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# Electronic voting system in next general elections - Gill

India will introduce an electronic voting system in the next general elections, former chief election commissioner (CEC), Manohar Singh Gill said.

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India will introduce an electronic voting system in the next general elections, former chief election commissioner (CEC), Manohar Singh Gill said.

"The new system will help curb fraud," Gill was quoted as saying by The Daily Star newspaper yesterday.

Terming electronic voting machines (EVMs) as both money and time saving equipment, Gill who is on a private visit to Dhaka, told the daily that he had introduced the devices for the first time in some Indian states during the last general elections.

"With the voting machine, people, both educated and illiterate, feel comfortable exercising their franchise." The former Indian CEC said he also introduced the slogan 'New Method for New Century'.

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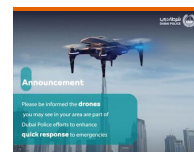
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Presently, nearly 75 per cent of India's over 600 million voters are covered by EVMs.

Gill also believes that the lifeblood of democracy is dialogue through which any issue can be resolved.

Pointing to some common problems faced by the South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India, Gill stressed the need for dialogue among these neighbours to share their experiences in resolving problems.

Gill mentioned the use of money, muscle power and participation of unsavoury candidates in elections as obstacles before the growth of democracy in developing nations.

The former Indian bureaucrat, who served with the Election Commission of India for eight years since 1993, also talked about his experiences and the prospect of democracy in Bangladesh.

"We do not allow anyone to contest the polls if he/she has a proven record of misdeeds," he said, adding that India has been struggling to keep such people out of the election process as it is very difficult to identify them.

Leading Indian politicians gathered on the 50th anniversary of the election commission in 2001. He said: "It was the celebration and affirmation of Indian democracy."

On democracy in Bangladesh, he said it has a bright prospect and uttered the age-old saying: "What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow."

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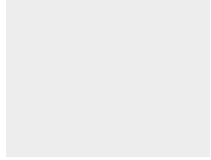
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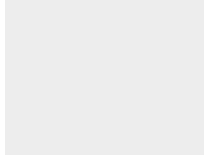
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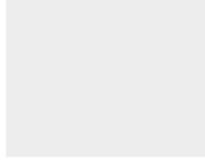
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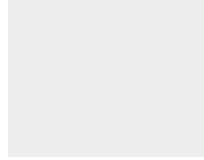
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