

General Elections and bye-elections 2026: Pre-certification of print-ads by MCMC on Pre-poll and Poll Day

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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.
2. In order to ensure a fair campaign environment, no political party, candidate, organization or person shall publish any advertisement in the print media **on the poll day and one day prior to the poll day**, unless the contents are pre-certified by the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) at the State/District level.
3. **Individuals or contesting candidates** can apply for certification of advertisements with **District MCMC**. **All registered political parties** headquartered in a State/UT can apply for certification of such advertisements with the **State Level MCMC**.
4. Accordingly, precertification of ads in poll-bound states/UT are necessary as per the schedule given below:

Name of State/UT going for general elections	Poll Date	Dates of publication for which Precertification of print ads is mandatory
Assam, Kerala and Puducherry	09.04.2026	08.04.2026 & 09.04.2026
Tamil Nadu	23.04.2026	22.04.2026 & 23.04.2026
West Bengal	23.04.2026 (Ph-I)	22.04.2026 & 23.04.2026
	29.04.2026(Ph-II)	28.04.2026 & 29.04.2026

5. Applicants seeking pre-certification for political advertisements in print media must apply to the MCMC **not later than two days prior** to the proposed date of publication of the advertisement.
6. To facilitate timely pre-certification, MCMC at the State/District levels have been activated to examine and pre-certify such advertisements, and ensure decisions are made expeditiously.
7. MCMCs shall also keep a strict vigil on suspected cases of **paid news** in the media and take suitable action.

PK/GDH/RP

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