

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-1

No. ECI/PN/49/2009

Dated: 12th September, 2009

PRESS NOTE

Subject: General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana and Maharashtra – Appointment of Observers.

The Commission today held a briefing for 470 Observers who are being appointed for the General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Haryana and Maharashtra. The Commission had held a briefing meeting for 40 Observers of Arunachal Pradesh yesterday.

The brief was given by the Chief Election Commissioner Shri Navin B. Chawla and Election Commissioners Dr. S.Y. Quarishi and Sh. V.S.Sampath

Observers, who are appointed under Section 20 B of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 play an important role in ensuring free and fair elections. They act as crucial link between the field and the Commission. These officers remain under disciplinary control of the Commission till the end of elections. Observers will be monitoring all the processes involved in the conduct of election to maintain its purity including the election expenditure incurred by the contesting candidates.

The Election Observers will reach their allotted constituencies on the last date of filing of nominations i.e. 25th September, 2009 and stay continuously in the constituencies assigned to them till the end of poll day. They would ensure quick redressal of complaints that are received from political parties/candidates etc. Their contact address and telephone number will be advertised in local newspaper by the District Election Officer and they will set aside 2 hours daily- 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. at Returning Officer's office to meet with any person who wants to meet the Observer in person and submit their grievance.

The Observer will supervise the process of election at all stages, viz campaign, poll, counting of votes and declaration of results. They would also be supervising randomization, preparation of Electronic Voting Machines, training of polling personnel and conduct of voter awareness programmes. All Observers have been advised to look into the force deployment plan in their constituency. They will also be examining the identification of critical polling stations and monitor the process of vulnerability mapping to identify the segments vulnerable to threat and intimidation.

The Observers have been advised to make sure that the affidavits that are filed by the Candidates at the time of nomination detailing their movable/immovable assets, qualifications, convictions, cases pending in courts, are displayed prominently and made available for public scrutiny without any loss of time.

Observers have specifically been advised to tour their respective allotted Assembly Constituency extensively and build confidence among weaker and disadvantaged sections. They will constantly review execution of non-bailable warrants, recovery of illicit arms and collection of licensed arms from undesirable elements. The Observers will monitor strictly the enforcement of Model Code of Conduct. The Observers have been advised to make sure that extensive videography is done of all critical events that may take place during the election process and polling at critical polling stations. The Commission has issued direction to all District Election Officers to prepare a comprehensive communication plan in consultation with Observers to ensure proper and effective communication on the day of poll.

The Observers would be assisted by the static Micro-Observers who would be deployed at critical polling stations to observe and ensure the purity of the polling process. Central Government/Public Sector employees would be utilized to the extent possible as Micro-Observers. These Micro-Observers will report to the Observers. The training and orientation of Micro-Observers shall be the responsibility of Observers.

The Commission impressed upon the Observers to take every step possible to ensure free and fair polls.

(R.K.SRIVASTAVA)
SECRETARY