

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

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OVERVIEW OF THE GENERAL ELECTION 2009 –SOME HIGHLIGHTS

- The Indian elections are considered the largest democratic and election management exercise in the world. The magnitude and the complexities of this exercise are simply mind-boggling.
- Indian Elections are about mobilizing millions of human resources; it's about enrolling 713.77 million voters; about setting up of 8.34 lakh polling stations; its about training, tracking, managing information and about enforcement. It's about delivering democracy in the remotest of remote locations. It is about strengthening the democratic foundations of this nation. It is about reinforcing our faith in our electoral system and its efficacy.
- As we talk to you through this Press Conference, 12 men out there in Zanskar Sub Division in Jammu & Kashmir are trekking towards 2 polling stations: namely, 39-Ralakung with 23 voters and 40-Phema with 14 voters thus a total of 37 voters. The whole day yesterday we tried our best to ensure the IAF Helicopters were able to land carrying the polling personnel and Electronic Voting Machines to conduct the poll as per schedule. As the landing became impossible due to terrain condition, 2 polling parties consisting of 12 men (polling team consisting of one Presiding Officer, one Polling Officer and one constable, one satellite phone operator and two porters each) left today at 04.00 AM on an arduous trek of over 45 km through knee-deep snow to reach the polling stations located an altitude of 13,700 ft. To reach these polling stations they have to cross a pass which is locally know as **Ralakung La** at a height of 16,100 ft. We expect these twelve polling personnel to reach the locations by tomorrow night to setup the polling stations for the poll, we

look forward to hold on 15th May. We will track their movement using satellite phones.

- The homework for this General Election started long before. We have been intensely preparing over the last five months for this General Election. Since the J&K Assembly Election in December 2008 the Commission has put in relentless effort to make it happen. The full Commission would like to express its gratitude to Shri N Gopaldaswami, the former Chief Election Commissioner who oversaw all the arrangements for the general elections and the first phase of the polls.
- The Commission is immensely satisfied about the entire poll process that took place in five phases. Barring a few incidents of violence the entire poll process has been largely peaceful. There has been unfortunate loss of lives of polling personnel, security personnel and other civilians. The Commission deeply condoles the death of those individuals while delivering the sacred duty of delivering elections.
- The Commission would like to thank the entire election machinery of the country. Firstly the Commission would like to thank the Deputy Election Commissioners, the Legal Advisor, our Principal Secretaries & Secretaries and other Advisors and the other staff of the Commission. It may not be out of place to mention that this huge exercise is managed and monitored by the Commission Secretariat, which is supported by a staff strength of only 310.
- I would also like to thank the over 2046 Observers, 1.4 lakh Micro-Observers who assisted them, the 46.9 lakh polling staff directly deployed in polling station another equal number of staff and officers used in various election related capacities. I would like to thank about 8.34 lakh Booth Level Officers (BLO) who helped in the task of preparing the electoral roll

in time. The Commission would like to thank all the Security personnel who belonged to Central Police Forces (CPF), State Police Forces.

- We would like to thank Shri Madhukar Gupta, Union Home Secretary, Shri Vijay Singh the Defence Secretary, Air Chief Marshal F H Major, Shri S S Khurana the Chairman Railway Board, Secretary Civil Aviation Shri M M Nambiar and also the Chairman of Air India. We would also like to thank the Director Generals of Central Police Forces. The Chief Secretaries, the Home Secretaries, Director General of Police, the CEOs, the DEOs, the Returning Officers and the supporting staff, and various the nodal officers in the states.
- Poll has been completed in all 29 States and 6 Union Territories covering 543 Parliamentary Constituencies as well as in 294 ACs of Andhra Pradesh, 147 ACs of Orissa and 32 ACs of Sikkim.
- Total number of candidates contesting elections is **8070** in the Parliamentary Constituencies. No. of male candidates contesting the Parliamentary polls are: 7514 and no. of female candidates contesting the Parliamentary polls are: 556. The % of female candidates is: **6.9** only
- Highest number of candidates is **43 in 3-Chennai South PC in Tamil Nadu** where poll was held in the 5th Phase and the lowest number of candidates is **3 in 1- Nagaland PC** for which poll was held in the 1st Phase.
- The number of electors who were enrolled for the election were: **71.377 crore** in the country.
- Total number of polling stations set up for the poll are **8,34,944**. The highest polling station was **181- AuleyPhu in Leh AC under Ladakh PC** which was setup at an altitude of **15,300ft**.

- A total of **9,08,643 control units** and **11,83,543 ballot units** were utilized for the conduct of voting.
- The number of polling personnel deployed were **46,90,575** in the country.
- Vulnerability mapping was done of all the constituencies to ensure a free and fair poll and a total of **86782** villages/hamlets were identified and **373861** persons were booked under various preventive sections.
- **79 PCs** were identified as **Naxal affected** and **1,18,604** polling stations had a higher deployment.
- To monitor the poll **74,729** video-graphers were deployed and **40,599** digital cameras were deployed in polling stations.
- **2046** Observers were deployed and to assist them 139284 micro-observers were deployed.
- **119** Special trains comprising of 3060 coaches were used to transport CPF
- **Airlift** of CPF was done from Imphal and Agartala to ensure that CPF was made available well in time for the 3rd Phase poll in W Bengal. For this purpose services of IAF and Air India were utilized.
- **55** Helicopters were deployed and they performed 589 sorties (excluding the 5th phase) and would perform **600** sorties in all inclusive of today.
- **648** polling stations in all had repolls/adjourned polls.
- Overall voter turnout for the first four stages is **55.40%**.