

# EXPENDITURE LIMIT FOR LS, ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES HIKED

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Ahead of Assembly polls in five States, the expenditure limit for candidates for Lok Sabha constituencies was increased to Rs. 75 lakh from Rs. 54 lakh and Rs. 95 lakh from Rs. 70 lakh, depending on the State, while the spending limit for Assembly constituencies was hiked from Rs. 20 lakh to Rs. 28 lakh and Rs. 28 lakh to Rs. 40 lakh, the Election Commission said on Thursday.

For the upcoming Assembly elections, the enhanced amount of Rs. 40 lakh would apply in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab and Rs. 28 lakh in Goa and Manipur, according to the Law Ministry's notification on Thursday.

Apart from a 10% increase in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last major revision in spending limits for candidates was carried out in 2014. The EC had formed a committee in 2020 to study the spending limit.

"The committee invited suggestions from political parties, chief electoral officers and election observers. The committee found that there has been increase in number of electors and Cost Inflation Index since 2014 substantially. It also factored in the changing modes of campaigning, which is gradually shifting to virtual campaign," the EC statement said.

The committee recommended enhancing the limit after taking into account the "demand from political parties" and the "increase in electors" from 834 million in 2014 to 936 million in 2021, as well as the increase in the Cost Inflation Index by 32.08% from 2014 to 2021-22, the EC said. "The Commission has accepted the recommendations of the committee and has decided to enhance the existing election expenditure limit for candidates," the EC said.

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