the cooperation of all our stakeholders .
8. **Elections are now due to be held in four states and one UT** in the near future and preparations for the same are already in full swing. We call upon the voters of these poll bound states to come out to vote in large numbers, without any fear, or inducement or influence of any type.
9. We also hope that you will make effective use of the **Cvigil app** launched by Election Commission as a pilot project in 2018 and extended to the entire country in Lok Sabha Elections 2019. It has emerged over a period of time as the most powerful and effective tool for citizen empowerment.
10. We also assure you that we will make all arrangements to ensure that the entire voting process and premises are completely sanitized and safe for the exercise of your franchise.
11. Commission has taken up several **new initiatives** for the benefit of our stakeholders. We will launch the **E-epic card** tomorrow for all our young, newly enrolled voters to make the process of electoral registration easier and digital.
12. **Hello Voters**, ECI's web radio and the first of its kind of initiative being launched on national voters day will help to further strengthen our continuing engagement with you. In days to come, this will emerge as a nerve center of voter awareness, information, sharing stories from our unsung heroes and election warriors.

13. Commission has given utmost priority towards extending facilitation to our **Persons with Disabilities and senior citizens**. Postal ballot facility has been extended to PwD voters and those aged 80 years and above.
14. For the convenience of **our service voters**, the ETPBS system was devised which led to record number of service voters exercising their franchise.
15. This is an occasion to share with you an important dimension of the vision of Election Commission for future electoral processes. We have already started a research project on **Remote voting** using cutting edge technology with IIT madras and other leading institutions and it has made good progress. Mock trials of this project will begin soon.
16. Another significant change we can look forward to pertains to grant of postal ballot facility to our **overseas electors** for which a proposal is under active consideration of the Law Ministry.
17. Once again, I convey warm greetings on the occasion of National Voters Day. Let us continue our resolve to enhance voter participation in order to further deepen and strengthen democracy.