

Delay of Gujarat Assembly Elections

Why in news?

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• Assembly elections for the Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh are usually announced simultaneously.

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• Currently, Gujarat elections have been suspiciously delayed by almost a month.

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What is the reason?

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• EC has reasoned that the delay was to facilitate the completion of flood relief programmes in Gujarat.

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- But this does not hold ground, as the 'Model Code of Conduct' for elections only prohibits fresh further spending and not work in progress.
- Hence it questions the credibility of the Election Commission (EC) as an independent impartial body.

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What are the implications of the delay?

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 \bullet Contradiction - Preference for holding simultaneous elections has been voiced by both the government & EC.

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• The current delay is thus a not just against the norm but also contradicts the envisioned election outlook.

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- **Misuse** Gujarat government had announced a variety of sops & concessions in this suspiciously attained grace time.
- \bullet In 13 days, the state government has announced projects worth about Rs 11,000 crores and almost 16 populist concessions. $\mbox{\sc h}$
- \bullet These include tax rebate for farmers, Salary increases for state government employees and diwali bonuses. $\mbox{\sc h}$
- Other high-profile projects include metro rail project, Dahej Ferry Service and giving the nod for a flyover & bus station.
- \bullet This episode has violated the spirit electioneering and the democracy. $\ensuremath{^{\text{\sc Nn}}}$
- \bullet If left unchecked, it could erode the credibility of our democratic institutions that have been pain-strikingly evolved over the years. $\$

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Source: Business Standard

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