

ECI to facilitate Elderly, PwD and Service Voters and voters on election duty to vote using Postal Ballot in the upcoming Assembly Elections

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1. Election Commission of India (ECI) announced the schedule for the General Election to Legislative Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and bye-elections in 6 states on March 15, 2026. Notifications have been issued for **Assam, Kerala and Puducherry on March 16, 2026**, as per the schedule.
2. The Commission, as per Section 60(c) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, has notified that electors **above the age of 85 years and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) flagged in Electoral Rolls** may cast their vote through postal ballot.
3. Such electors can avail this facility using **Form 12 D** and submitting to the Returning Officer through their **BLO within 5 days of notification** of election. Polling teams will **collect their votes at their homes**, as per schedule to be prepared by the respective Returning Officers and shared with the candidates as well.
4. Electors on **essential services on the date of poll** can apply for the postal ballot facility through the designated Nodal officer of their respective department. Essential services such as Fire Services, Health, Electricity, Traffic, Ambulance Services, Aviation, long-distance Government Road Transport Corporations etc. are covered under this facility.
5. **Media persons** authorized by the Election Commission for **poll day coverage** have also been included in the category of **absentee voters on essential services** and are entitled to postal ballot facility.
6. A voter on election duty shall receive his postal ballot, record his vote thereon and return the same at the **facilitation center**. ECI has issued directions in this regard to ensure that voting takes place with **complete secrecy** for the voter at the facilitation center.
7. Service voters will be sent their postal ballots electronically by the Returning officer through the **Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS)**, immediately on finalization of list of contesting candidates. Service voters are not required to bear the cost of postal services.
8. The postal ballots cast should reach the concerned Returning Officers (ROs) by 8:00 AM on the date of counting of votes i.e., **May 4, 2026**.
9. The Returning Officer (RO)/District Election Officer (DEO) have also been directed to **brief the political parties/contesting candidates** regarding the above provisions.

PK/GDH/RP

