

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. ECI/PN/5/2007

Dated 17th January, 2007

PRESS NOTE

Complaints had been received in the Commission raising apprehensions that the postal ballots (meant for the Punjab Police) are likely to be misused/manipulated by the State Police. The matter was referred by the Commission to the Chief Electoral Officer , Punjab for a report . The report furnished by the Chief Electoral Officer states that the Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar District, as part of his campaign to enhance EPIC (Elector's Photo Identity Card) coverage had directed the Heads of various Departments in his District including the Commandant of the 7th Battalion of the PAP to ensure that their personnel got their EPIC cards made. It has been mentioned that the said step was taken to ensure 100% EPIC coverage. In compliance with the DC's directive, the PAP commandant had sought details of personnel in Battalions under their control. The CEO has confirmed that no other functionary of police department either at Headquarters or in the Districts, or in the DGP's office has sought any such information. The State Home Department has also confirmed that it has not issued any directions in the matter of postal ballots. The Home Department has further categorically assured that the instructions concerning the postal ballots issued by the Election Commission will be meticulously observed.

The Commission has noted that the Chief Electoral Officer has been in touch with the Principal Secretary, Home and has cross checked through DC, Jalandhar and he is satisfied that the allegations of ulterior motives on the aspect of postal ballot are misplaced. It has been informed that the Chief Secretary has directed the DGP to ensure complete transparent functioning so that no cause was given to raise suspicion on any count.

The Commission is satisfied with the clarification given in the matter and the steps taken by the State Chief Secretary and the Chief Electoral Officer. The Commission however, wishes to make it clear that it will not hesitate to take strict action against any person who violates Commission's instructions on the conduct of elections.

(LALIT MOHAN)
SECRETARY