

**भारत निर्वाचन आयोग**  
**ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

Tel. No. 011-23052246  
Fax 011-23052001  
Website: [www.eci.gov.in](http://www.eci.gov.in)

निर्वाचन सदन,  
अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली-110001.  
Nirvachan Sadan, Asoka Road,  
New Delhi-110001

No. ECI/PN/83 /2019

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**PRESS NOTE**

**Subject: General Election to the Legislative Assemblies of Haryana and Maharashtra, 2019.**

The terms of the Legislative Assemblies of Haryana and Maharashtra are due to expire on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 respectively. The terms and strength of the two assemblies are indicated as below-

<b>State</b>	<b>Term Commenced</b>	<b>Term Ending</b>	<b>No. of Assembly Seats</b>
<b>Haryana</b>	<b>03.11.2014</b>	<b>02.11.2019</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>10.11.2014</b>	<b>09.11.2019</b>	<b>288</b>

The Election Commission of India (hereinafter ECI) is committed to hold free, fair and transparent elections to these two legislative assemblies before the cessation of their respective terms in exercise of the authority and powers conferred upon under Article 324 read with Article 172 (1) of the Constitution of India and Section 15 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

**1. Assembly Constituencies**

The total number of Assembly Constituencies in the States of Haryana & Maharashtra and seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, as determined by the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 2008, are as under: -

<b>State</b>	<b>Total No. of ACs</b>	<b>Reserved for SCs</b>	<b>Reserved for STs</b>
<b>Haryana</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>

## 2. Electoral Rolls

A clean and updated electoral roll is the bedrock of conducting free, fair and credible election. The ECI attaches great importance on enrollment and verification of eligible voters and removal of invalid entries from the roll. The ECI, to further improve the quality of the list, ordered 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Summary Revision of Photo Electoral Rolls including the last part of Electoral Rolls for Service voters w.r.t. 01.01.2019 as the qualifying date (2<sup>nd</sup> SSR, 2019) in the states of Haryana & Maharashtra. The existing electoral rolls of all the Assemblies Constituencies in the states of Haryana & Maharashtra have been since revised with reference to 01.01.2019 as the qualifying date and the date of Final publication of electoral rolls in respect of Haryana & Maharashtra are as follows:

<b>State</b>	<b>Date of Final Publication of Electoral Rolls (1<sup>st</sup> SSR, 2019)</b>	<b>Date of Final Publication of Electoral Rolls (2<sup>nd</sup> SSR, 2019)</b>
<b>Haryana</b>	<b>31.01.2019</b>	<b>27.08.2019</b>
<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>31.01.2019</b>	<b>31.08.2019</b>

As per the final electoral rolls of 2<sup>nd</sup> SSR, 2019 published on 27.08.2019 and 31.08.2019 in the states of Haryana and Maharashtra respectively, the number of electors in the States of Haryana & Maharashtra are as follows:

<b>State</b>	<b>No. of General electors</b>	<b>No. of Service Voters</b>	<b>Total No. of electors as per final electoral rolls</b>
<b>Haryana</b>	<b>1,81,91,228</b>	<b>1,07,486</b>	<b>1,82,98,714</b>
<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>8,94,46,211</b>	<b>1,16,495</b>	<b>8,95,62,706</b>

### (a) Photo Electoral Rolls

Photo Electoral Rolls will be used during the General Election of Assemblies of both States. The photo coverage in Photo Electoral Rolls of the final electoral rolls of 2<sup>nd</sup> SSR, 2019 for Haryana & Maharashtra are as under:

<b>State</b>	<b>Image coverage in Photo Electoral Rolls (%)</b>
<b>Haryana</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>96.44</b>

(b) Electors Photo Identity Cards (EPIC)

Identification of the voters at the polling booth at the time of poll shall be mandatory. Electors who have been provided with EPIC shall be identified through EPIC. Presently, the EPIC coverage in final electoral rolls of 2<sup>nd</sup> SSR, 2019 of the states of Haryana & Maharashtra are as under:

<b>State</b>	<b>Electors Photo Identity Cards Coverage (%)</b>
<b>Haryana</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>96.81</b>

All the residual electors are advised to obtain their Elector Photo Identity Cards from the Electoral Registration Officers (ERO) of their Assembly Constituencies, urgently.

(c) Photo Voter Slips (PVS)

To facilitate the voters to know at which serial number of electoral roll of which particular polling station he/she is enrolled as a voter, 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 electors by the District Election Officer (DEO) 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 (PVS) has also been substantially improved to enhance its utility and effectiveness in voter 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 by generating pdf files through ERO

Net.

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.

The residual undistributed Photo 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.

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 Returning Officer (RO) to the Political Parties and 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.

(d) Identification of Voters at Polling Stations –

For identification of voters at Polling Station, the Voter shall present his EPIC or any of the following identification documents approved by the Commission along with the Photo Voter Slips:

- i. Passport
- ii. Driving License
- iii. Service Identity Cards with photograph issued to employees by
- iv. Passbooks with photograph issued by Bank/Post Office.
- v. PAN Card
- vi. Smart Card issued by RGI under NPR

- 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

(e) Braille Photo Voter Slips:

To ensure ease of 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.

(f) 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.

## **Polling Stations and Special Facilitation**

The number of Polling Stations of Haryana & Maharashtra (2<sup>nd</sup> SSR, 2019) are as follows:

<b>State</b>	<b>No. of Polling Stations in 2014</b>	<b>No. of Polling Stations in 2019 (2<sup>nd</sup> SSR, 2019)</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
<b>Haryana</b>	<b>16,244</b>	<b>19,425</b>	<b>19.58</b>
<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>90,403</b>	<b>95,473</b>	<b>5.61</b>

(a) Minimum Facilities (AMF) at Polling Stations:

The Commission has issued instructions to the Chief Electoral Officers of all concerned States/ UTs to ensure that every Polling Station shall have good access road leading to Polling station building and is equipped with Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) like drinking water, waiting shed, toilet with water facility, adequate arrangements for lighting, ramp of appropriate gradient for the PwD electors and a standard voting compartment etc.

(b) Facilitation for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and Senior Citizens:

The Commission has issued instructions to ensure that as far as practicable, all polling stations are located at ground floor and sturdy ramps of proper gradient are provided for the convenience of differently-abled electors with wheel-chairs. Further, in order to provide targeted and need- based facilitation to differently-abled voters, the Commission has directed that all Persons with Disabilities in an Assembly Constituency are identified and tagged to their respective Polling Stations and necessary disability-specific arrangements made for their smooth and convenient voting experience on the poll day. Identified PWD electors will be assisted by volunteers appointed by RO/DEO. Special facilitation will be made for PWD electors at Polling Stations. Also, it has been directed that differently-abled electors are given priority for entering polling booths, provision made for designated parking spaces close to the entrance of polling premise and special care to be provided to electors with speech and hearing impairment. Special focus has been laid for the sensitization of the polling personnel regarding the special needs of the differently-abled.

The Commission has directed the Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) that there should be proper transport facility for PwD electors in each and every polling station on the day of poll. Each and every PwD elector will be provided free pass on public transport on poll day.

(c) Voter Facilitation Posters:

In order to fulfill the statutory requirements under Rule 31 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 and to provide accurate and relevant information for voter awareness and

information at each polling station, the Commission has also directed that uniform and standardized Voter Facilitation Posters (VFP) shall be displayed on all Polling Stations for greater facilitation and awareness of the voters. A total of FOUR (4) Posters have been designed to capture voter-centric information relevant on the poll day like details of the Polling Booth, polling area specified for that particular polling booth, list of contesting candidates, contact details of the important election functionaries, list of prescribed identification documents, illustrative voting procedure, items prohibited around the polling booth and important Do's and Dont's to be observed on the poll day. The Commission has directed that these four VFPs shall be prominently displayed at each polling booth in the poll-going State.

(d) Voter Assistance Booths (VAB):

Voter Assistance Booths shall be set up for every polling station location, having a team of BLO/officials with the objective of facilitating the voter to locate his/her polling booth number and serial number of that voter in the electoral roll of that concerned polling booth. The VABs will be set up with prominent signage and in such a manner that it will be conspicuous to the voters as they approach the polling premise/building to enable them to seek required facilitation on the poll day. Alphabetic locator generated with ERO Net is placed at VAB to search the name easily and to know the serial number in the Electoral Roll.

(e) Increase in Height of Standardized Voting Compartment to ensure Secrecy of Voting:-

In order to maintain the secrecy of vote at the time of poll and to achieve uniformity in use of voting compartments, the Commission has issued revised instructions to increase the height of the Voting Compartments to 30 inches. It has been, further, directed that the Voting Compartment should be placed on a table whose height shall be 30 inches and only corrugated plastic sheet (flex-board) of steel-grey colour, which is completely opaque and reusable, shall be used for making the voting compartments. The Commission hopes that the use of these standardized and uniform Voting Compartments in all the polling booths will translate into greater voter facilitation, ensure absolute secrecy of vote and eliminate aberrations and non-uniformity in the preparation of Voting Compartment inside the polling booths.

### 3. Polling stations managed by women

As part of its firm commitment towards gender equality and greater constructive participation of women in the electoral process, the Commission has also directed that, to the extent possible, at least one polling station managed exclusively by women shall be set up in every Assembly Constituency in Haryana & Maharashtra. In such stations all election staff, including police and security personnel, must be women.

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

#### (a) Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPATs)

The Commission has decided to use Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) along with Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) at every polling station in the General Elections to State Legislative Assemblies of Haryana and Maharashtra 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.

<b>Deployment of EVMs and VVPATs for General Elections to State Legislative Assemblies of Haryana and Maharashtra</b>				
<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of State</b>	<b>BUs</b>	<b>CUs</b>	<b>VVPATs</b>
1	Haryana	0.38 Lakh	0.25 Lakh	0.27 Lakh
2	Maharashtra	1.8 Lakh	1.28 Lakh	1.39 Lakh

#### (b) Storage of EVMs and VVPATs

EVMs and VVPATs are stored in EVM warehouses at District Headquarters. However, if it is not possible to store the EVMs at District HQs, then EVM warehouses are at a place not



below the Tehsil headquarters. The District Election Officers are responsible for their physical security and their upkeep.

(I) Opening of EVM/VVPAT warehouses:

- i. Even Election Commission of India cannot open the EVM warehouses without involving political parties/ candidates.
- ii. The EVM warehouses are always opened in the presence of the representatives of Political Parties/Candidates.

(II) Security of the EVM/VVPAT-warehouse:

- i. 24X7armed police security is provided at all such EVM/VVPAT warehouse
- ii. CCTV surveillance from start of First Level Checking till Election Petition completion period.

### ***Various layers of security of polled EVMs/VVPATs***

1. Adequate strength of Central Forces will be to guard EVM strong rooms.
2. Unique ID of BUs, CUs & VVPATs randomized polling station wise and shared with political parties/candidates.
3. Sealing of CU and BU with Pink Paper Security Seals at FLC and commissioning respectively on which political parties and candidates put their signatures.
4. Sealing of EVMs/VVPATs before starting actual poll on which polling agents also put their signatures.
5. Seals on carrying cases of EVMs/VVPATs after closing of poll on which polling agents also put their signatures.
6. Double lock system at the door of strong room.
7. CCTV feed to Candidates Camping Area to monitor strong room.
8. Two Cordoned round-the-clock security (Inner perimeter manned by CAPF and Outer perimeter by State Armed Police.
9. Log-book and videography of officers inspecting the two cordons daily.

#### (b) First Level Checking of EVMs and VVPATs

Before every election a first level checking (FLC) is done for each EVM and VVPAT to be used in the election by the engineers of the manufacturers in the presence of representatives of National and State Recognized Political Parties. Any malfunctioning EVM/VVPAT is kept separately and is not used in the election. For these elections, the

First Level Check of EVMs and VVPATs is being completed in the presence of representatives of political parties.

(i) Manufacturers certify at the time of FLC that all components in the EVM are original. After this, the plastic cabinet of Control Unit of the EVM is sealed using a “Pink Paper Seal”, which is signed by representatives of political parties. After this, the plastic cabinet of Control Unit of the EVMs cannot be opened and there is no access to any component inside of EVMs.

(ii) A full physical verification and functionality check of each and every EVM and VVPAT is carried out at this time along with mock poll on each and every EVM and VVPAT. Additionally, a higher rate of mock poll in 5% of EVMs i.e. in 1% of EVMs of 1200 votes, in 2% of EVMs of 1000 votes and in 2% of EVMs of 500 votes are polled using VVPATs. After the mock poll the result of the printed ballot slips is tallied with the electronic result of CU and shown to the representatives of political parties present in the FLC.

(d) Randomization of EVMs and VVPATs

EVMs/VVPATs are randomized twice using “EVM Management System (EMS)” while being allocated to an Assembly and then to a polling booth ruling out any fixed allocation. Lists of randomized EVMs/VVPATs are also shared with political parties/candidates. During the process of candidate setting on the EVMs, Ballot Paper is fixed on the Balloting Unit and the EVMs are prepared. The sequence of contesting candidates are placed alphabetically on the ballot paper, first for National and State Parties, followed by other State Registered Parties, followed by independents and NOTA. Thus, the sequence in which the candidates appear on the BU is contingent on the names of the candidates and their party affiliation and cannot be ascertained beforehand. It is therefore clear that serial no. of any political party candidate is not fixed or pre-determined in all the constituencies of the State. Hence, till candidate setting, none, not even Returning Officer or District Election Officer or Chief Electoral Officer or the Commission could know which button on which Balloting Unit will be assigned to which candidate.

(e) Commissioning of EVMs and VVPATs

After finalization of list of the contesting candidates, commissioning (candidate setting) of EVMs and VVPATs is done in the presence of the contesting candidates/their

representatives. After commissioning (candidate setting) of EVMs and VVPATs, in every EVM and VVPAT, one mock poll with one vote to each candidate is done. Additionally, mock poll of 1000 votes is conducted in 5% randomly selected EVMs, as well as VVPATs. The electronic result is tallied with paper count.

(f) Mock Poll on Poll Day

(i) On poll day before start of the actual poll, a mock poll is conducted by casting at least 50 votes at every polling station, in the presence of polling agents of the candidates and the electronic result of the Control Unit and the VVPAT slips count are tallied and shown to them. A certificate of successful conduct of mock poll shall be made by the Presiding Officers.

(ii) Immediately after mock poll, the CLEAR button on Control Unit (CU) is pressed to clear the data of the mock poll and the fact that no votes are recorded in the CU is displayed to the Polling Agents present. The Presiding Officer also ensures that all mock poll slips shall be taken out from the VVPAT and kept in separate marked envelope before the start of Poll.

(iii) After mock poll, EVMs and VVPATs are sealed in the presence of polling agents and signature of polling agents are obtained on seals.

(g) Poll Day & Storage of polled EVMs and VVPATs at Strong Rooms

(i) On poll day a copy of the Form-17C having details of total polled votes, seals (unique number), EVMs and VVPATs used in polling stations is provided to polling agents of candidate.

(ii) After completion of poll, EVMs and VVPATs are sealed in the respective carrying cases in the presence of polling agents and signature of polling agents are obtained on seals.

(iii) Polled EVMs and VVPATs are escorted back to the strong room for storing in double lock system in the presence of candidates/their representatives under videography.

(iv) Candidates or their representatives can also camp in front of the strong room. These strong rooms are guarded 24x7 in multilayers, with CCTV facilities.

(h) Counting of Votes at Counting Centres

(i) The polled EVMs are brought to the Counting Centres under security under CCTV coverage and in presence of candidates/their agents.

- (ii) On the day of counting, strong room opened in the presence of Candidates, RO and Observer under videography
- (iii) Round-wise CUs are brought to the counting tables from Strong Rooms under continuous CCTV Coverage.
- (iv) On the counting day, before retrieving the result from the Control Units, the seals are verified and unique ID of CU is tallied before counting agents deputed by the candidates.
- (v) On counting day, counting agents can verify the polled votes displayed on CU with that of Form-17C. Candidate-wise polled votes are recorded in part-II of Form-17 C and signature of counting agents are obtained thereof.
- (vi) EVMs & VVPATs are stored back in Strong Room in the presence of candidates/their representatives till the completion of the Election Petition period.

(i) Mandatory Verification of VVPAT Paper Slip

In pursuance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India's order dated 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, the Commission has also mandated that VVPAT slips count of Five (5) randomly selected Polling Stations in each Assembly Constituency of the State Legislative Assemblies of Haryana and Maharashtra, 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 five (5) polling stations in each Assembly Constituency shall be in addition to the provisions of Rule 56(D) of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961.

(j) Training and Awareness on use of EVMs and VVPATs:

The Commission directed the Chief Electoral Officers concerned 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).

(k) 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.

(l) Defective EVM/VVPAT Protocol

Some EVMs fail to function due to any mechanical, structural or physical defect like faulty switches, broken button, faulty connection etc. However, these never record Wrong Vote.

(i) EVMs are checked for defects 3 times- during FLC, candidate setting and start of poll.

(ii) Serial Numbers and defects of these EVMs are noted and EVMs are sent to the manufacturers for analysis and repair.

(iii) Manufacturers follow same security protocols during repair as they do for manufacturing new EVMs.

(m) None of The Above (NOTA) In EVMs and VVPATs:

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.



As part of the SVEEP, there are awareness programmes to bring this option to the knowledge of voters and all other stakeholders.

(n) Photographs Of Candidates On EVM Ballot Paper

In order to facilitate the electors in identifying the candidates, the ECI 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.

## **5. 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.

## **6. Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) for Service Voter:**

During Special Summary Revision of last part of electoral rolls with reference to 01.01.2019 as the qualifying date, efforts have been taken by the Commission to maximize the enrollment of service voters with correct particulars.

Recently concluded General Election to Lok Sabha in May 2019, ETPBS was used in all States for all Parliamentary Constituencies and record turnout of about 61 percent was seen. The Commission has decided to use ETPBS for Service Voters in ensuing Assembly Elections of Haryana and Maharashtra.

## **7. Affidavits of Candidates**

### **(a) All Columns to be filled in:**

In pursuance of the judgment dated 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 passed by the Supreme Court in Writ Petition (C) No. 121 of 2008 (Resurgence India Vs Election Commission of India and Another), which among other things makes it obligatory for the Returning Officer "to check whether the information required is fully furnished (by the candidate) at the time of filing of affidavit with the nomination paper", 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 file the revised affidavit with all columns duly filled in. After such notice, if a candidate still fails to file affidavit complete in all respects, the nomination paper will be liable to be rejected by the Returning Officer at the time of scrutiny.

(b) Changes in the Format of Nomination Form and Affidavit in Form 26:

Vide notifications dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2017, Part IIIA of Nomination Forms 2A & 2B and Part II of Nomination Forms 2C, 2D & 2E have been amended. Affidavit in Form 26 has also been amended vide Notification dated 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 making provisions of (i) Mandatory disclosure of 'PAN' for candidates who have been allotted the number or to state clearly that 'No PAN allotted' for those candidates without a PAN; (ii) Details of total income as declared in the Income Tax return filed in the last 5 years to be declared for candidate, spouse and HUF; and dependents (iii) Details to be provided of Assets (Movable/immovable) held abroad including beneficial interest in any offshore entity/trust by self, spouse, HUF or Dependents. Copy of amended Nomination Forms and Affidavit are available on the Commission's website <https://eci.gov.in> > Menu > Candidate nomination & other Forms.

(c) Eco-friendly elections-

Commission has been asking all the political parties to use only environment-friendly material for campaign purposes since long. In this connection, on 26.02.2019, Commission again instructed that all political parties should take adequate steps and measures to not use single-use plastic as campaign materials (posters, banners etc.,) during the elections in the interest of human health and environment.

Further, the Hon'ble High Court, Kerala in its Order dated 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 in WP(C) No. 7193 of 2019 (B.S.Syamkumar Vs. State of Kerala & Others) has taken note of the Commission's direction in the letter No. 4/3/2019/SDR dated 26.02.2019 regarding making our elections eco-friendly and passed the following Order: -

*"..... We also deem it appropriate to order that all candidates and the National/State Political Parties must strictly adhere to the aforequoted guidelines of the Election Commission, so that only the eco-friendly materials are used during the election campaign and there is no use of PVC Flex Boards and other*

*such non bio-degradable materials as campaign material, in the State of Kerala.”*

The Commission has issued advisories on several occasions urging political parties and candidates to avoid single-use plastic and non-biodegradable material in their election campaign activities.

(d) Advisory to Political Parties regarding silence period- For reviewing the working of Section 126 in the context of advancements in communication technology and rise of social media a Committee was constituted by the Commission with the mandate of studying the provisions of Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and other related provisions and to make suitable recommendation in this regard. The Committee submitted its report to the Commission on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2019. Among other proposals, the Committee has proposed for an advisory to political parties for compliance with the letter and spirit of the provisions of Section 126. The Commission called upon all political parties to instruct and brief their leaders and campaigners to ensure that they observe the silence period on all forms of media as envisaged under Section 126 of the RP Act, 1951, and their leaders and cadres do not commit any act that may violate the spirit of Section 126.

In a multi-phased election, the silence period of last 48 hours may be on in certain constituencies while campaign is ongoing in other constituencies. In such event, there should not be any direct or indirect reference amounting to soliciting support for parties or candidates in the constituencies observing the silence period.

During the silence period, star campaigners and other Political Leaders should refrain from addressing the media by way of press conferences and giving interviews on election matters.

## **8. 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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.).

## **9. 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 vetted 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.

## **10. Booth Level Management Plan**

An innovative "bottom up" approach of booth level planning and management has been implemented in the States of Haryana & Maharashtra where in Booth Level plans for Polling Stations have been prepared containing all information and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for response for smooth conduct of elections at each Polling Station. These booth level Plans have been used to prepare AC level, District level and State level Election Management Plans.

## **11. 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 of Haryana & Maharashtra 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.

## **12. Model Code of Conduct**

The Model Code of Conduct comes into effect immediately from the announcement of schedule. All the provisions of the Model Code will apply to the whole of Haryana and Maharashtra with regard to all candidates, political parties and the governments of the said states. The Model Code of Conduct shall also be applicable to the Union Government insofar as announcements/policy decisions pertaining to/for these states are concerned.

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 inadequate understanding/interpretation. The Governments of the poll-bound States have 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 the 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 Procedures (SOPs) for compliance by the field election machinery.

## **13. 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.

#### **14. 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, has 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 the ensuing General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Haryana & Maharashtra. 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 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 in the States 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 great 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 after 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.

## **15. 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.

#### **16. 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.

#### **17. 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-moto 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, a reconciliation meeting will be convened by the DEOs before final submission of the accounts, on the 26th day after the declaration of the results.

(d) The ambit of authorized expenses: 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.

(f) Ceiling Of Election Expenses For Candidates:

The election expenses ceiling for candidates has been revised by the Government of India vide Notification dated 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2014. The maximum limit of election expenses for candidates for the Assembly Constituencies Haryana & Maharashtra is Rs. 28 lakhs. All candidates are required to furnish their accounts of expenditure within 30 days of declaration of results.

(g) Final Accounts By Political Parties:

All Political Parties sponsoring candidates for the 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 75 days of the completion of such 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 Legislative Assemblies in prescribed format.

## **18. Effective use of Media:**

### (a) 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 poll going States to take the following measures for positive and progressive engagement and interaction with the media:

- i) Regular interaction with the media during the elections and maintaining an effective and positive line of communication with media at all times.
- ii) Effective steps to sensitize the media about the Election Code.
- iii) Authority letters will be issued to all accredited media for the polling day and day of counting.

The 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) Pre-Certification of Political Advertisements and monitoring of suspected cases of paid news:

Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMC) are in place at all the districts and state level. All political advertisements proposed to be issued on electronic media shall require pre-certification from the concerned MCMC.

Political advertisement in all electronic media/TV Channels/Cable Network/Radio including private FM channels/Cinema halls/audio-visual displays in public places/voice messages & bulk SMS over phone and social media & internet websites shall come within the purview of pre-certification.

MCMCs will also keep a strict vigil on suspected cases of paid news in media and suitable action will be taken in confirmed cases after following all due procedures.

(c) Use of Social Media in election:

The 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 –

- i) Legal provisions relating to election campaigning shall also apply to social media in the same manner as they apply to any other media.
- ii) Candidates are required to furnish details of their social media account (if any) at the time of filing of nominations.
- iii) 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).
- iv) 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.
- v) All the provisions of Model Code of Conduct shall also apply to the content being posted on social media by candidates and political parties.

**19. Training of Election Officials:**

India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM), among other things, caters to the training needs of the electoral personnel. The upcoming elections to the State Assemblies of Maharashtra and Haryana mark the beginning of a new cycle in the training calendar. The ECI and IIDEM has laid down cascaded training model, wherein election related knowledge and skills percolate down the election human resource hierarchy.

The following are the details of the training programs conducted in connection with the upcoming elections to the State Assemblies of Haryana and Maharashtra-

- a. Certification Programme for Returning Officers (ROs): An exhaustive training

programme is being executed at IIIDEM for the ROs. So far about 293 ROs/SLMTs from Maharashtra have been trained as part of the Certification Programme at IIIDEM. The CEO Haryana has trained about 160 ROs/AROs at the State level as part of the same programme.

- b. Training of State Level Master Trainers (SLMTs): The SLMT programme aims at preparing a resource base that can train various segments of election officials at State level. Maharashtra and Haryana are utilizing the services of the SLMTs trained for the General Elections 2019 for Assembly Elections as well. This apart, a total of 10 SLMTs, from Haryana and Maharashtra were trained at the IIIDEM.

## **20. 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 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, will be undertaken for enhancing awareness, elector convenience and confidence in respect of these machines. The EVM and VVPAT awareness campaign will be further 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 will be active in the States to facilitate voters. **Voter Helpline -1950** is activate 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 planned.

Special measures have been rolled out to facilitate Persons with Disabilities (PwD) 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’.

Special Outreach activities have been taken up for targeted groups i.e Youth, Women, PwD, Service Personnel, Migrants, Transgender.

Endeavour shall be taken up for 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 taken up by the Chief Electoral Offices and District Election Offices.

## 21. 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) Police Observers.

The Commission would deploy IPS officers as Police Observers at District/AC level, depending upon the need, sensitivity and assessment of ground situation of the District/AC, wherever required. They will monitor all activities relating to force deployment, law and order situation and co-ordinate between Civil and Police administration to ensure free and fair election.

### (c) 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/>).

### (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.

(e) Accessibility Observers

The Commission has decided to deploy Accessibility Observers to further strengthen the efforts taken up by ECI for enhancing participation of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the electoral process. Accessibility observers are deployed to oversee the efficient and effective implementation of all instructions of the Commission related to Accessible Elections at the field level and to act as the eyes and ears of the Commission during the period and provide inputs to the Commission from the field about the steps taken up to make the electoral process accessible.

**22. Use of ICT and Mobile Applications:**

By the dedicated use of the Information and Communications Technology, the ECI has ushered in the era of greater participation and involvement of citizens in the election process. Following are the brief outlines of the Information and Communications Technologies to be used:

**Candidate and Political Parties:**

I. cVIGIL Application

cVIGIL App empowers every citizen to click a photo or video of an incident using his or her smartphone thus providing time-stamped evidentiary proof of any violation of Model Code of Conduct or Election Expenditure. The application uses GIS technology and the unique feature of auto location provides fairly correct information which can be relied upon by flying squads to navigate to the right spot of reported incident and take prompt action. cVIGIL acts not only as a potent tool for election machinery but also ensures the participation of citizens in conducting free and fair elections. This App prioritizes the speedy and effective actions by authorities and promised users status report within 100 minutes. Real-time status tracking and monitoring also help to fill in all the existing gaps and creates a fast-track complaint reception and redressal system.

The inbuilt features of the app prevent its misuse. The user will only get 5 minutes to report an incident after having clicked a picture/ video. To prevent being put on the false scent, the app does not allow uploading of the pre-recorded videos/ photos, neither would it allow users to save photos/ videos clicked from this app into the phone gallery. The App can only be active in the States where elections have been announced. The moment a citizen exits such a State; the App will become inactive.

The Commission also incorporated a feature i.e. “Cornerstone/ Leaderboard” into the app, to identify and reward the most proactive citizens. The application was extensively used in all States/ UTs during the Lok Sabha election of 2019. Out of the total number, **142,270 cases** of c-VIGIL cases filed through the mobile app phenomenal **80% of cases** were found correct. This has significantly improved the enforcement of Model Code of Conduct.

To further enhance the functionalities based upon the user suggestion the c-VIGIL application now will also allow users to submit Voices recording with location marking apart from photo and video. To speed up the process of disposal of cases the commission has also developed a mobile application for Returning Officer to take prompt decisions on the move.

## II. Voter Helpline Mobile Application

The application 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 a reply on their mobile app. All types of forms, results, candidate affidavit, press notes, Voter awareness, and important instructions are available through the mobile app. Electoral Search is the paramount feature of Voter Helpline Application, which allows voters to search their names in electoral roll by entering personal details, EPIC, or by scanning Barcode. The information can be saved by the voter/ elector to use it as voter slip. A person can share this information with their contact list also.

The application also has an option to search the Booth Level officer, Electoral Registration Officer, District Election Officer, and the Chief Electoral Officer and can make a direct call to them from the app. For voters’ facilitation, features like seeing the name of the contesting candidates as per the Form 7A sequence has been added. Results will also be available through the Voter Helpline App. A common man can simply scan their EPIC No. from the mobile app to see the result of his constituency.



The Voter helpline app launched before the Lok Sabha election, 2019 and has seen tremendous success amongst voters. The app was extensively used for voter search, filling up forms, complaints, viewing of contesting candidates and results. A total of **46.3 crore viewership** has been witnessed so far and **9,65,987 forms** have been filled.

### III. Persons with Disability Application (PwD):

The PwD Mobile Application has been developed for use by PwD voters. The PwD App has various accessibility features such as Voiceover prompt, high contrasting interface, easy navigation, and access to Booth Level officers.

To facilitate visually impaired people, the PwD application reads out the full candidate list with name and serial number to the voter. A total of 46,810 requests for marking themselves as PwD have been received from the PwD app. Till today 23,97,957 users have viewed their PwD status.

### Candidate Suvidha App:

The Candidate App provides relevant information to the candidates about the status of their Nomination and campaign related permissions. All the permissions for meetings, rallies, loudspeakers, the temporary office will be handled through the online portal. The candidate, Political parties or any representative of the candidate can apply directly on <https://suvidha.eci.gov.in> and thereafter receive the permission approval status on the Candidate App. It obviated manual intervention in granting permissions as the applications will be processed on a first come first serve basis

### IV. National Grievance Services Portal (NGSP):

A citizen can call on the toll-free number 1950 for information, feedback, suggestions, and complaints. District contact Voter Helpline canters to address all the grievances had also been placed, where this system ensures that a caller can receive all voter facilitation services in his local language. Any citizen can reach now to all electoral services by simply calling 1950 from a landline or mobile. **20,33,189 cases** of Information, Feedback, Suggestions, and Complaints have been registered in the National Grievance Service Portal. **99%** of the cases have resolved. **(i.e.20,09,646 )**

## V. Voter Turnout App:

Voter Turnout App provides real-time voter turnout details of each Constituency including the number of men, women and third gender. The application can also be used by media houses to capture the live voter turnout data. The Voter Turnout App has proven to be a milestone in transparent elections. The application is available on Google Play store.

## ***For Election Officials:***

### **I. Observer Mobile App**

Observer mobile app aids Observers in real-time to get all information about their allotted Parliamentary / Assembly Constituency and send observation reports to ECI instantly and securely. All eVIGIL cases reported in their jurisdiction are also made available to General Observers, Expenditure and Police Observers and they can give their input too from the place of citing of eVIGIL incidence. Observers can check their deployment status and download their ID cards with the convenience of a few clicks only from the dashboard and will be able to check all the important notifications and instructions sent by the ECI Officials.

### **II. Enabling communications on real time environment (ENCORE)**

This application provides facility for online permissions, the publication of candidate affidavits and most importantly result management system.

ENCORE provides easy processing of candidate applications in a multilingual format. As and when the applications will be digitized by Returning Officers, the information about the status of the application is reflected on the website and mobile applications. Once the candidature is final the citizen can download the list of contesting candidates. The complete profile of the candidates along with the affidavit is also available on <https://affidavit.eci.gov.in> and in the Voter helpline mobile app available on android and apple store. Users can download affidavits of all candidates at the convenience of their mobile phones.

The Returning Officers may grant permissions for meetings, rallies, loudspeakers, temporary office can also be handled through the online portal. It obviates manual intervention in granting permissions and it will be processed on a first come first serve basis. The online application once received, required various departmental nodal officers to give no objection before the permission could be granted by the Returning Officer. Each nodal officer of Police, Revenue, Transport,

PWD and others are given an exclusive mobile App to process the permissions on the fly. During the General Elections to Lok Sabha, 2019 for contesting candidate, an aggregate of 2,48,586 permissions for campaign/rallies were processed over ENCORE.

The result portal <https://results.eci.gov.in> contains the information in a compiled manner such that citizens get to know the authentic and real-time results even before it is available in any media house. The result will be available on the website, accessible through the Mobile App i.e. Voter Helpline App and the Result Panel <https://results.eci.gov.in>. The result website has witnessed a single day edge user hits of **81.23 crores**.

### **III. EVM Management System (EMS):**

EVM Management System is designed to manage inventory of EVM units. One of the important modes to ensure a fair and transparent process in EVM management is the administrative protocol of the randomization of the machines before they are deployed in the Polling stations. This whole process will be done in the presence of Political Parties' representatives. The EVM Management System adds to the transparency and ensure that there is no manual intervention at any level from the manufacturer to the polling stations. The new mobile App for scanning of machine units will be used for scanning at the warehouse level each time an EVM moves from one warehouse/strong-room to another.

Once FLC is successfully completed then EVMs and VVPATs randomized twice, once for allocation of machines to assembly constituencies and second to polling stations. The randomizations are carried out through EVM Management System(EMS) by the DEO in the presence of the representatives of political parties/candidates for complete transparency. The lists of EVMs and VVPATs containing serial number of EVM and VVPAT allocated to particular Assembly Constituency polling station are provided to the political parties/candidates.

**A total number of 70,01,489 BU/CU/VVPATs are tracked through EMS software and during last Lok Sabha General Elections, 84,34,422 transaction movements** of the machine were handled through EMS software.

#### **IV. Model Code of Conduct Reference Portal:**

Model Code of Conduct (MCC) relaxation request Portal is developed to address all the cases of references received from State Governments for relaxation and to expedite the responses during the process and period of elections. All the requests are digitized at the source by the concerned official from the ministries and departments so that they could be visible and trackable during the processing. The Election Commission of India set up a master account and both the Central and State concerned authorities have direct access to the portal. During General Election of Parliament 2019, a total of **121 relaxation requests** received from the Central Government Ministries and many thousand of request received from various State Governments were processed on the MCC reference portal.

By the use of this online disposal portal for relaxation requests during the model code of conduct period greatly facilitate time-bound disposal of requests.

#### **23. 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.

#### **24. Schedules of General Election**

The Commission has prepared the Schedules for holding General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Haryana & Maharashtra after taking into consideration all relevant aspects like climatic conditions, academic calendar, major festivals, prevailing law and order situation in the State, availability of Central Police Forces, time needed for movement, transportation and timely deployment of forces and in-depth assessment of other relevant ground realities.

The Commission after considering all relevant aspects has decided to

recommend to the Governor of the States of Haryana & Maharashtra to issue notifications for the General Elections under the relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, as per the **Annexure-1**.

The Commission seeks the active cooperation, close collaboration and constructive partnership of all the esteemed stakeholders in the electoral process and strives to employ the collective synergies towards delivering a smooth, free, fair, peaceful, participative and festive General Assembly Elections, 2019 in Haryana & Maharashtra.

**Sd/-**

**(SUMIT MUKHERJEE)**  
**PRINCIPAL SECRETARY**

## Schedule

### Schedule for General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Haryana & Maharashtra

<b>Date of Issue of Gazette Notification</b>	<b>Last Date for Nominations</b>	<b>Date Scrutiny of Nominations</b>	<b>Last date for withdrawal of candidature</b>	<b>Date of poll if necessary</b>
27.09.2019	04.10.2019	05.10.2019	07.10.2019	21.10.2019
Friday	Friday	Saturday	Monday	Monday

Date of Counting: 24.10.2019 (Thursday)

Date before which election shall be Completed: 27.10.2019 (Sunday)