

Parties get 48 hours to publish candidates' criminal records

Supreme Court modifies its February 2020 judgment

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The Supreme Court on Tuesday warned Parliament that the nation is losing patience with the advent of criminals in politics even as it imposed fines on major political parties, including the BJP and the Congress, for covering up from voters the criminal past of the candidates they fielded in the Bihar Assembly poll last year.

The court had directed political parties to publish the criminal history, if any, of their election candidates on the homepage of their websites under the caption 'Candidates with criminal antecedents' within 48 hours of their selection.

'Nation losing patience'

"The nation continues to wait, and is losing patience. Cleansing the polluted stream of politics is obviously not one of the immediate pressing concerns of the legislative branch of the government," a Bench consisting of Justices Rohinton F. Nariman and B.R. Gavai told

Under the scanner

As many as 70% of the candidates analysed from the BJP and the RJD in the 2020 Bihar Assembly election had criminal cases against them. The share was the lowest for BSP candidates among major parties

Party	No. of candidates analysed	Candidates with declared criminal cases (%)
BJP	109	70
RJD	141	70
Congress	70	64
LJP	135	52
JD(U)	115	49
BSP	78	37

SOURCE: ADR



the lawmakers.

Justice Nariman, who authored the 71-page judgment based on a plea by advocate Brajesh Singh, said the Supreme Court's repeated appeals to legislators to amend the law to weed out the criminals amidst them had fallen on deaf ears.

The court said it did not take political parties much time to flout its February 2020 judgment, which directed them to prominently publish the criminal antecedents of their candidates in

newspapers and on social media accounts, including Twitter and Facebook.

Eight months from the February judgment, in the run-up to the Bihar Assembly election in October-November last year, these parties had already subverted the verdict by either publishing inadequate information about their candidates' criminal antecedents or by cleverly printing them in obscure newspapers.