

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING HELD THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OF ALL DISTRICTS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH ON 16.04.2026 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER, H.P REGARDING PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR UPCOMING GENERAL ELECTIONS TO PRIs and ULBs:-

At the outset, the State Election Commissioner welcomed all the participants and apprised that this Video Conference (VC) has been called to discuss the preparedness with regard to conduct of upcoming general elections to PRIs and ULBs. It was stressed upon all the Officers present to familiarize themselves with State Local Body Election Rules, Regulations and the directions of the Commissions issued from time to time, especially because there are certain differences in the way elections are conducted for Local Bodies as compared to Parliament and the State Assembly.

Thereafter, Secretary, State Election Commission took up the agenda, items one by one:-

1. Preparation and Printing of Electoral Rolls of PRIs & ULBs for General Election

2026:- The Secretary apprised that the Commission issued directions to publish electoral rolls on Form 15 and print 20 copies of electoral rolls of those Gram Panchayats which were not involved in creation/re-organization. Accordingly, the electoral rolls of 3332 Gram Panchayats were published and 20 copies of electoral rolls have been printed. But the Government created/ re-organized certain Gram Panchayats. Due to delay in holding of General Elections to PRIs, the Commission decided to issue special revision programme to update Electoral Rolls of Gram Panchayats not involved in any kind of creation/re-organization on 18th March, 2026, wherein supplementary electoral rolls are to be finalized on or before 20.04.2026. Further, the Commission vide notification dated 02nd April, 2026 issued programme for preparation of electoral rolls of those Gram Panchayats which were involved in creation/re-organization wherein final publication of electoral rolls is scheduled on or before 27.04.2026. The Commission vide Notification dated 06.04.2026 issued another programme for updation of electoral rolls of those Gram Panchayats which were initially created/reorganized by the Govt. but the Hon'ble High Court in CWP 3547/2026 issued directions that these Gram Panchayats shall not be considered for the ensuing general elections. Their electoral rolls are to be finalized on or before 24.04.2026. It was also apprised that the Deputy Commissioners are required to undertake the printing

of supplementary electoral rolls (in respect of programme issued on 18.03.2026 & 06.04.2026) and de-novo electoral rolls (in respect of programme issued on 02.04.2026) at the local level itself strictly in accordance with the direction issued by the Commission for printing of electoral rolls. Further, it was apprised that after printing of supplementary electoral rolls in respect of PRIs/ULBs is completed, the respective Returning Officer (SDMs/BDOs) are to be directed to prepare 20 sets of electoral rolls by attaching the supplementary electoral rolls with the already printed copy of electoral roll pertaining to that particular ward, which was got printed through the printer at Mohali. This work should be executed under the personal supervision of Returning Officers, so that 100% accuracy is ensured. As regards Electoral Rolls for those PRIs which were impacted in creation/re-organization, in their case electoral rolls being finalized de-novo on 27.04.2026 would be used in the upcoming elections and are to be printed locally. The earlier electoral rolls in their case should be sealed and set aside.

The Commission directed the district administration that they should have clarity with regard to electoral rolls to be used in the upcoming General Elections. Special care needs to be exercised in respect of Gram Panchayats which got impacted by creation/re-organization exercise and fresh set of electoral rolls of such Gram Panchayats are to be printed locally once their electoral roll is finally published and electoral rolls of such Gram Panchayats printed earlier should be sealed so that they are not used inadvertently.

3. Preparatory arrangements to conduct general elections (such as appointment of ROs/AROs and polling parties):- The Secretary, SEC apprised that the services of officers/ officials will be required for appointment as ARO/Presiding Officer/Polling Officer to conduct elections in a smooth manner. The preparatory arrangements regarding preparing details of officers/ officials, information regarding vehicles, establishments of media and grievance cells, setting up of control rooms and identification of building/place where counting of Zila Prishad/Panchayat Samiti votes will be undertaken, are required to be made well in time.

The Commission emphasized that general elections to PRIs/ULBs is a gigantic exercise as almost 22000 polling booths are to be setup as compared to Parliamentary/ State Assembly elections where number of polling booths are comparatively less. Hence, it needs meticulous planning in order to avoid improper execution at the eleventh hour. Therefore, all preparatory arrangements shall be made well in advance.

4. **Movement plan of polling parties for three phase elections:** - The Secretary, SEC apprised the participants that the general elections to PRIs shall be conducted in three phases as per past precedent. It was advised that movement plan should be framed in such a way that a polling party has to travel minimum distance. The movement plan shall be framed early and conveyed to all polling parties and Sector Officers so that there remains no confusion among any of the stakeholders. Requisition of vehicles for transport of polling parties should also be done well in time.
5. **Training of officers/officials deployed on poll duty:-** The Secretary, SEC apprised that although majority of the officials deployed as ARO/Presiding Officer/Polling Officer etc may have performed election duties in the past, but training and rehearsal to acquaint them with their duties should be given highest priority and all officials should have clarity about the duties they are required to perform, as there might be certain changes in Act/Rules/procedures, which is required to be explained to them during training/rehearsals.
6. **Setting up of polling stations, alternate polling stations where required and all women polling booths wherever deemed necessary:** - It was apprised that the Commission has already issued detailed directions to set up polling stations. Accordingly, it is expected that polling stations have been setup in all Gram Panchayats and ULBs as per the directions of the Commission. However, districts have reported that some identified polling stations have been damaged due to natural calamity. Besides, recently the State Government has de-notified various schools across the State. The Commission directed that all identified polling stations shall be got re verified from the field functionaries and it shall be ensured that all polling stations are well lit, have required furniture and other basic amenities. It was directed that the report in this regard shall be submitted to the Commission by 10th May, 2026 positively by each district. Besides, it was advised to set up auxiliary polling stations in urban areas where number of voters in a ward is comparatively high. All women polling stations may also be setup by the ROs in wards where number of women Voters is high and all women staff may be deputed for the conduct of elections in such wards. It was further directed that auxiliary polling stations shall be setup in same premises/adjoining places where main polling station has been setup, but clear signboards should be established for the convenience of voters.
7. **Adequate arrangements at counting centres:-** The Secretary, SEC apprised that proper security & logistics arrangements at Counting centres are required to be made to ensure

smooth conduct of counting process. The Secretary further apprised that the Commission has framed SOPs for the counting of ballot papers of PRIs and they are required to be adhered to in letter and spirit.

The Commission directed that since elections to PRIs are contested very keenly and conducted through ballot papers, therefore, the AROs should be well conversant with the counting process, procedure to be followed if request for re-counting is made by the candidate and also should be well conversant with the procedure to decide if a ballot paper is valid or invalid. These aspects need to be covered thoroughly during training of the counting staff. The Commission advised that AROs to be instructed to follow the laid down instructions, uninfluenced by any external pressure. It was further emphasized that adequate security arrangements must be made at the counting centres to encounter any Law & Order situation.

8. **Availability of ballot boxes keeping in view No. of phases:-** The Secretary, SEC apprised that the Commission has sufficient number of ballot boxes to conduct PRIs General Election. The ballot boxes have been provided to the districts as per their requirements. The Districts were requested to allot the ballot boxes to the Development Blocks as per their requirement keeping in view the fact that general elections shall be conducted in three phases.
9. **Availability of election material:-** The Secretary, SEC apprised that the Commission has provided election material to the districts as per their requirement. However, it must be ensured by the District Election Officers that adequate election material has been supplied to the Development Blocks/ULBs for smooth conduct of these elections. Local procurement of items not supplied by the State Election Commission should be completed well in time after following all codal formalities.
10. **Preparation of ballot papers:-** The Secretary, SEC apprised that since the names of the contesting candidates are to be hand written on the ballot papers, hence adequate staff at Block level shall be appointed by the Returning Officer concerned to write the names of candidates on the ballot papers. The Secretary also apprised the participants that in previous elections certain instances were reported where mistakes were committed while writing the names of the contesting candidates. The District Election Officers must ensure that the ROs are directed to prepare ballot papers for all offices strictly under their supervision with proper care and caution.

It shall be ensured that the names of contesting candidates are written on the ballot papers strictly as they are appearing in the list of contesting candidates prepared by the AROs concerned.

11. Constitution of Media Cell:- The Secretary, emphasized that Media cell at District shall be constituted, so that important information pertaining to elections is shared with the Media.

The Commission emphasized that it is an era of social media and possibility of misinformation/rumours spreading through social media cannot be denied. Hence, the district administration will have to work proactively. A Media Cell at district level shall be headed by an officer not below the rank of ADM and DPRO/IT experts may also be included in the Cell to counter such misinformation/rumours. The Commission directed the district administration that misinformation should be rebutted instantly in order to avoid any confusion amongst the general public. The Commission further emphasized that as every district has its website and social media page so these platforms may be used to counter mis-information.

12. Setting up of Control Room:- The Secretary, SEC apprised the participants that a control room to be setup in the office of District Election Officer/Returning Officers room after election programme is announced by the Commission. The Commission will also set up a control room in its head office which will function round the clock. The Control Room should be headed by some senior officer and all election related complaints/queries should be addressed quickly. The e-mail id/contact number of control rooms shall be shared for information of general public.

13. Wide publicity of election programme for maximum participation in electoral process.

Videography of important events:- It was apprised that wide publicity of election programme is to be ensured for the maximum participation of general public in the electoral process and Videography of important events shall also be made. Besides, the districts should make arrangements for proper documentation of all activities. Deputy Commissioners may use local media channels wherever available.

14. Keeping account of election expenses and lodging of accounts by Zila Parishad and

Urban Local Bodies contesting candidates:- The Secretary, SEC informed the participants that lodging of election expenses by contesting candidates of Zila Parishad and Urban Local Bodies is mandatory as failing to lodge election expenses by contesting candidates related to these offices may lead to their disqualification. The candidates should be advised to use the

Candidate Expenditure Reporting System (CERS) software to upload the details of election expenses or alternately file expenditure details in person with the Returning Officer.

15. List of disqualified candidates:- The Secretary, SEC apprised the participants that list of those candidates who have been disqualified to contest the election in PRIs/ULBs for various reasons shall be provided to the Returning Officers/Assistant Returning Officers so that it is readily available during nomination.

As per relevant statutes, disqualification occurring under provision of any Act/Rules whether Panchayati Raj Act or Municipal Act, shall be applicable for all elections to all offices.

16. Voting from Home facility to 85 plus and PwD electors:- The Secretary, SEC apprised the participants that the Commission is considering to facilitate the 85 plus and PwD electors to vote from home and suggestions are invited from all district administration in this regard. It was further apprised that it will be kept optional for the abovementioned category of electors. The Commission is framing SoPs and also considering to develop an application with the support of the NIC. After deliberation with the Deputy Commissioners on this subject, the Commission apprised that final decision taken on this account shall be communicated to them in due course of time.

17. Arrangements for enforcement of Law and Order:- The Secretary, SEC requested that the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police to take stock of law and order situation during the General Elections. Adequate security arrangements should be made to enable conduct of free and fair elections.

18. Timely response to the information sought from districts/field officers by the Commission:- The Secretary, SEC apprised that during the election process the Commission seeks various information from the Districts/field officers and requested that timely response shall be ensured by the districts/field officers.

19. Arrangements to maintain proper order at nomination centres:- The Secretary, SEC advised that Returning Officer should be directed to make proper arrangements to maintain proper law and order at nomination centres, to avoid crowding and to ensure orderly filing of nominations. Similarly, security arrangements during movement of polling parties and counting should be foolproof. The district administration must make a detailed assessment of sensitive and hyper sensitive booths/counting centres and other locations and make special arrangements there.

20. **Real time uploading of date on Data Profiler Management Information System (DPMIS) software and prior training of staff on data uploading by BDOs/SDMs:-** The Secretary, SEC apprised that various types of information i.e. Information regarding Polling parties, Nomination, scrutiny, withdrawal, contesting candidates, allotment of symbols, result etc. are to be uploaded on the DPMIS software. The BDOs/SDMs will ensure uploading of data on real time basis on DPMIS software. The concerned Returning Officer will ensure to appoint dedicated officials for uploading of data on the DPMIS and an office order to be issued in this behalf. The appointed official will be properly trained to upload data in the DPMIS through the resource person already trained in each Block/ULB.

21. **Proper maintenance of Election Record for any future litigation:-** The Commission advised the participants that all election records shall be maintained properly. It was further emphasized that possibility of litigation cannot be denied as Local Bodies elections are closely and keenly contested and margin of victory in lot of cases may be in single digits. Hence, proper maintenance of election related record is need of the hour, so that, if required, well maintained record may be produced before the competent authority.


The State Election Commissioner in his concluding remarks emphasized that credibility of district administration depends upon its honesty and neutrality in the conduct of these elections. It was further emphasized that the conduct of elections is a solemn constitutional responsibility and all officers must discharge their duties with utmost integrity, impartiality, and professionalism. The district administration has a pivotal role in ensuring that the entire electoral process is conducted in a free, fair, transparent, and peaceful manner. It is imperative that every officer/official maintains strict neutrality and does not allow any bias, influence, or external pressure to affect the discharge of their responsibilities.

All necessary arrangements relating to polling personnel, security, logistics, training, and voter facilitation must be completed well within the prescribed timelines. Special attention should be given for maintaining law and order, enforcing the Model Code of Conduct in letter and spirit, and ensuring a level playing field for all candidates. The Commission expects proactive coordination among all departments, prompt redressal of grievances, and continuous monitoring of sensitive areas. Any lapses will be viewed seriously.

The ultimate objective is to instil confidence among voters and stakeholders that the election process is being conducted in an honest, neutral, and transparent manner. The district administration was directed to remain vigilant, responsive, and committed to upholding the

highest standards of electoral integrity. All the Officers assured that they will discharge their duties with utmost sincerity and will not give anybody any cause for complaint.

The meeting concluded with the expectation that all concerned officers will work in close coordination to ensure the successful conduct of elections.



(Surjeet Singh Rathore)
Secretary
State Election Commission
Himachal Pradesh.

No. SEC(F)1/17-2020-9679-9720 Dated the

18, April, 2026.

Copy to:-

1. The Chief Secretary, Government of Himachal Pradesh.
2. The Secretary (Urban Development) Govt. of Himachal Pradesh.
3. The Secretary (PR) Government of Himachal Pradesh.
4. The Director General of Police Himachal Pradesh.
5. Director, Panchayati Raj Department Himachal Pradesh.
6. Director, Urban Development Department Himachal Pradesh.
7. All the Deputy Commissioners Himachal Pradesh.
8. All the Superintendent of Police Himachal Pradesh.
9. All the District Panchayat Officers Himachal Pradesh.


Secretary
State Election Commission
Himachal Pradesh.