

ECI OPENS WEB-PORTAL FOR POLITICAL PARTIES TO FILE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS ONLINE

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Election Commission of India has informed that, Political parties will now be able to file their financial accounts online to the Election Commission. The measure has been enabled with the launch of a new web-portal (<https://iems.eci.gov.in/>) to facilitate the online filing of Contribution Report, Audited Annual Account and Election Expenditure Statement by the Political Parties. These financial statements are required to be submitted by political parties to the Election Commission/Chief Electoral Officers of States/Union Territories, as per the Representation of People's Act, 1951 & transparency guidelines issued by the Commission, from time to time, over the last many years.

In a letter addressed to all political parties, ECI has said that the facility has been created with twin objectives: firstly, to facilitate political parties in overcoming the difficulties in physical filing of reports, and secondly, to ensure timely filing of financial statements in the prescribed/standardized formats. The online availability of the data is expected to enhance the level of compliance and transparency. The ECI pointed to the pivotal position of political parties, and stressed that it is incumbent on them to adhere to the principles of democratic functioning and transparency in electoral processes, particularly in financial disclosures.

The on-line portal also has a facility for sending reminders in the form of messages on the registered mobile number and registered emails of the authorized representatives of the political party so that the dates of compliances are not missed. A comprehensive guiding manual with graphical representations, and FAQs have also been sent to the political parties explaining the online module and the process of filing reports online. To give further guidance on the on-line filing, the ECI would also organize a hands-on training programme for the designated person(s) from various political parties.

The political parties not wishing to file the financial report through online mode will have to convey the reasons for not filing on-line to the Commission in writing and may continue to file its reports in hard copy along with CDs/Pen drive in the prescribed formats. The commission will, in turn, publish all such reports

online, along with a letter of justification sent by the party for not filing financial statements online.

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