

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110 001.

No.MCS/PN/07/2000

Dated: February 21, 2000

PRESS NOTE

Subject: Bihar - Law & Order

On the evening of the 14th of Feb, 2000, the Election Commission of India's observer, Shrimati Kalpana Mittal Barua, in 46-Kodarma Parliamentary Constituency, Bihar faced a very serious threat, while returning from Hazaribagh, from a dangerous and violent mob. Smt Barua, who was accompanied by a small Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) escort, handled a most dangerous situation in a calm, cool and courageous manner. But for her conduct on the occasion, the consequences could have been very grave. It may be mentioned that Smt Barua's batch mate in the IAS, Shri Krishnayya, a former D.M. in the State, had unfortunately died while discharging his duty, due to such a mob attack.

On reaching Kodarma, Shrimati Barua met the Collector and tried to get the Superintendent of Police and other officers. She also made a report to the Election Commission. The Election Commission of India, after taking into consideration the Chief Electoral Officer's report, and the reports of the Divisional Commissioner, Hazaribag, Collector and District Magistrate, Kodarma and Shrimati Barua's report, has unanimously come to the conclusion, that the police administration of Kodarma Distt, was a mute spectator to the entire series of dangerous happenings on the 14th Feb, 2000, which resulted in the observer being subjected to a most grave physical threat, by a violent crowd while on official duty. There was a clear break down of the law and order machinery, and the police officers concerned remained passive spectators. The SDO (Civil), the Returning Officer for 262-Kadarma Assembly Constituency, was also responsible for helping to trigger off the chain of events, which resulted in this situation.

The Election Commission of India, takes a most grave view of this incident and has unanimously ordered the following immediate action by the Govt of Bihar.

1. The Officer in-Charge Kodarma Sadar Police Station, should be immediately placed under suspension, and disciplinary action taken against him.
2. The Superintendent of Police, Kodarma, and the S.D.P.O., Kodarma are directed to be replaced immediately, by new officers in consultation with the Chief Electoral Officer, Bihar. This is to be effective by 11.00 A.M. on the 22nd February, 2000.
3. The Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) and Returning Officer of 262-Kodarma assembly constituency, is also to be forthwith removed, and a suitable replacement posted, in consultation with the Chief Electoral officer, Bihar by 11-00 A.M. on the 22nd February 2000.
4. The Observer will be given full security for which Central Para Military Forces will be deputed. The security will be given ex-Patna.
5. Two Companies of Central Para Military Forces, will be provided to the District Administration, to ensure smooth counting on the 25th February 2000.

6. The Commission wishes to place on record its appreciation, of the sense of duty of Shrimati Kalpana Mittal Barua, and her cool and brave conduct on the occasion. After the elections, the Commission shall be conveying its recommendations in this regard, to the Ministry of Personnel, Government of India.

(K.R.PRASAD)

SECRETARY