

Officers on the dais, Shri Sriram Taranikanti, Chief Electoral Officer, Tripura Shri M. L. Dey, State Election Commissioner, Shri Samir Barman, Paralympics Champion and other officials, ladies and gentlemen, and my young friends. I am happy to be among all of you on this august occasion to celebrate Indian democracy.

In each and every democracy, voters have the last word for upholding democratic values. Keeping in mind the significance of voters in democratic set up, the Election Commission declared that 25th January in 2011 be celebrated as National Voters Day (NVD). Each and every year, throughout the Country in all Polling Stations, Assembly Constituencies, District and Sub-Divisional Head quarters and also in the State Head quarters, Indian democracy is celebrated this day. Such celebrations bring further awareness among the youth community to participate in the electoral process and also strengthen the democratic roots in the country.

It is an honour and privilege for me to participate in the observance of 11th National Voters' Day in the State. The theme for this year's NVD is 'Making our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed'. I am glad that the office of the Chief Electoral officer, Tripura under the guidance of the Election Commission of India is earnestly fulfilling these objectives.

Today, India's credibility as the largest democratic Nation is recognized world-wide. We are proud to say that since Independence, free and fair elections have been held at regular intervals as per the principles enshrined in the Constitution. The Election Commission of India, which is one of the pillars of Indian democracy, has equipped itself exceptionally well to conduct free and fair elections in the country and has stood the test of time. With various checks and balances, we are today a thriving democracy.

The voter turnout in Tripura has witnessed an increasing trend over successive elections in the past and I am proud to be part of the State which has in the last Assembly Elections and Lok-Sabha Elections recorded a massive voter turnout of 91.61% & 82.23% respectively. Such mammoth turn out can happen with the sheer dedication, zeal and continued efforts of officials from various departments coming together, working as a team and overcoming challenges posed before them. The credit also goes to active involvement of political parties, civil society organizations, media and above all the citizens of Tripura. I am hopeful that, given the educative campaign being undertaken by the election machinery and other stakeholders, Tripura shall continue with the record in coming elections also.

In fact, Election Commission of India's goal is to build wider social support in favour of participatory democracy, and to promote and sustain it through education and voter participation. I, therefore, appeal to the civil society organizations and political parties to sensitize the people to make them informed about ethical voting during elections.

I am also glad to note that the State Election Machinery has been taking a number of initiatives for awareness building among the voters and Student community through the Systematic Voter Education and Electors Participation (SVEEP) activities throughout the year. In that context, I compliment them for devising an online quiz as a part of SVEEP activities in the State which is an innovative and topical method given the current pandemic situation. Through such measures the election machinery of the State has gained the confidence of Election Commission of India.

I am glad to note that the Summary Revision of Electoral Rolls with reference to 1st January 2021 as the qualifying date has taken place in the State under the guidance of the Election Commission of India and published on 15th January, 2021. It is also my proud privilege to be a part of the electoral roll system of Tripura, having registered along with my family, as a voter in Tripura.

I am also glad that the Election Commission has launched e-EPIC system throughout the Country, making obtaining of EPIC card a much more easy and accessible process. In times to come, I am confident that the Election Commission of India and the State Election Machinery will take several new strides towards strengthening the thriving democracy of this great Country.

JAI HIND