Election immediate
By special camp bag/e-mail.

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No.52/2013/SDR Dated: 28 January, 2013

To

Chief Electoral Officer
Tripura
Agartala

Sub: - Guidelines for smooth management of Postal Ballot Papers for employees on poll duty, Police Officers on Poll duty and drivers/conductors and cleaners of vehicles requisitioned on Poll duty.

Ref;- **1**. ECI Letters No. 52/2102/SDR/216-250, dated 13th August 2012, No. 52/2012/SDR/181-215, dated 13th August 2012 and No. 52/2012/SDR/251-285, dated 13th August 2012.

2. Letter of Chief Electoral Officer Tripura, No. F.19 (7)-CEO/Condt/2008/238, dated 2nd/3rd January 2013.

Sir,

I have been directed to state that the Commission has considered suggestions made by the Chief Electoral Officer by his above cited letter and has decided that facilitation of postal ballots for employees on poll duty, police officers on poll duty and drivers, conductors and cleaners of vehicles requisitioned for poll duty will be done according to the guidelines contained in the letters of ECI referred to above. However, for greater transparency following additional measures will be taken: -

I. Postal Ballot facilitation for TSR personnel, other Police personnel and other Voters on election duty.

1. While Form 12 for requesting postal ballot will be sent along with the appointment order to all persons drafted for poll duty, blank Form 12 will also be available in the office of all Returning Officers, from where it can be given to any person on poll duty if required. Blank Form 12 will also be put on the website of CEO for free download.

2. Since the CEO already has a database of all persons drafted for poll duty, he should include fields containing information about Assembly Constituency, Part of electoral roll and serial number in relevant part of electoral roll, for all persons in the database. It should not be difficult to get this information by doing a search based on EPIC. Pre-filled Form 12 should be generated using software developed by CEO. These pre filled Form 12 should be sent to all

persons drafted for poll duty along with their appointment order with a request to verify the entries and make any corrections, if necessary.

3. Filled and signed Form 12 shall be collected at the training center. Form 12 will then be sorted Assembly Constituency wise and sent to the concerned RO. If the Assembly falls in another district, Form 12 shall be sent to the concerned RO through the concerned DEO.

4. The RO will then issue Postal Ballots and mark 'PB' against the name of the person to whom postal ballot is issued in the marked copy of the roll. Postal ballots issued by the RO will then be packed facilitation center wise and will be sent to the same facilitation center from where Form 12 was received for facilitation of casting of vote by postal ballot. If the facilitation center is in another district, the packet containing postal ballots will be sent to the facilitation center through the concerned DEO.

5. At the time of facilitation the postal ballot will be given to the concerned voter and his signature will be obtained in a register to be maintained by the facilitation center for this purpose, as a token of having received the postal ballot.

6. Employees will be explained that after they cast their postal ballots at the facilitation center these postal ballots will be immediately sent to the concerned RO, who will keep them in a strong room till the day of counting. This will ensure that the postal ballot is counted.

7. Facilitation of postal ballots for officers and Jawans of Tripura State Rifles (TSR) will be done according to the guidelines for facilitation of postal ballots for police officers on poll duty. They will be called to postal ballot facilitation centers according to schedule fixed by the Chief Electoral Officer.

8. All recognized political parties will be informed in writing about the time and place where the said facilitation of postal ballots will be done. Political Parties (and contesting candidates, wherever their list is finalized) will be requested to send their representatives at the facilitation centers for Postal Ballots to observe the process.

9. All necessary arrangements shall be made at every training venue so that postal ballots can be marked in privacy.

10. At least one gazetted officer shall be deputed by the DEO for every facilitation center for verification of declarations in Form-13A. The Commission has received complaints that there is a possibility of Jawans of police being influenced by their senior officers. The Commission has, therefore, decided

that no senior police officers shall bedeputed at these facilitation centers for the purpose of verification of Forms 13A.

11. As the concerned electors may be registered in different parts of the State, one large common Box will be kept at the facilitation center for casting postal ballots. At the beginning of the process, the box will be opened and shown to all including the representatives of political parties/candidates present, that the box is empty. After this, the box will be sealed in the presence of all including the representatives of political parties/candidates present. Only one slit will remain open at the top of the box from which postal ballots can be cast into the box.

12. After all postal ballots for the day have been cast, the box will be opened by the gazetted officer nominated by the DEO for the facilitation center in the presence of the representatives of political parties/candidates. All the postal ballots will be taken out of the box and the empty box will be shown to the said representatives of political parties/candidates. The postal ballot envelops will be sorted Assembly Constituency wise and the number of postal ballot envelopes received for each Assembly Constituency will be entered in a register in Format-1 to be maintained for this purpose at the facilitation center. Representatives of political parties/candidates present will be requested to put their signatures on the register and will be given a copy of the relevant pages of the register. All postal ballot envelopes for one Assembly Constituency will be kept in a large envelope meant for that Assembly Constituency. The name of the facilitation centre,the date of facilitation and the number of postal ballots contained therein will be clearly written on this envelope. The number and name of the Assembly Constituency for which the envelope is meant will also be clearly written on the envelope. This envelope will then be sent to the Returning officer of the concerned Assembly Constituency along with a copy of the relevant pages of the register.

13. The process described in point number 6 above will be repeated on every day when facilitation of postal ballots is done at the facilitation center.

14. The gazetted officer deputed to the facilitation Center will prepare a return in Format-2 every day when facilitation of postal ballots is done at the facilitation center and will send it to the DEO. The DEO of every district will compile the return in Format-2 for his district every day till the facilitation for postal ballots is over in the district, for the postal ballots cast in the facilitation centers of his district. A copy of this return will be sent every day to the Chief Electoral Officer. CEO will compile the returns of the entire state in Format-2 and will send a copy of the compiled Format-2 to the Commission every day till the facilitation of postal ballots is over in the State. Chief Electoral Officer

will also send a copy of return in Format-2 every day to all recognized political parties.

15. The entire process will be videographed.

16. Returning Officer of the concerned Assembly Constituency shall keep the envelope containing postal ballots along with the copy of the relevant pages of the register in a special strong room made especially for this purpose.

II. Postal Ballots for Service Voters

All postal ballots for service voters will be issued within 24 hours of the finalization of ballot paper. The outer envelope (FORM 13C) for postal ballots to service voters shall be in yellow color to distinguish them from the postal ballots for employees on poll duty. Chief Electoral Officer will have a meeting with the head of the postal department for the State, and work out an arrangement that the postal ballots for service voters are handed over by the Returning Officer of each constituency to a designated employee of the postal department nominated for this purpose. Postal Department shall then ensure that all postal ballots for service voters are delivered to the respective Record Offices within 48 hours.

III. Return of Postal Ballots

1. For receiving back postal ballots by post the Chief Electoral Officer will make an arrangement with the Postal Department and ask them to nominate one post office for each Assembly Constituency which will deliver postal ballots every day to the Returning Officer. The time of delivery will be fixed at 3 PM every dayat the office of the Returning Officer, except for the counting day when the time for delivery will be 8 AM at the counting center for that Assembly Constituency. The list of counting centers and the addresses of ROs offices will be communicated in writing to the Postal Department by the CEO.All recognized political parties and contesting candidates will be informed in writing that they or their representatives may remain present at the time of delivery of postal ballots by the post office. The postal ballots delivered by the post office will be counted in the presence of the political party representatives and candidate representatives and an acknowledgement of the number of postal ballots received will be given to the post office. A copy of this acknowledgement shall be kept in the record of the RO. The number of postal ballots received will be entered in the daily return in Format-3 by the RO. The entire process will be videographed.

2. The Retuning Officer will keep all postal ballots received from the post office every day in a separate envelope for that day and write on the envelope the

date and words – “Postal Ballots Received by Post”. He will keep this envelope also in the strong room for postal ballots every day after the post has been received.

3. Returning Officer will prepare a return of the Postal Ballots received from facilitation centers in Format-3 every day till he stops receiving postal ballots from facilitation centers. He will also enter the number of postal ballots received by post in the return on Format-3 and Format-4 till the day of counting. He will send a copy of the return in Format-3 to the Chief Electoral Officer every day through the DEO of the District. He will also send a copy of the return in format-3and format-4 to all the candidates of his Assembly Constituency. The Chief Electoral Officer will compile the information of the State in Format-3and format-4 every day and will send a copy to the Commission. The CEO will also send a copy of the compiled Format-3 and format-4 to all recognized political parties.

4. In those cases where the counting is done at a place other than the RO headquarters, the postal ballots for the Assembly Constituency will be transferred to another strong room for the postal ballots for the concerned Assembly Constituency at the counting centers, one day before the day of counting. For this purpose, the RO shall inform in writing to the candidates the time at which this will be done. The strong room for postal ballots shall be opened in the presence of the candidates of their representatives present. All postal ballots will then be kept in a large steel box which will be sealed in the presence of candidates and their representatives. This box will then be carried under guard of armed CPF to the strong room for postal ballots at the counting center. Candidates and their representatives shall be allowed to follow the vehicle carrying postal ballots. The box containing postal ballots will then be kept in the strong room for postal ballots at the counting center in the presence of the candidates and their representatives. Strong room will then be sealed and signatures of candidates and their representatives shall be taken as proof of their presence. Candidates and their representatives shall be allowed to keep watch on the strong room for which they will be provided reasonable facilities by the DEO. The whole process will be video graphed. On the day of the counting, the returning officer will open the strong room and bring all postal ballots and copies of the relevant pages of registers received from the facilitation centers to the table where the postal ballots will be counted.

5. The envelopes received from facilitation centers will be opened one by one and the number of postal ballots found in each envelope will be tallied with the numbers mentioned in the copies relevant pages of the registers received from the facilitation center. The result of such tallying will be shown to the candidates and their election agents before the counting of postal

ballots.Similarly, the register of postal ballots received by post shall also be shown to the candidates and their election agents.

6. Every DEO shall prepare information in Format 5 and send it to the CEO. CEO will compile the information for the entire State and send the same to the Commissionon daily basis. A copy of this information will also be sent to all recognized political parties.

The Commission has directed that these instructions should be brought to the notice of all concerned immediately. A copy of this letter should be immediately given to all the recognized political parties by the Chief Electoral Officer at the State level and District Election Officers at the district level. A copy of this letter should also be given to all the contesting candidates by the Retuning Officer after the last date of withdrawal at the time of allotment of symbols.

Receipt of this letter be acknowledged and copies of instructions issued to DEOs/ROs/Political parties/candidates should be endorsed to the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

(Ashish Chakraborty)
Secretary

Format -1

Register for Postal Ballots at Facilitation Center

Name of State _____

Name of District _____

Name of Facilitation Center _____

S.No.	Date	No. and Name of AC for which Postal Ballot has been Cast	Number of Postal Ballots cast by Employees on Poll duty	Number of Postal Ballots cast by Police	Number of Postal Ballots cast by TSR Jawans and Officers	Number of Postal Ballots Cast by Drivers, conductors, cleaners of requisitioned vehicles	Total Number of postal ballots cast for the Assembly Constituency
Total for the Date							
Cumulative Total Till Date							

Format -2

Statement of Postal Ballots Cast at Facilitation Center

Name of State _____

Name of District _____

Date_____

S.No.	Name of Facilitation Center	Number of Postal Ballots cast by Employees on Poll duty		Number of Postal Ballots cast by Police		Number of Postal Ballots cast by TSR Jawans and Officers		Number of Postal Ballots Cast by Drivers, conductors, cleaners of requisitioned vehicles		Total Number of postal ballots cast for the Assembly Constituency	
		On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date
Total for District											
Total for State											

Format -3

Statement of Postal Ballots Received by RO

(Summary)

Name of State _____

Name of District _____

Date_____

S.No.	No. and Name of AC	Number of Postal Ballots received by special messenger from Facilitation Centers		Number of Postal Received by Post		Total Postal Ballots Received (Including by special messenger from facilitation centers and by post)	
		Received on Date	Received cumulative till date	Received on Date	Received cumulative till date	Received on Date	Received cumulative till date
Total for District							
Total for State							

Format 4

Statement of Postal Ballots Received by RO

(Detailed based on the copies of relevant pages received along with postal ballots from facilitation centers)

Name of State _____

Name of District _____

Date_____

S.No.	No. and Name of AC	Postal Ballots Received by Special Messenger from Facilitation Centers										Postal Ballots Received by Post				Total Postal Ballots Received					
		Number of Postal Ballots by Employees on Poll duty		Number of Postal Ballots by Police		Number of Postal Ballots by TSR Jawans and Officers		Number of Postal Ballots by Drivers, conductors, cleaners of requisitioned vehicles		Total Number of postal ballots received form facilitation Centers		Postal Ballots by Employees		Postal Ballots by Service Voters (Outer Envelope of Yellow Color)		From Employees (Add Total Postal ballots received from facilitation centers with postal ballots received from employees by post)		From Service Voters (Received by post)		Total	
		On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date	On Date	Till Date
Total for District																					
Total for State																					

Format – 5

Statement of persons eligible for postal ballots,postal ballots issued by RO and postal ballots received by RO

Name of State _____

Name of District	Category of Employees	No. of Employees on duty	No. of employees to whom Form-12 given	No. of employees who submitted filled Form-12	No. of Employees to whom postal ballot were issued	No. of Employees who cast postal ballot at facilitation centre	No of Postal Ballots received from Employees by Post	Total No. of Service Voters in District	No. of Postal Ballots issued to Service Voters	No. of postal Ballots received from Service Voters
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
District -1	Civilian									
	Police									
	TSR									
	Driver, Conductor, Cleaner									
Total for State	Civilian									
	Police									
	TSR									
	Driver, Conductor, Cleaner									