

EC Tightens Timeline for Publicity of Criminal Record by Candidates

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The Election Commission has decided to revise the timeline for publicity of criminal antecedents by candidates concerned and by the political parties that nominate them for elections.

Revised Timelines

- As per the revised guidelines, publishing of the details of criminal antecedents in newspapers and television will have to be **spread over three rounds of publicity** beginning with soon after filing nomination and ending towards the end of campaign period.
- EC felt in absence of detailed timelines, candidates had the option of **clubbing publicity of such records.**
- Timeline
 - . First publicity: Within the first 4 days of the last date of withdrawal.
 - . Second publicity: Within 5th to 8th day of last date of withdrawal
 - . Third publicity: From 9th day till the last day of campaign, i.e. two days prior to date of poll
- The announcement of the detailed timeline is expected to be more stringent from current rules which make it compulsory for contesting candidates to publicize their criminal antecedents in television and newspapers at least thrice during electioneering.
- Regarding the publicity by uncontested winning candidates as well as the political parties who nominate

them, it is clarified that **uncontested winner candidates as well as the political parties who nominate them shall also publicise the criminal antecedents.**

- The electoral reform related to publicity of criminal antecedents was set in motion by the **Supreme Court (SC) in September, 2018 when it had asked political parties to publicize criminal antecedents** of contestants in news media.

Political Candidates with Criminal Records

- The 17th Lok Sabha has close to half of its new MPs with declared criminal cases. Out of the 539 winners analysed in Lok Sabha election 2019, **233 MPs had declared criminal cases against themselves.**
- It is an **increase of 44%** in the number of MPs with declared criminal cases **since 2009.** However the number might be inflated as many politicians tend to be charged with relatively minor offences such as unlawful assembly and defamation.
- The real worry is that the current cohort of Lok Sabha MPs has the **highest (29%) proportion of those with serious declared criminal cases** compared to its recent predecessors.
- Researchers have found that such candidates with serious records **seem to do well despite their public image, largely due to their ability to finance their own elections** and bring substantive resources to their respective parties.