



Review of preparedness for Himachal Pradesh election by the Commission

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In view of the forthcoming polling in Himachal Pradesh on 9th November, 2017, the Election Commission of India today held a Video Conference (VC) with full Commission comprising Sh. A. K. Joti, CEC, Sri OP Rawat, Election Commissioner and Shri Sunil Arora Election Commissioner, to review the preparations of conduct of Polls in a free, fair and peaceful way. The VC was attended by the Chief Secretaries, DGPs and Chief Electoral Officers along with other senior officials related to Excise, Commercial Tax of Himachal Pradesh and its neighbouring States i.e. Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Haryana.

During the VC, the Commission discussed wide-ranging subjects from joint checking at boarders, checking the movement of liquor, cash, arms and Anti-Social Elements/ criminals at the check posts, sharing of intelligence between the States, effective communication, declaration of dry day and other pre-poll and poll day arrangements in Himachal Pradesh and other neighbouring States.

The Commission directed the officials to enhance the surveillance on possible interstate movement of free goodies intended for distribution to induce electors and to prevent the storage of such items in bordering areas. Commission also directed to implement sealing of the interstate border on poll day to prevent any undue influence on polling from outside. Commission reviewed the Income Tax (IT) seizures and preparedness of Himachal Pradesh and neighbouring states. Commission also directed to hold Inter-State Co-ordination meetings of border districts for better co-ordination and effective implementation of the Commission's directions.

The Commission directed the Chief Secretaries of the neighbouring States to declare paid holidays on 9th November and 18th December for those electors of Himachal Pradesh who work in adjoining areas of the neighbouring states. It also directed that the CAPF be used for Confidence Building Measures and to re-assure the voters and instil faith and confidence. It also emphasised on setting up of interstate 'Nakas' and proper surveillance at the adjoining areas of bordering states of Himachal Pradesh to prevent any illegal transport of arms, drugs, liquors etc. on poll day and pre-poll days. Following are the data related to search and seizure in the State.

Seizure by all authorities 12.10.17 to 2.11.2017				
	Police	Excise	IT	Total
Cash	Rs. 1.29 cr	0	Rs. 61.61 lakh	Rs. 1.91 cr
Liquor (w.e.f. 28.9.17 to 2.11.17)	13510 ltr	1.77 lakh ltr	0	Rs. 3.72 cr
Drugs				Rs. 12.86 cr
Printed Material	28 Bags+ 44211 Posters	0	0	28 Bags+ 44211 Posters
Gold Items (Kg)	2.988	0	0	2.988

During the VC, Director General (Investigation) of Income Tax and Principal Director (IT) briefed the Commission about the activities undertaken by Income Tax Department in election bound Himachal Pradesh and bordering areas during the election and informed that all airports of poll bound States and bordering States will have Air Intelligence Units and a strict vigil will be done of all movements of cash through aircrafts/helicopters.

Commission also held a Video Conference (VC) with General, Police and Expenditure Observers deployed in the state of Himachal Pradesh. During the VC, the Commission took their feedback on various aspects related to the election and gave necessary instructions to the observers. The major points discussed during the VC were ensuring availability of Assured Minimum Facilities, Voter Assistance Booths, Voter Guide, strict enforcement of Model Code of Conduct (MCC), Vulnerability Mapping, Transportation and Communication Plan and training of polling staff. Emphasis was given on maintaining absolute neutrality of the Government Officials, Creating Awareness about use of VVPAT, ensure 100% **ePayment** to the polling staff including Forces, hiring charges to private vehicle owners and payment to the vendors, deployment of forces, Complaint Redressal Mechanism, effective poll day monitoring, arrangements at the EVM Strong Room, counting day arrangements and new IT applications like RO Net, SAMADHAN, SUVIDHA, SUGAM.

Election Commission of India

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