



# Election Rules for State-Owned Media

[Source: IE](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, two opposition leaders accused **state-owned media of censoring their speeches during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.**

- However, according to a [Prasar Bharati official](#), the televisions and radio networks were simply following rules set by the [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) regarding the use of state media by recognised parties during elections.

## What are the Rules for Political Parties Using State-Owned Media?

- **Allocation of Time on State Media:**
  - Recognised political parties have been allowed to freely use state-owned television and radio during polls **since the 1998 Lok Sabha elections.**
  - The ECI decides the time allocation for each **recognised [national and state party](#)** before the start of the election campaign.
    - National parties collectively receive a minimum of 10 hours on Doordarshan's national channel and 15 hours on regional channels. They also get 10 hours on AIR's national hook-up and 15 hours on regional AIR stations.
    - State parties get a minimum of 30 hours on regional Doordarshan channels and AIR radio stations.
- **Guidelines on Speech Content:**
  - Parties and speakers must submit speech transcripts 3-4 days in advance for approval by respective **All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD) authorities.**
  - **ECI Guidelines Prohibit:**
    - Criticism of other countries;
    - Attack on religions or communities;
    - Obscene or defamatory content;
    - Incitement of violence;
    - Contempt of court;
    - Aspersions against the President and judiciary;
    - Anything affecting national unity and integrity;
    - Criticism of individuals by name.

## Note

- The ECI allocated broadcast and telecast time to six national parties and 59 state parties for the 2024 elections. National parties received 4.5 hours on Doordarshan and AIR, with the remaining 5.5 hours **based on their vote share in the [2019 Lok Sabha elections.](#)**

## Prasar Bharati

- It is a **statutory autonomous body** established under the **Prasar Bharati Act in 1997.** It is the

Public Service Broadcaster of the country.

- It comprises **two main wings**:
  - **All India Radio (AIR)**: The national radio broadcaster with a vast network of stations across the country.
  - **Doordarshan (DD)**: The national television broadcaster offering a mix of national, regional, and local programming.
- AIR and DD were earlier media units of the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

#### Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

#### Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

**Ans: (d)**