

Press Note

Lok Sabha Election 2024: CEO holds meeting with DCs

- Directs Effective implementation of the MCC Guidelines

Chandigarh, 16 March:

Punjab's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Sibin C, held a meeting with the Deputy Commissioners (DC) cum District Election Officers of the state. He directed the DCs to ensure effective implementation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) guidelines so as to ensure free and fair elections.

Sibin C instructed the officials to activate the MCC teams and to remove all violations on public and private places immediately. On C-Vigil, he asked the officials to ensure that 100 minutes time period adhered to in taking action on the complaints. Notably, C Vigil is a mobile application developed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to empower citizens to report violations of the MCC during elections.

He prescribed the officials to maintain a list of the ongoing works in districts, get ongoing works certified by head of all agencies like PWD, LG, HUD Irrigation departments etc and ensure that no other work is started in the district without the permission of the Election Commission.

Guiding the officials, he said that it needs to be ensured that the SUVIDHA portal is working smoothly and permissions are given timely and without bias. The Suvidha Portal aims to facilitate the process of applying for permissions by political parties and candidates for conducting various election-related activities.

Sibin C directed the officials to conduct meetings with all the political parties and apprise them about the MCC guidelines. He further clarified that the school grounds in Punjab cannot be used for conduct of political meetings.

Meanwhile, the meeting was attended by Additional CEO Harish Nayyar, Joint CEO Sakkatar Singh Bal and other officials from the office of CEO.

Press Note

Information and Public Relations Department, Punjab

Lok Sabha Elections 2024 : Punjab CEO Sibin C releases Election Programme

Chandigarh, 17 March:

Punjab's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Sibin C, has released the election programme of Lok Sabha Elections 2024 for the state of Punjab. Providing key insights, he said that the Gazette Notification for the elections is scheduled to be issued on May 7th, 2024 (Tuesday). The deadline for nominations is set for May 14th, 2024 (Tuesday), with scrutiny of nominations to take place on May 15th, 2024 (Wednesday). The Candidates can withdraw their nominations till May 17th, 2024 (Friday). The Polling day is scheduled for June 1st, 2024 (Saturday) in Punjab, with the counting of votes set for June 4th, 2024 (Tuesday) encompassing the entire country, including Punjab. The final date for the completion of elections is June 6th, 2024 (Thursday).

Sibin C emphasized that following the announcement of the election schedule by the Election Commission of India on March 16th, 2024, the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has been implemented immediately across the state of Punjab. The MCC will be applicable to all candidates, political parties, the State Government, as well as to the Union Government. He apprised that a copy of the MCC manual can be downloaded ECI's website link:- <https://www.eci.gov.in/handbooks-manuals-modelchecklist>.

Sibin C further informed that the instructions of the Election Commission of India have been circulated through the Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister, all Ministers, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, all Additional Chief Secretaries, Financial Commissioners, Principal Secretaries, Secretaries, all Head of Departments, Chairmen and Managing Directors of all Boards, Corporations and Authorities of the Punjab for their strict compliance.

Press Note

Punjab CEO Holds Meeting with Political Parties; apprises about key election process

- Political parties and candidates must refrain from hate speech, religious or caste-based vote solicitation, personal attacks on opponents: Sibin C

Chandigarh, March 18th:

Punjab's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sibin C, convened a meeting with representatives from major political parties in the state to discuss essential aspects of the upcoming elections. During the session, he provided detailed insights into the election process, highlighting key statistics such as the total number of voters (2,12,71,246), including Male voters (1,11,92,959), Female voters (1,00,77,543), Transgender voters (744), Persons with Disabilities (PwD-1,57,257), Overseas Voters (1597) and the number of polling stations (24,433).

Additionally, he informed attendees about recent provisions allowing PwD voters and individuals aged 85 and above to opt for voting at home.

Regarding Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) availability, Sibin C stated that the state boasts 150% availability, ensuring a surplus of 50% more than required. Furthermore, he assured that all polling stations would be equipped with essential facilities such as ramps, water supply, proper lighting arrangements, and toilets. He emphasized that all polling stations would be conveniently located within 2 kilometers of voters' addresses.

He elaborated on various intricacies of the electoral process, including candidate qualifications for Lok Sabha elections, disqualification provisions (both constitutional and statutory), nomination procedures, grounds for rejection of nominations, and rules governing withdrawal of nominations, as well as symbol allotment regulations.

CEO also outlined the key provisions of the Model Code of Conduct, stressing that political parties and candidates must refrain from hate speech, religious or caste-based vote solicitation, personal attacks on opponents, or criticism based on unverified reports. He further emphasized the necessity of obtaining prior permission from district authorities for meetings and other events.

He provided insights into the Suvidha portal and its role in simplifying the nomination process and obtaining various permissions for political parties. Through the Suvidha portal, candidates can file nominations and affidavits online, schedule meetings with returning officers for document submission, and streamline administrative procedures.

The meeting was also attended by Additional CEOs Harish Nayyar and Abhijeet Kaplish, Joint CEO Sakkatar Singh Bal and other officials of CEO office.

Press Note

Punjab CEO's Press Conference:

Sibin C expresses commitment to ensure free and fair elections

-Underscores 15,653 Posters and 7,511 Banners removed across the state after implementation of MCC

-Seizures including Cash and Narcotics worth 113.45 crores since 1st March

Chandigarh, March 19:

Punjab's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Sibin C, today held a press conference regarding the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 at his office in sector 17. On this occasion, he expressed the commitment of his office to implement the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in letter and spirit in the state so as to ensure free, fair and transparent elections. Divulging details, he pointed out that 24,433 Wall Writings, 15,653 Posters, 7,511 Banners and 23,916 Defacements on Property have been removed across the state from March 16 to March 18, 2024.

He emphasized that to prevent the misuse of muscle and money power, elaborate efforts have been undertaken. Replying to a query, he said 25 companies of paramilitary forces have been deployed and additional deployments would be made based on threat assessment. A robust seizure management system has been implemented, resulting in seizures worth 113.45 crores since 1st March, 2024, he added.

He further said that 119 complaints have been received via C-Vigil, with 86 found valid and addressed. CCTV cameras have been installed at inter-state checkpoints, and flying squads equipped with necessary tools have been deployed at inter-district checkpoints.

Sibin C noted that out of 24,433 polling stations in the state, 2,416 have been identified as critical till now, warranting additional security measures. CCTV installation and centralized monitoring will be implemented across all polling stations. Efforts will also focus on increasing voter turnout, particularly at around 12,000 polling stations where voter turnout was lower than the national and state averages in Lok Sabha Elections 2019, so that the objective of 'Is Vaar 70 Paar' can be achieved.

He added that the District Election Officers-cum-Deputy Commissioner have been directed to ensure Drinking Water, Toilets, Signage, Ramp/Wheelchair, Helpdesk, Voter Facilitation Centre, sufficient Light and Shed facilities at the Polling Stations.

He stated that as on March 1, 2024, Punjab has a total of 2,12,71,246 voters. Efforts have been made to purify the electoral rolls by deleting demographic and photographic similar entries during Special Summary Revision of electoral roll to prevent duplications. Regular

meetings have been held with political parties at every stage of electoral roll updating, providing them with opportunities to raise objections.

During the media interaction, Sibin C emphasized the pivotal role of the media in acting as the eyes and ears of the Election Commission, crucial for conducting elections in a free and fair manner. He expressed the office's commitment to actively engage with the media to receive as well as to disseminate critical information to the public.

Press Note

ECI directs to transfer Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar

-Also directs to transfer Ropar Range and Border Range Police Officers

Chandigarh, March 19:

Election Commission of India (ECI), on the basis of a complaint has directed to transfer Jalandhar Deputy Commissioner, Vishesh Sarangal. The letter issued in this regard, specifies that he should be transferred from present posting to some other place not in his home district. Also, it must be ensured that the officer should be transferred out of the district and is not posted within the same parliamentary constituency. ECI has demanded a panel of 3 Officers to be appointed the new Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar.

Similarly, ADGP of Ropar Range, Jaskaran Singh, and DIG of Border Range, Narinder Bhargav, have been directed to be transferred. These two officers have also been asked to be transferred out of the district and not posted within the same parliamentary constituency. Above both officers are getting retirement in April and June respectively. The Commission has demanded panels of 3 names for both postings, from whom new posting would be done.

Press Note

All police personnel deemed to be on deputation of ECI: Sibin C

Chandigarh, March 20:

Punjab Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Sibin C, informed that in respect of the Model Code of Conduct regarding General Election to Lok Sabha 2024, all officers and personnel of the Police Department, ranging from the rank of Director General of Police to Constable, shall be deemed to be on deputation of the Election Commission of India. This is owing to their direct or indirect involvement in the management and conduct of elections as per the provisions of Section 28A of the Representation of People Act, 1951, with immediate effect.

Sibin C further stated that a Gazette Notification has been issued by the State Government to this effect. He clarified that the aforementioned order shall be applicable to Director General of Police, Additional Director Generals of Police, Inspector Generals of Police (both at headquarters and in the field), Commissioners of Police, Deputy Inspector Generals of Police (both at headquarters and in the field), Assistant Inspector Generals of Police (both at headquarters and in the field), Senior Superintendents of Police, Superintendents of Police, Sub-Divisional Police Officers such as Deputy Superintendents of Police, and other police officers/officials including Inspectors, Sub Inspectors, Assistant Sub Inspectors, Head Constables, and Constables.

The orders of deputation will be remain in force till the end of the Election Process, he added.

Press Note

Lok Sabha Election-2024:

ECI transfers five SSPs of Punjab: Sibin C

- SSPs of Pathankot, Fazilka, Jalandhar Rural, Malerkotla, and Bathinda districts

Chandigarh, March 21:

Continuing its commitment to conduct fair and impartial Lok Sabha Elections 2024, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has transferred five Senior Superintendents of Police (SSP) in Punjab, who are not cadred officers from the Indian Police Service or have association with the elected political representative.

Disclosing the further information, Punjab Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sibin C said that the four Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) of Pathankot, Fazilka, Jalandhar Rural and Malerkotla districts have been transferred as they are not IPS cadred officers.

The CEO said that Bathinda SSP has been transferred in view of his kinship or familial association with the elected political representatives.

The CEO further said that according to the ECI orders, the state government has been asked to promptly transfer non-encadred officers from their current positing as SSP, with immediate effect, and submit a compliance report to the Commission.

Press Note

Lok Sabha Elections 2024:

100% webcasting of all polling booths in Punjab: CEO Sibin C

- All 24,433 polling stations covered with CCTV surveillance and additional cameras to be installed outside 1884 polling stations in Punjab

- Punjab CEO takes innovative IT initiatives to make electoral process more efficient and transparent

-Introduces revamped DISE system, mobile voter friendly apps, Web casting of polling station, Vehicle Monitoring and other initiatives for conducting a fair and impartial elections

Chandigarh, March 22:

Aiming to make electoral process more efficient and transparent in the Lok Sabha elections 2024, the Chief Electoral Office (CEO) Punjab has introduced major innovative initiatives in the IT sphere, including webcasting at all 24,433 polling stations in the state.

These novel initiatives include the launch of several mobile voter-friendly apps and websites, empowering voters to report election violations via phone, and monitoring the transportation of EVMs, along with installing CCTV cameras at polling stations.

Divulging the further details, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sibin C said that they are closely monitoring the election process through 100% webcasting of poll stations. For the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, CCTV surveillance will be ensured inside all 24,433 polling booths, apart from it cameras will be installed outside 1884 polling stations in all 13 constituencies where there are three or more polling stations.

Sibin C said that they have introduced a revamped NextGen District Information System for Elections (DISE) this time. It will be used to manage all aspects of elections, from collecting data of polling staff to scheduling rehearsals, randomizing polling staff and counting staff. The CEO said that this modernization aims to make elections more efficient, transparent, and secure.

The CEO said that this web-based application is utilized to integrate available employee data from other applications using APIs/CSV/Excel files. It will also assist in managing staff shortages after the initial stage by deploying additional staff.

In another initiative, the CEO said that live streaming from flying squad vehicles (FSV), and static surveillance teams are monitoring violations of the model code of conduct during election process. The poll activity management system (PAMS) used for deploying polling parties and updating voting information, such as the commencement of polling and the status of voter queues at closing hours, has also been revamped to enhance the efficiency of election-related activities. The mobile app will provide real-time data.

The CEO further said that other innovative initiatives by the Election Commission of India, including the Voter Helpline APP, providing citizens with convenience in finding their names in the electoral roll, submitting online forms, downloading their digital photo voter slip, filing complaints, and receiving replies on their mobile app.

Another crucial initiative is the mobile application 'Know Your Candidate,' allowing electors to access details and criminal background of any candidate. This app aims to provide wider publicity and greater awareness regarding the criminal background of contesting candidates to ensure transparent elections. It is available for download on Google Play Store and Apple App Store.

The CEO said that other novel initiatives by the ECI, including the launch of mobile voter-friendly app cVIGIL, which enables people to report the Model Code of Conduct violations, featuring live photo/video with live location. Any citizen can lodge a complaint through this mobile app, after which Flying Squads investigate the matter, and the Returning Officer takes a decision within 100 minutes, utilizing GPS to track the violation's location.

Likewise, the CEO said that Saksham-ECI, an application enabling Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to request new registration, address changes, alter particulars, and mark themselves as PwD. The app offers voice assistance, text-to-speech, accessibility features, among others, catering to the needs of PwDs during the electoral process.

Press Note

ECI seeks immediate report from Punjab CS and DGP in Sangrur hooch tragedy

Chandigarh, March 23:

The Election Commission of India on Saturday has sought an immediate report from the Punjab Chief Secretary and DGP in the Sangrur hooch tragedy through Punjab CEO .

According to commission's information, around 20 People had died and 20 people are under treatment in various hospitals in Sangrur and Patiala district.

Punjab CEO had written a letter to Chief Secretary of Punjab and DGP Punjab to send an immediate preliminary report and a detailed report Today regarding the entire event to apprise the commission.

Press Note

Lok Sabha Elections 2024:

Punjab CEO office organises SVEEP program to encourage voters during IPL match: Sibin C

- 400 members of the Electoral Literacy Club urge people to register as a voter and actively participate in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections
- Voter awareness messages and vote appeal by State Icons Cricketer Shubman Gill and Tarsem Jassar displayed during the match
- Huge hoardings, banners, canopies, standies were put up outside the stadium

Chandigarh, March 23:

As part of encouraging people to be involved in the electoral process and achieve the goal of the 'Iss Vaar 70 Paar' campaign, the Chief Electoral Office (CEO) on Saturday organised a SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) program during IPL match at Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in Mullanpur, District Shahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar.

Divulging the further information about the event, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sibin C said that SVEEP is a flagship programme of the Election Commission of India to promote voter education and participation in elections.

He said that considering the craze of Cricket, the office of CEO Punjab appointed sensational cricketer Shubman Gill as the State Icon and they are confident that his mass appeal would help them achieve the target of taking the voting turnout above 70 percent.

The Chief Electoral Officer said that during the SVEEP event, a myriad of activities were organized in the stadium to motivate voters to exercise their right to vote. He said that over 400 members of the Electoral Literacy Club present at the venue encouraged everyone who has reached the age of 18 to register as a voter and actively participate in the forthcoming elections.

Apart from it, folk orchestra version of ECI song "Main Bharat Hun" was played before the start of the match. Sibin C said that giving special attention to native audience, Punjabi adaptation of Main Bharat Hun song was also played on the big screen. Likewise, voter awareness messages and vote appeal by State Icons Shubman Gill and Tarsem Jassar were displayed during the match.

The CEO further said that huge hoardings, banners, canopies, standies were also put up outside the stadium, apart from several cutouts of Election Mascot Shera 2.0. Canopies were also put up outside the stadium and merchandise with election awareness slogans like mugs and keychains were distributed to the visitors to encourage them for voting.

Meanwhile, addressing media persons before the start of the match, District Election Officer-cum-DC of Shahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar Aashika Jain said that there couldn't have been a better platform than Cricket to raise voter awareness especially among youth. She appealed to the electors to exercise their voting right on 1st June 2024 in a fearless and inducement free manner.

Press Note

Lok Sabha Elections 2024:

ECI directs Disciplinary Action against absentee SDM during election duty

Chandigarh, March 24:

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has issued directions to take disciplinary action against Amardeep Singh Thind, PCS, Assistant Returning Officer cum-SDM of Amloh, who has been absent from election duty during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections 2024.

Divulging the details, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Punjab, Sibin C said that in place of Amardeep Singh Thind, the Commission has appointed Karandeep Singh, PCS as Assistant Returning Officer cum-SDM of Amloh to ensure smooth conduct of the election process. The commission has also asked for a report on disciplinary action against Amardeep Singh Thind to be sent soon.

Press Note

ECI allows journalists on poll duty to vote through postal ballot: Sibin C

- ECI includes journalists in essential service category along with staff of 6 other state government offices

Chandigarh, March 29:

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has allowed media personnel on duty related to poll day coverage to vote through postal ballot in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Giving the further information, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sibin C said that according to the notification issued by the ECI, media personnel authorized by ECI for poll day coverage and other state government department officials can vote via postal ballot under Section 60 (c) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

The CEO said that as per the notification, the ECI has notified journalists holding authorization letters issued by the ECI who are engaged in polling day coverage as essential service personnel, along with staff from 6 government departments. These departments include Department of Local Government (Fire Services), Department of Transport (Drivers, conductors, Work shop staff, Operations staff and Officers posted at Headquarters and Depots at District level), Department of Jails (Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Guarding staff posted in Jails), Department of Home Affairs and Justice (Police officers, Police personnel, Civil Defense, and Home guards), Department of Power (Staff of State power corporation and state transmission corporation deputed at Generations units, Thermal plants, Hydel units (within or outside state), Staff on deputation to BBMB and field Staff posted in Grid sub station), Department of Health and Family Welfare (a) Drug Control Officers working under the Commissionerate of Food and Drugs administration (b) Medical and Para-medical Staff working/on duty on the day of poll.

He said that the aim of this is to ensure that no one is deprived of voting due to their service commitments.

Press Note

CEO Sibin C visits Chandigarh Press Club, emphasizes pivotal role of press in ensuring transparent, free, and fair elections

Chandigarh, March 31:

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Punjab, Sibin C, visited the Chandigarh Press Club today in conjunction with the annual election of office bearers of the Chandigarh Press Club. During his visit, he lauded the club for conducting a thorough democratic process for the election of its office bearers.

On this occasion, Sibin C emphasized the pivotal role of the press in ensuring transparent, free, and fair elections. He called upon the members of the press to act as the eyes and ears of the Election Commission, thus ensuring the comprehensive implementation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) across Punjab. Additionally, he urged the press to assist in increasing awareness among the citizens about 'C-Vigil' application, for reporting any MCC violation.

The journalists in attendance expressed their gratitude to the CEO for his visit and for the facilitation of the provision of voting through postal ballots for the journalists on election duty, in Lok Sabha Elections 2024.
