

Election Commission (EC) freezes LJP's party symbol

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In news- The EC froze the 'Bungalow' election symbol of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), so that neither of the two factions of the party will be able to use it in the coming Assembly byelections in Bihar. The EC has asked both the factions to choose three free symbols in order of preference and then the Commission would allocate the symbols.

ECI's powers in a dispute over the election symbol when a party splits-

- On the question of a split in a political party outside the legislature, **Para 15 of the Symbols Order, 1968**, states that the Commission may decide that one such rival section or group or none of such rival sections or groups is that recognised political party.
- The decision of the Commission shall be binding on all such rival sections or groups.
- This **applies to disputes in recognised national and state parties.**
- For splits in registered but unrecognised parties, the EC usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court.
- Before 1968, the EC issued notifications and executive orders under the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.
- Whenever the EC could not test the strength of rival groups based on support within the party organisation, it has fallen back on testing the majority only among elected MPs and MLAs.
- In 1997, the EC introduced a new rule under which the splinter group of the party – other than the group that got the party symbol – had to register itself as a separate party, and could lay claim to national or state

party status only on the basis of its performance in state or central elections after registration.