

# ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi 110 001

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No. 51/8/16/9/2009-EMS (Vol-IX)

Dated: 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2010

To,

Shri V.V. Rao  
HIG-155, Phase-V,  
KPHB Colony, KKP  
Hyderabad – 500072  
Andhra Pradesh

**Sub: Allegation of vulnerability/tamperability of the ECI-EVM.**

**Ref: 1. The Commission's letter dated 22.07.09.  
2. The Commission's letter dated 31.07.09  
3. Your letter dated 04.08.09  
4. Your letter dated 08.08.09  
5. The Commission's letter dated 12.08.09  
6. Your letter dated 13.08.09  
7. The Commission's letter dated 22.08.09  
8. Your letter dated 27.08.09  
9. The Commission's letter dated 01.09.09  
10. Your letter dated 03.09.09  
11. Your letter dated 10.11.09  
12. Your letter dated 25.11.09  
13. The Commission's letter dated 14.12.09  
14. Your letter dated 22.12.09  
15. The Commission's letter dated 12.01.10  
16. Your letter dated 16.01.10  
17. The Commission's letter dated 02.02.10  
18. The Commission's letter dated 15.03.10  
19. Your letter dated 18.03.10  
20. The Commission's letter dated 29.03.2010  
21. Your letter dated 24.04.2010  
22. The Commission's letter dated 24.06.2010  
23. Your letter dated 16.07.2010**

Sir,

Please refer to the correspondence on the subject cited above. The Commission has already given you several opportunities to demonstrate alleged vulnerability/tamperability of ECI-EVM. You were requested to convey a suitable date and time between 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2010 for yet another opportunity to make a demonstration of the alleged vulnerability/tamperability of ECI-EVMs and also to give

any suggestion for further improvements. Instead of suggesting a suitable date and time for the meeting you have again raised the same oft-repeated procedural questions in your letter.

2. It may once again be pointed out that EVMs cannot be seen in isolation. Security of any voting system depends as much on administrative safeguards as on technical safeguards. Administrative safeguards which the Commission has put in place have been explained to you several times, and are once again enclosed with this letter for ready reference. It is obvious that even during the alleged tamperability demonstration these administrative safeguards must be in place for the demonstration to be of any value. The conditions which have been communicated to you vide Commission's letters dated 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2<sup>nd</sup> February and 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 are only to ensure that the administrative safeguards which are in place during elections are also in place during the alleged tamperability demonstration.

3. You have mentioned in your letter that the Commission had permitted bringing of hacking or reverse engineering tools during the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2009. The fact of the matter is that you had requested the Commission on that day that you may be allowed to bring some tools with you which, the Commission had permitted, but you had never said on that day that the purpose of bringing these tools was to reverse engineer the EVMs. When it became apparent to the Commission at the meeting with you on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2009, that you wanted to reverse engineer and thereby create a fake EVM, the permission to bring the tools was withdrawn.

4. You have also referred to a letter of the Commission to Shri Omesh Saigal. It can be seen from a simple reading of that letter that the precondition for any breaking open of EVMs for reverse engineering was an undertaking that the knowledge acquired in the process will not be taken out from the premises of the Election Commission of India or passed on to anybody in order to avoid any misuse. Obviously the Commission cannot allow anybody to gain knowledge which can be used to make fake EVMs or to mislead the public. On the other hand, Mr. Hariprasad, who came with you for meeting the Commission on 17<sup>th</sup> August and 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2009, has apparently said in a programme shown on a Telugu TV channel that he has stolen an EVM and replaced its components, thereby creating a fake EVM. You were yourself seen sitting with Mr.

HariPrasad on that TV show where he made this statement. Thus, Mr. HariPrasad, by his own admission, has used this stolen EVM for a misinformation campaign in the media to mislead the public about EVMs. It is, therefore, not possible for the Commission to give permission for breaking open or reverse engineer the EVMs. However, if you still have some procedural questions they can be discussed when you meet the Commission.

5. As far as meeting political parties on the issue of EVM reforms is concerned, it may be mentioned that the Commission meets political parties regularly and has had discussion with several political parties on this issue. The Commission has a completely open mind and is always open to suggestions for improvements.

6. You are once again invited for a meeting with the Commission, on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010, at 3 PM, for any suggestions for improvement, and for making a demonstration of alleged tamperability of EVMs, if you so wish, under conditions communicated to you vide Commission's letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2<sup>nd</sup> February and 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2010.

Yours faithfully,

**(K.N. BHAR)**  
**SECRETARY**

Encl: Administrative safeguards.

### **Administrative Safeguard**

- The Commission has put in place elaborate administrative measures and procedural checks-and-balances aimed at prevention of any possible misuse or procedural lapses.
- Before elections, First Level Checking is made of each EVM by the manufacturing firms of EVM i.e. M/s Bharat Electronics Limited, Bangalore and M/s Electronics Corporation of India Limited, Hyderabad, to find out any defects and the defects, if any, are then removed or the EVMs which are not easily repaired are kept separately and not used.
- A database of the Control Units and Ballot Units verified and certified by the manufacturing engineers is prepared separately and kept in readiness for randomization.
- The District Election Officers fix up a schedule for randomization of CUs/BUs for distribution to Assembly Constituencies in the presence of the representatives of recognized political parties. The randomization is done in such a way that the CUs/BUs are randomly selected by grouping them to match the poll day requirement including reserve required for each constituency.
- After First Level Checking of EVMs and first randomization of EVMs, EVMs are stored in a Strong Room.
- On the day fixed for preparing the CUs/BUs for use in the election, the Returning Officers ensure that the preparation of CUs/BUs is done invariably in the presence of the candidates or their agents or authorized representatives and in the presence of the Commission's Observer.
- Multilevel thread sealing of various compartments/sections as shown under:
  - i. Sealing of EVMs by Returning Officer during preparation of EVMs in the presence of the candidates/their authorized agents:
    1. Thread seal for the "Candidate Set" and Power Pack (Battery) Section of Control Unit after setting of number of contesting candidates and installation of battery.
    2. Thread seal for Ballot paper screen of Balloting Unit after fixing of ballot paper.
    3. Thereafter, two thread seals for Ballot paper cover of Balloting Unit.

- Now, the Returning Officers do the second randomization of the CUs/BUs to allot the CU/BU to specific polling stations. After that they write the polling station number to which the BU/CU has been randomly allotted in the slot provided for it in the sticker.
- These CUs/BUs are then stored in a strong room in the presence of the candidates/their agents and the Commission's Observer.
- The strong room is thereafter opened, again in the presence of candidates/their agents and Observer, on the day when the polling parties are dispatched to their respective polling stations. The candidates/their agents are allowed to put their seals on the locks of the strong room.
- Before actual poll, mock poll is conducted by the Presiding Officer in the presence of the candidates/their authorized agents to ensure that EVM is working properly and to clear doubts of the candidates/their authorized agents and issue mock poll certificate.
- Sealing of Result Section/Bottom Compartment of Control Units by the Presiding Officer, after mock poll:-
  1. Green paper seal for result section
  2. Thread seal for inner door of result section
  3. Thread seal for Bottom compartment
  4. Thread seal for connector box for cascading Balloting Unit, if any (when there are more than 16 candidates).
- At each of the above steps, the candidates/their agents are authorized to put their seals also in addition to seals put by Returning Officer/Presiding Officer.
- After the conduct and close of poll, the polled EVMs are taken straight to the strong hall from the polling stations and the storage (strong) hall is closed in the presence of the candidates/their agents and the Commission's Observer, after all machines have been stored therein. The candidates/their agents are permitted to affix their own seals on the locks of the strong hall.
- The storage hall so sealed is opened; again in the presence of the candidates/their agents and the Commission's Observer on the day of counting, and, in the intervening period, the candidates/their agents are allowed to keep a round-the-clock watch on the storage hall.