EC's Meeting with Political Parties

What is the issue?

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- The Election Commission (EC) recently held its meeting with all major political parties.
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- The meeting is aimed at making the electoral process more transparent, inclusive and credible.
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What are the major demands?

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- Several state Assembly elections and the general election are approaching.
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- In this context, there were three major demands:
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1. giving up on electronic voting machines (EVMs) and moving back to paper ballots
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2. linking voter identification cards to Aadhaar
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3. cap on election expenditure of political parties (click here to know more)
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What is the tussle with EVMs?

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- Most of the parties flagged the issue of malfunctioning of electronic voting machines (EVMs).

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- EVMs have typically been questioned by parties after losing elections.
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- However, it is claimed that EVMs are tamper-proof.
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- It also eliminates booth capturing, a favourite pastime of political parties during elections.
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- This is because the machines do not allow casting of more than five votes a minute.
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- The provision of voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines has further enhanced EVMs' credibility.
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- Besides, a return to the ballot paper system would also not be advisable.
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- As, it would come with huge environmental costs and logistical issues.
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What is the Aadhaar linkage demand?

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- The demand for linking Aadhaar to voter ID cards is prompted by concerns about the existence of ghost voters.
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- E.g. the Congress has complained about 6 million fake voters in the electoral rolls of Madhya Pradesh.
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- It is true that Aadhaar would go a long way in eliminating these fake voters.
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- But notably, Aadhaar itself is not a proof of citizenship.
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- Moreover, there are privacy concerns related to Aadhaar.
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- So mandating it as the final adjudicator for voting rights is questionable.
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Source: Business Standard

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