

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

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PRESS NOTE

Election Commission of India reviews poll preparedness for Assam Assembly Election

The Election Commission of India (ECI) today reviewed poll preparedness for the General Elections to the Assam Legislative Assembly 2021. The review meeting was chaired by the Chief Election Commissioner of India, Sh Sunil Arora, in the presence of Election Commissioners Sh Sushil Chandra and Sh Rajiv Kumar at Tezpur as also later at Guwahati. Commission met with Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police and other senior officers of all districts going to polls in the first and second phase of elections, as also nodal officers of the Enforcement Agencies. Specific review of Covid arrangements was done with Chief Secretary Sh Jishnu Barua and also issues with DGP Assam Sh B Mohanta.

Sr Deputy Election Commissioner and Incharge of State of Assam at ECI, Sh Dharmendra Sharma, Deputy Election Commissioner Sh Sudeep Jain along with Special General Observer Sh S. Srinivasan, Special Police Observer Sh Ashok Kumar and Special Expenditure Observer Smt Neena Nigam interacted with State officers. CEO, Assam Sh Nitin Khade, State Police Nodal Officer Sh Deepak Kedia, State Force Coordinator, CAPF Ms Sonal V Mishra, Divisional Commissioners of Upper and North Assam and DIGs of North-Eastern, Northern, Eastern, Central and Central-Western ranges participated in today's review meeting held at Tezpur.

Chief Election Commissioner Sh Sunil Arora directed all the officials to ensure that elections in the State of Assam are conducted in a peaceful,

free and fair and safe manner with high voter turnout. Sh Arora reiterated that this time Special General and Police Observers have been associated with randomization of State and Central Armed Police Forces to jointly decide the election security plan.

Shri Sushil Chandra, Election Commissioner urged to expedite seizures and asked the departments to establish money trail linkages specifically related to election expenditure. He directed the investigative agencies for better co-ordination and collaboration of data, in order to improve their searches and seizure operations during the election period. Shri Rajiv Kumar, Election Commissioner asked all the agencies to continue with their vigil efforts even after the 3-phased election is over in the state of Assam, as the adjoining state, West Bengal will still be having elections. The border check posts need to be functioning strictly, till the election results, in order to deter any illegal goods transfer /crossings across the state borders, he emphasised.

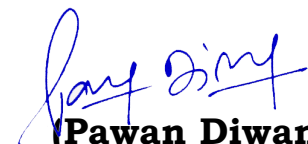
Special General Observer S. Srinivasan apprised the Commission of the overall status of preparedness in the State, while Special Police Observer Sh Ashok Kumar gave an overview of security measures put in place to ensure smooth conduct of the elections. Special Expenditure Observer Neena Nigam apprised ECI of seizures worth Rs 80 crores made already (as against Rs 16 crores done in previous elections) due to concerted efforts of the Flying Squad Teams and SSTs working round the clock to ensure free and fair elections in the state.

The ECI team today reviewed poll preparedness of Phase I districts at Tezpur while DCs and SPs of second phase districts joined the meeting virtually. DIGs and Divisional Commissioners also apprised the Commission of the activities undertaken as yet. The Commission also met with Nodal officers of Central and State Regulatory Agencies like Excise Department, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Income Tax, Enforcement Directorate, Narcotics Control Bureau, Railway and Airports authorities, Postal Department, Security agencies like CISF, Railway Police, SSB,

State Level Bankers' Committee etc to review in detail the strategy to curb misuse of money/drugs/liquor & freebies distribution during the election.

During the meeting, presentations were made by the Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police highlighting the status of poll preparedness in their respective districts. Status of distribution of EPICs, distribution of voter information slips, publishing of Criminal Antecedents by contesting candidates, provisions made at polling stations for voters above 80 years of age along with PwD voters, SVEEP activities being carried out to increase voter turnout, postal ballot status for absentee voters, cash seizures, drive against illicit liquor as also preparations put in place for COVID19 suspects, among others were elaborated upon. Issues relating to inter-district coordination, deployment of security forces, management plan for remotely located polling stations, communication plan for shadow areas, provisions for webcasting and monitoring, resolution of complaints received over voter helplines and cVIGIL app, availability of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) in auxillary Polling Stations, training of security forces, etc. were specifically reviewed.

Assam is scheduled to go to polls in Three Phases with polls due on March 27, April 1 and April 6th 2021 for the 126 ACs across 33530 Polling Stations covering more than 2.33 crore electors.


(Pawan Diwan)
Under Secretary