

## EC MAKES FRESH PUSH FOR ELECTION REFORMS

Relevant for: Indian Polity & Constitution | Topic: Elections, Election Commission and the Electoral Reforms in India Incl. Political Parties

The Election Commission is set to make a fresh push for electoral reforms with the government, including making filing of false declaration a ground for disqualification and putting a cap on expenditure by candidates in Legislative Council polls.

Highly placed sources in the commission said its officials would raise the subject of making bribery during the election period a cognisable offence at the meeting planned with Legislative Secretary G. Narayana Raju after the winter session of Parliament ends on January 8.

While the Law Ministry is the administrative Ministry for the EC, the Legislative Department is the nodal unit for issues related to the panel.

The sources said the Commission would ask the Ministry to take a call on its demand to extend constitutional protection to the two Election Commissioners on the lines of the provision given to the Chief Election Commissioner.

A Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only through impeachment by Parliament. The President can remove the Election Commissioners based on the recommendation of the CEC.

Referring to the issue of false declarations, the sources said that, as of now, the penalty was a jail term of six months. But the EC wants to make it into an “electoral offence”.

Conviction in an electoral offence is a ground for disqualification. “Jail term of six months does not instil fear. Disqualification would,” another official said.

As of now, candidates contesting the Legislative Council elections do not have a bar on expenses.

**END**

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