

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. ECI/PN/49/2024

12.04.2024

PRESS NOTE

Major relief to Kashmiri migrant voters; ECI abolishes cumbersome procedure of Form-M for migrants residing at Jammu and Udhampur

For migrants residing outside these areas, Form M will continue, but with self-attestation certificate instead of gazetted officer attestation

Special polling stations to be set up at all the migrants' zones in Jammu and Udhampur

In a major decision to facilitate voting by Kashmiri migrants in the ongoing General Elections 2024, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has abolished the cumbersome procedure of filling Form-M for the displaced people from valley who are residing in Jammu and Udhampur. Additionally, for the migrants residing outside Jammu and Udhampur (who will continue to submit Form M), ECI has authorized the self-attestation of the certificate appended with Form-M, thus removing the hassle of getting this certificate attested by the Gazetted Officer. The decision was taken by the Commission after a meeting today chaired by CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar along with Election Commissioners Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.

Various representations were received from several Kashmiri Migrant groups projecting the difficulties they face in filling of Form-M every election which brings a lot of hassle to them in exercising their right to franchise. The Form-M procedure subjects these voters to additional bureaucratic hurdles compared to other voters and also the process of filling out the Form-M is often complex and cumbersome, requiring specific documentation, proof of migration status and attestation by a gazetted officer. The Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu and Kashmir also submitted his comments to the Commission on 09.04.2024 with due consultation and in full agreement with the political parties. The Commission after taking into consideration the representations received from several Kashmiri Migrant groups regarding the scheme, feedback from the political parties and comments of the Chief Electoral Officer, UT of Jammu and Kashmir, notified the Scheme for Kashmiri migrants to vote in person at transitory camps and voting by means of postal ballot pertaining to the ongoing General Election to Lok Sabha, 2024, vide order No. 3/J&K-HP/2024(NS-I) dated 11.04.2024.

For migrant voters of Jammu and Udhampur:

- (i) All the 22 special polling stations (21 in Jammu and 1 in Udhampur) shall be mapped to camps/zones individually, ensuring that every zone has at

least one Special Polling Station. In case there are multiple polling stations in one zone, the zonal officers shall earmark the intra-zonal jurisdiction for each such polling station keeping in mind the distance/ease of approach for each set of electors. In case there is any zone that does not have any of the existing Special Polling Stations, a new Special Polling Station shall be proposed by the ARO Migrant concerned in a suitable Government building following all extant directions of the Commission concerning setting up a polling station, including consultation with political parties. Consequent to this, the electors staying in these zones/camps shall be mapped to the respective polling stations by the respective AERO Migrants at Jammu and Udhampur.

- (ii) Electoral roll extracts corresponding to each of these Special Polling Stations shall be culled out of the basic electoral rolls of their respective assembly constituencies. Draft Electoral Roll Extracts, to be used as the rolls for respective Special Polling Stations, for each of the Zone shall be notified by the respective AERO Migrants at Jammu and Udhampur and published in the newspapers as well as given wide publicity by placing it at all conspicuous places in the zone including the Zone Office as well as other places of importance for the Migrants like Office of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner, J&K, websites, etc. All electors within 7 days of the notification of the draft electoral roll extract, approach the respective Assistant Returning Officers (Migrant) at Jammu and Udhampur in case:
- there is any omission of any eligible name in the draft lists
 - s(he)wishes to opt for voting through postal ballot
 - s(he) wishes to vote at the original polling station in Kashmir valley,
 - those who have already submitted their Form-M, choosing a Special Polling Station which is different from the one allotted in the draft and wish to retain the same, as per choice already given in Form-M.

After the passage of 7 days period, the Assistant Returning Officers (Migrant) shall notify the final Electoral Roll Extracts for each Special Polling Station and the same shall be used at these polling stations on the day of poll. A copy of these Final Electoral Roll Extracts shall be shared immediately by the Assistant Returning Officers (Migrant) with the Returning Officers/Assistant Returning Officers of the respective Constituencies in Kashmir for marking of the Electoral Rolls to be used at the original polling stations in Kashmir.

- (iii) In order to doubly ensure that no elector who opts for postal ballot by filling Form 12C gets the voting opportunity to vote at these special polling stations, the ARO Migrant Jammu who is the nodal officer for Postal Ballots under the scheme, shall ensure that in case Form 12C is received from any of these electors and the postal ballot has been

dispatched, marking of 'PB' shall be made against the name of the said elector in the corresponding Electoral Roll Extracts.

For the migrants who are staying outside Jammu and Udhampur

To remove the hassle of looking for a Gazetted officer to attest the Certificate appended with Form M, 'Self Attestation' of these Forms can suffice. However, in order to avoid impersonation at the Special Polling Stations, they shall be required to produce either EPIC (voter id card) or any of the alternate documents prescribed by the Commission for the identification of electors at Polling Stations.

(Alternative id documents : <https://www.eci.gov.in/eci-backend/public/api/download?url=LMAhAK6sOPBp%2FNFF0iRfXbEB1EVSLT41NNLRjYNJJp1KivrUxbfqkDatmHy12e%2FzBiU51zPFZI5qMtjV1qgjFsi8N4zYcCRaQ2199MM81QYarA39BJWGAJqpl2w0Jta9CSv%2B1yJkuMeCkTzY9fhBvw%3D%3D>)

Background: Scheme for Kashmiri Migrants

The Commission vide letter No. 464/J&K-HP/2024, dated 22.03.2024 had issued the scheme for Kashmiri migrants to vote in person at transitory camps or voting by means of postal ballot pertaining to any of the three Parliamentary Constituencies namely 1-Baramulla, 2-Srinagar and 3-Anantnag-Rajouri in the UT of J&K in connection with the ongoing General Election to Lok Sabha, 2024.

As per the scheme, Kashmiri migrant voters, who are residing at various relief camps in Delhi, Jammu, and Udhampur and who have opted to cast their votes in person through Electronic Voting Machines at the forthcoming General Election to the Lok Sabha, 2024 can do so at any one of the designated polling stations located at Delhi (4), Jammu (21) and Udhampur (1) by filling Form M. Those migrant voters who have opted to vote using postal ballots may apply for the postal ballot paper in the prescribed Form 12-C

Migrant electors residing at various places other than Jammu, Udhampur and Delhi can also vote in person or using postal ballot and can download Form-M and Form 12-C from the Commission's website and after filling, such forms shall get it verified from the Electoral Registration Officer of the areas where he/she is residing. The Electoral Registration Officers can have access to the details of migrant electors enrolled in different Parliamentary Constituency in Kashmir through ERO-Net. The ERO concerned, after verifying details in the Form-M will scan and upload it to electronically transmit the same to AROs Migrants at Delhi, Jammu and Udhampur for further necessary action.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) had announced the schedule for the General Election to the Lok Sabha, 2024, with polling to be conducted in the following phases in Jammu & Kashmir.

Phase	No. and Name of PC	Date of poll
Schedule 1A	4-Udhampur	19.04.2024
Schedule 2B	5-Jammu	26.04.2024
Schedule-III	3- Anantnag-Rajouri	07.05.2024
Schedule-IV	2-Srinagar	13.05.2024
Schedule-V	1-Baramulla	20.05.2024



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