

## Azharuddin, minister booked for violating poll code of conduct

Former Indian cricket team captain and Congress MP Mohammad Azharuddin and union Minister for Road Transport and Highways R.P.N. Singh have been charged with violating the election code of conduct ahead of by-polls in Uttar Pradesh, police said Wednesday.

Singh and Azharuddin -- who is the Congress MP from Moradabad -- addressed public meetings in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district Tuesday, some 300 km from Lucknow, without taking the mandatory permission from the district administration, police said.

'Both of them were booked late Tuesday evening under section 188 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) as they violated the election code of conduct by organising meetings at the grounds of the Udit Naraynan College,' police inspector V.S. Chauhan told IANS.

'In their attempt to solicit support for the Congress candidate, the two also played cricket. On the directions of the district administration, the case was registered against the two,' he added.

The Padrauna assembly seat in Kushinagar district fell vacant when Singh, who was the legislator from it, resigned after winning the Kushinagar Lok Sabha seat. Mohini Devi is the Congress candidate for the Padrauna assembly seat.

By-elections will take place Nov 7 for one Lok Sabha seat (Firozabad) and 11 assembly seats -- Puwayan, Lucknow West, Isauli, Haiserbazar, Padrauna, Kolasala, Rari, Etawah, Bharthana, Lalitpur and Jhansi.

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