

# **ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. ECI/PN/09/2020

Dated: 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2020

## **Press Note**

### **ECI to Host the 1<sup>st</sup> Sukumar Sen Memorial Lecture**

### **Former President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee to deliver the Lecture on 23rd January 2020**

In its 70th year of inception, Election Commission of India has decided to institute an Annual Lecture Series as a tribute to the first Chief Election Commissioner of India, Shri Sukumar Sen. Sh Sen (1898-1963) commendably conducted the first two General Elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, thereby putting India firmly on the map of democracy. The rationale behind instituting the lecture is to make a positive and constructive intervention in the democratic discourse of the nation within the constitutional mandate of the Election Commission of India.

Former President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, has kindly consented to deliver the first of the Lectures on 23rd January 2020. In 2019, Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award of the Republic, was conferred upon him, for his achievements in public affairs. Spanning over a career of more than fifty years, Sh Mukherjee had occupied varied Ministerial posts of Finance, Commerce, External Affairs and Defence Minister at different times. Shri Mukherjee has extensive diplomatic experience and has served on the Board of Governors of Multilateral Institutions such as IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and African Development Bank. Shri Mukherjee is a widely respected savant known for his encyclopedic knowledge of economic, constitutional and historical affairs. A prolific reader, he has authored several books on the Indian economy and the nation building.

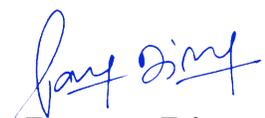
While announcing the institution of Sukumar Sen Memorial Lecture Series on behalf of Election Commission at a book launch in New Delhi on 7th February 2019, Chief Election Commissioner Shri Sunil Arora had observed "It

would be Commission's endeavor to involve a wide cross-section of civil society including political parties, media, constitutionalists, legal luminaries, academia etc. This lecture would be delivered by an eminent person from the democratic world, whose contribution for the spread and furtherance of democratic values and ideals is widely known and recognized”.

Shri Sukumar Sen was born on 2 January, 1898. He was educated at Presidency College, Kolkata and University College, London. Shri Sen joined the Indian Civil Services in 1922. During his service, he held several important posts, including as Chief Secretary of West Bengal (1947-1950). He served as the first Chief Election Commissioner of India from 21st March 1950 till his retirement 19th December, 1958. He conducted the first two Lok Sabha elections of India held in 1952 and 1957 simultaneously with the Legislative Assembly Elections based on universal adult franchise under challenging circumstances and little precedence to guide him.

Shri Sen is also credited with conducting the first general elections in the then Sudan in November-December, 1953 as the Chairman of the International Election Commission. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan for his distinguished contribution to public life. He was one of the earliest recipients of that award in 1954.

On this occasion a reprint of the Report on India's First Election would be released by Shri Pranab Mukherjee as also a postal stamp in memory of Shri Sukumar Sen would be unveiled.

  
**Pawan Diwan**  
**Under Secretary**