

# SAARC nations to emulate India's poll practices

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India's success in holding elections through electronic systems including the use of EVMs, has caught the fancy of Pakistan and other SAARC countries, which have expressed the desire to emulate it in their respective areas.

As heads of poll management bodies of SAARC countries got together to evolve solutions to common problems at the 3rd conference of heads of election management bodies of SAARC nations in New Delhi, India showcased its use of modern technology for strengthening democracy and election management systems.

India made a presentation on use of technology in election management which generated encouraging response from Election Commissions of SAARC countries.

“Yes, we would like to follow the best practices followed by India. We are inspired by India's controls on use of money power and help us increase voter turnouts, as our voter turnout is very low...,” Justice (Retd) Muhammad Roshan Essani, member of Election Commission of Pakistan said on Tuesday.

“For the 83 million voters in Pakistan, the Election Commission of Pakistan has created a computerised data base of voters and we are trying to make use of IT and EVMs in our election system... For tackling money power and political finance, that legislation is under consideration. We are working on that. A committee has been formed,” he said.

Pakistan EC spokesman Muhammad Afzal Khan said, “With Pakistan, India and Bangladesh having similar cultures, all should help each other... We must learn from each other... We are trying to use EVMs in our elections.”

Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan (Dasho) Kunzang Wangdi also said they are trying to emulate many good election practices from India, as theirs was a new democracy — formed only in 2008 after years of monarchy.