

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. ECI/PN/31/2020

Dated: 24th March, 2020

PRESS NOTE

ECI DEFERS RAJYA SABHA POLL IN VIEW OF COVID-19; FRESH DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED LATER

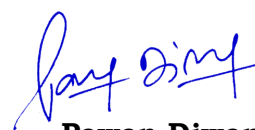
On 25.02.2020, Election Commission of India announced elections to the Council of States to fill 55 seats of Members from 17 States, retiring in the month of April, 2020, which were notified vide Notification No. 318/CS-Multi/2020(1) dated 06.03.2020. After the last date of withdrawal on 18.03.2020, respective Returning Officers declared 37 seats from 10 States filled in uncontested. Now, as per the reports received from the concerned Returning Officers, the biennial elections for 18 seats from the States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Rajasthan are to be conducted on 26.03.2020 (Thursday) and the date before which election was to be completed as earlier announced by the Commission was 30.03.2020 (Monday).

On 11.03.2020, World Health Organization has declared Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 a global pandemic. Ministry of Health & Family Affairs and Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India have issued various guidelines and instructions to monitor and contain the transmission of COVID-19. Government of India, vide its press note dated 22.03.2020, has asked all the State Governments to take all measures to break the chain of transmission of COVID-19. This includes suspension of all train services till 31.03.2020 including sub urban rail services; closure of all activities except essential services such as hospitals, telecom, medicine shops, provision stores etc. Subsequently, on 23.03.2020 it has also been informed that the operations of domestic schedule commercial

airlines shall cease operations with effective from the mid night 23.59 IST hours on 24.03.2020. State Governments have issued various orders including curb on local transportation accordingly for management and containment of COVID-19. The States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Rajasthan have issued orders of lock down to contain the transmission of COVID-19.

Commission has reviewed in detail the matter. The prevailing unforeseen situation of public health emergency indicates the need for avoidance of possibilities of gatherings of any nature, which expose all concerned to possible health hazard. The poll process in the above said elections would necessarily include the gathering of polling officials, agents of political parties, support officials and members of respective Legislative Assemblies on the poll day, which may not be suitable in view of the prevailing unforeseen situation and related advisories in the country.

Section 153 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 specifies that the Election Commission for reasons which it considers sufficient, may extend the time for the completion of any election by making necessary amendments in the notification issued by it under section 30 or sub-section (1) of section 39; and accordingly, the Election Commission has deferred the poll and extended the period of said election under the provisions of section 153 of the said Act. The list of contesting candidates, already published for the said elections by the respective Returning Officers shall remain valid for the purposes of remaining activities, as prescribed under the said notification. Fresh date of poll and counting for the said biennial elections shall be announced in due course after reviewing the prevailing situation.



Pawan Diwan
Under Secretary