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Article For Reading - Electronic distraction: On politics and the 'EVM issue'

After **consecutive** electoral losses, in the Haryana and Maharashtra Assembly elections, the Congress has raised the tempo with regard to its concerns about electronic voting machines (EVM). While there are numerous issues related to the **integrity** of elections that the Election Commission of India (ECI) needs to **come clean on**, the risk of electronic tampering with EVMs is not among them. The Congress is **barking up the wrong tree** — that too selectively and only when it loses. Some of its party leaders have publicly expressed the view that there is no evidence that suggests the risk of manipulation, remotely or through preprogramming. At least two Opposition leaders, NC leader and J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, and Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee, have distanced themselves from the allegations. To assume that EVMs are so **elaborately** and **precisely** manipulated that the BJP wins in some States and loses in some others in a detailed **conspiracy**, defies logic. After all, the BJP ended up short of a majority in the 2024 general election. Moreover, all these results, particularly those of Haryana, Maharashtra and Jharkhand are well explained by the social and political dynamics at play.

By repeatedly raising the **spectre** of EVM manipulation, the real and serious questions of election integrity are being overlooked. Among them, the possibility of old style, manual capture of EVMs in booths dominated by one party and where polling agents of opponents are absent. This is **pertinent** against the backdrop of questions about a massive turnout recorded in many places in the closing hours of polling. This trend has not yet been satisfactorily explained by the ECI. Large-scale additions and deletions of voter names are now a pattern, and the ECI seems to be **brazening it out**. In Delhi, where elections are now due, allegations of the selective removal of Muslim voters have **surfaced**. In the Uttar Pradesh by-elections, partisan police actions that restrained voters expected to vote against the BJP have been controversial. The scheduling of elections is another serious question that the ECI has been less than transparent about. For a country that is preparing to conduct all elections **in one go**, it scheduled the three recent Assembly elections in two batches, and the BJP is the one party that gained the benefits. As is evident, some of these issues are local, some related to the vast capacity gap between the BJP and the Opposition while some others are squarely in the court of the ECI. The Opposition needs to focus on the real questions of election integrity, and an EVM scare should not act as a distraction.

Summary –

The Congress has raised concerns about EVM tampering after electoral losses, but these claims lack evidence and have been dismissed by some Opposition leaders. The focus on EVMs diverts attention from genuine issues of election integrity, such as booth capture, unexplained high voter turnout, selective voter deletions, partisan actions, and lack of transparency by the Election Commission of India (ECI). The Opposition should prioritize addressing these real concerns instead of fixating on EVM manipulation.

Vocabulary –

1. Consecutive (adj) क्रमिक

Meaning = following continuously

Synonym: Successive, sequential

Antonym: Interrupted, no sequential

Sentence: He worked for five consecutive days to finish the project on time.

2. Integrity (noun) सत्यनिष्ठा

Meaning= the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.

Synonym: Honesty, uprightness

Antonym: Dishonesty, corruption

Example: The integrity of the leader was respected by all her followers.

3. Tampering (noun) छेड़छाड़

Meaning= the action of making unauthorized alterations.

Synonym: Interference, meddling

Antonym: Restoration, repair

Sentence: Tampering with the device voids the warranty.

4. Elaborately (adv) विस्तार से

Meaning = in a detailed and carefully arranged manner (

Synonym: Intricately, meticulously

Antonym: Simply, plainly

Example: The banquet hall was elaborately decorated for the royal reception.

5. Precisely (Adv) सटीक रूप से, ठीक-ठीक, or बिल्कुल सही तरीके से.

Meaning - "Precisely" means exactly, accurately, or in a clear and detailed way.

Synonyms – Exactly, Accurately, Correctly.

Antonyms – Approximately, Vaguely, Inaccurately.

Example – She explained the process precisely, leaving no room for confusion.

6. Conspiracy (Noun) साजिश, षड्यंत्र

A secret plan by a group of people to do something harmful, unlawful, or deceitful.

Synonyms – Intrigue, Machination, Cabal, Connivance, Treachery

Antonyms – Honesty, Openness, Truthfulness

Example – The employees were accused of engaging in a conspiracy to steal company secrets.

7. Spectre (Noun) "भूत" or "प्रेत", डर

Meaning - A ghost or spirit, especially one that haunts a place.

- A source of fear or dread; something that is feared or looms as a threat.

Synonyms – Ghost, Phantom, Apparition, Spirit, Wraith.

Antonyms – Reality, Certainty, Substance, Tangibility.

Example- The spectre of his past mistakes continued to haunt him, making it difficult to move on.

8. Pertinent (Adj) संबंधित" or "प्रासंगिक"

Meaning - Something that is relevant or applicable to a particular matter or situation.

Synonyms – Relevant, Applicable, Appropriate, Related.

Antonyms – Irrelevant, Inapplicable, Unrelated, Extraneous.

Example – The lawyer asked only the pertinent questions during the trial to avoid wasting time.

9. Brazening(Verb) बेशर्मी से व्यवहार करना" या "साहसिक तरीके से

The act of behaving in a bold, shameless, or audacious manner, often without regard for social norms or expectations.

Synonyms – Audacious, Shameless, Bold, Brash, Impudent.

Antonyms – Humble, Modest, Shy, Bashful, Timid.

Example – The thief was brazening in his attempts to steal, doing so in broad daylight without fear of being caught.

10. Surfaced (Verb) उभरना" or "सतह पर आना"

Meaning – to appear, come to the top, or become visible after being hidden or submerged.

Synonyms – Emerged, Appeared, Materialized, Came up.

Antonyms – Submerged, Disappeared, Vanished, Concealed, Evaded

Example – The issue of budget cuts surfaced during the meeting, sparking a heated discussion."

Idioms & Phrases

1. Come clean on:

Meaning- To confess or admit to something, usually about a hidden truth.

2. Barking up the wrong tree:

Meaning - Pursuing a mistaken or misguided course of action.

3. Brazening it out:

Meaning - Acting boldly or shamelessly to defy criticism or opposition.

4. In one go:

Meaning - All at once or in a single attempt.

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