

# 'ELECTORAL BOND AMENDMENT IS A MOCKERY OF TRANSPARENCY'

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

A day after the Centre approved the issuance of the 23rd tranche of electoral bonds which will open for sale on Wednesday with the Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat Assembly elections around the corner, the move came under fire from the Opposition, civil society groups and activists.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), which has filed a public interest litigation petition in the Supreme Court demanding that the Electoral Bond Scheme, 2018, be scrapped entirely, questioned the timing of the move given the fact that the matter was scheduled for hearing in the Supreme Court on December 6.

Senior advocate Prashant Bhushan, who is representing the ADR in the matter, said, "They [electoral bonds] have become a mockery of the same transparency in the interest of which they were introduced; the BJP has been the beneficiary of 70% of the electoral bonds issued so far; so much for a level playing field when it comes to these on the heels of elections."

On Monday, the Centre amended the Electoral Bond Scheme to grant itself the power to spell out an extra fortnight of electoral bond sales in years when the States and Union Territories with a legislature had polls using it further to open a fresh one-week window for issuing such bonds starting Wednesday.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera on November 3 questioned the "opacity" surrounding the bonds, and said, "Which party has got how much money through electoral bonds is something, which the people of India deserve to know, why is the Election Commission silent."

Jagdeep Chhokar, founding member and trustee, ADR, said, "This move will open the floodgates for unaccounted-for cash to flow freely into the electoral system."

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Jagdeep Chhokar

Founding member, ADR

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