



पूर्व तट रेलवे
EAST COAST RAILWAY

संख्या: ECoR/Pers/IRM/GSBE-III/P-I/161

कार्यालय/Office of the
प्रधान मुख्य कार्मिक अधिकारी
Principal Chief Personnel Officer
रेल सदन, चंद्रशेखरपुर.
Rail Sadan, Chandrasekharpur
भुवनेश्वर/Bhubaneswar- 751017

दिनांक: 13-09-2024

To,
IG-cum- Principal Chief Security Commissioner (RPF),
East Coast Railway, Rail Sadan,
Chandrasekharpur,
Bhubaneswar.

विषय:- Key Guidelines and Security Arrangements for Secret Ballot Elections-III, December 2024 for conducting Secret Ballot Elections over East Coast Railway to be held on 04th, 05th & 06th December, 2024.

- संदर्भ:-
- 1) EDE/RRB, Railway Board & Convener & Member Secretary Secret Ballot Election Committee's letter No.2024/SBEC-III/Election, dated 09-09-2024.
 - 2) This office letter No. ECoR/Pers/IRM/GSBE-III/P-I/161 dated 09-09-2024.
 - 3) EDE/RRB, Railway Board & Convener & Member Secretary Secret Ballot Election Committee's letter No.2024/SBEC-III/Election, dated 30-08-2024.

The much-anticipated Secret Ballot Elections for the recognition of Railway Trade Unions will be held on the 4th, 5th and 6th of December, 2024. A formal notification, detailing the election schedule, was released on 30-08-2024 & 09-09-2024. The Security Department will play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth and secure conduct of this significant event, from the nomination process to the final declaration of results.

Recognizing the vital importance of the Security Department's involvement in Secret Ballot Election-III, key guidelines issued by the Railway Board letter No.2024/SBEC-III/Elections dated 09-09-2024 vide Ref. 1 are highlighted below. For more detailed information, including the complete election modalities, the official ECoR website can be referred to.

Outlined below are the section-wise security arrangements, along with other important items the Security Department needs to be aware of as per the Railway Board's directives (As per MOU):

- 3.0 Ineligible Voters: Staff on Railway Establishments NOT eligible to vote:
- 3.1 Substitutes without Temporary Status.
- 3.2 Casual/Contract labour and those engaged on daily wage basis
- 3.3 Academic staff of Railway Schools/Colleges, who are not permitted to be members of the Trade Union in terms of Railway Board's letter No E(LWA)65AT/ID/1-6 dated 04.01.1966. (Para 4.9 of MC 18 dated 22.01.2021).

- 3.4 A Railway Servant, who is promoted and has assumed charge of a Gazetted Post on or before the date of polling. Her/his name shall stand deleted/deemed to be deleted from the Voters' list.
- 3.5 A Railway Servant, who has superannuated or pre-maturely retired or voluntarily retired or compulsorily retired or dismissed or removed or resigned or is no more, on or before the date of polling. Her/his name shall stand deleted/deemed to be deleted from the Voters' list.
- 3.6 RPF/RPSF Staff governed under Railway Protection Force Act, 1957.
- 3.7 Newly recruited staff i.e. those who (i) are yet to join a post in Railways; or (ii) are getting training as Trainees as on 01.09.2024; and (iii) are in receipt of Stipend.
- 6.0 **Pre-conditions for contesting elections:**
- 6.1 Participation in this election would signify unconditional acceptance by the contesting TUs of these rules and conditions and related instructions issued by Railway Board/Administration, including these modalities. In case of any dispute, provisions of these modalities (and any related clarifications) shall have primacy over Indian Railway Establishment Manual in the matters covered by these modalities. Contesting TUs agree to abide by the following as well:
- 6.2 **Code of discipline:** All the contesting TUs must furnish in writing that they shall observe the "Code of Discipline", as laid down in Annexure-I. Railway Administrations shall display the "Code of Discipline" prominently on the website.
- 6.3 Indian Railway Establishment Manual (IREM): Chapters XXV and XXVI of IREM which deal with the rules for (i) recognition of Unions of Non- Gazetted Railway Servants; and (ii) Conditions precedent to recognition of the Unions; and (iii) Negotiating machinery for dealing with disputes between Railway labour/staff and Railway Administration etc. Therefore, participation in this SBE-III would signify unconditional acceptance by the contesting TUs of provisions of IREM.
- 6.4 **Code of Conduct (Annexure-II) :** "Code of Conduct" has come into effect from the date of Notification by SBEC of these elections i.e. 30th August, 2024
- 6.5 All contesting TUs shall abide by the provisions of "Code of Conduct" during the course of the election process. Violation of these would make them liable to attract penalties as laid down in **Annexure-II**. Some of the important Provisions of the Code of Conduct are brought out below:
- 6.5.1 No contesting TU shall make any appeal to voters on grounds of religion, politics, caste, community, region, gender and language etc.
- 6.5.2 No contesting TU or its office bearers/representatives shall indulge in any activity which may cause tension/rift amongst different categories, cadres, communities, religions etc.
- 6.5.3 Criticism of other TUs or its office bearers or their workers based on unverified statements shall not be made.
- 6.5.4 Contesting TUs or its agents (acting as Social Media User) must not spread 'Fake News' through "Social media Platforms" about their rivals and Railway Administration. "Fake News" includes the following or combinations thereof:
- (i) misquotation or the false and/or inaccurate report of one's statement;
(ii) editing audio or video which results in the distortion of facts and/or the context; or (iii) purely fabricated content. "Social Media Platform" means any

user-specific web-based technology intended to create virtual connection through the internet such as social networking sites, blog sites, video-sharing sites and the like. "Social Media User" includes any person or group of persons, natural or juridical, organized or unorganized that utilizes social media platforms to send messages and/or information across through any social media account, verified or under a pseudonym, fictitious or false account/page name for whatever purposes it may serve. In case TUs are found indulging in spreading of 'Fake News', they are liable for suitable action as per Annexure-II.

- 6.5.5** Criticism of rival TUs should be confined to their policies, programmes and past records of work. The private life of individual/office bearers and activities not connected with the railway working shall not be raised during canvassing.
- 6.5.6** Temples, mosques, churches etc and other places of worship/congregation shall not be used for propaganda/meeting purposes.
- 6.5.7** Campaigning by elected public representatives (who do not hold any post in any of the contesting TUs or National Federations or Central Trade Unions to which the contesting Union is affiliated) is not permitted.
- 6.5.8** Campaigning within 100 meters of polling booths and holding public meetings during 48 hours prior to the start of the polling is not permitted.
- 6.5.9** Intimidation of any type/threatening or coercing any Railway Servant to vote/or not to vote in a particular manner is not permitted.
- 6.5.10** Possession of firearms during canvassing, slogan shouting, inciting communal/political/religious passions shall not be permitted.
- 6.5.11** Giving of gifts, cash etc. in any manner is strictly prohibited. In this regard, Principal CPOs should issue an advisory to Railway Co-operative Societies located within the jurisdiction of the Zonal Railway concerned to refrain from granting special loans (other than Compulsory Monthly Thrift Deposit loans) or/and Special Dividends during the period from the date of notification of elections to the last day of polling.
- 6.5.12** It may be noted that (i) pasting of posters/ campaigning material on stations/station buildings, rolling stock, and official/administrative buildings and/or; (ii) defacing in any manner, including writing on the walls of office and other buildings in colonies, etc. is strictly prohibited. TUs shall not disfigure the walls within Railway premises, Railway Stations and boundary walls, by sticking posters or painting on them. In cases of infraction of this section, Returning Officer may pass appropriate speaking orders for (i) forfeiture of Security deposit; and/or (ii) imposition of fine on TU concerned; and/or (iii) any other penalty as deemed fit in cases of serious violations as per provisions of the Code of Conduct.
- 6.5.13** In cases of violations, apart from action(s) under Annexure-II, suitable action will be taken under relevant provisions of 'Prevention of Defacement of Property Act' or similar Acts of the States concerned.
- 6.5.14** Railway Administration should provide/designate appropriate space for pasting of posters/campaigning material to the contesting TUs. However, TUs shall remove any poster (pasted on permitted/designated place) after completion of the elections.

- 6.5.15** No disrespect shall be shown to pictures of present and past national leaders in the posters put up during campaigning.
- 6.5.16** Any other activity during campaigning which are (i) extraneous; (ii) repugnant and contrary to the recognized sphere of Trade Union activities; (iii) against tranquility and public peace are prohibited.
- 7.0 Level playing field to contesting Trade Unions:**
Certain facilities have been provided to the existing recognized TUs. In order to provide level playing field to all contesting TUs in these elections, TUs which are in possession of any railway facilities such as office premises (including premises provided free of rent under PREM [erstwhile CEG] scheme), card passes, Telephones etc. are barred from using them for their electoral purposes. Trade Unions would not use these facilities for storing advertising or election-related material. No election meeting shall be held at these premises. An affidavit (as per **Annexure-III**) shall be furnished by the contesting Unions that they shall not use these facilities for above purposes.
- 7.4 Gate Meeting:** All Contesting TU must obtain prior permission of the Railway administration to hold a 'Gate Meeting' during lunch hours. However, no 'Gate meeting' will be allowed within 48 hours of the date of polling.
- 7.5 Violations:** Violations of these instructions shall be treated as corrupt election practices and violation of "Code of Conduct". The onus shall be on the TUs to prove that such violations have not occurred.
- 8 Preparation for election:**
- 8.0 Delegation of financial power:** One time Imprest for meeting the election related expenses shall be sanctioned by Railway Board and order will be issued separately. Financial Powers for making expenditure on election account shall be delegated to Returning Officer or other polling related authorities through specific orders to be issued by Railway Board.
- 8.1 Ballot Boxes:** Adequate number of Ballot Boxes will be provided for each Polling Booth by the Returning Officer/Presiding officer with requisite stationery, sealing wax, Paper seal with serial numbers etc. and these would be sealed before the start of polling and after end of polling every day in the presence of (i) Polling Agents of the TUs and; (ii) the Polling Officer or her/his authorized representative.
- 8.2** The Ballot Boxes may be borrowed from Chief Electoral Officer of the state(s) or neighboring state(s). In case of any shortfall, metal boxes used in RRB/RRC examinations may be used by making suitable modifications in it for insertion of folded ballot papers. If there is still a shortfall, then new boxes may be arranged/purchased/manufactured in the workshop.
- 8.3** Separate Ballot Boxes will be used for each day of voting. After each day's voting, the ballot boxes shall be sealed by obtaining signatures of Polling Officer, nominated Polling Agents (by TUs) for this purpose and RPF/RPSF staff. Thereafter, these boxes will be stored in a safe and secured room under proper lock and paper seal, bearing signatures of the Polling Officer (or his representative), nominated Polling Agents for this purpose and RPF/RPSF staff. The place of storage shall be decided by the Presiding Officer concerned.

- 8.4** The seal of the room shall be opened only for storing the next day's ballot boxes and sealed again following the same protocol. A Polling Officer or an officer specifically nominated by the Presiding Officer for this purpose shall be the custodian of the ballot boxes. RPF/RPSF Guards shall be deputed for the security of ballot boxes. At the end of final polling, the Polling officers shall make a secure arrangement for safe transportation of the ballot boxes to the counting centre as decided by the Presiding Officer for counting of votes.
- 8.5** Similar storage and security arrangements shall be made by the Presiding officer when sealed ballot boxes are received from the Polling officers after the end of polling/voting process.
- 8.6** Place identified for storage of ballot boxes shall be notified by the concerned Presiding Officer well in advance. In all these matters, the decision of the Presiding Officers shall be final.
- 14.0 Postal Ballot System (PBS):**
Postal Ballot shall be permitted only for following categories of Railway Servants who are deputed/deployed for (a) Secret Ballot Election (SBE) Duty;(b) Various training programs at different divisional/zonal and other training centers; (c) Train running/escort duties/ticket checking duties who are not likely to return to their HQ within the stipulated polling dates; and (d) Railway Servants working outside their cadre on deputation.
- 17.0 Storage and Security of Ballot Boxes:**
After the polling is held on a day, the Ballot Boxes should be duly sealed by obtaining the signature of Polling Officer, Polling Agents of TUs present and designated Security in- charge. Thereafter, it should be stored in a strong room, which should have been already notified to the contesting unions. At the end of every day of polling, the boxes are required to be kept in the strong room and sealed. The sealing of the strong room should be done after obtaining the signatures of the designated (by PO) functionary, RPF/RPSF Staff and Polling Agents (designated by TUs for this purpose). At the end of polling, these ballot boxes should be transported to the counting centre, as identified and notified by the presiding officer under proper security.
- 18.0 Transportation and Security of Ballot Boxes:**
Suitable measures should be taken to carry these boxes, preferably by road with proper RPF/RPSF guards and in the presence of responsible Railway functionaries. However, if a need is felt to transport the Ballot boxes by service train then the Railway authorities should make proper arrangements for their transportation by the train under the security of RPF/RPSF guards and nominated Railway functionaries. In case transshipment is required to be done during train movement, at no time the Ballot Boxes should be left unattended either on the platforms or in station buildings. The travel plan for the Ballot Boxes should be shared with the Trade Union representatives and if they desire they may accompany the team carrying the Ballot Boxes on their own without interfering with the movement of the Ballot Boxes in any manner.
- 19.0 Counting of Votes:**
All the Ballot Boxes from the polling Booths under the jurisdiction of a Presiding Officer shall be brought and stored in pre-notified place. The votes have to be counted on scheduled date in a centralised place as identified and

notified by the Presiding Officer. The Ballot Boxes should be opened as per prescribed instructions given below. After opening of the Ballot Boxes, number of total ballots in each box shall be tallied with the number of ballots as per the records of the polling officer. Before counting of votes begin, the ballots from all the boxes should be opened and mixed together. No booth-wise counting should be done.

- 19.1 The Ballot Boxes shall be opened in the presence of the Presiding Officer and "Authorized Counting Agents" (ACA) of the TUs.
- 19.2 PO/RO will decide the number of ACA which should be adequate. Names of the ACA shall be as recommended by contesting TUs.
- 19.3 If the ACAs do not present themselves at the appointed time & place during the time of counting the votes, such absence shall not invalidate the election all counting process and counting shall proceed as per schedule.
- 21.1 **Declaration of Final Result:**
All Sealed Covers (containing Election Reports from Presiding Officer & RO in case of Postal Ballots) will be opened by Returning Officer in the presence of contesting TUs' representatives (Whoever available. This process cannot be delayed due to absence of anybody) to prepare and compile "Final Election Result" (Performa shall be conveyed later). Thereafter, the result of the election shall be declared accordingly.

Encl.:- As above (Provision Related to enforcement of Code of Conduct/Discipline).


(SIDDHARTH KATI)

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-cum-Principal Chief Personnel Officer
East Coast Railway, Bhubaneswar.

Copy to Sr. DSC/DSC (RPF) - KUR, WAT & SBP for kind information. They are requested to arrange for deployment of RPF/RPSF personnel as per requirement in the Division with consultation of ADRMs, CWM/MCS & FA & CAO(HQ)/ECOR and as per advised by IG-cum-CSC (RPF)/ECOR/BBS.

Copy to Presiding Officer-cum-ADRM's(Infra)/ADRM/CWM/ FA & CAO(HQ) - KUR, WAT, SBP, MCS WS, HQrs./BBS to interact with Sr. DSC/DSC(RPF) for security arrangements in Polling/Counting Booths & transportation of election materials and additional security arrangements in sensitive Polling Booths with list of name and locations of such Booths.


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