

# Election Commission further streamlines the process of Counting of Postal Ballots

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1. The Election Commission of India has already taken 29 significant initiatives during the past six months aimed at streamlining and improving the electoral process. In furtherance of this, ECI has decided to further streamline the process of counting of Postal Ballots to reduce delays and enhance clarity as its 30<sup>th</sup> initiative. (Annexure)
2. The process of counting of votes has two major parts: Counting of Postal Ballots/Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballots (ETPBs) and; Counting through EVM.
3. On the day of counting, postal ballot counting starts at 8:00 AM and EVM counting starts at 8:30 AM. As per the earlier instructions, EVM counting could theoretically go on irrespective of the stage of postal ballot counting and chances of it getting completed before the completion of postal ballot counting cannot be ruled out.
4. In view of the recent initiatives taken by the Commission for home voting for PwDs and senior citizens (85+) also, the number of postal ballots has increased substantially.
5. Although, counting of postal ballots generally gets completed before counting of EVMs, in order to ensure uniformity and utmost clarity in the counting process, the Commission has decided that, **henceforth, the penultimate (second last) round of EVM/VVPATs counting shall be taken up only after the counting of Postal Ballot Papers is completed, at the counting center, where postal ballot counting is being done.**
6. The Commission has also directed that in cases where there are a large number of postal ballots, the ROs are to ensure that sufficient number of tables and counting staff are in place so there is no delay and the counting process is further streamlined.

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**PK/GDH/RP**

## **Annexure**

### **List of 29 initiatives during the past six months:**

#### **I. Convenience of Electors**

1. Mobile Deposit Facility for voters at Polling Stations for convenience on polling day.([Link](#))
2. Not more than 1,200 electors per Polling Station to reduce crowding.([Link](#))
3. Voter Information Slip (VIS) design modified to carry Serial number and Part number of voter more prominently.([Link](#))
4. Candidate Booths allowed just beyond 100 meters of PS for voter facilitation.([Link](#))
5. EVMs to have colour photos of candidates for better visibility.([Link](#))

#### **II. Strengthening and clean-up of Electoral Systems**

6. Delisting of 808 Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs) in two rounds for continually failing to meeting essential conditions of registration.([Link](#))
7. Identification and mapping of roles of 28 ECI stakeholders in line with the Constitution, RPA 1950, 1951 Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, Conduct of election rules 1961, and various ECI

instructions.[\(Link\)](#)

8. Standard Photo ID Cards issued to BLOs.[\(Link\)](#)

9. Technical and Administrative SOPs for checking and Verification of burnt memory/microcontroller of EVM post announcement of election results.[\(Link\)](#)

10. National Conference with Legal Counsels & CEOs to strengthen and re-orient ECI's legal framework.[\(Link\)](#)

11. Bilateral Meetings with Heads of Election Management Bodies to strengthen India's partnerships with EMBs across the globe.[\(Link\)](#)

### **III. Proactive engagement with Political Parties**

12. 4,719 all-party meetings held nationwide at EROs, DEOs and CEOs levels.[\(Link\)](#)

13. Meetings of the Election Commission with 25 recognized National/State Political Parties held so far.[\(Link\)](#)

### **IV. Enhanced use of Technology**

14. Launched ECINET, a one-stop Digital Platform subsuming 40+ apps/websites for the electors and its other stakeholders.[\(Link\)](#)

15. 100% Webcasting at all Polling Stations to ensure constant monitoring of poll process.[\(Link\)](#)

16. Presiding Officer (PRO)s will directly enter voter turnout on the new ECINET App every two hours on polling day in order to reduce time lag.[\(Link\)](#)

17. Streamlined Index Card and Statistical reports generation to ensure faster sharing of election-related data at the constituency level.[\(Link\)](#)

18. VVPAT Counting to be ensured in each and every case of mismatch between Form 17C and EVM.[\(Link\)](#)

### **V. Purity of Electoral Rolls**

19. Special Intensive Revision in Bihar to ensure no eligible voter is left out and no ineligible person is included in the Electoral Rolls.[\(Link\)](#)

20. Special Summary Revision before By-elections in 4 states for the first time in nearly 2 decades.[\(Link\)](#)

21. Linking Death Registration Data to ensure EROs receive timely information about registered deaths.[\(Link\)](#)

22. Same EPIC numbers for different persons eliminated.[\(Link\)](#)

23. New SOP to ensure EPIC Delivery within 15 days of an update in Electoral Roll with SMS notification at each stage of delivery.[\(Link\)](#)

### **VI. Capacity building for**

24. In a first, over 7,000 BLOs and BLO Supervisors trained at IIIDEM, New Delhi.[\(Link\)](#)

25. Training for Booth Level Agents (BLAs) appointed by all recognised Political Parties from Bihar, TN and Puducherry for the first-time at IIIDEM, New Delhi.[\(Link\)](#)

26. Training for Media & Communication Officers of offices of 36 State/UT CEOs.[\(Link\)](#)

27. Training of Police Officers for poll-preparedness in Bihar.[\(Link\)](#)

28. Enforcing discipline, digitisation of workflow and better utilisation of resources in ECI Headquarters.[\(Link\)](#)

Remuneration doubled for BLOs, enhanced for BLO Supervisors and polling/counting staff, CAPF, monitoring teams and micro-observers.[\(Link\)](#)

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