

Incidents of failure of VVPAT units

*282. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether rising incidence of failure of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) units have become a major area of concern for Election Commission of India (ECI);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has reviewed the reasons for such rising failures in VVPATs and if so, the details of remedial action taken by Government in this regard; and

(d) whether Government would extend all possible assistance to ECI to substantially increase its reserve of the machines?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Election Commission has informed that the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) is essentially an elector-mechanical device consisting of a printer to print paper slips bearing details of vote cast in the Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) and has multiple advanced sensors, which are specially designed to ensure its proper functioning. There is a constant endeavor on the part of the Commission and the Technical Experts Committee (TEC), comprising of independent eminent domain experts, to improve the functioning of various sensors for optimal performance, based on field experience. Root Cause Analysis of non-functioning noticed during various stages of EVM/VVPAT preparation, including during actual polls have been carried out and necessary modifications and improvements have been done to make the machines more efficient and robust across different environmental and weather conditions. Intensive trainings are being given to the election officials to prevent VVPAT failures due to human errors. In addition, adequate replacement reserves are being provided to replace any EVM and VVPAT that would go out of operation on the poll day.

(d) The Commission has informed that no proposal is made in this regard. However, all requests from the Commission for additional requirements of EVMs/VVPAT units are acceded to after following the procedure laid down in this regard.