Delay of Gujarat Assembly Elections

Why in news?

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- Assembly elections for the Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh are usually announced simultaneously.
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- Currently, Gujarat elections have been suspiciously delayed by almost a month.
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What is the reason?

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- EC has reasoned that the delay was to facilitate the completion of flood relief programmes in Gujarat.
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- But this does not hold ground, as the ‘Model Code of Conduct’ for elections only prohibits fresh further spending and not work in progress.
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- Hence it questions the credibility of the Election Commission (EC) as an independent impartial body.
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What are the implications of the delay?

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- **Contradiction** - Preference for holding simultaneous elections has been voiced by both the government & EC.
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- The current delay is thus a not just against the norm but also contradicts the envisioned election outlook.
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- **Misuse -** Gujarat government had announced a variety of sops & concessions in this suspiciously attained grace time.
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- In 13 days, the state government has announced projects worth about Rs 11,000 crores and almost 16 populist concessions.
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- These include tax rebate for farmers, Salary increases for state government employees and diwali bonuses.
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- Other high-profile projects include metro rail project, Dahej Ferry Service and giving the nod for a flyover & bus station.
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- This episode has violated the spirit electioneering and the democracy.
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- If left unchecked, it could erode the credibility of our democratic institutions that have been pain-strikingly evolved over the years.
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Source: Business Standard

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