Indian EVMs not connected to Internet or Wi-Fi, says EC after U.S. official's comments

Context

- **Tulsi Gabbard**, U.S. Director of National Intelligence, recently warned about vulnerabilities in electronic voting systems in the U.S., suggesting a return to **paper ballots**.

- **Elon Musk** had previously raised concerns about EVMs being hackable, even by Artificial intelligence (AI).

- **The Election Commission of India (EC)** responded, emphasizing the security and integrity of **Indian EVMs.**

Technical Aspects of Indian EVMs

- Indian EVMs are **not connected to the Internet, Wi-Fi, or Infrared.**

- They are **stand-alone, one-way programmable devices** – functioning like simple **calculators**.

- No external communication hardware/software is embedded.

Tamper-Proof & Secure Design

- Once programmed, the EVMs are **sealed**, and no further input or manipulation is possible.

- Stored in **strong rooms** under **multi-layer security**, with access monitored and logged.

- **VVPAT** (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail) allows the voter to visually verify their vote.

- **No internal clock** or memory – prevents manipulation based on time or stored data.

Transparency & Verification Measures

- **VVPAT slips** are generated with every vote and available for verification.

- Over **5 crore VVPAT slips** have been matched and verified during live counting in front of party representatives.

- Political parties are involved at every stage – **mock polls**, **randomization**, **sealing**, and **counting**.

Legal and Judicial Backing

- Indian EVMs have passed the **test of legality** – upheld by the **Supreme Court of India**.

- Regular **public interest litigations (PILs)** and challenges have been addressed by the judiciary.

International Comparisons

- U.S. systems use a variety of **e-voting systems,** often linked to private networks or the Internet, making them **susceptible to hacking.**

- Indian EVMs are indigenous, self-contained, and have no external network dependency.

Why EVMs are Still Criticized Internationally

- Lack of understanding of **India's specific design** vs. global models.

- Political and civil society concerns in various democracies about **digital manipulation**.

- **General skepticism** toward technology in elections due to rising cyber threats globally.

India's Approach to Trust in Elections

- Emphasizes **speed** (counting 100 crore votes in a day), **accuracy**, and **transparency**.

- EC maintains **continuous public confidence** through voter education and process openness.

- India has **resisted international pressure** to move toward online or hybrid systems, citing **cybersecurity risks**.

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