

IEVP 2026: World watches India's Festival of Democracy

From Scale to Record Participation: Tamil Nadu & West Bengal Elections Impress International Delegates

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1. As part of Election Commission of India's International Election Visitors' Programme (IEVP) 2026, the Legislative Assembly Elections in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (Phase 1) have drawn global attention, as 32 international delegates from 16 countries and International IDEA witnessed firsthand, the scale, the precision, and the vibrancy of India's electoral processes.
2. Describing the experience as "a true festival of democracy," delegates expressed admiration for the record voter participation, meticulous planning, and seamless execution of polls by ECI.

After witnessing poll at a Polling station in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, **H.E. Mrs. Sheilabai Bappoo, High Commissioner, Mauritius**, said *"India is giving the whole world, experience, procedures and knowledge, how to do it. This is what is democracy, bring the vote to the voter"*

3. The international delegates began their two-day visit (April 22-23) to Tamil Nadu and West Bengal by visiting the **dispatch and distribution centers**, where they observed the systematic movement of polling parties along with election materials through well-planned logistics and established standard operating procedures.

"Earlier today, I was at the dispatch center and I was amazed to see how lively it was..... polling officers would receive 3-part EVM machines: the Control Unit (CU), Ballot Unit (BU), and VVPAT. It was an amazing experience..very transparent and orderly" **Ms. Melissa Anne M. Telan, The Philippines, in Siliguri, West Bengal**

4. Delegates also interacted with the Chief Electoral Officer of Tamil Nadu, as well as senior district election officials of Darjeeling district in Siliguri, West Bengal. They were apprised of the overall conduct of elections and the security arrangements in place to ensure a peaceful and smooth elections. During the interaction, the delegates applauded the poll arrangements and specifically described the home voting facility for elderly voters and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) as an amazing initiative.
5. The delegates also visited the Media/Webcasting control rooms set up for monitoring the 100% webcasting of Polling stations, describing them as an important measure for transparency.
6. On the poll day morning, delegates observed mock polls. Thereafter, they visited various polling stations in Chennai (Tamil Nadu) and Siliguri & Kurseong (West Bengal) to witness the actual polling process.

7. They expressed their appreciation for the inclusive, participative, and accessible features at the polling stations including ramps, wheelchairs, volunteers, and crèche facilities, as well as dedicated polling stations managed by women and PwDs.

“We observed the polling stations; All polling station management is very good and very nice”

Mr. Yagya Prasad Bhattarai, delegate from Nepal, speaking at a polling station in Siliguri

8. In Tamil Nadu, delegates praised the provision of assured minimum facilities and the well-organized, colour-coded polling booths in Chennai.

“The most important thing I have learned is minimum assured facilities that ECI and District Election Officer is facilitating their voters..most specifically the help desk and colour coding” **Mr. Tshering Samdrup, delegate from Bhutan, speaking at a polling station in Chennai**

In West Bengal, they appreciated the availability of health check-up services at polling stations, along with recent initiatives by the Election Commission of India such as the mobile deposit facility, aimed at voter comfort and enhanced voting experience.

“I am amazed by the mobile holder pocket, where voters are not allowed to go in polling with their mobile phones but you deposit in pockets and then you can take, for the privacy of vote.

Another thing that I really liked is the resting place for the elderly and PwDs, it is quite commendable.” **Ms. Ruth Khatievi Kulundu, Kenya, speaking at a polling station in**

Siliguri

- The seamless conduct of polling and high voter turnout drew appreciation from the visiting teams. They expressed gratitude to the ECI for the opportunity to witness the scale and grandeur of election management and commended its commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and excellence.
- Earlier, on April 8-9, 38 delegates from 22 countries visited Assam, Kerala & Puducherry; thus, a total of 70 delegates from 38 countries and International IDEA visited the 5 election-ongoing States/UTs as part of IEVP 2026. While the world watches to learn, India continues to set benchmarks in conducting elections at an unparalleled scale & record voter participation, truly a festival of democracy.
- IEVP is a flagship initiative of ECI, aimed at fostering international cooperation and engagement with Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and international organisations. The programme provides a comprehensive overview of India's electoral framework, institutional mechanisms, and operational architecture, while familiarising delegates with best practices and innovations in election management.

Note: Annexure – YouTube links for testimonials of international delegates under IEVP 2026.

PK/GDH/RP

Annexure

Sl No.	Country	Testimonial Link
1.	Benin	https://youtube.com/shorts/onw850XuNKM?si=_76Nt7yD5QCC8pzk https://youtube.com/shorts/qk7gYn9XE_E?si=WR9lUm2DIKLuQ22B
2.	Bhutan	https://youtube.com/shorts/x29TxxFDvsM?si=OvfrqlbQQZgQbwj6i
3.	Ghana	https://youtube.com/shorts/SHcr8Z89QXo?si=unZmzDZBRt-xBsvO
4.	Indonesia	https://youtube.com/shorts/HYDAMt4SwkY?si=-hkUkSOnZA8fzVwu https://youtube.com/shorts/u2oQyamZJRk?si=csA7HmiBDmWabzQ1
5.	Mauritius	https://youtube.com/shorts/XUF8CBPSshhk?si=gaCs9OBzNO14_MEq https://youtube.com/shorts/EKgvqduK6dY?si=JSpA25qM8gzQbp28
6.	Moldova	https://youtube.com/shorts/HVOjFd8C2GQ?si=Mo9hwLO8FOnGDZvP
7.	Namibia	https://youtube.com/shorts/J8Eo0FZuHl0?si=V1b-ZRCdAgJCrzvX https://youtube.com/shorts/YIj_WeHhn-w?si=9kH98EqTXShgRzX4 https://www.youtube.com/shorts/QoAZJuDGiKs https://youtube.com/shorts/qjkCq3O_qtE?si=KzBTITESbJUg9nvG https://youtube.com/shorts/hxlgI0lV29o?si=bUDhs-iiqUUEV9YF https://youtube.com/shorts/gI4Q0JrVFq8?si=8-mU_66B55wiTZP0
8.	Nepal	https://youtube.com/shorts/9HuIRQg12gM?si=F5vYcrkzUZIuvW5T https://youtube.com/shorts/-jJyfrZeEY8?si=ZfaXZH52L1U1HFnJ
9.	Peru	https://youtube.com/shorts/2HDgpUdN0yw?si=iO_1d6XE_EXnVgTi

10.	Phillipines	https://youtube.com/shorts/UkiqkZbFYKY?si=n3UkinbcYwxbmZ2 https://youtube.com/shorts/pdQ0IUhdDbA?si=T4KTwm3g6ELK6Bdn https://youtube.com/shorts/v-Zw84HSQSs?si=YoTaCKDqNzPtDafE
11.	Sri Lanka	https://youtube.com/shorts/g13V4BH60eQ?si=0R9yCBBGQNwRAYmZ









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