

For immediate release

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Get criminal, financial & educational details of contestants by SMS, toll-free number or the website for assembly election contestants

Former DGP Maharashtra Arvind Inamdar, others ask people to vote out criminals for the future of the country

Delhi, Oct 1, 2009: On the eve of Assembly elections in states of Maharashtra, Haryana and Arunachal Pradesh, **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)** and **National Election Watch (NEW)** announce re –launch of a **voter awareness** campaign. The campaign, whose theme “Sacche ko chune, Acche ko chune” means “vote for integrity, vote for good people” includes a toll free helpline number, an exclusive website and a SMS campaign.

Voters from these three states can now easily access voter information with a **toll free number (1-800-110-440)**. The helpline will be available from Mon to Sat (from 10am – 6pm). Voters will be able to get information on criminal records, assets, liabilities and education qualifications of all the contesting candidates. Initially information will be provided based on affidavits filed in earlier elections, but as soon as new affidavits are made available, information based on them will also be provided to the callers.

As part of the SMS campaign, people will have to send SMS **MYNETA <PINCODE>** to **56070** to register and get criminal and other background information on their current MLA for that pin code (or contesting candidates after affidavits availability). After that, NEW and ADR will send 3 messages a week on alternate days with factual information during the elections.

Apart from these two initiatives, another initiative of ADR & NEW has been the website <http://myneta.info> . This website provides full details of pending criminal charges, convicted cases, asset details, liability details and education details of all candidates, but also the comparison charts for each constituency which they can use as a powerful aid in making an informed choice for their vote.

Re-releasing the CDs containing the messages from Amir Khan on “Sacche to Chune”, Acche to Chune”, Former **Director General of Police, Maharashtra and member of National Election Watch Mr Rajiv Inamdar** made an appeal to voters. He said “if you want the future of our country to be secure, safe and prosperous, please don’t vote for criminals”.

Mr Ajit Ranade, State Coordinator of Maharashtra Election Watch said, “The **affidavits** of candidates become **available barely ten days before polling**, and are not easily accessible to voters. ADR and NEW will fill this gap by widely disseminating this detailed information through this toll free number, sms and website to help people make informed choice”.

Mr Jaskirat Singh, North Zone coordinator of National Election Watch and the architect of myneta said, “Myneta.info was a smash hit during Lok Sabha 2009 elections. It got upto 3.5 lakh hits on a single day and was linked by scores of bloggers. We hope that during these elections myneta.info will be used extensively by voters to spread awareness about contestants from their constituencies.”

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About NEW and ADR

The *National Election Watch (NEW)* is a nationwide campaign comprising of more than 1200 NGO and other citizen led organizations working on electoral reforms, improving democracy and governance in India. The National Election Watch is active in almost all states of India and has done election watch for all states and Lok Sabha elections since ADR, along with couple other organizations, won the PIL in Supreme Court in 2002 to making disclosure of educational, financial and criminal background of electoral candidates mandatory.

Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) is a Non-Political, Non-Partisan and a Non-Governmental Organization. It continues to works towards strengthening democracy and governance in India by focusing on fair and transparent electoral and political processes. It is currently conducting election watch is all states going for assembly polls. You can learn more about ADR at: <http://www.adrindia.org>