

# CENTRE SAYS ELECTORAL BONDS SCHEME IS TRANSPARENT AS SC SEEKS CLARITY ON FUND SOURCES

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

The Supreme Court on October 14 asked the government whether the electoral bonds system reveals the source of money pumped in to fund political parties even as the Centre maintained that the scheme is “absolutely transparent”.

“Is it transparent? Does the system provide from where the money comes?” Justice B.R. Gavai, heading a Bench comprising Justice B.V. Nagarathna, quizzed the government.

“The methodology of receiving money is absolutely transparent... It is impossible to get any black or unaccounted money in... To say that this [electoral bonds scheme] affects democracy may not hold water. We will take Your Lordships through this step-by-step,” Solicitor- General Tushar Mehta replied for the government.

The exchange came hours before the announcement of date for the Assembly election in Himachal Pradesh.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for the petitioners, said the scheme affected the very idea of free and fair elections provided under Article 324 of the Constitution.

“They have been issuing electoral bonds before every State elections,” advocate Prashant Bhushan, also for the petitioners’ side, interjected.

“Free and fair elections are central to a democracy. It is the basic structure... Now an opaque way of funding political parties where you do not even know who is funding whom destroys the very concept of Article 324. This is a matter for a larger Bench,” Mr. Sibal argued.

The court scheduled the hearing on December 6.

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