

# ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

*Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001*

No. ECI/PN/51/2024

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## Press Note

**With General Elections 2024 underway, ECI is on track for the highest ever seizures of inducements recorded in the 75-year history of Lok Sabha elections in the country**

**ECI cracks down on money power: Rs.100 crore seizure each day since 1<sup>st</sup> March**

**Rs. 4650 crores seized even before polling begins: Higher than total seizures in 2019 polls**

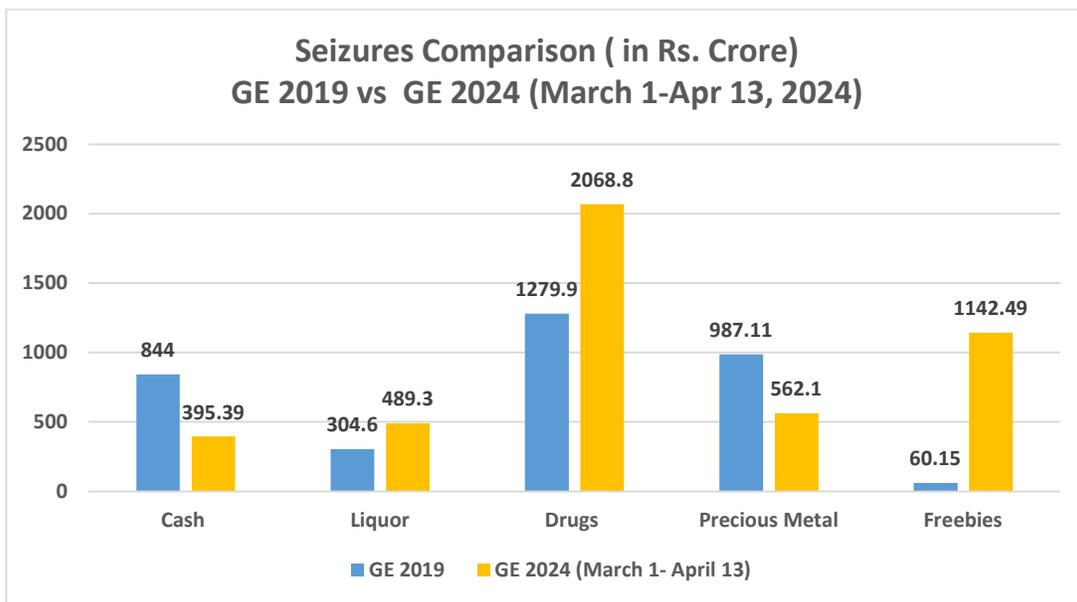
**Commissions says action will continue to be strict and non-stop**

With General Elections 2024 underway, ECI is on track for the highest ever seizures of inducements recorded in the 75-year history of Lok Sabha elections in the country. Enforcement Agencies have made a record seizure of over Rs. 4650 crores in ECI's resolute fight against money power even before the first phase of polling for the 18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections commences on Friday. This marks a sharp increase over Rs 3475 crores seized during the entire Lok Sabha election in 2019. Significantly, 45% of the seizures are of drugs and narcotics, that are under the special focus of the Commission. The seizures have been possible by comprehensive planning, scaled up collaboration and unified deterrence action from agencies, proactive citizen participation and optimal engagement of technology.

Use of black money, over and above political financing and accurate disclosure thereof, may disturb the level playing field in favour of more resourceful party or candidate in specific geographies. The seizures are a critical part of ECI resolve to conduct the Lok Sabha elections free of inducements and electoral malpractices and to ensure a level playing field. CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar, while announcing the polls last month, underlined Money Power as one of the '4M' challenges. On 12<sup>th</sup> April, Commission led by CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar along with ECs Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu reviewed all Central Observers deployed in Phase -1 of elections going to poll on 19<sup>th</sup> April. Tightening, monitoring and checking were amongst the focus of deliberations to ensure inducement-free electoral process.

The enhanced seizures reflect ECI's unwavering commitment to monitor inducements and curb electoral malpractices for a 'level playing field', particularly in favour of smaller and less resourceful parties.





In an incident in Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, the Commission suspended the flying squad team leader for laxity in duty and selective checking of a cavalcade of a prominent leader. Similarly, officials checked vehicles in the convoy of CM of a state and also vehicle of a Dy CM in another state. Commission has also taken strict action against approximately 106 government servants who have been found assisting politicians in campaigning, thereby violating the Code of Conduct and instructions.

In the press briefing during announcement of Parliamentary elections, CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar stressed in his presentation on strict compliance of BCAS instructions on surveillance and inspection of non-scheduled aircrafts and helicopters by Income tax, airport authorities and SPs of concerned districts, border agencies to keep close watch on international checkpoints and GST authorities to closely monitor godowns, especially makeshift godowns meant for storing freebies. The Commission during reviews had always emphasized that there will be multi-pronged surveillance on all modes of transport - check posts and nakas for road transport, Coast guard for coastal routes and DMs and SPs alongside agencies for air routes including checking of helicopters and non-scheduled flights.



Details of State /UT wise and category wise seizures as on 13.04.2024 is placed at Annexure A.

## How has it been made possible?

1. **Election Seizure Management System (ESMS)- breaking silos and bringing all enforcement agencies on one platform through use of technology is proving to be a game changer.** With the introduction of technology in monitoring process, ESMS, an ECI in-house developed portal is proving to be a catalyst. The novel innovation for real time reporting of interceptions and seizures, avoiding duplication of seizures was tested in the last round of Assembly elections.

The portal facilitates digital trails and availability of seizure information at the click of a mouse enabling quick and timely reviews at all controlling levels. As per data, 6398 District nodal officers of various agencies, 734 state nodal officers, 59000 flying squads (FS) and Statics Surveillance Teams (SST) have been on boarded on ESMS platform for exhaustive real time monitoring and updates. All nodal officials have been trained on various aspects of using ESMS. The system took firm root during Assembly elections during 2023, when Rs 2014.26 crores was seized as against Rs 239.35 crores in the previous corresponding elections. With successful implementation and feedback from the field in the last round of assembly elections, it has been reviewed and made robust before implementation in ongoing elections.

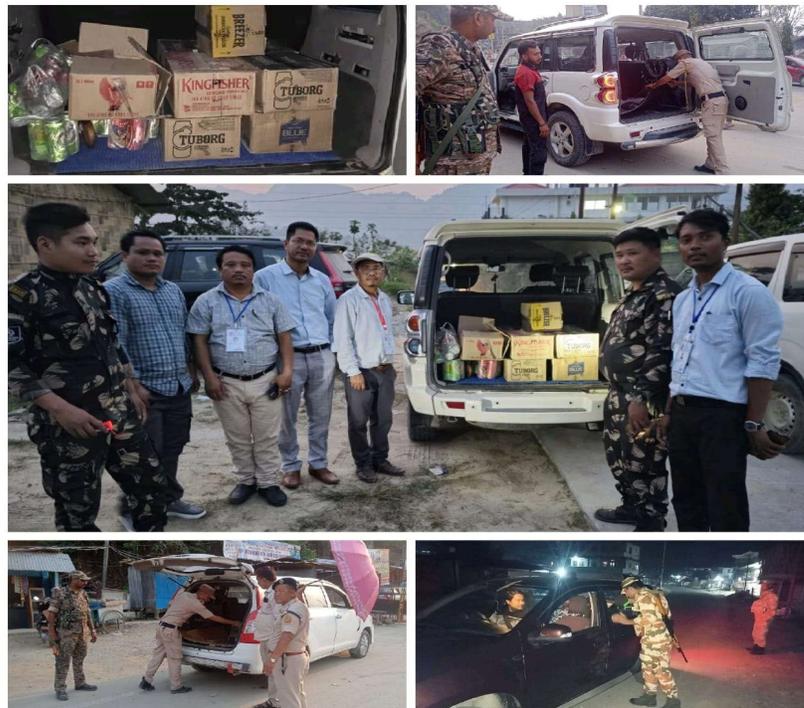
2. **Meticulous and exhaustive planning, involvement of largest number of Enforcement Agencies:** The largest number of enforcement agencies both from Centre and States have been assembled for collaborative effort among agencies.

S. No.	Cohort	Agencies
1	Cash & Precious Metals	Income Tax, state Police, RBI, SLBC, AAI, BCAS, State Civil Aviation, Enforcement Directorate, Dept. of Post, CISF
2	Liquor	State Police, State Excise, RPF
3	Narcotics	State Police, NCB, ICG, DRI
4	Freebies	CGST, SGST, State Transport Department, Customs, State Police
5	Border and Other agencies	Assam Rifles, BSF, SSB, ITBP, CRPF, Forest Department, State Police

3. Months prior to elections and more intensively from January 2024, senior officials from the Election Commission visited every State and Union territory to emphasize the importance of combating the influence of money in elections. Furthermore, districts were thoroughly reviewed, and discussions were held with Chief Secretaries, Directors General of Police (DGPs), and heads of enforcement agencies to assess their performance and encourage heightened vigilance against the misuse of financial resources during elections. Field-level personnel are also subject to ongoing reviews by Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs), Observers, and District Electoral Officers (DEOs). Often, discoveries made by one agency 'inform and guide' the actions of others, leading to a unified and widespread deterrent effect. Commission has also emphasized the importance of joint teams comprising relevant agencies in inspecting inducements through various means—road, rail, sea, and air—during electoral visits to States/UTs. **As a result, in January and February, the months preceding the official announcement, countrywide seizures totalling another Rs 7502 crores were recorded in form of cash, liquor, drugs, precious metals**

and freebies. This brings total seizure to over Rs 12000 crores so far with six weeks still left in the election period.

- 4. Increased focus on drug menace in society:** Notably, there was a substantial focus on drug seizures, which accounted for approximately 75% of the total seizures in January and February 2024. Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar had emphasized the importance of agencies' efforts in seizing drugs and narcotics during his visits to nodal agencies. He highlighted that besides the risk of dirty money being used to influence elections, drugs pose a serious social menace with the potential to harm communities, particularly youth. The Commission has also collaborated with the Directorate General of the Narcotics Control Bureau and its senior officials to identify key routes and corridors for drug trafficking and ensure effective countermeasures are in place. Over the past few years, significant seizures have been made during elections to State Assemblies, including during the operation of Model Code of Conduct in States like Gujarat, Punjab, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, and Mizoram.



Checking of vehicles by Static Surveillance Team in Arunachal Pradesh



Seizure of liquor in Kalaburagi District in Karnataka

5. **Identification of Expenditure Sensitive Constituencies:** 123 Parliamentary Constituencies are marked as Expenditure Sensitive Constituencies for more focussed vigil. These constituencies had either had a history of distribution of inducements in previous elections or have inter-state and international borders with potential inflow of drugs, cash, and liquor.
6. **Deployment of Expenditure Observers:** Senior officers appointed as Expenditure Observers serve as the eyes and ears of the Commission for a fair and inducement free elections. A total of 656 Expenditure Observers have been assigned to Parliamentary Constituencies, while 125 are deployed in Assembly Constituencies across Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Sikkim. Special Expenditure Observers with a brilliant track record of domain expertise and experience with election processes have also been deployed in States/UTs.
7. **Use of cVigil:** cVigil app of the Commission has also reinforced the expenditure monitoring process through complaints directly from citizens on distribution of any type of inducements. Since announcement of election schedule, a total of 3262 complaints have been received pertaining to distribution of cash, liquor and freebies.
8. **No harassment to citizens:** At the beginning of the current elections, there were reports in the media about tourists undergoing unnecessary checks and hassles by ground-level teams. Taking this matter seriously, the Commission promptly issued an advisory to all Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) regarding the need for a careful and courteous approach when inspecting tourists and citizens. Additionally, the Commission directed the constituted 'District Grievance Committees (DGC)' to hold daily hearings at designated locations for the swift resolution of grievances related to seizures. CEOs and DEOs were instructed to ensure the effective functioning of these committees.

These measures serve as the cornerstone of a comprehensive expenditure monitoring process, resulting in increased seizures with least inconvenience to the public. With campaigning intensifying in the days ahead, the Commission stands prepared to enhance its vigilance to ensure an inducement-free electoral process in line with its commitment.



Anuj Chandak

Joint Director

## Annexure A- State/UT wise seizure details as on April 13, 2024

		Election Seizure Management System						
Date of Print: 13.04.2024 09:53 pm								
Filter Date: From 01-03-2024 To 13-04-2024								
S.N	State	Cash (Rs. Crore)	Liquor Qty (Litres)	Liquor Value (Rs. Crore)	Drugs Value (Rs. Crore)	Precious Metal Value (Rs. Crore)	Freebies / Other Items Value (Rs. Crore)	Total (Rs. Crore)
1	Andaman And Nicobar Islands	0.2283950	3129.11	0.0744660	2.0127000	0.0000000	0.0000000	2.3155610
2	Andhra Pr.	32.1549530	1022756.48	19.7198350	4.0635400	57.1427590	12.8933650	125.9744520
3	Arunachal Pr.	6.4626890	157056.59	2.8799110	0.8182360	2.6378890	0.7295980	13.5283230
4	Assam	3.1780990	1594842.47	19.2702290	48.7692370	44.2246890	25.6795360	141.1217900
5	Bihar	6.7770240	845758.18	31.5729460	37.5943630	19.7613200	60.0628720	155.7685250
6	Chandigarh	0.9690950	29027.47	0.9157730	2.0751550	0.5269720	0.0000000	4.4869950
7	Chhattisgarh	11.9818310	55690.73	1.3978870	17.1809360	2.5824360	26.3291050	59.4721950
8	DD&DNH	0.3949850	8351.26	0.2149490	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.6099340
9	Goa	15.6452760	101446.04	2.3307540	3.2368700	3.7885940	1.1857350	26.1872290
10	Gujarat	6.5565420	760062.82	21.9468710	485.9946220	36.4879620	54.3495200	605.3355170
11	Haryana	3.8467740	191840.41	5.6527380	5.4925780	1.7325760	1.1865960	17.9112620
12	Himachal Pr.	0.2235760	355123.80	5.2488070	2.2543480	0.0335000	0.1547150	7.9149460
13	Jammu And Kashmir	1.2466890	23964.59	0.6300640	2.3529220	0.0025800	0.0559150	4.2881700
14	Jharkhand	4.2282350	158054.60	3.4131010	35.1123330	0.3980360	8.6841250	51.8358300
15	Karnataka	35.5380070	13052708.14	124.3380670	18.7566280	41.9368860	60.8632560	281.4328440
16	Kerala	10.9301610	49212.31	2.0053870	14.2861250	21.0896510	5.0468590	53.3581830
17	Ladakh	0.0000000	18.83	0.0011580	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.0011580
18	Lakshadweep	0.0000000	35.55	0.0181200	0.0556000	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.0737200
19	Madhya Pr.	13.3794000	1633114.94	25.7788940	25.8906670	8.7413820	38.4886970	112.2790400
20	Maharashtra	40.0560580	3556027.76	28.4656210	213.5643290	69.3837180	79.8780460	431.3477720
21	Manipur	0.0003530	36489.36	0.4067430	31.1167990	3.8523740	8.9337170	44.3099860
22	Meghalaya	0.5048930	42655.42	0.6695960	26.8558810	0.0000000	7.3595450	35.3899150
23	Mizoram	0.1119530	105488.00	3.7789580	37.1563530	0.0000000	5.8545950	46.9018590
24	Nagaland	0.0000000	26537.76	0.2617410	2.9973300	0.0000000	4.9314800	8.1905510
25	NCT OF Delhi	11.2862670	67046.55	1.4250850	189.9424280	32.2370250	1.1788900	236.0696950
26	Odisha	1.4750630	1324111.29	16.2141150	39.0155790	6.4600000	43.9682390	107.1329960
27	Puducherry	0.0000000	818.56	0.0173900	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.0173900
28	Punjab	5.1334400	2206988.94	14.4041880	280.8158050	10.5262050	0.9652680	311.8449060
29	Rajasthan	35.8561600	3798601.52	40.7857900	119.3799370	49.2176960	533.2869270	778.5265100
30	Sikkim	0.3015000	6145.30	0.1195790	0.0141580	0.0000000	0.0015000	0.4367370
31	Tamil Nadu	53.5886800	590297.33	4.4342350	293.0253640	78.7575380	31.0436110	460.8494280
32	Telangana	49.1818260	685838.52	19.2125880	22.7139650	12.3893650	18.3519690	121.8497130
33	Tripura	0.4830040	136617.51	2.1921530	16.8726420	0.6326870	3.3093150	23.4898010
34	Uttar Pr.	24.3163150	1059181.84	35.3357200	53.9802710	20.6561230	11.4803120	145.7687410
35	Uttarakhand	6.1560290	67488.22	3.0093810	9.8666220	3.2938600	0.2153580	22.5412500
36	West Bengal	13.2002790	2077396.55	51.1733990	25.5883020	33.6120330	96.0305140	219.6045270
<b>TOTAL (Rs. Crore)</b>		<b>395.3935510</b>	<b>35829924.75</b>	<b>489.3162390</b>	<b>2068.8526250</b>	<b>562.1058560</b>	<b>1142.4991800</b>	<b>4658.1674510</b>
<b>Grand Total (CR): 4658.1674510</b>								

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