

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110 001

No. ECI/PN/14/2013

Dated: 20th March, 2013

PRESS NOTE

Subject : Schedule for the General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Karnataka – Regarding.

The term of the Legislative Assembly of Karnataka will expire on 03.6.2013. By virtue of its powers, duties and functions under Article 324 read with Article 172(1) of the Constitution of India and Section 15 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the Election Commission of India is required to hold elections to constitute the new Legislative Assembly in the State of Karnataka before expiry of its present term.

1. Assembly Constituencies:

The total number of Assembly Constituencies in the State of Karnataka and the 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:

Total No. of A. C.s	Reserved for SCs	Reserved for STs
224	36	15

2. Electoral Rolls:

The electoral rolls of all the existing Assembly Constituencies in the State have been revised, with reference to 01.01.2013 as the qualifying date, and have been finally published in two phases (for 178 ACs on 16.1.2013 and for the remaining 46 ACs on 28.1.2013). As per the final published electoral rolls, total electors in the State are 4,18,75,267.

3. Photo Electoral Rolls:

Photo electoral rolls will be used during the forthcoming general election. Photo percentage in Photo electoral rolls of Karnataka is 98.69%.

4. Identification Of Voters And Electoral 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 only. Presently, the EPIC coverage in Karnataka is 98.37 %.

All the residual electors are advised to obtain their Electoral Photo Identity Cards from the Electoral Registration Officers of their Assembly Constituency.

In order to ensure that no voter is deprived of his/her franchise, if his/her name figures in the Electoral Rolls, separate instructions will be issued regarding additional documents for identification of voters, if needed.

5. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs):

The poll in Karnataka will be conducted at all polling stations using EVMs. The Commission has already made arrangements to ensure availability of adequate number of EVMs for smooth conduct of elections. The first level checks of EVMs has been done in the presence of representatives of political parties in accordance with the instructions of the Commission. A two-stage randomization of EVMs shall be made. In the first stage, all the EVMs stored in the District storage center are randomized by the District Election Officer (DEO) in the presence of the representatives of the recognized political parties for allocation to assembly constituencies. In the second stage EVMs are again randomized to decide the actual polling stations in which they will be ultimately used. The second stage randomization is done in the presence of General Observers and candidates or their election agents. EVMs will be prepared and set for elections after the contesting candidates are finalized in presence of candidates. At this stage also, candidates or their agents/representatives will be allowed to check and satisfy themselves in every manner about the functionality of the EVMs.

6. Law and Order and Deployment of Forces:

Based on the assessment of the ground situation, Central Police Forces (CPF) and State Armed Police (SAP) drawn from other States will also be deployed during the ensuing general elections. The CPF and SAP will be used generally for safeguarding the polling stations, the electors, poll-material and the polling personnel. Besides, these forces will be used for securing the strong rooms where the EVMs are stored pending counting and for securing the counting centers and for other purposes, as required.

The Commission has been issuing instructions from time to time with regard to the advance preventive measures to be taken by the District Magistrates and Police authorities to maintain Law & Order and to create atmosphere conducive for 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.

7. 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. Their names, addresses within the district/constituency and their telephone numbers will be publicized in local newspapers so that the general public can quickly approach them for any grievance redressal. The Observers will be given a detailed briefing by the Commission before their deployment. Commission may also deploy Police Observers to keep a close watch on law & order situation.

8. Election Expenditure Monitoring:

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. 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. Comprehensive instructions for the purpose of effective monitoring of the election expenditure of the candidates, have been issued, which include formation of flying squads, video Surveillance Teams, involvement of Investigation Directorates of Income Tax Deptt. etc.

The formats, for filing of affidavits regarding criminal backgrounds, assets, liabilities and education qualification of the candidates have been combined into one format (Form 26) and modified to include a summary sheet. All candidates must ensure that they file their affidavits in the revised format (Form 26) only. The revised format is available on the ECI website and in Returning Officer's handbook.

Necessary instructions have been issued to the CEO to ensure briefing of political parties and Media in the districts about 'paid news' and the mechanism to check

'paid news'. Representatives of Political Parties and Media Organizations are briefed by the Election Commission.

To deal with the issue of 'Paid News', a mechanism has been laid out with three tier of Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMC) at District, State and ECI level. Revised comprehensive instruction on 'paid news' have been issued on 27th August, 2012 and is available on ECI Website, which will be supplemented by further instructions.

9. Micro Observers:

In addition to General Observers, the Commission will also deploy Micro-observers to observe the poll proceedings in the polling stations on the poll day in selected critical polling stations. They will be chosen from Central Government/Central PSUs officials. Micro-Observers will observe the proceedings at the polling stations on the poll day right from the mock poll to the completion of poll and the process of sealing of EVMs and other documents to ensure that all instructions of the Commission are complied with by the Polling Parties and the Polling Agents. These Micro-Observers will work directly under the control and supervision of the General Observer. They will be tasked to ensure purity of polling process and will report to the General Observers directly about any vitiation of the poll proceedings in their allotted polling stations.

10. 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. Several instructions have been issued from time to time to ensure impartiality of officials who are engaged in the conduct of elections. 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. The Commission has already given instructions that no election related official or Police officer of the rank of Inspector and above shall be allowed to continue in his home district. Besides, instructions have also been issued that election related officials including police officials of Inspector level & above who have completed three years in a district during last four years should be transferred out of that district. Police officers of

the rank of Sub Inspectors who have completed three years in a Sub Division/Assembly Constituency or are posted in their home sub division/assembly constituency shall be transferred out of that Sub Division and the Assembly Constituency. The State Government has also been asked to transfer all those officers against whom the Commission has recommended disciplinary action or who have been charged for any lapse during previous elections or for any election related work, from positions entailing any election work. The State Government has been instructed to ensure that those who stand transferred shall move out physically from their last place of posting and shall not remain there on any pretext including leave. The Commission has also instructed the State Government not to associate any officer with the electoral process against whom charges have been framed in a court of law in any case.

11. Protection to SC/ST Electors:

As per Section 3 (1) (vii) of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, 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 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 Government to bring these provisions to the notice of all concerned for prompt action.

12. Polling Stations:

There are a total of 50446 Polling Stations in the State of Karnataka as on the date of final publication of electoral rolls.

For the facility of physically challenged persons, instructions have been issued to ensure that all polling stations as far as practicable, are located at ground floor and ramps are provided. Facilitation shall also be provided for locating electors' names in a polling station or a group of polling stations through help lines and facilitation centers.

13. Polling Parties and Randomization:

Polling parties shall be formed randomly, through special application software. 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 just before the polling party's departure. There shall be randomization for such Police Constables and Home guards also, who are deployed at the polling stations on the poll day.

14. District Election Plan:

The District Election Officers have been asked to prepare a comprehensive district election plan in consultation with 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 station in accordance with Election Commission of India's extant instructions.

15. Videography:

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 nominations, scrutiny thereof and allotment of symbols, First Level Checking, preparations and storage of Electronic Voting Machines, important public meetings, processions etc. during campaign, process of dispatching of postal ballot papers, polling process in identified vulnerable polling stations, storage of polled EVMs, counting of votes etc. Digital cameras will also be deployed inside polling booths wherever needed and inside all counting centers. CDs of video recordings will be available on payment to anyone who wishes to obtain a copy of the same.

16. Model Code of Conduct:

The Model Code of Conduct comes into effect immediately from now onwards. All the provisions of the Model Code will apply to the whole of Karnataka with effect from today itself. Attention of the political parties and candidates is particularly invited to the following provisions of the Model Code:-

*“There shall be no appeal to caste or communal feelings for securing votes. Mosques, Churches, Temples or other places of worship shall **not** be used as forum for election propaganda.”*

17. Voter Slips:

To facilitate the voters to know where he/she is enrolled as a voter at a particular polling station and what is his/her serial number in the Electoral roll, the Commission has directed that voter slip along with Photo (wherever present in the roll) will be distributed to all enrolled voters by the District Election Officer. 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.

18. Complaint redressal mechanism – Call Center and Website based:

The poll going State shall have a complaint redressal mechanism based on website and call center. The number of call center is **1950** which is a toll free number. The URL of the complaint registration website will be announced by the Chief Electoral Officer separately. Complaints can be registered by making calls to the toll free call center numbers or on the web site. Action will be taken within time limit on all complaints. Complainants will also be informed of the action taken by SMS and by the call center. Complainants can also see the details of the action taken on their complaints on the website.

19. Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP):

Comprehensive measures for voters' education and outreach were taken up during the Roll Revision process in the State of Karnataka. These measures will continue during the electoral process. The Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka has been directed to ensure wide dissemination of election related information and also for carrying out SVEEP campaigns as well as adequate facilitation measures through engagement of appropriate partner agencies for ensuring wider participation of voters in polling. Awareness Observers are being appointed in every district of the State to make sure that SVEEP measures have been implemented and the level of information, motivation and facilitation of voters is duly high.

20. Schedule of Election:

The Commission has prepared the Schedule for holding General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Karnataka after taking into consideration all relevant aspects, like the climatic conditions, academic calendars, 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 assessment of other ground

realities. The Commission after considering all relevant aspects has decided to recommend to the Governor of the State, to issue notification for the General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Karnataka under the relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. The Election Schedule for the abovementioned general election is annexed at Annexure-I.

All Instructions/Guidelines of the Commission regarding this election can also be seen by visiting Commission's website "www.eci.nic.in".

(SUMIT MUKHERJEE)
SECRETARY

Schedule for General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Karnataka

Event	Date (day)
1. Issue of Notification	10.4.2013 (Wednesday)
2. Last date of making Nominations	17.4.2013 (Wednesday)
3. Scrutiny of Nominations	18.4.2013 (Thursday)
4. Last date for withdrawal of Candidatures	20.4.2013 (Saturday)
5. Date of Poll	5.5.2013 (Sunday)
6. Counting of Votes	8.5.2013 (Wednesday)
7. Date before which election shall be completed	11.5.2013 (Saturday)
8. Hours of Poll	8.00AM to 5.00PM