

GENERAL ELECTIONS – 2019

SCHEDULE OF ELECTIONS

General Elections to Lok Sabha

and

**State Legislative Assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh,
Odisha and Sikkim**



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India

Nirvachan Sadan

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ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi 110001.

No. ECI/PN/23/2019

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PRESS NOTE

SUBJECT: ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHEDULE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS TO LOK SABHA AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH, ARUNACHAL PRADESH, ODISHA & SIKKIM, 2019.

The five-year term of the 16th Lok Sabha is due to expire on 03rd June, 2019. Credible elections, conducted at regular prescribed intervals, are the very soul of any democratic system. Article 324 of the Constitution of India bestows the relevant powers, duties and functions upon the Election Commission of India while Section 14 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 provides for the conduct of the elections to constitute a new Lok Sabha before the expiry of its current term. Taking into account these Constitutional and legal provisions, the Election Commission of India has made comprehensive preparations for the conduct of elections to the 17th Lok Sabha in a free, fair and peaceful manner.

2. Elections to the world's largest democracy pose immense challenges with respect to logistics and man/woman and material management and Commission's endeavour in this direction has been to consult all the stakeholders, invite inputs from all the relevant departments/organizations and evolve a coordinated framework for smooth delivery of another round of General Elections.
3. In the course of assessing various dimensions involved in holding elections to the 543 Parliamentary Constituencies (PCs) and, in

particular, the parameters to be considered for their scheduling and phasing, the Election Commission of India has planned meticulously for each and every aspect of election much in advance to ensure that these elections are conducted in best professional manner.

4. The Commission organized a series of meetings with the Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) of all the 36 States and Union Territories (UTs) to review all the aspects of election preparedness in all the States and UTs and accordingly, appropriate instructions were issued to the CEOs for ensuring efficient conduct of the elections.
5. The Commission also held meeting with the Chief Secretaries, Directors General of Police, Home Secretaries, Chief Electoral Officers and Police Nodal Officers of all States and UTs on 21st, 22nd & 28th January, 2019, to assess the overall law and order situation, ascertain State/ UT specific areas of concern, to deliberate on the quantum of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) required in each State/ UT and to review the overall preparedness of the election machinery. The cooperation of all authorities was sought for conducting free, fair and peaceful elections across the country, under the overall superintendence, direction and control of the Commission.
6. The Commission has visited different States to review the poll preparedness. During these visits, the Commission interacted with political parties, enforcement agencies, all District officers, SSPs/SPs, Divisional Commissioners, Range IGs and Chief Secretaries, Home Secretaries, DGPs and other Senior officers of the States.
7. The conduct of General Elections in the entire country requires considerable deployment of Central and State Police Forces to ensure peaceful, free, fair election with fearless participation of electors, especially in the vulnerable areas/ pockets. Mobilization, deployment

and disengagement of these forces with minimum criss cross movement and optimal utilization, involved complex planning and detailed analysis, carried out over several rounds of consultations with the senior officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs/ CAPFs/ Police Nodal Officers of the States/ UTs. The Commission also held discussions with the Union Home Secretary to highlight the areas of coordination for effective deployment of these forces.

8. The Commission also held meeting with Railway and many others in regard to the specific requirements of special trains, including other logistics, for smooth and timely movement of CAPF Companies and other police forces across States/ UTs, including their intra-State shifting during the election period.
9. Keeping in view the interests of the students and also the fact that Polling Stations are mostly located in school buildings and teachers are engaged as polling personnel, the Commission has consciously factored-in the examination schedules of various State Boards, including the Central Board of Secondary Education, in the process of finalizing the poll dates. In addition to this, other relevant factors like various holidays and festivals falling in the months of March, April and May, harvest season in certain parts of the country and the inputs obtained from the Indian Meteorological Department on the pre-monsoon rainfall, onset and spread of monsoon and acute hot weather conditions in certain parts of the country have also been taken into consideration. Thus, while deciding on the number of poll days for each State/ UT and the composition of the PCs that go to polls on a particular poll day, the Commission has, to the extent possible, taken all relevant aspects and information, related thereto, into view.

10. DELIMITATION OF PARLIAMENTARY AND ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES:

The General Election to the House of People, 2019 to constitute the 17th Lok Sabha shall be held on the basis of the extent of Parliamentary Constituencies as contained in the “Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 2008”. Therefore, there is no change in the extent and status of any Parliamentary Constituency after General election to Lok Sabha, 2009. Besides, the total number of Parliamentary Constituencies allotted to various States/UTs including SC/ST seats are also continued to be the same. Similarly, general elections to the Legislative Assemblies of *Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim* shall be held on the basis of the extent of Assembly Constituencies as contained in the said Delimitation Order, 2008. The total number of ACs allotted to these States including SC/ST seats shall also continue to be the same.

11. As per “Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014(No.6 of 2014) dated 1st March, 2014” & “Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Removal of Difficulties) Order, 2015 dated 23.4.2015” and subsequently, ‘Commission’s Notification No.282/AP/2018(DEL) dated 22.9.2018, the total number of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies in respect of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States shall be as under:-

ANDHRA PRADESH

Parliamentary Constituencies:- Total number of seats as allocated are 25, SC-4 and ST-1.

Assembly Constituencies:- Total number of seats as allocated are 175, SC-29 & ST-7.

TELANGANA

Parliamentary Constituencies:- Total number of seats as allocated are 17,

SC-3 and ST-2.

Assembly Constituencies:- Total number of seats are 119, SC-19 & ST-12.

The extent of all Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies in respect of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States shall be as per the said Act(s) and the Commission's Notification dated 22.9.2018, as referred above.

12. **ELECTORAL ROLLS:**

- a. All citizens who turned 18 years on 1st January, 2019 and registered as electors will get opportunity to cast their vote in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and in the respective Vidhan Sabha elections of those States where it will be held. Those who turned 18 years on 1st January 2019 and are eligible, but yet to be registered as electors, they still have opportunities to register as electors. Through the media, they are requested to apply urgently online through nvsp.in or offline through the BLOs of the concerned polling stations or in the electoral registration office.
- b. Electoral Rolls have been revised with reference to 01.01.2019 as the qualifying date and have been finally published in all the States and the Union Territories. The process of continuous updation of electoral rolls will continue till the last date of filing nominations.
- c. The total electorate in the country as per finally published E-rolls in reference to 01.01.2019 is approximately 900 million compared to 814.5 million in 2014. This marks an increase of more than 84 million electors. Over 15 million electors are in 18-19 years age group. Electors in the age group of 18 to 19 years constitute 1.66% of total electors. Commission allowed enrollment of transgender persons with gender written as "Others" in the electoral rolls since 2012. The number of electors enrolled as "Others" gender is 38,325. Parliament amended the Representation of the People Act, 1950, allowing

enrollment of Indian citizens living overseas as electors. 71,735 overseas electors have been enrolled in the current electoral rolls. **There are 16,77,386 service electors in the electoral rolls.**

13. PHOTO ELECTORAL ROLLS AND ELECTOR PHOTO IDENTITY CARDS (EPIC):

The country had gone to polls with Photo Electoral Rolls for the first time in 2009. In that year the State of Assam, Jammu & Kashmir and Nagaland did not have Photo Electoral Rolls (PERs), and Elector Photo Identity Cards (EPICs) were not distributed to electors in Assam and Nagaland. Now, all the States and UTs have Photo Electoral Rolls (PERs). Photographs of 99.72% electors are already printed in the electoral rolls. 99.36% electors have been given EPIC. The percentage of electors with EPIC and photographs in electoral rolls is likely to increase further before the elections. 24 States and UTs, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, NCT of Delhi, Puducherry, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal have photographs of 100% electors in the electoral rolls. 23 States and UTs have 100% EPIC coverage. These are - Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, NCT of Delhi, Puducherry, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. Remaining electors are advised to submit their photographs to obtain their EPIC from the concerned Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) urgently. CEOs have been directed to maximize photo and EPIC coverage in the electoral rolls before the elections.

14. MEASURES FOR FACILITATING FRANCHISE OF EPIC HOLDERS – SPECIAL CAMPS TO BE ORGANISED:

Commission has received complaints that some persons having EPIC have in the past been denied the right to vote because their name was not found in the electoral rolls. It is clarified here that only those persons are allowed to vote at a Polling Station who are enrolled in the electoral roll for that Polling Station. EPIC is only an identity document and does not confer the right of vote on any person, whose name is not in the electoral roll. It is also clarified that the law does not allow inclusion of names in the electoral roll after 3:00 PM on the last date of filing nominations, till the electoral process is complete. All persons are, therefore, advised that they must check that their names are in electoral rolls and apply at the earliest. Facility of checking is provided on the website of Chief Electoral Officers. “Voter Verification & Information Programme (VVIP)” has been launched where facility to check the names in electoral rolls through SMS on toll free number “1950” has been provided. In addition, the Commission has organized special camps at all Polling Stations for enrolment of left out eligible voters. In this camp, the electoral roll for that Polling Station shall be pasted on the wall of the Polling Station and shall also be read out in public, so that people can check that their name is in the electoral roll. If the name of any person eligible to be enrolled is left out for some reason or has been wrongly deleted, such a person should immediately fill application for inclusion of name in Form 6 and hand it over to the Booth Level Officer (BLO), who will be present in the camp at the Polling Station. The BLO shall then deliver the form to the ERO, who will include the name if the applicant is found eligible to be enrolled as an elector.

15. INTENSIVE MONITORING OF ELECTORAL ROLLS BY THE COMMISSION:

Commission has put in place a mechanism of daily monitoring of electoral rolls during the period of continuous updation. Instructions have been given that there shall be no suo moto deletion of names after final publication of electoral rolls. EROs have been directed that they must consult the District Election Officer (DEO) on all deletions after final publication of e-rolls; further, no deletion or modification shall be done, after 10 days of announcement of elections, without prior approval of the Commission.

16. MEASURES TO PREVENT IMPERSONATION OF ABSENTEE VOTERS:

BLOs shall do a door to door survey and prepare a list of voters found absent from the place of their ordinary residence. Similarly, names of shifted and dead voters shall also be added to this list by BLOs. This list of Absent, Shifted or Dead (ASD) voters shall be given to the Presiding Officers on the poll day. Commission has issued instructions that voting will be allowed only after proper identification of voters. Identification shall be done on the basis of EPIC or other alternative identity documents permitted by the Commission. Presiding Officers are required to double check the identity of voters whose names are on the ASD list.

17. PHOTO VOTER SLIPS (PVS):

PHOTO VOTER SLIP shall be used for guidance but not as identity proof in polling station. Electors will be required to carry EPIC or any of the eleven Identity Documents as notified by the Commission.

To facilitate the voters to know where he/she is enrolled as a voter at a particular polling station and what is his/her serial number in the Electoral roll, the Commission has directed that official **voter slip bearing the Photo of the elector (wherever present in the roll) will be distributed at least**

5 days before the date of poll to all enrolled voters by the District Election Officer and a very close and rigorous monitoring of the distribution process shall be done by the DEO and General Observer concerned. The size, design and format of the Photo Voter Slip has also been substantially improved to enhance its utility and effectiveness in voter identification, awareness and guidance by increasing the size of the image, providing additional information along with polling station Nazri Naksha on the reverse of the slip and improvement in the quality of printing. It has also been directed that the said voter slip should be in the languages in which electoral roll is published for that Assembly Constituency. The Commission has laid a special emphasis on the systematic, efficient and timely distribution of the Photo Voter Slips through the Booth Level Officers (BLOs), who are under strict instructions to hand over the voter slip to the elector concerned only and not to any other person. The BLOs shall also maintain a pre-printed Register of Voters and take the signatures/thumb impression of person to whom the Photo Voter Slip is delivered.

18. The residual undistributed Voter Slips shall be returned by the BLO to the concerned ERO, who shall keep the same in a sealed cover after making an alphabetical list of the undistributed PVS in respect of each Part/polling station. Two copies of such alphabetical lists shall be handed over to the RO of the concerned constituency, while sealed cover of undistributed photo voter slips shall remain in safe custody with the ERO. No further distribution of photo voter slips shall be done after the same are returned to the ERO.

19. **The Returning Officer (RO) of the Constituency shall prepare a schedule for distribution of Photo Voter Slips by the BLOs.** A copy of

this schedule shall be given by the RO to the Political Parties, Booth Level Agents (BLAs) of all recognized political parties well in advance, if they have been appointed and contesting Candidates and their Agents, under acknowledgement.

20. BRAILLE PHOTO VOTER SLIPS:

To ensure wholesome and constructive participation and active engagement of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the election process, the Commission has directed to issue Accessible Photo Voter Slips with Braille Features to Persons with Visual Impairment or Blind, over and above normal Photo Voter Slips to be issued.

21. VOTER GUIDE:

In this election, a **Voter Guide (in Vernacular / English)** shall be handed over to **every** household ahead of the elections, giving information about the date and time of polls, contact details of the BLOs, important websites, helpline numbers, documents required for identification at the polling station besides other important information including the Do's and Don'ts for voters at the polling station. This Voter Guide Brochure will be distributed along with the Photo Voter Slips by the BLOs.

22. POLLING STATIONS:

Presently there are approximately 10,35,918 Polling Stations in the country, as compared to approximately 9,28,000 Polling Stations set up during Lok Sabha election, 2014. This marks an increase of nearly 10.1% Polling Stations. This increase is largely due to rationalization of Polling Stations, which the Commission undertook in the recent years.

23. ASSURED MINIMUM FACILITIES (AMF) AT POLLING STATIONS:

The Commission has recently issued instructions to the Chief Electoral Officers of all States/ UTs to ensure that every Polling Station is equipped with Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) like drinking water, shed, toilet, ramp for the physically challenged voters and a standard voting compartment etc.

24. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPATs):

The Commission has decided to use Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) alongwith Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) at every polling station of all the States and Union Territories to enhance the transparency and credibility of the election process as VVPAT allows the voter to verify his/her vote. The Commission has already made arrangements to ensure availability of adequate number of EVMs and VVPATs for the smooth conduct of elections. The requirement and availability of EVMs and VVPATs for the Lok Sabha and for the State Assembly Elections due to be held together in 2019 are as follows:

Requirement of EVMs and VVPATs for upcoming General Election to Lok Sabha and simultaneous elections in some States			
Polling Stations	Deployment of units		
	BU	CU	VVPAT
10.35 lakh	23.3 lakh	16.35 lakh	17.4 lakh

25. First level Checking (FLC): The First Level Check of EVMs and VVPATs has been completed in the presence of representatives of political parties. A two-stage randomization of EVMs and VVPATs will also be done. For this purpose, a Standard Operating Procedure for randomization of EVMs and VVPATs has been issued. In the first stage, all the EVMs and VVPATs stored in the district warehouse will be randomized by the District Election Officer (DEO) through EVM Management System (EMS) in the

presence of the representatives of the recognized political parties for Assembly Constituency/Segment-wise allocation. Second randomization of EVMs and VVPATs will be done at RO level before candidate setting of EVMs and VVPATs for polling station-wise allocation. This is done in the presence of General Observer of Election Commission of India and contesting candidates/their agents. This process will be carried out after finalization of the contesting candidates. At this stage also, candidates or their agents/representatives will be allowed to check and satisfy themselves in every manner about the error-free functionality of the EVMs and VVPATs.

26. **Mock Poll:** Before actual use of EVMs and VVPATs at polling stations, mock polls are conducted on the machines three times. First, during the First Level Checking (FLC), each and every VVPAT is also subjected to a mock poll with 96 votes and the paper slip count is cross verified with the electronic count in the EVM. Furthermore, a mock poll in 5% randomly selected EVMs is done as follows i.e. 1% of EVMs with 1200 votes, in 2% of EVMs with 1000 votes and in 2% of EVMs with 500 votes is done using VVPATs. After the mock-poll, the printed ballot slips of each VVPAT printer are counted and the result is tallied with the electronic result of Control Unit. The tally is shown to the representative of political parties present at the FLC to ensure absolute transparency. As part of the preparations for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, mock poll has already been conducted in EVMs and VVPATs during the First Level Checking in the presence of the representative of Political Parties. During commissioning of EVMs and VVPATs, mock poll is again done on each EVM and VVPAT. In addition, mock poll of 1000 votes are cast in 5% randomly selected EVMs, as well as VVPATs and the electronic result is tallied with paper count. Candidates/their representatives are allowed to pick machines randomly for this purpose and also to participate in the process. Finally, on poll day

before start of the actual poll, a mock poll is conducted by casting at least 50 votes at every polling station by the Presiding Officer, in the presence of representatives of candidates and the electronic result of the Control Unit and the result of VVPAT slips are tallied and shown to them. A Certificate of successful conduct of the Mock Poll shall be made by the Presiding Officer. Immediately after the conduct of Mock Poll, the CLEAR Button is pressed on the EVM to clear the data of the Mock Poll and the fact that no votes are recorded in the Control Unit is displayed to the Polling Agents present. The Presiding Officer also ensures that all mock poll slips shall be taken out and kept in separate marked envelope before the start of Poll.

27. Mandatory Verification of VVPAT Paper Slip: The Commission has also mandated that VVPAT slip count of One (1) randomly selected Polling Station in each Assembly Constituency in case of Assembly elections and One (1) randomly selected polling station of each Assembly Segment of Parliamentary Constituency, by the Returning Officer, by Draw of Lot in presence of all candidates, shall be done for verification of the result obtained from the Control Unit. This mandatory verification of VVPAT slip count of one (1) polling station in each Assembly Constituency/each Assembly Segment of Parliamentary Constituency shall be in addition to the provisions of Rule 56(D) of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961.

28. Training and Awareness on use of EVMs and VVPATs: The Commission directed all the Chief Electoral Officers of States and Union Territories to ensure proper training of all the polling personnel regarding the use of EVMs and VVPATs, as well as to create widespread awareness amongst the citizens, political parties, contesting candidates, their polling agents and other stakeholders about the use of EVMs and VVPATs. The Commission has also directed that sufficient number of Mobile Vans for each Assembly Constituency should be deployed for demonstration and

awareness on use of VVPATs (practice of vote casting by electors) so that each village/hamlet gets covered with 3-4 hours demo twice before the elections. There should be atleast one visit to each polling station location by mobile van (for demonstration and practice of vote casting) before announcement of elections and repeat coverage after announcement of election, if not done earlier.

29. GPS tracking of movement of EVMs and VVPATs: The Commission has instructed the Chief Electoral Officers of all States and UTs that end-to-end movement of all Reserve EVMs and VVPATs shall be carefully monitored at all times, for which all Sector Officers' vehicles with Reserve EVMs and VVPATs shall mandatorily be fitted with GPS tracking system.

30. NONE OF THE ABOVE (NOTA) OPTION IN EVMs:

As usual, there will be 'None of the Above' option for the elections. On the BUs, below the name of the last candidate, there will be a button for NOTA option so that electors who do not want to vote for any of the candidates can exercise their option by pressing the button against NOTA. Similarly, on Posted Ballot Papers also there will be a NOTA Panel after the name of the last candidate. The symbol for NOTA as given below will be printed against the NOTA Panel.



31. PHOTOGRAPHS OF CANDIDATES ON EVM BALLOT PAPER:

In order to facilitate the electors in identifying the candidates, the Commission has prescribed an additional measure by way of adding provision for printing the photograph of candidate also on the ballot paper

to be displayed on the EVM (Ballot Unit) and on Postal Ballot Papers. This will help avoid any confusion, which may arise when candidates with same or similar names contest from the same constituency. For this purpose, the candidates are required to submit to the Returning Officer, their recent Stamp Size photograph as per the specifications laid down by the Commission.

32. MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT:

Consequent on the announcement of the Schedule for the General Election through this Press Note, the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates comes into operation with immediate effect from today itself in the entire country. This will be applicable to all Political Parties and the Union and State Governments and UT Administrations. In pursuance of the judgment of Supreme Court dated 5th July 2013, in SLP (C) no 21455 of 2008 (S.Subramaniam Balaji vs Govt of T.N. & others) the Election Commission has framed Guidelines on Election Manifesto in consultation with recognized Political Parties. These Guidelines have been incorporated as part VIII of “Model Code of Conduct of Guidance of Political Parties & Candidates” and shall be applicable & implemented in Lok Sabha Elections - 2019 as part of MCC. The Commission calls upon all the Political Parties, Candidates and the Union and State Governments and UT Administrations to strictly adhere to the MCC. The Commission has made elaborate arrangements for ensuring the effective implementation of the MCC Guidelines. Any violations of these Guidelines would be strictly dealt with and the Commission re-emphasizes that the instructions issued in this regard from time to time should be read and understood by all Political Parties, contesting candidates and their agents/ representatives, to avoid any misgivings or lack of information or understanding/ interpretation. The government of the poll-bound States has also been directed to ensure that no misuse of official machinery/position is done during the MCC period.

The Commission has also issued instructions for swift, effective and stringent action for enforcement of Model Code of Conduct during the first 72 hours of announcement of election schedule and also for maintaining extra vigilance and strict enforcement action in the last 72 hours prior to the close of polls. These Instructions have been issued in the form of Standard

Operating.

33. AFFIDAVITS BY CANDIDATES:

All the candidates are required to file an affidavit (in Form 26) along with their nomination papers. This affidavit will include information on the criminal antecedents of the candidate, if any, assets (including the movable, immovable properties and investments even in foreign countries, of the candidate, his/ her spouse and dependents), liabilities of the candidate, his/ her spouse and dependents and his/ her educational qualifications. The filing of the affidavit with all columns duly filled in is mandatory and its non-filing may result in rejection of the nomination paper by the Returning Officer, who has a duty to inform about such omissions to the candidate. The format of Form 26 has been amended vide Ministry of Law & Justice Notification dated 26th February, 2019. The Commission has circulated the revised format of Form 26 to all the States/UTs and Political Parties. With the amendment, it has been expressly provided that declaration on assets shall include full information about offshore assets. The candidates are also required to declare the total income shown in the Income Tax return filed for the last five years for the candidates, spouse, HUF (if candidate is Karta or Coparcener in HUF), and for dependents. Facility for e-filing of the affidavit by the candidates is available. After e-filing, the hardcopy of the affidavit is required to be got notarized by the candidate and submitted to the Returning Officer within the prescribed format. The e-filing system will help candidates in filling up the information in the affidavit in correct manner, without any omission.

In pursuance of the judgment of the Supreme Court dated 13th September, 2013, in Writ Petition (C) No. 121 of 2008, the Commission has issued instructions that in the affidavit to be filed along with the nomination paper, candidates are required to fill up all columns. If any column in the affidavit is left blank, the Returning Officer will issue a notice to the candidate to submit a fresh affidavit, duly filling up all columns. After such notice, if the candidate fails to file the affidavit, complete in all respects, the nomination paper will be liable to be rejected at the time of scrutiny.

As part of the efforts of the Commission to widely disseminate the information contained in the affidavits filed by contesting candidates to the citizens at the earliest, instructions have been issued to the Returning

Officers to display the copies of these affidavits on notice-boards outside their offices and to make available, on demand, the copies of the affidavit freely to other candidates, general public, media, etc. on the very day of filing of affidavit by a candidate. Further, Commission has issued instructions for displaying copies of the abstract part of the affidavit of contesting candidates at various public offices within the Constituency such as Collectorate, Zila Parishad Office, Panchayat Samiti Office etc. The scanned copies of these affidavits will also be uploaded on the website of CEOs for public viewing and any member of the public can download such copies of affidavits.

The Commission appeals to the citizens, the media and all the interested parties to cooperate with the election authorities for the widest dissemination of this information as contemplated in the directions of the Courts and the Commission.

34. CANDIDATES WITH CRIMINAL CASES:

Candidates with criminal antecedents are required to publish information in this regard in newspapers and through Television channels on three occasions during the campaign period. A political party that sets up candidates with criminal antecedents is also required to publish information about criminal background of its candidates, both in its website and also in newspapers and Television channel on three occasions. Instructions in this regard has been issued as 10th October, 2018. This requirement is in pursuance of the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Writ Petition(C) No. 784 of 2015 (Lok Prahari Vs. Union of India & Others) and Writ Petition(Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.).

35. IDENTIFICATION OF ELECTORS:

All electors who have been issued EPIC shall produce the EPIC for their identification at the polling station before casting their votes. Those electors who are not able to produce the EPIC shall produce one of the following alternative photo identity documents for establishing their identity:-

- i. Passport;
- ii. Driving License;
- iii. Service Identity Cards with photographs issued to employees by Central/ State Govt. PSUs/ Public Limited Companies;

- iv. Passbook with photograph issued by Bank/ Post Office;
- v. PAN Card;
- vi. Smart Card issued under the scheme of Ministry of Labour;
- vii. MNREGA Job Card;
- viii. Health Insurance Smart Card issued under the scheme of Ministry of Labour;
- ix. Pension document with photograph;
- x. Official Identity cards issued to MPs/MLAs/MLCs; and
- xi. Aadhar Card.

Electors with photo voter slip (PVS) shall produce any one of these 12 documents for identification as Commission vide its instruction dated 28.02.2019 has instructed that PVS will not be used as a stand-alone identity document now onwards. Overseas electors who turn up for voting shall produce their original Passport for identification at the polling station.

36. **DEPLOYMENT OF POLLING PERSONNEL AND RANDOMIZATION:**

Polling parties shall be formed randomly, through the special randomization IT application. **Three-stage randomization** will be adopted. First, from a wider district database of eligible officials, a shortlist of a minimum 120% of the required numbers will be randomly picked up. This group will be trained for polling duties. In the second stage, from this trained manpower, actual polling parties as required shall be formed by random selection software in the presence of General Observers. In the third randomization, the polling stations will be allocated randomly to these polling parties just before the polling party's departure. There shall be such randomization for Police personnel and Home Guards also, who are deployed at the polling stations on the poll day.

37. **DISTRICT ELECTION MANAGEMENT PLAN (DEMP):**

The District Election Officers have been asked to prepare a comprehensive District Election Management Plan in consultation with SSPs/SPs and Sector Officers, including the route plan and communication plan for conduct of elections. These plans will be **vett**ed by the **Observers** taking into account vulnerability mapping exercise and mapping of critical polling stations, in accordance with Election Commission of India's extant

instructions.

38. BOOTH LEVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN:

An innovative “bottom up” approach of booth level planning and management has been implemented where in Booth Level plans for Polling Stations have been prepared containing all information and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for smooth conduct of elections at each Polling Station. These booth level Plans will be used to prepare PC/AC level, District level and State level Election Management Plans.

39. COMMUNICATION PLAN:

The Commission attaches great importance to preparation and implementation of a perfect communication plan at the district/constituency level for the smooth conduct of elections and to enable concurrent intervention and mid-course correction on the poll day. For the said purpose, the Commission has directed the Chief Electoral Officers to coordinate with the officers of Telecommunication Department in the State headquarters, BSNL/MTNL authorities, the representatives of other leading service providers in the State so that network status in the States is assessed and communication shadow areas be identified. The CEOs have also been instructed to prepare the best communication plan in the States and make suitable alternate arrangements in the communication shadow areas by providing Satellite Phones, Wireless sets, Special Runners etc.

40. MEASURES TO PREVENT PUBLIC NUISANCE:

- (a) Usage of eco-friendly substances for preparing election campaign/publicity material-**Considering the long-term deleterious impact of materials like plastics, polythene etc. on the life-giving and life-sustaining environment, the Commission, had directed that all political parties, contesting candidates and their authorized agents etc, **shall desist from utilizing environmentally hazardous materials** like plastics, polythene etc for the preparation and usage election-related publicity materials during these Elections. The DEOs and ROs are directed to emphasize the

importance of environment protection and preservation during the meetings with the political parties and contesting candidates and ensure that the instructions of the Commission with regard to the restrictions on the usage of non-eco-friendly materials like plastics, polythene etc. during electioneering shall be adhered to by all concerned. The CEOs shall impress upon the importance of using eco-friendly and bio-degradable materials for campaign material to various political parties and candidates in the States/UTs and issue necessary instructions in this regard.

(b) Restrictions on the use of Loudspeakers- The Commission is genuinely concerned about the serious 'noise pollution' and disturbance to the peace and tranquility of the general public by the reckless, widespread and flagrant use of loudspeakers during election canvassing and campaign by candidates, political parties and their agents. In particular, the student community, gets seriously disturbed and adversely impacted as their studies are badly hampered because the loudspeakers start blaring from very early hours in the morning and continue to do so throughout the day and till extremely late hours in the night. Similarly, the aged, the infirm and the sick whether in institutions, hospitals, etc. or at home, are also affected. The Commission has directed that the use of public address system or loudspeakers or any sound amplifier, whether fitted on vehicles of any kind whatsoever, or in static position used for public meetings for electioneering purposes, during the entire election period starting from the date of announcement of election and ending with the date of declaration of results, shall not be permitted **at night between 10.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m.**

Further, No loudspeakers fitted on vehicles of any kind or in any other manner whatsoever shall be permitted to be used during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of the poll in any polling area.

Moreover, for maintenance for law and order and prevention of loudspeaker use for inciting tension in a politically surcharged atmosphere, District Administrations is advised to consider any application for permission to use loudspeakers beyond the aforesaid prohibitory period of 48 hours, on merit of each application and

keeping in view the need to maintain proper law and order till the completion of election.

Also, the Commission solicits the cooperation and collaboration of all the esteemed stakeholders, notably the political parties and contesting candidates, to **refrain from using loudspeakers and sound amplification in the vicinity of educational institutions** like schools and colleges, hospitals, senior citizens' homes, sanatoriums and other facilities tending to the sick, infirm or the needy.

41. VIDEOGRAPHY/ WEBCASTING/CCTV COVERAGE:

All critical events will be video-graphed. District Election Officers will arrange sufficient number of video and digital cameras and camera teams for the purpose. The events for videography will include filing of nomination papers and scrutiny thereof, allotment of symbols, First Level Checking, preparations and storage of Electronic Voting Machines, important public meetings, processions etc. during election campaign, process of dispatching of postal ballot papers, polling process in identified vulnerable polling stations, storage of polled EVMs and VVPATs, counting of votes etc. Additionally, CCTVs will be installed at important Border Check Posts and Static Check Points for effective monitoring and surveillance. Further, the Commission has directed that Webcasting, CCTV coverage, Videography and Digital cameras will also be deployed inside critical polling booths and polling booths in vulnerable areas to closely monitor the proceedings on the poll day without violating secrecy of voting process.

42. LAW AND ORDER, SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES:

Conduct of elections involves elaborate security management, which includes not just the security of polling personnel, polling stations and polling materials, but also the overall security of the election process.

Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) are deployed to supplement the local police force in ensuring a peaceful and conducive atmosphere for the smooth conduct of elections in a free, fair and credible manner. In view of the same, the very preparation of poll schedule, sequencing of multi-phase elections and choice of constituencies for each phase had to follow the logic of force availability and force management.

The Commission has taken various measures to ensure free and fair elections by creating a conducive atmosphere in which each elector is able to access the polling station and cast his/her vote without being obstructed or being unduly influenced/ intimidated by anybody.

Based on the assessment of the ground situation, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and State Armed Police (SAP) drawn from other States will be deployed during these elections. The **CAPFs shall be deployed well in advance for area domination, route marches in vulnerable pockets, point patrolling and other confidence building measures to re-assure and build faith in the minds of the voters**, especially those belonging to the weaker sections, minorities etc. In the insurgency-affected areas, CAPFs shall be inducted well in time for undertaking area familiarization and hand-holding with local forces and all other standard security protocols for movement, enforcement activities etc in these areas will be strictly adhered to. The CAPFs/SAP shall also be **deployed in the Expenditure Sensitive Constituencies and other vulnerable areas and critical polling stations** as per the assessment of ground realities by the CEOs of the States, in consultation with the various stakeholders. On the Poll-eve, the CAPFs/SAP shall take position in and control of the respective polling stations and will be responsible for safeguarding the polling stations and for providing security to the electors and polling personnel on the poll day. Besides, these forces will be used for securing the strong rooms where the

EVMs and VVPATs are stored and for securing the counting centers and for other purposes, as required.

The CEOs will ensure a **day-to-day monitoring** of the activities and deployment of the CAPFs/SAP in the State to optimize the usage and effectiveness of these forces for conducting peaceful and transparent elections and inform the Commission periodically. Further, the entire force deployment in the assembly segments shall be under the **oversight of the Central Observers** deputed by the Commission.

The Commission lays a special emphasis on the advance preventive measures to be taken by the District Magistrates and Police authorities to maintain the Law & Order and to create atmosphere conducive for the conduct of free and fair elections. The Commission will be constantly monitoring the ground situation closely and will take appropriate measures to ensure peaceful, free and fair polls in the State.

43. PROTECTION TO ELECTORS OF SC/ST AND OTHER WEAKER SECTIONS:

As per Section 3 (1) of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (as amended in 2015), whoever, not being a member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, forces or intimidates a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe not to vote or to vote for a particular candidate or to vote in a manner other than that provided by law, or not to stand as a candidate etc., shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to five years and with fine. The Commission has asked the State Governments to bring these provisions to the notice of all concerned for prompt action. In order to bolster the confidence of the voters hailing from vulnerable sections especially SCs, STs etc and enhance their conviction and faith in the purity and credibility of the poll process, CAPFs/SAP shall be

extensively and vigorously utilized in patrolling such areas, conducting route marches and undertaking others necessary confidence building measures under the supervision of the Central Observers.

44. SYSTEMATIC VOTERS' EDUCATION AND ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION (SVEEP):

The Commission works on the premise of '*No Voter to be Left Behind*' in its endeavor to realize universal adult suffrage. Voter education connects people to the elections. In this pursuit, several initiatives under 'Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation' (SVEEP), the flagship voter education programme of the Commission have been launched effectively well in advance to connect with voters of all categories in the States and UT's down to the polling station level. As per extant directions of the Commission, State SVEEP Plans have been developed, approved and the implementation is being closely monitored.

In view of the fact that VVPAT shall be used with every EVM at each Polling Station, special campaign, including hands on experience, has been undertaken right from September, 2018 for enhancing awareness, elector convenience and confidence in respect of these machines. EVM and VVPAT awareness campaign is further being carried out through different media besides EVM and VVPAT equipped Mobile Vans to cover people at block level, traditional haats, bazaars and 'Gram Sabha' etc in rural areas.

Voter Facilitation Centers have been activated in all the States and Union Territories to facilitate voters.

Voter Helpline -1950 has been activated across the country to cater to the voters queries and in addition, 'Voter Helpline App' has also been launched. SMS facility has been made available on 1950 to enable electors verify their

names on the Electoral Roll (Voter List).

Steps have been taken up to ensure wide dissemination of election related information, as well as to ensure adequate facilitation measures for enhancing participation of people in polling. Reminder services on poll days have been meticulously planned.

Special measures have been rolled out to facilitate persons with disabilities both for the purpose of enrollment; as well as participation on poll day. These measures include accessible awareness material, Braille enabled EPICs for blind electors, sensitization of polling personnel and PwD friendly infrastructure at polling stations. Polling Station wise mapping of the electors with disabilities has been undertaken to extend requisite facilitation to them. PwD electors will be provided transport facility to their respective polling station on poll day to help them exercise their franchise.

Services of Electoral Literacy Clubs, “Chunav Pathshala’ are being used for connecting with youth for enhancing awareness, disseminate information, motivation and facilitation among youth for both, enrollment and use of EVM and VVPAT and as such for the entire electoral process.

‘Lowest turnout’ Polling Stations have been identified, reasons for the low turnout analyzed and targeted interventions based on the findings for enhanced IMF (Information, Motivation and Facilitation) are being rolled out to meet the objective of ‘No Voter to be Left Behind’.

Commission has taken up a National Multi-Media Campaign covering practically all areas of relevance to promote informed and ethical participation besides other important information through Television, Radio, Print, Social and Digital Media, Cinemas and through Outdoor media to supplement the communication campaign taken up by the Chief Electoral

Offices and District Election Offices.

45. DEPLOYMENT OF CENTRAL OBSERVERS:

A. General Observers

The Commission will deploy General Observers in adequate number to ensure smooth conduct of elections. The Observers will be asked to keep a close watch on every stage of the electoral process to ensure free and fair elections.

B. Expenditure Observers

The Commission has also decided to appoint adequate number of **Expenditure Observers** and **Assistant Expenditure Observers** who will exclusively monitor the election expenditure of the contesting candidates. **Control room and Complaint Monitoring Centre with 24 hours toll free numbers** shall be operative during the entire election process. Banks and Financial Intelligence Units of Government of India have been asked to forward suspicious cash withdrawal reports to the election officials. Comprehensive instructions for the purpose of effective monitoring of the election expenditure of the candidates have been separately issued by the Commission and are available on the ECI website (<https://eci.gov.in/>).

The names and telephone numbers of all Observers will be publicized in local newspapers so that the general public can quickly approach them for any grievance redressal. The Observers will be given a detailed briefing by the Commission before their deployment.

C. Police Observers

The Commission has decided to deploy IPS officers as Police Observers at State and District levels, depending upon the sensitivity of the

Constituency, wherever required. They will monitor all activities relating to force deployment, law and order situation and co-ordinate between the Civil and Police administration to ensure free and fair election.

D. Micro Observers

As per the extant instructions, the General Observers will also deploy Micro-Observers, from amongst Central Government/PSUs Officials, to observe the poll proceedings on the poll day in critical/vulnerable polling stations. Micro-Observers will observe the proceedings at the polling stations on the poll day, right from the conduct of mock poll, to the completion of poll and the process of sealing of EVMs and VVPATs and other documents so as to ensure that all instructions of the Commission are complied with by the Polling Parties and the Polling Agents. They will report to the General Observers directly regarding any vitiation of the poll proceedings in their allotted polling stations.

46. TRAINING OF ELECTION OFFICIALS:

General Elections to Lok Sabha in India is considered to be the biggest, man management exercise in the world. It involves a mammoth task to mobilize an election machinery of more than 11 million officials for this exercise. These officials are government employees of Central/ State governments working on deputation to Election Commission of India for conducting the elections. Training of these officials thus becomes essential for flawless conduct of elections.

Training of such a magnitude can be completed in a cascaded manner whereby master trainers are prepared and they in turn train the participants. India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) was established by Election Commission of India in June 2011 to fulfill this important task of training of election officials from India and abroad. IIIDEM has since been working to achieve its objectives. For General Elections to Lok Sabha and simultaneous Assembly Election in 4 States, IIIDEM has trained 294 National Level Master Trainers (NLMTs), 2040, State Level Master Trainers (SLMTs), who have been train the Assembly Level Trainers (ALTs) and other officials of Election Machinery in

cascading manner.

IIIDEM has also organized the following programs to train the important functionaries and trainers.

1. **Certification Program for District Election Officers (DEOs) and Returning Officers:** An in-depth training program of 2 days per batch was designed for all District Election Officers (DEOs) and Returning Officers from all States/ UTs. 28 batches were organized from 29th January - 28th February 2019, wherein 856 officers were trained in all the aspects of elections.
2. **Training of Trainers and Facilitators:** This programme aims at empowering the trainers of all categories with training techniques and methodologies, thereby ensuring better delivery and interactive training programmes. 70 batches were organized to train various categories of trainers.
3. **Leadership and Motivational Trainings:** These programs are targeted at important election officers involved in various leadership roles in the election process. 103 batches were organized to train the officers.

Chief Electoral Officers are organizing State and District Level trainings of all election officials with the help of master trainers (SLMTs and ALTs).

47. **CONDUCT OF OFFICIALS:**

The Commission expects all officials engaged in the conduct of elections to discharge their duties in an impartial manner without any fear or favour. They are deemed to be on deputation to the Commission and shall be subject to its control, supervision and discipline. The conduct of all Government officials who have been entrusted with election related responsibilities and duties would remain under constant scrutiny of the Commission and strict action shall be taken against those officials who are found wanting on any account.

48. **POLL DAY MONITORING SYSTEM:**

A constant and stringent 24-hour monitoring of the critical events and activities of the poll day will be done using the Poll Day Monitoring System.

All the crucial events like reaching of Polling Parties, queue management etc will be captured and monitored using this state-of-the-art IT application, which has the added advantage of being used offline also, so as to circumvent non- connectivity of network. All data captured offline is synchronized with the centralized server as soon as the person using the App comes in the coverage area. Through this App, we can find out Voter Turnout (VTR) gender-wise, age-wise and section-wise.

49. ELECTION EXPENDITURE MONITORING:

Comprehensive instructions for the purpose of effective monitoring of the election expenditure of the candidates have been issued, which include formation of Flying Squads (FS), Static Surveillance Teams (SST), Video Surveillance Teams (VST), involvement of Investigation Directorate of Income Tax Deptt. etc. State Excise Department, Commercial Tax Department, Narcotics Control Bureau and police authorities have been asked to monitor production, distribution, sale and storage of liquor and other intoxicants (including narcotics) and inducements in the form of free goods during the election process. The functioning and operations of the Flying Squads/Mobile Teams shall be closely monitored using GPS Tracking & the use of cVigil App.

For greater transparency and for ease of monitoring of election expenses, candidates would be required to open a separate bank account and incur their election expenses from that very account. The Investigation Directorate of Income Tax Dept. has been asked to activate Air Intelligence units in the airports of the State and also to gather intelligence and take necessary action against movement of large sum of money in the State.

Some new initiatives taken by the Commission to strengthen the Expenditure Monitoring mechanism are:

(a) Standard Operating Procedure for Seizure and release of cash:

For the purpose of maintaining purity of elections, the Election Commission of India has issued a Standard Operating Procedure for Flying Squads and Static Surveillance Teams, constituted for keeping vigil over excessive campaign expenses, distribution of items of bribe in cash or in kind, movement of illegal arms, ammunition, liquor, or antisocial elements etc. in the constituencies during election process.

In order to avoid inconvenience to the public and genuine persons and also for redressal of their grievances, if any, the Commission has issued instruction no. 76/Instructions/EEPS/2015/Vol-II dated 29.05.2015 stating that a committee shall be formed comprising three officers of the District, namely, (i) CEO, Zila Parishad/CDO/P.D, DRDA (ii) Nodal Officer of Expenditure Monitoring in the District Election Office (Convenor) and (iii) District Treasury Officer. The Committee shall suo-motu examine each case of seizure made by the Police or SST or FS and where the Committee finds that no FIR/Complaint has been filed against the Seizure or where the seizure is not linked with any candidate or political party or any election campaign etc., as per Standard Operating Procedure, it shall take immediate steps to order release of such cash etc. to such persons from whom the cash was seized after passing a speaking order to that effect. The Committee shall look into all cases and take decision on seizure. In no case, the matter relating to seized cash/seized valuables shall be kept pending in malkhana or treasury for more than 7(seven) days after the date of poll, unless any FIR/Complaint is filed.

(b) Accounting of the expenditure incurred for campaign vehicles – on the basis of permissions granted: It has come to the notice of the Commission that the candidates take permission from the Returning Officer for use of vehicles for campaign purpose, but some candidates do not show the vehicle hiring charges or fuel expenses in their election expenditure account. Therefore, it has been decided that unless the candidate intimates the R.O. for withdrawing the permission, the notional expenditure on account of campaign vehicles will be calculated based on the number of vehicles for which permission is granted by the Returning Officer.

(c) Account Reconciliation Meeting: In order to reduce litigation relating to expenditure accounts, account Reconciliation Meeting will be convened by the DEOs before final submission of the accounts, on the 26th day after the date of declaration of the results.

(d) All expenditure incurred by those candidates, their party agents or party leaders on their travel, boarding, lodging etc. who travel to overseas countries for the purpose of canvassing in their favour to seek votes of overseas electors residing there, would be deemed to be the expenditure incurred or authorized by the candidates in connection with their election and will have to be included in their account of election expenses. Moreover, any inducement to overseas electors by way of air tickets or any

other allurements to them, in cash or kind, to come to India for the purpose of voting at the election would amount to the electoral offence of 'bribery' within the meaning of section 171B of the IPC as also the corrupt practice of 'Bribery' within the meaning of section 123(1) of the R.P. Act, 1951.

(e) Expenditure incurred on candidates' Booth/(Kiosk) and on TV/Cable Channel / Newspaper owned by party for promoting the electoral prospects of the candidate in the account of the candidate:

The Commission, on further examination of the relevant provisions of section 77(1) of the R. P. Act, 1951, had decided that the candidates' booths set up outside the polling stations should hereinafter be deemed to have been set up by the candidates as part of their individual campaign and not by way of general party propaganda and as such all expenditure incurred on such candidates' booths shall be deemed to have been incurred/authorized by the candidate/his election agent so as to be included in his account of election expenses.

Further, the Commission, after taking into consideration various references/complaints from various sources in the above matter, has directed that if the candidate(s) or their sponsoring parties utilize TV/Cable Channels/Newspapers owned by them for promoting the electoral prospects of the candidate, the expenses for the same, as per standard rate cards of the channel/newspaper, have to be included by the candidate concerned in his Election Expenditure Statement, even if they actually do not pay any amount to the channel/newspaper.

In pursuance of the Commission's aforesaid decisions, Schedule 6 and Schedule 4 in Abstract Statement of Election Expenses have been amended and incorporated accordingly in the Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring(February, 2019).

(f) Ceiling of Election Expenses for Candidates:

The election expenses ceiling for candidates has been revised by the Government of India vide Notification dated 28th February, 2014. As per the revised ceilings, the maximum limit of election expenses for a Lok Sabha Constituency is Rs.70.00 lakh per candidate for all States except Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Sikkim. For these three States it is

Rs.54.00 lakh per candidate. For the Union Territories, the maximum limit is Rs.70 lakh per candidate for NCT of Delhi and Rs.54.00 lakh per candidate for other UTs.

Accordingly, in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha the limit of expenses for Assembly Constituencies is Rs. 28.00 lakh per candidate and in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim it is Rs. 20.00 lakh per candidate.

The Commission has decided that an election expenditure / either by / to candidate(s) or political parties exceeding Rs. 10000/- (Ten Thousand) in all the situations be incurred by crossed account payee cheque or draft or by RTGS/NEFT or any other electronic mode linked with bank account of the candidate opened for election purpose.

(g) Accounts of Election Expenses submitted by Political Parties:

All Political Parties sponsoring candidates for the **Lok Sabha/Legislative Assembly elections** are required to maintain day-to-day accounts of all election campaign expenses and submit the final accounts to the Commission/CEO within **90 days/75 days of the completion of Lok Sabha/Legislative Assembly elections**. Such accounts will be uploaded on the website of the Commission for public viewing. For the sake of transparency and reconciliation of accounts of political parties and candidates, the political parties have to file a part statement in addition to the final statement of election expenditure in respect of lump-sum payments made by the party to the candidate within 30 days after declaration of results of **election to Lok Sabha/Legislative Assemblies** in prescribed format.

The Commission has already issued detailed guidelines on the manner in which accounts are to be maintained and submitted by the candidates and it is incumbent upon them to maintain a daily account of expenditure and to submit it for inspection to the Designated Officer/**Expenditure**

Observer three times during the campaign period. To strengthen the monitoring of expenses, the Commission has taken special steps. A separate **Election Expenditure Monitoring Division** has been set up in the Commission to deal with information on poll expenses of the candidates and political parties. To assist the candidates, the Commission has prepared e-learning modules for maintaining their election expense accounts, and such modules are freely accessible on the Commission's Website (<https://www.eci.gov.in/>).

(h) Seizures figures

Seizures in Lok Sabha Elections - 2014 :

Item	Value (in Rs. Cr.)
Cash	304
Liquor	92
Drugs	804
Total	1200

Seizures in 5 poll gone states in 2018 (in Rs. Crores) :

State	Cash	Liquor & Drugs	Others	Total
Chhattisgarh	5	1.5	6.5	13
Madhya Pradesh	13	20	21	54
Mizoram	1	4	1	6
Rajasthan	13	54	19.5	86.5
Telangana	115	13	8.5	136.5
Total	147	92.5	56.5	296

50. USE OF ICT AND MOBILE APPLICATIONS:

Use of the latest technologies by ECI has led to further improvement in overall efficiency of various of election activities, in addition to enhancing the election system. This boost in technology usage has primarily been driven by "Smart Technology" which is a familiar terminology and is widely being used in everyday life by way of smartphones, tablets, etc. For effective

conduct of elections, the ECI has integrated use of Smart Technology in various processes of elections. Following Information and Communications Technologies are used in the current elections.

- ***For Citizens, Candidate and Political Parties:***

1. **cVIGIL:** By using the [cVIGIL app](#), citizens can record on his Android mobile and promptly to election authorities report any violation of Model Code of Conduct, any incident of intimidation or inducement within minutes of having witnessed them and without having to go to the office of the returning officer. cVIGIL is a simple, Android-based- Mobile App which is user-friendly and easy to operate. All that one has to do is to simply click a picture or to take a video and briefly describe the activity before uploading it on the cVIGIL mobile application. If the complainant desires to remain anonymous he has the option to do so. cVIGIL provides time-stamped evidentiary proof of the Model Code of Conduct / Expenditure Violation, having live photo/video with auto location data. The District Control Room allocates cVIGIL cases to the Flying Squads etc. through GIS-based platform. Flying Squads investigate the matter and the Returning Officer takes the decision. The status of cVIGIL is shared with the cVIGIL complainant within 100 minutes.

2. **Voter Helpline Mobile app** provides convenience to all Citizens of finding names in the electoral roll, submitting online forms, checking the status of the application, filing complaints and receiving the reply on their mobile app. All forms, results, candidate affidavit, press notes, Voter awareness and important instructions are available through the mobile app. This popular app is available at [Google Play Store](#).

3. **PwD App:** Eligible citizens/ citizens in the category of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) can request for new registration, change in address, change in particulars and mark themselves as PwD through the use of the mobile application. By simply entering their contact details, the Booth Level Officer is assigned to provide doorstep facility. PwDs can also request for a wheelchair during polling. The app is available at google play store [here](#).

4. **Suvidha Candidate App:** Contesting candidates can log on to the website <https://suvidha.eci.gov.in> and request for permissions. Upon successful registration, an Android based [Mobile app](#) is available for

tracking the status of nomination, status of their permission requests. The candidates will be able to download the application from Google Play store and with their registered mobile number will be able to log on and keep track of their applications.

5. Samadhan: Election Commission of India has designed a single integrated web portal for registering and resolving citizen Information, Suggestion, Feedback and Complaints (IFSC). The website can be accessed at <https://eci-citizenservices.eci.nic.in/>. The universal portal is available for Election as well as non-election period, and any citizen can also use the facility from the convenience of their mobile phone to lodge a grievance using '[Voter Helpline](#)' Mobile App. All the EROs, DEO, CEO and ECI Officials are connected into the Samadhan Portal and the complaint lodged in the Samadhan directly connects to concerned official. There is an escalation matrix configured into the system and if within a time frame the matter is not addressed by ERO, it gets escalated to the next levels.

6. Voter Helpline Contact Centre: Now a citizen can call universal toll-free helpline number of Election Commission of India i.e. 1950 to connect directly to District Contact Centre. All Districts & CEO Office across all States / UTs have established Contact Centre to provide Information and register Feedback, Suggestions and Complaints. Any user can call 1950 and obtain information about his Voter details in the electoral roll, check for the status of his enrollment application and also lodge grievance.

For Election Officials:

1. Observer App: Observer mobile app aids Observers in the real-time to get all information about the Parliamentary / Assembly Constituency and send observation reports to ECI instantly and securely. All cVIGIL cases reported in their jurisdiction are available to General Observers, Expenditure and Police Observers and they can supervise and give their inputs too from the place of citing of cVIGIL incidence.

2. Suvidha: The application provides a robust single interface for candidates and political parties to apply and get permission for all campaign related activities in time bound manner and for ROs, DEOs, and CEOs for effective management and monitoring of Candidate Nomination, Candidate Affidavit filing, candidate/ political parties permissions management,

Counting, and results display. New Suvidha also has complete decision support system for Returning Officers which includes, Electoral Roll, Observers deployment plan, Polling Station details, Voter Slip distribution statistics and an interface to handle all complaints.

3. Sugam: The Election Commission of India has been using this application for Vehicle Management with the facility of Issuance of requisition letters for vehicles, Capturing of vehicle details with address, mobile number and bank details of Owner & Driver, Transfer of vehicles from one district to another district etc. It is to be used by CEOs as per requirements.

4. EVM Management System (EMS): One of the important modes to ensure a fair and transparent process in EVM management is the administrative protocol of randomization of the machines before they are deployed in the Polling stations. This whole process is done in the presence of Political Parties'/Candidates representatives. The New EVM Management System will be used for randomization in addition to end to end inventory management.

5. Election Monitoring Dashboard: The online system for reporting the poll turnout in the PCs and ACs and incidents at the polling booth level. This will bring a single source of truth across the full managerial network across the Election Commission of India. The data is entered by the Returning Officer.

6. One-way Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot for Service Voters: All registered Service Voters will be delivered e-postal ballot of their respective constituency through electronically transmitted postal ballot (ETPBS), which will be printed and after casting the vote will be sent back to Returning Officer by post.

51. Media Engagement:

The Commission has always considered the media as an important ally and a potent force multiplier in ensuring an effective and efficient election management. Hence, the Commission has directed to the CEOs of all the States/UTs to take the following measures for positive and progressive engagement and interaction with the media:

- a) Regular interaction with the media during the elections and maintaining an effective and positive line of communication with media at all times.
- b) A strong and concerted focus on the creation of an effective information dissemination system at the State and district level to ensure timely and due access to election-related data and information by media, by the appointment of a Nodal Officer and Spokesperson at State Level.
- c) Effective steps to sensitize the media about the Election Code.
- d) Authority letters will be issued to all accredited media for the polling day and day of counting.

Commission expects the media to play a positive, pro-active and constructive role in supplementing and facilitating the efforts towards delivery of free, fair, transparent, participative, peaceful and credible elections.

(b) Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMC):

Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMC) are in place at all the districts and state level. One Social Media expert will also be now part of this committee at each level. All political advertisements proposed to be issued on election media shall require pre-certification from the concerned MCMC

The Commission has decided that the bulk SMSs/Voice messages on phone and in election campaigning shall also be in the purview of pre-certification of election advertisements as in case of all electronic media/TV Channels/Cable Network/Radio including private FM channels/Cinema halls/audio-visual displays in public places and political advertisement in social media.

MCMC shall also monitor cases of paid news.

(c) Use of Social Media in election:

Commission has clear guidelines with regards to use of social media by political parties and candidates in elections. Followings are the key points of these guidelines –

a) Candidates are required to furnish details of his/her social media account (if any) at the time of filing of nominations.

b) Since Social Media is also electronic media by definition, all political advertisement on Social Media will also require pre-certification from Media Certification & Monitoring Committees (MCMC).

c) Candidates and political parties shall include all expenditure on campaigning, including expenditure on advertisement on social media in their election expenditure account. This among other things shall include payments made to internet companies and websites for carrying advertisements and also campaign related operational expenditure on making creative development of content, salaries and wages paid to the team of workers employed to maintain their social media account.

d) All the provisions of Model Code of Conduct shall also apply to the content being posted on social media by candidates and political parties.

(d) Monitoring of Electronic and Social Media:

(i) All the election management related news would be monitored vigorously on all the major national and regional news channels during elections. If any untoward incident or violation of any law/rule is noticed, action would be taken immediately. Reports of monitoring would also be forwarded to the CEOs concerned. Office of CEO will ascertain status on each and every item and file ATR/Status Report. Various Social Media platforms shall also remain under the close and stringent vigil of the Commission for any content aimed at vitiating the electoral process or designed to disturb peace, tranquility, social harmony and public order.

(ii) Commitments by Intermediaries including Social Media platforms

Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) to workout the details accordingly. With the input of Facebook, Twitter, Google, WhatsApp and Share Chat, IAMAI has already responded and

confirmed its eagerness to cooperate with the ECI to uphold the integrity and legality of the political campaigns conducted on the platforms of the intermediaries. Some of the specific commitments are as follows:-

- i. Intermediaries have already started awareness campaigns for their users highlighting the activities of the ECI and this will cover awareness campaigns regarding unlawful conduct during the election particularly, the prohibited period of 48 hours, under Section 126.
- ii. All the platforms have agreed to establish priority channels for the ECI for quick response.
- iii. All the platforms have taken specific measures to appoint grievance officers for upcoming election.
- iv. The platforms will deploy appropriate fact checkers which scan the fake news, abuse etc.
- v. Advertisements and pages are being made more transparent.
- vi. Platform are already taking actions against fake accounts, spam etc. by deploying fact checkers.

Each of these platforms has created a mechanism to accept only pre-certified political advertisements during the elections and will share the expenditure incurred on this account with the elections authorities for the purposes of accounting.

52. Political Party

Political Parties are, after our electors, are one of the most significant stakeholders in the electoral process. We have multi-party democracy and Commission takes special efforts in ensuring that the group, which intends to form a political party under the Representation of the People Act, 1951

are facilitated for the process of registration following due process timely.

In 2014, **1709** (including recognised) political parties were registered with the Commission. Now, as on date **2354** (including recognised) political parties are registered with the Commission. In 2014, **464** (including recognised) political parties contested elections.

53. Symbols

From first elections onwards Commission has devised a unique method of identification of political parties and candidates through specific symbols. Now, this is allocated in accordance with Symbols Order, 1968, issued under Article 324 by the Commission.

As on date we have 7 national recognised political parties, 52 state recognised political parties which are already having ear-marked symbols. As on date **151** common symbols have been allocated to **291** registered but unrecognised political parties for the upcoming elections for Lok Sabha as well as State elections.

54. GENERAL ELECTIONS TO LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES:

The Commission has taken into account the fact that the tenure of the Legislative Assemblies of the States of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim will expire on 18.06.2019, 01.06.2019, 11.06.2019 and 27.05.2019 respectively.

55. After taking into account all relevant factors, the Commission has decided to hold elections for new Legislative Assemblies for these four States, simultaneously with the General Elections to the 17th Lok Sabha. Elections to the different Assembly Constituencies in the States of Andhra

Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim will follow the same Schedule as for the corresponding Parliamentary Constituencies of which these are the relevant Assembly segments.

56. BYE ELECTIONS TO LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES:

There are 34 casual vacancies in Legislative Assemblies of 12 States, as on 09.03.2019. In regard to provisions of Section 151A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the Commission has decided to hold bye-elections to these 34 Assembly Constituencies following the **same schedule** as for the relevant Parliamentary Constituency. (Annexure-1)

57. Elections, free, fair, peaceful and participative, are the life force of democracy. By virtue of holding its first national election in 1951-52 India achieved the status of the world's largest electoral democracy. Credible democratic elections at stipulated intervals have since enabled our nation, starting with deep-rooted social hierarchies and developmental backlog, to undertake a peaceful Transformative journey for inclusion and empowerment of the common citizen and, thereby, become an inspiration to the whole world.

58. About Jammu and Kashmir Election

59. About holding election in Jammu and Kashmir, the Commission has been continuously assessing the prevailing situation in the state, requirement of central forces and other logistics for elections, requirement of the security for the candidates and preparedness of the state for the election on key factors. The Commission had conducted several rounds of review meetings with MHA, State Administration of Jammu and Kashmir.

60. State government of J & K and Union Home Secretary had sent detailed and specific inputs to the Commission regarding holding elections in the state. To assess the situation and level of preparedness, the Commission had recently visited J & K and had detailed meeting with the Political Parties, all important Central and State Government agencies, with District Authorities and the Chief Secretary, DGP, Home Secy. and other officials in this matter.
61. Based on the specific inputs and recommendation from the State Government and Union Home Secretary, inputs from the Political Parties and other stakeholders, constraints of availability of central forces and other logistics, requirement of security forces for security of candidates in wake of incidents of violence in recent past and keeping other challenges in mind, the Commission has decided to announce only schedule of the parliament elections in J & K .
62. The Commission will be regularly and on real time basis monitoring the situation in J & K and will also be taking inputs from all necessary quarters and decision regarding holding Legislative Assembly elections in J & K will be taken soon.
63. A committee of three very eminent and senior officers has been set up as Special Observers to assess the situation in J&K. Sh. Noor Mohammad, IAS(1977, retd) , Sh Vinod Zutshi , IAS (1982, retd) and Sh. A.S.Gill, IPS (1972, retd) as Special Observers. Mr. A S Gill, a celebrated officer has experience working as IG, CRPF in Jammu

and Kashmir and DG, CRPF and working in the field of security mangament. Mr. Noor Mohammad has been worked in the area of Election Management for more than a decade and has been international expert and consultant to Afganistan for many years. He is currently working as Senior Consultant in the IIIDEM. Mr. Zutshi has worked as CEO Rajasthan and Deputy Election Commissioner for many years and has long experience in the field of election Managements and has been contributing to the Commission as National and International trainer.

64. Appointing Special Observers by the Commission:

65. Apart from appointing General, Police and Expenditure Observers, the Commission will also appoint some special observers in the areas of special law and order problems, expenditure sensitive constituencies and areas with any specific challenges.

66. Before concluding, I would like to reiterate that the Commission is totally committed to maintain purity of elections and to deliver free, fair, transparent, peaceful, inclusive, accessible, ethical and participative elections in the entire country.

67. The Commission has directed the Central, State and District Level Election Machinery to be completely impartial, fearless, objective, and independent from any influence whatsoever. The Commission solicits proactive support of all political parties, media

organizations, civil societies, youth and community organizations and all voters to join hands with the Commission and wholeheartedly participate in poll process. I hope that with the proactive participation and support of all stakeholders in the country, all National and State level elections will attain greater heights in all benchmarks recording highest turnout ever in the country.

68. On the occasion of the 17th Lok Sabha Elections, the Commission:

- Reassures the nation of its solemn resolve and deep commitment to fulfill its constitutional mandate to conduct free, fair, credible elections;
- Exhorts the eleven million plus election machinery to re-dedicate themselves to the tasks associated with the conduct of elections as a sacred duty;
- Appeals to all the stakeholders and in particular, the political parties and the candidates, to uphold the peerless democratic traditions of the nation by maintaining high standards of political discourse and fair play in course of their election campaigns; and
- Calls upon all voters to reinforce the democratic ethos of the nation by turning up at the polling stations and exercise their right to vote in an informed and ethical manner.

(UMESH SINHA)
Senior Deputy Election Commissioner

Details of Clear Vacancy Position in the State Legislative Assemblies:

Sl. No.	State	Constituency No. & Name
1	Bihar	212-Dehri
2	Bihar	237-Nawada
3	Goa	1-Mandrem
4	Goa	05-Mapusa
5	Goa	22-Siroda
6	Gujarat	21-Unjha
7	Gujarat	91-Talala
8	Madhya Pradesh	126-Chhindwara
9	Maharashtra	48-Katol
10	Meghalaya	48-Selsella (ST)
11	Mizoram	15-Aizawl West-I(ST)
12	Nagaland	26-Aonglenden (ST)
13	Pudducherry	9-Thattanchavady
14	Tamil Nadu	5-Poonamallee (SC)
15	Tamil Nadu	12-Perambur
16	Tamil Nadu	33-Thiruporur
17	Tamil Nadu	39-Sholingur
18	Tamil Nadu	46-Gudiyattham (SC)
19	Tamil Nadu	48-Ambur
20	Tamil Nadu	55-Hosur
21	Tamil Nadu	60-Pappireddippatti
22	Tamil Nadu	61-Harur (SC)
23	Tamil Nadu	130-Nilakkottai (SC)
24	Tamil Nadu	168-Thiruvarur
25	Tamil Nadu	174-Thanjavur
26	Tamil Nadu	187-Manamadurai (SC)
27	Tamil Nadu	198-Andipatti
28	Tamil Nadu	199-Periyakulam (SC)
29	Tamil Nadu	204-Sattur

30	Tamil Nadu	209-Paramakudi (SC)
31	Tamil Nadu	213-Vilathikulam
32	Uttar Pradesh	138-Nighasan
33	West Bengal	88-Krishnaganj (SC)
34	West Bengal	176-Uluberia Purba