

# **ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110 001

**NO. ECI/PN/02 /2008**

**Dated: 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2008**

## **PRESS NOTE**

**Subject: Schedule for General Election to the Legislative Assemblies of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura.**

The terms of the Legislative Assemblies of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura are normally due to expire on 10.03.2008, 13.03.2008 and 19.03.2008 respectively. By virtue of its powers, duties and functions under Article 324 read with Article 172(1) of the Constitution of India, Section 15 of Representation of the People Act, 1951, the Commission is under a constitutional mandate to hold general elections to constitute the new Legislative Assemblies in these States at any time within a period of six months before the expiry of the present term.

### **ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES**

2. There are 60 Assembly Constituency seats (ACs) in Meghalaya out of which 55 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. In case of Nagaland, there are 60 seats out of which 59 are reserved for Scheduled Tribes and in Tripura out of total 60 seats 20 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes and 7 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

### **ELECTORAL ROLLS**

3. General Elections will be conducted in these States on the basis of the electoral rolls revised with reference to 01.01.08 as the qualifying date. The electoral roll revision process in these States has been completed and the final publication was made in Meghalaya and Tripura on 10.01.2008 and in Nagaland on 04.01.2008. As per final rolls, there are 12,30,152 electors in the State of Meghalaya, 13,00,507 in the State of Nagaland and 20,30,886 electors in Tripura. The electoral rolls of all the Assembly Constituencies of these States have been computerized and are available on the website of the Chief Electoral Officers of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. In addition, work relating to preparation of photo electoral rolls has been completed in Meghalaya and Tripura and the photo rolls will be used in these states during the forthcoming general elections for easy identification of voters.

### **ELECTORS PHOTO IDENTITY CARDS (EPIC)**

4. Identification of the voters at the polling booth at the time of poll shall be mandatory. Presently, in Meghalaya and Tripura the EPIC coverage is more than 99% while in case of Nagaland it is 45%.

### **ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMs)**

5. The Elections in these three States will be conducted at all polling stations using EVMs. The Commission has already made arrangements to ensure availability of adequate number of EVMs for the smooth conduct of elections.

## **INDELIBLE INK**

6. The Commission in recent times has been adopting a new procedure for the application of indelible ink. The new procedure of applying the ink as a line running from top of the nail to the bottom of first joint of the left forefinger will be followed during the forthcoming general election in Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura also.

## **LAW AND ORDER AND DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES**

7. Based on the assessment of the ground situation, Central Police Forces (CPFs) and State Armed Police (SAPs) drawn from other States will be deployed during the ensuing general elections. The CPF and SAP will be used generally for safeguarding the polling stations and for providing security to the electors and polling personnel at the polling stations on the poll day. Besides, these forces will be used for securing the strong rooms where the EVMs are stored and at the counting centers. Wherever needed, the CPF will be deployed in advance for area domination. The identification of polling stations requiring coverage by CPF in various assembly constituencies will be made in consultation with the ECI Observers.

8. The Commission has been issuing instructions from time to time with regard to the advance preventive measures to be taken by the District Magistrates and Police authorities to maintain the Law & Order and to create atmosphere conducive for the conduct of free and fair elections. The Commission will be monitoring the ground situation closely and will take appropriate measures to ensure peaceful, free and fair polls in these States.

## **OBSERVERS**

9. The Commission will be deploying General and Expenditure Observers to ensure smooth conduct of forthcoming General Election in these three states. The Observers will be asked to keep a close watch on every stage of the electoral process to ensure free and fair elections.

## **CONDUCT OF OFFICIALS**

10. The Commission expects all officials engaged in the conduct of elections to discharge their duties in an impartial manner without any fear or favour. Several instructions have been issued from time to time to ensure impartiality of officials who are engaged in conduct of elections. The conduct of all government officials who have been entrusted with election related responsibilities and duties would remain under constant scrutiny of the Commission and strict action shall be taken against those officials who are found wanting on any account.

11. The Commission has already given instructions that no election related official or Police officer of the rank of Sub Inspector and above shall be allowed to continue in his home district. Besides, instructions have also been issued that all the election related officials including the police officials who have completed three years in a district during last four years should be transferred out of that district. The Government of the States has also been asked to transfer all those officers against whom the Commission has recommended disciplinary action or who have been charged for any lapse during previous elections or for any election related work, from the positions entailing any election work.

12. The Governments of these States have been instructed to ensure that those who stand transferred shall move out physically of their last place of posting and not remain there on any pretext including leave.

13. The Commission has also instructed the State Government not to associate any officer with the electoral process against whom charges have been framed in a court of law in any case.

### **PROTECTION TO SC/ST ELECTORS**

14. As per Section 3 (1) (vii) of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, whoever, not being a member of a Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, forces or intimidates a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe not to vote or to vote to a particular candidate or to vote in a manner other than that provided by law shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to five years and with fine. The Commission has asked the State Government to bring these provisions to the notice of all concerned for prompt action.

### **POLLING STATIONS**

15. There are 1582 polling stations in Meghalaya, 1586 polling stations in Nagaland and 2372 polling stations in Tripura. For the facility of physically challenged persons, instructions have been issued to ensure that all polling stations are located at ground floor and ramps are provided. Facilitation shall also be provided for locating voter's name against a polling station or a group of polling stations through help lines and facilitation centres.

### **POLLING PARTIES AND RANDOMIZATION**

16. Polling parties shall be formed randomly, through a special software. Three-stage randomization will be adopted. First, from a wider district database of eligible officials, a shortlist of about 150% of the required numbers will be randomly picked. This group will be trained for polling duties. In the second stage, from this trained manpower, actual polling parties shall be formed by random selection software in the presence of ECI Observers. In the last stage, the polling stations will be allocated just before the polling party's departure by random number generation. The Central Government Employees will be utilized for the forthcoming elections to the extent possible.

### **COMMUNICATION PLAN**

17. The District Election Officers have been asked to prepare a comprehensive district election plan including communication plan using multi-mode resources such as landline telephones, mobile telephones, wireless sets etc., to facilitate effective monitoring and control on the day of poll. They have also been asked to open Help Lines /Control Rooms in each AC for the convenience of electors.

### **VIDEOGRAPHY**

18. The Commission has issued detailed guidelines for video coverage of all critical events during the election process and polling at all vulnerable polling booths on the poll day. The digital cameras will also be deployed inside the booths wherever needed.

## **MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT**

19. **The Model Code of Conduct comes into effect immediately from now onwards.** The Code will apply to the whole of the States of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura and will be applicable to all candidates, political parties, the State Governments concerned and the Union Government.

## **SCHEDULE**

20. The Commission has prepared the schedule for holding General Election to the Legislative Assemblies of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura after taking into consideration all relevant aspects like the climatic conditions, academic schedules, festivals, prevailing law and order situation in the states, availability of Central Police Forces, time needed for movement and proper deployment of forces, and assessment of other ground realities.

21. The Commission after considering all relevant aspects has decided to recommend to the Governors of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura to issue notifications for the General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of the respective States under the relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, as per the schedules given in the **Annexure**.

(BERNARD JOHN )  
SECRETARY

Schedule for General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Tripura

<b>Notification</b>	<b>Last Date for Nomination</b>	<b>Scrutiny</b>	<b>Withdrawal</b>	<b>Date of poll if needed</b>	<b>Counting</b>
<b>30.01.08</b> (Wednesday)	<b>06.02.08</b> (Wednesday)	<b>07.02.08</b> (Thursday)	<b>09.02.08</b> (Saturday)	<b>23.02.08</b> (Saturday)	<b>07.03.08</b> (Friday)

Schedule for General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Meghalaya

<b>Notification</b>	<b>Last Date for Nomination</b>	<b>Scrutiny</b>	<b>Withdrawal</b>	<b>Date of poll if needed</b>	<b>Counting</b>
<b>08.02.08</b> (Friday)	<b>15.02.08</b> (Friday)	<b>16.02.08</b> (Saturday)	<b>18.02.08</b> (Monday)	<b>03.03.08</b> (Monday)	<b>07.03.08</b> (Friday)

Schedule for General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland

<b>Notification</b>	<b>Last Date for Nomination</b>	<b>Scrutiny</b>	<b>Withdrawal</b>	<b>Date of poll if needed</b>	<b>Counting</b>
<b>09.02.08</b> (Saturday)	<b>16.02.08</b> (Saturday)	<b>18.02.08</b> (Monday)	<b>20.02.08</b> (Wednesday)	<b>05.03.08</b> (Wednesday)	<b>08.03.08</b> (Saturday)