



Bypolls in India

Why in News?

Recently, **Bypolls** were conducted for **one Lok Sabha constituency in Punjab and four Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Odisha.**

What are Bypolls?

- **About:**
 - Bypolls, also known as **bye-elections or special elections**, refer to [elections](#) held to **fill vacant seats in the legislative bodies of India.**
 - It serves as a **vital component within the broader electoral cycle** and complements regular elections by **addressing unforeseen vacancies.**
- **Purpose:**
 - The primary objective of bypolls is to ensure **the timely filing of vacant seats, enabling the representation of the affected constituency** or district in the legislative body.
- **Occurrence:**
 - Bypolls are conducted when a seat in the legislature becomes vacant due to reasons such as the **death, resignation, [disqualification](#), or expulsion of a sitting member.**
- **Timeframe:**
 - Section 151A of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951** mandates the Election Commission to fill the casual vacancies in the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures through **bye elections within six months from the date of occurrence of the vacancy**, provided that the **remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is one year or more.**
 - Hence, there is **no need to hold bye elections if the remaining term of the Lok Sabha is less than one year** from the date of occurrence of vacancies.
- **Impact:**
 - **Impact on Political Landscape:** Bye-elections often serve as a **litmus test for [political parties](#) and their popularity.**
 - They provide an opportunity for parties to **gauge public sentiment and assess their support base.**
 - **Impact on Government Majority:** Bye-election outcomes can affect the majority of the ruling government.
 - If the **ruling party loses a significant number of by-poll seats, it may lead to a loss of majority in the legislative body**, which can impact the government's stability and decision-making.
 - **Testing the Electoral Strategies:** Bye-elections provide an avenue for political parties to test their **electoral strategies and fine-tune their campaign approaches.**
 - Parties may experiment with **candidate selection, campaign themes, and messaging during by-polls**, which can influence their strategies in subsequent elections.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. The Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

Ans: (d)

Source: TH

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