

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No.470/2019/SDR/

Dated: 18th May, 2019

To,

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States and Union Territories

Sub: Counting of votes-regarding.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to refer to the Commission's letters No. 470/2003/JS.II dated 25th November, 2003, and 470/2009/EPS, dated 21st January, 2009, regarding Counting of Votes. It was, inter-alia, directed that the penultimate round of EVM counting is not be taken up until the counting of all Postal Ballot Papers is completed. There is also an instruction that if victory margin is less than the number of postal ballot papers, re-verification of all postal ballot papers should be carried out by the Returning Officer.

2. With the introduction of ETPBS and casting of postal ballot by election duty staff at the facilitation centre, the number of postal ballot papers for counting has gone up considerably. Further, with the requirement of mandatory QR code reading for the ETPBS, the postal ballot counting will now require more time. Moreover, there is a mandatory VVPAT slips count of five Polling Stations per Assembly Segment in addition to the cases of VVPAT count that may be required on account of other reasons, such as CU not being cleared after mock poll, the CU not displaying the results at the time of counting, etc.

3. In view of the above, the Commission has reviewed the above referred instructions and the modified instructions are as follows: -

- (i) The instruction that the penultimate round of EVM counting should be taken up only after completion of Postal Ballot counting is withdrawn. Accordingly, the EVM counting can go on irrespective of the stage of Postal Ballot counting. Once the EVM counting is completed, the VVPAT slips counting can start as per the prescribed procedure for counting VVPAT slips.
- (ii) The Commission's instruction for mandatory re-counting of all postal ballot papers on the ground that the margin of victory is less than the number of postal ballots has been revised to the effect that where the margin of victory is less than the number of Postal Ballot papers rejected as invalid at the time of counting, all the rejected Postal Ballot papers shall be mandatorily re-verified by the Returning Officer before declaration of result. Whenever, such re-verification is done, the entire proceedings should be video-graphed as per the instructions in paragraph 7 of the Commission's letter No. 470/2009/EPS dated 21-01-2009, referred to above
4. These instructions should be immediately communicated to all Election Observers appointed in your State/UT, District Election Officers and Returning Officers. This may also be communicated to the political parties.
5. Please acknowledge receipt and confirm action being taken.

Yours faithfully,



(K.F. WILFRED)
Sr. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

Standard Distribution among Zonal Sections