STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
LADAKH
F-Block, 1st Floor, M.S. Apartments,
Kasturba Gandhi Marg,
New Delhi – 110 001

NOTIFICATION

Dated the 12th November, 2026

No.10-2/EC/LD/2026: Whereas, the Administrator, Union Territory of Ladakh, has, vide notification dated 10th November, 2026, called upon all constituencies of all Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils in the Union Territory of Ladakh to constitute new Councils;

And whereas, the State Election Commission, Ladakh, has vide Notification dated 10th November, 2026, has appointed the last date for filing nominations, date for scrutiny, date of poll, etc., for the said election;

Now, therefore, in order to facilitate the exercise of voting rights by the personnel deployed on specified election duties, who are unable to cast their votes at their respective polling stations on the date of poll, on account of such duties, the State Election Commission, Ladakh, in pursuance of the provisions of Rule 40 of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (Election) Rules, 2026, hereby declares the **29th November, 2026 (Sunday),between 07.00 a.m. and 06.00 p.m**., as the date on which, and the hours during which, such electors can cast their votes at the prescribed polling centres, as per the procedure specified by the Commission.

(Sudhanshu Pandey)
State Election Commissioner

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) for Facilitation of Voting through Election Duty Certificate (EDC) for Personnel Deployed on Election Duties for LAHDC and Panchayat General Elections, 2026

1. Objective

The objective of this SOP is to facilitate the exercise of voting rights by personnel deployed on specified election duties who are unable to vote at their respective polling stations on the date of poll on account of such duties. The arrangement shall ensure orderly constituency-wise voting, proper accounting and custody of ballot papers, maintenance of secrecy of voting and prevention of duplicate voting.

2. Basic Principle

1. The facility of voting through EDC shall be available to personnel assigned to polling parties, including police personnel deployed as part of polling parties, as well as Returning Officers (ROs), Assistant Returning Officers (AROs), Sector Magistrates and Zonal Magistrates, and the police personnel accompanying the Sector Magistrates and Zonal Magistrates.

2. EDCs for polling-party personnel shall be processed after the **second randomisation**, when the composition of polling parties is finalised. The third and final randomisation shall determine the specific polling station/location to which each polling party is assigned. Accordingly, EDCs may be processed after the second randomisation without waiting for the third randomisation.

3. In the case of ROs, AROs, Sector Magistrates, Zonal Magistrates and the police personnel accompanying the Sector Magistrates and Zonal Magistrates, their respective election-duty orders shall be treated as the EDC for the purpose of casting their votes under this arrangement. No separate EDC certificate shall be required for these categories.

4. All eligible personnel shall cast their votes at the District Headquarters of the district in which their electoral constituency falls, irrespective of the district or constituency in which they are deployed for election duty.

5. Each RO shall facilitate voting for eligible personnel belonging to the constituency/constituencies under his/her charge at the designated District Headquarters.

3. Establishment of EDC Voting Centres at District Headquarters

1. EDC voting centres shall be established at all eight District Headquarters of the UT of Ladakh.
2. Each RO shall establish a separate counter for the constituency/constituencies under his/her charge at the designated EDC voting centre.
3. For LAHDC elections, a separate ballot box shall be arranged for each LAHDC constituency falling within the respective district. For example, if a district has 21 LAHDC constituencies, 21 separate ballot boxes shall be placed at the concerned District Headquarters. Eligible personnel enrolled in any of these constituencies shall cast their votes in the corresponding constituency-specific ballot box, irrespective of their place of deployment.
4. Accordingly, one ballot box for each of the 100 LAHDC constituencies shall be maintained across the eight District Headquarters.
5. The arrangement of ballot boxes for Panchayat elections shall be made separately in accordance with the special procedure prescribed in Section 4 of this SOP.
6. The DEO concerned shall make necessary arrangements for:
    - Adequate space and separate counters for the ROs;
    - Separate voting compartments to maintain secrecy;
    - Proper display of constituency-wise information;
    - Secure placement and handling of ballot boxes; and
    - Necessary security and logistical arrangements.

4. Special Arrangement for Ballot Boxes for EDC Voting in Panchayat Elections

The arrangement for EDC voting in Panchayat elections shall take into account the fact that a Sarpanch constituency comprises multiple Panch constituencies. The

ballot boxes shall, therefore, be arranged on the basis of the Panch constituencies falling within each Sarpanch constituency, subject to the contest status of the respective seats, as follows:

A. Where both Panch and Sarpanch seats are contested

1. Where a Sarpanch constituency comprises, for example, five Panch constituencies, and all five Panch seats as well as the Sarpanch seat are contested, five separate ballot boxes shall be arranged, one for each Panch constituency.
2. An eligible elector belonging to a particular Panch constituency shall cast:
    - One ballot for the Panch candidate of his/her respective Panch constituency; and
    - One ballot for the Sarpanch candidate of the Sarpanch constituency to which his/her Panch constituency belongs.
3. Both ballot papers shall be deposited in the ballot box earmarked for the elector's respective Panch constituency.
4. Thus, the ballot box of each Panch constituency shall contain the Panch votes pertaining to that Panch constituency and the Sarpanch votes cast by electors belonging to that Panch constituency.

B. Where a Panch seat is uncontested but the Sarpanch seat is contested

1. Where any Panch constituency falling within a Sarpanch constituency has been declared uncontested, no separate ballot box shall be arranged for that uncontested Panch constituency.
2. An elector belonging to such an uncontested Panch constituency shall not cast a Panch vote but shall be entitled to cast a vote for the Sarpanch, provided the Sarpanch seat is contested.
3. Since no separate ballot box is maintained for the uncontested Panch constituency, the elector shall deposit the Sarpanch ballot paper in any one of the ballot boxes maintained for the contested Panch constituencies falling within the same Sarpanch constituency.

4. The elector shall be appropriately guided by the concerned RO/authorised polling official to ensure that the Sarpanch ballot paper is deposited in a ballot box belonging to the same Sarpanch constituency.

C. Where all Panch seats are uncontested but the Sarpanch seat is contested

1. Where all Panch constituencies falling within a particular Sarpanch constituency have been declared uncontested, but the Sarpanch seat itself is contested, only **one ballot box shall be arranged for the entire Sarpanch constituency** at the District Headquarters.
2. All eligible electors belonging to any of the Panch constituencies falling within that Sarpanch constituency shall cast their Sarpanch votes in this single ballot box.
3. No Panch ballot paper shall be issued in respect of the uncontested Panch constituencies.

D. Where the Sarpanch seat is uncontested

1. Where the Sarpanch seat has been declared uncontested, no Sarpanch ballot paper shall be issued.
2. Ballot boxes shall be arranged only for those Panch constituencies in which the Panch seats are contested.
3. Electors shall cast only their respective Panch votes in the ballot boxes earmarked for their respective contested Panch constituencies.

E. General instructions for Panchayat ballot-box arrangements

1. The concerned ROs shall prepare a constituency-wise statement identifying each Sarpanch constituency, the Panch constituencies falling within it, and the contest status of the respective Panch and Sarpanch seats.
2. On the basis of the above statement, the ROs shall determine the number of ballot boxes required for each Sarpanch constituency and ensure that boxes are arranged only in accordance with the principles prescribed above.

3. Each ballot box shall be clearly labelled with the name and number of the Panch constituency or, where applicable, the Sarpanch constituency for which it is being maintained.

4. The ROs shall ensure that electors belonging to uncontested Panch constituencies, but entitled to vote in a contested Sarpanch election, are specifically informed of the ballot box in which their Sarpanch ballot papers are to be deposited.

5. Procedure for Casting of Votes

1. Eligible personnel shall report at the designated EDC voting centre at the District Headquarters of their electoral constituency on the date and during the hours notified by the State Election Commission/DEO.

2. Personnel assigned to polling parties shall produce their EDC along with their valid office photo identity card.

3. ROs, AROs, Sector Magistrates, Zonal Magistrates and the police personnel accompanying the Sector Magistrates and Zonal Magistrates shall produce their respective election-duty orders along with their valid office photo identity card. Such election-duty orders shall be treated as the EDC for the purpose of this voting arrangement.

4. The concerned RO or authorised official shall verify:

    - The identity of the personnel;
    - The validity and particulars of the EDC or election-duty order, as applicable;
    - The name of the elector in the final electoral roll;
    - The constituency, part number and serial number in the electoral roll; and
    - Whether the elector has already exercised the right to vote through the EDC facility or otherwise, in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the State Election Commission.

5. Upon successful verification, the RO shall issue the ballot paper(s) pertaining to the relevant constituency/constituencies, as applicable:

- For LAHDC elections, the ballot paper pertaining to the LAHDC constituency in which the elector is enrolled;
- For Panchayat elections, the Panch and/or Sarpanch ballot papers, as applicable, depending upon the contest status of the respective seats and the elector's electoral constituency.

6. The elector shall mark the ballot paper(s) in the designated voting compartment, maintaining complete secrecy, and thereafter deposit them in the ballot box/boxes earmarked in accordance with Para 3 and 4 of this SOP.

7. The RO shall maintain a constituency-wise EDC voting register containing, at a minimum, the following particulars:
   - Name of the personnel;
   - Designation/category of election duty;
   - Details of polling party or election-duty order, as applicable;
   - Name of the electoral constituency;
   - Part number and serial number of the elector in the electoral roll;
   - EDC number or election-duty order number;
   - Identity document particulars, as prescribed;
   - Date of voting; and
   - Signature/thumb impression of the elector.

8. The RO shall maintain a proper account of ballot papers received, issued, cast, spoiled, unused and returned, separately for each election and constituency, as applicable, in the format prescribed by the State Election Commission.

6. Marking of Electoral Rolls and Prevention of Duplicate Voting

1. The concerned RO shall maintain an updated working copy of the electoral roll for recording the particulars of personnel who have exercised their vote through the EDC facility.

2. The procedure for marking the electoral roll shall strictly follow the directions of the State Election Commission, including the treatment of EDCs issued but not actually used.

3. A clear distinction shall be maintained between EDCs issued and EDC votes actually cast, so that no eligible elector is inadvertently deprived of the opportunity to vote and no elector is permitted to cast more than one vote.

4. After completion of EDC voting, the concerned RO shall ensure that the relevant marked electoral roll particulars are communicated to the Presiding Officers of the respective polling stations sufficiently in advance of the poll.

5. The Presiding Officers shall take necessary precautions to ensure that persons who have already voted through the EDC facility are not permitted to cast a second vote at the polling station.

7. Responsibilities of Returning Officers

The concerned ROs shall:

1. Establish and operationalise the EDC voting counter for their respective constituencies at the designated District Headquarters.

2. Ensure that separate ballot boxes are arranged and clearly identified for each LAHDC constituency.

3. Make the Panchayat ballot-box arrangements strictly in accordance with Para 4 of this SOP, taking into account the contest status of Panch and Sarpanch seats.

4. Verify the EDC or election-duty order, as applicable, and the identity of each eligible personnel before issuing the ballot paper(s).

5. Verify the particulars of the elector against the final electoral roll.

6. Maintain constituency-wise EDC registers and ballot-paper accounts, separately for LAHDC and Panchayat elections.

7. Ensure secrecy of voting and proper supervision of the voting process.

8. Ensure proper sealing and identification of ballot boxes after completion of voting.

9. Prepare the prescribed account and record of votes cast through EDC.
10. Ensure timely communication of relevant marked electoral roll particulars to the concerned Presiding Officers.
11. Hand over the sealed ballot boxes to the DEO/Election Officers concerned against proper acknowledgement for safe custody in the designated Transit Strong Room.

8. Responsibilities of District Election Officers/Election Officers

The DEOs/Election Officers shall:

1. Coordinate with all ROs for the establishment and functioning of EDC voting centres at the District Headquarters.
2. Ensure availability of the required constituency-wise ballot boxes, ballot papers and other election material.
3. Notify the venue, date and timing of EDC voting in accordance with the directions of the State Election Commission.
4. Ensure that all eligible personnel are informed of the facility and the procedure for availing it.
5. Ensure that election-duty orders of ROs, AROs, Sector Magistrates, Zonal Magistrates and the police personnel accompanying the Sector Magistrates and Zonal Magistrates are available for verification, wherever required.
6. Make adequate arrangements for security, logistics and orderly conduct of EDC voting.
7. Establish and maintain a designated Transit Strong Room at the District Headquarters for safe custody of sealed EDC ballot boxes.
8. Ensure that sealed ballot boxes are transported to the designated counting venue on the counting day.
9. Obtain constituency-wise reports from the ROs and submit a consolidated report to the State Election Commission.

9. Facilitation of Eligible Personnel

1. The concerned authorities shall ensure that the details of all eligible personnel are collected sufficiently in advance for facilitating EDC voting.

2. In respect of personnel forming part of polling parties, including police personnel deployed as part of polling parties, the details shall be collected after the second randomisation for processing of EDCs.

3. In respect of ROs, AROs, Sector Magistrates, Zonal Magistrates and the police personnel accompanying the Sector Magistrates and Zonal Magistrates, the concerned authorities shall ensure that their election-duty orders are issued and made available for verification.

4. Since the third and final randomisation only determines the specific polling station/location of deployment of polling parties, the processing and issuance of EDCs for polling-party personnel shall not be unnecessarily delayed pending such final allocation.

5. All eligible personnel shall be informed of the date, time and venue of EDC voting and shall make necessary arrangements to reach the District Headquarters of their electoral constituency.

10. Security and Custody of Ballot Boxes (same procedure as on the date of poll, to be adopted)

1. Before commencement of EDC voting, the RO shall demonstrate that the respective ballot boxes are empty and thereafter seal them in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the State Election Commission.

2. Upon completion of EDC voting, the RO shall reconcile the ballot-paper account and ensure that each ballot box is properly closed, sealed and labelled with the name and number of the concerned constituency.

3. The RO shall prepare a sealing memorandum indicating the constituency, identification particulars of the ballot box, seal details and other prescribed particulars. Candidates or their authorised representatives may be permitted to witness the sealing process.

4. Each DEO/EO shall establish a designated **Transit Strong Room at the District Headquarters** for the safe custody of sealed EDC ballot boxes.

5. After completion of the EDC voting process, the ROs shall hand over the sealed ballot boxes to the DEO/EO concerned against proper acknowledgement. The acknowledgement shall contain the constituency, ballot-box identification, seal particulars, date and time of handover.

6. The sealed ballot boxes shall be kept in the designated Transit Strong Room under the custody and supervision of the DC/DEO/EO concerned, with the following safeguards:

    - Secure double-lock arrangements;
    - Round-the-clock security deployment;
    - Restricted and duly authorised access;
    - Maintenance of an access and movement register;
    - Proper recording of deposit and withdrawal of ballot boxes; and
    - Verification and documentation of seals at every stage of movement.

7. On the counting day, the sealed ballot boxes shall be transported from the Transit Strong Room to the designated counting venue under adequate security and with a properly documented chain of custody. The record shall include the time of withdrawal, seal condition, vehicle and escort particulars, and acknowledgement of receipt at the counting venue.

11. General Instructions

1. The EDC voting facility shall be confined exclusively to the personnel specified in Para 2 of this SOP.

2. The facility shall be available at the District Headquarters corresponding to the electoral constituency in which the eligible personnel are enrolled, and not at the place of their election-duty deployment.

3. For ROs, AROs, Sector Magistrates, Zonal Magistrates and the police personnel accompanying the Sector Magistrates and Zonal Magistrates, the respective election-duty order shall serve as the authority for availing the EDC voting facility. No separate EDC certificate shall be required for these categories.

4. All EDC voting shall be completed within the schedule notified by the State Election Commission and sufficiently before commencement of the poll.

5. The concerned ROs shall ensure that the requisite electoral roll particulars and records are updated and communicated to the concerned polling stations in advance of the poll.

6. The DEOs/EOs shall ensure uniform implementation of this SOP and submit the prescribed consolidated report to the State Election Commission.

7. Any procedural issue not specifically covered under this SOP shall be referred to the State Election Commission for clarification and appropriate directions.

8. This SOP shall be read subject to the applicable provisions of the LAHDC and Panchayat Election Rules, and the instructions/directions issued by the State Election Commission from time to time.

STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
LADAKH
F-Block, 1st Floor, M.S. Apartments,
Kasturba Gandhi Marg,
New Delhi – 110 001

ADDENDUM

Dated the 25th November, 2026

No.10-2/EC/LD/2026: Whereas, the State Election Commission, Ladakh, has vide Notification dated 12th November, 2026, declared the **29th November, 2026 (Sunday), between 07.00 a.m. and 06.00 p.m**., as the date on which, and the hours during which, the personnel deployed on specified election duties can cast their votes at the prescribed polling centres, as per the procedure specified by the Commission.

Now, in order to facilitate exercise of franchise by them, such Defence, Paramilitary and ITBF personnel, who are registered electors for respective Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils, are also allowed to cast their votes at the specified centres for polling on 29.11.2026, upon production of their official ID card, to the satisfaction of the concerned Presiding Officer.

(Sudhanshu Pandey)
State Election Commissioner