

ELECTIONS / TOP PRIORITY

STATE ELECTION COMMISSION

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Lr. No. 64/SEC-B1/2011

Date: 07.3.2013

To

All the Collectors and District Election Authorities

(except District Collector, Hyderabad and Commissioner, GHMC).

Sir/Madam,

Sub: Elections – 4th ordinary elections to Panchayat Raj bodies –
Furnishing report on availability and sufficiency of Ballot Boxes –
Called for – Reg.

Ref: 1. G.O.Rt.No.278, PR & RD (E&R) Dept., dtd.16.2.2012.
2. SEC Lr.No.64/SEC-B1/2011, dtd. 23.02.2013.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in its interim orders dated 18.02.2013 directed to proceed with the elections to Panchayat Raj bodies as per the existing system. As a first step towards conduct of elections, the State Election Commission already initiated the process of preparation of Gram Panchayat Photo Electoral Rolls with reference to 1.1.2013 as qualifying date. The election process will be set in motion soon after reservations are finalised by the State Government and communicated to the Commission. Therefore, all the arrangements should be in place to conduct elections at short notice.

The ordinary elections to MPTCs/ZPTCs and Sarpanch and Ward Members of Gram Panchayats will be held using ballot boxes. It should be noted that no procurement of new ballot boxes was made in the last five years. Therefore, all the ballot boxes available in the districts should be repaired / overhauled immediately and used in the ensuing elections to PR Bodies. As Election Commission of India switched over to Electronic Voting Machines, it is difficult to get additional ballot boxes from outside.

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In the year 2006, MPTC/ZPTC elections were held in two phases with all the MPTCs/ZPTCs in 11 districts going for poll in the first phase and all MPTCs/ZPTCs in the remaining 11 districts in the second phase with three clear days gap between first and second phases to facilitate movement of men and materials. Similarly, last ordinary elections to Gram Panchayats were held in three phases with all Gram Panchayats in one Revenue Division going for poll in one phase (and where a district is having more than three Divisions, two Revenue Divisions were notified for poll in one phase) and there was a gap of three clear days between one phase and the next phase. The same pattern will be followed this time also. Keeping this in view, all the District Collectors have to assess the sufficiency of available ballot boxes in their respective districts.

In the year 2012, an amount of Rs.34.00 Lakhs was released to all the Districts vide G.O. 1st cited for undertaking repairs / overhaul of the ballot boxes whose condition was not good. It is not known whether the funds sanctioned were utilised or not. If they were not utilised, the amount required now to undertake repairs / overhaul may be projected and sent to the Commission immediately so that steps can be taken to get the funds released on priority basis for this purpose. Every ballot box available in the district should be repaired and put to use to ensure sufficiency due to non-availability of additional boxes from outside.

The District Collectors are, therefore, requested to review this matter immediately and send a report to the State Election Commission on availability and sufficiency of ballot boxes in their respective districts and also on requirement of funds for repair / overhaul of ballot boxes.

Yours faithfully,
Sd/- P. Ramakanth Reddy
State Election Commissioner

// Attested //

N. Jayantirao Reddy
Joint Director

7/3/13