

Important instructions regarding counting of E- Postal ballot

The Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System is a new feature incorporated by the Commission in all the Parliamentary Constituencies for Lok Sabha Elections 2019. ETPBS system is being used for issuing the E-Postal ballot to all service voters. In this writeup we will discuss about the counting the E-Postal Ballot received from the from the Service voters in the RO office on or before 7:59 AM on the day of counting.

There are two stages for ETPB counting:

- A. Pre counting
- B. Counting

Assess the number of ETPB that you will receive in advance keeping an 80% return estimate. You can do the pre counting of up to 500 ETPB on one table. So if you are expecting 5000 ETPB, you can have 10 tables for pre counting.

There will be one ARO to supervise every set of 10 tables for pre counting only.

Requirements of Hardware items for pre-counting of E-Postal ballot for each table:

1. One Desktop/ Laptop with windows 7 and above
2. One QR Code Scanner as per the specification defined by the ECI
3. Licensed Antivirus Should be Installed on the system
4. System should be cleaned and there should be no other data on it
5. Ensure Power Backup and One UPS for each desktop
6. Wired Internet Connectivity of minimum 2 MBPS for each system (make arrangement of two internet lines of different operators)

Points to be taken care at the time of Pre-Counting of E-Postal Ballot:

1. Suitable seating arrangements for one agent for each candidate may also be made within the room for them to watch the process of QR Code reading.
2. ARO appointed for pre-counting (ETPBS Scanning) should be well trained.

3. Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistant should be well trained regarding the scanning of 13C, 13A and 13B and should be familiar with all type of scenarios.
4. Helpline Contact number will be provided on the day of Counting for any support related to ETPBS
5. Never change the Mobile Number or E-Mail Id till elections are over
6. Ensure that DND is not activated on your mobile number
7. Keep two separate trays – one for ETPB's which are to be counted and one for ETPB's which are not to be counted. Paste the following signs on the tray:
TO BE COUNTED and **NOT TO BE COUNTED**
8. Never mix the ETPB's of these two trays.
9. **Pattern to be followed while scanning the E-Postal ballot is C-A-B**

NOTE :

- **Counting Supervisor and Counting Agent appointed will be responsible only for scanning of QR Codes in proper order and in case, QR code is not scanned then entering the e-PBID of 40 digits. They will not deal with the validity of any document related with e-postal ballot. The validity of the E-postal ballot will be checked by Counting ARO on the counting table**
- **After Pre-counting of all ETPB's is done, transfer the ETPBs in the tray TO BE COUNTED to the counting tables.**
- **The Pre counting ARO will check each of the ETPB's in the NOT TO BE COUNTED tray and mark them accordingly with reason.**

Steps of counting of ETPB

Give upto 500 ETPB's to each pre counting table

Scenario 1:

Normal Scenario

Step 1: Scan the outer cover (Form 13-C) which has a QR Code on lower right hand side. It will be read by the QR Code Reader and necessary valid checks will be performed for possible duplicates and verification of the service voter. A unique serial number will be provided by the computer. The Counting Supervisor will manually write the computer generated serial number on the envelope being verified.

Step 2: If no duplicate and correct verification is found, then only outer envelope (Form 13-C) will be opened.

Step 3: Open the outer cover (Form 13-C) and take out the two documents which are required to be found inside. The first one is declaration (Form 13-A) and the second one is inner cover (Form 13-B) containing the postal ballot paper.

Step 4: Scan two QR Codes on Form 13-A one by one which is on the lower side of 13-A. Note down the computer generated Sl. No. on form 13-A

Step 5: Scan the QR Code which is on lower right side on Form 13-B. Note down the computer generated Sl. No. on form 13-B

Step 6: If the QR Code reading does not raise any anomaly, keep Form 13-B envelope and Declaration (Form 13-A) back in Form 13-C envelope and keep the envelope in a tray marked for **TO BE COUNTED**.

Scenario 2:

If the QR Code available on 13 C is not being scanned

Step 1: Open the Outer covers (Form 13-C) and read the name of the elector from the declaration (Form 13-A). Select the name of the elector from drop down list in 13-A tab and click on **ADD** button. Necessary valid checks will be performed for possible duplicates and verification of the

service voter by the software. A unique serial number will be provided by the software. The Counting Supervisor will manually write the computer generated serial number on the envelope being verified.

Step 2: If no duplicate and correct verification is found, then only outer envelope (Form 13-C) will be opened.

Step 3: Open the outer cover (Form 13-C) and take out the two documents which are required to be found inside. The first one is declaration (Form 13-A) and the second one is inner cover (Form 13-B) containing the postal ballot paper.

Step 4: Scan two QR Codes on Form 13-A one by one, which is on the lower side of 13-A. Note down the computer generated Sl. No. on Form 13-A.

Step 5: Scan the QR Code on Form 13-B, which is on lower right side. Note down the computer generated Sl. No. on Form 13-B

Step 6: If the QR Code reading does not raise any anomaly, keep Form 13-B envelope and Declaration (Form 13-A) back in Form 13-C envelope and keep the envelope in a tray marked for **TO BE COUNTED**.

Scenario 3:

If the QR Code available on 13 A are not being scanned

Step 1: Scan the outer cover (Form 13-C) which has a QR Code on lower right hand side. It will be read by the QR Code Reader and necessary valid checks will be performed for possible duplicates and verification of the service voter. A unique serial number will be provided by the computer. The Counting Supervisor will manually write the computer generated serial number on the envelope being verified.

Step 2: If no duplicate and correct verification is found, then only outer envelope (Form 13-C) will be opened.

Step 3: Now scan two QR Codes on Form 13-A one by one, which is on the lower side of 13-A. If you are not able to scan anyone of the two QR Code available on 13-A then enter the 40 digit e-PBID available on the Form 13-A in the text boxes available on the portal and click on **ADD** button for confirmation.

Step 4: After that scan the QR Code which is on lower right side on Form 13-B.

Step 5: Note down the computer generated Sl. No. in all the above Covers respectively.

Step 6: If the QR Code reading does not raise any anomaly, keep Form 13-B envelope and Declaration 13-A back in Form 13-C envelope and keep the envelope in a tray marked for **TO BE COUNTED**.

Scenario 4:

If QR code available on 13-B is not been being scanned

Step 1: The Outer covers (Form 13-C) which is having QR Code on lower right hand side, it will be read by the QR Code Reader and necessary valid checks will be performed for possible duplicates and verification of the service voter. A unique serial number will be provided by the software. The Counting Supervisor will manually write the computer generated serial number on the envelope being verified.

Step 2: If no duplicate and correct verification is found, then only outer envelope (Form 13-C) will be open.

Step 3: Open the outer cover (Form 13-C) and take out the two documents which are required to be found inside. The first one is declaration (Form 13-A) and the second one is inner cover (Form 13-B) containing the postal ballot paper.

Step 4: Counting Supervisor should take out the declaration from Outer Envelope, Form 13-A and the inner cover in Form 13-B.

Step 5: Scan two QR Codes on Form 13-A one by one, which is on the lower side of 13-A. Note down the computer generated Sl. No. on Form 13-A.

Step 6: Now scan the QR Code which is on lower right side on Form 13-B. If you are not able to scan the QR Code available on 13-B then enter the 40-digit e-PBID available on the Form 13-B in the text boxes available on the portal and click on **ADD** button for confirmation.

Step 7: Note down the computer generated Sl. No. in all the above Covers respectively.

Step 8: After completion of above steps keep Form 13-B envelope and Declaration 13-A back in Form 13-C envelope and keep the envelope in a tray marked for **TO BE COUNTED**.

Scenario 5:

If the declaration 13-A is not found after opening of outer envelope 13-C

Step 1: The Outer covers (Form 13-C) which is having QR Code on lower right hand side, it will be read by the QR Code Reader and necessary valid checks will be performed for possible duplicates and verification of the service voter. A unique serial number will be provided by the computer. The Counting Supervisor will manually write the computer generated serial number on the envelope being verified.

Step 2: If no duplicate and correct verification is found, then only outer envelope (Form 13-C) will be open.

Step 3: Open the outer cover (Form 13-C) and If you don't find the declaration (Form 13-A) then select the reason from the drop down menu **"NOT FOUND"**.

Step 4: Once you have entered the reason of not scanning the Form 13-A then it will be declared as **INVALID POSTAL BALLOT**.

Step 5: Note down the computer generated Sl. No. in all the above Covers respectively.

Step 6: After completion of above steps keep Form 13-B envelope and in Form 13-C envelope and keep in a tray meant for **NOT TO BE COUNTED**.

Scenario 6:

If 13-A or 13-B QR code cannot scanned and 40-digit e-PBID is also not readable

If 13-A or 13-B QR code cannot scanned and because of damage 40-digit e-PBID is also not readable then the user has to select **"other reason"** from the drop down menu in which you have to write the reason of not scanning or entering the 40-digit e-PBID from the declaration Form 13-A.

Scenario 7:

In case duplicate or spurious E-Postal Ballot

If the QR Code reading indicates any discrepancy such as the documents not being genuine or multiple copies of the document have been received, such envelopes shall be kept in a separate tray meant for **NOT TO BE COUNTED**.

In case of rejection of envelopes/documents on QR Code reading, the ARO in-charge of the team should see and satisfy himself about the discrepancy shown in QR Code reading that results in rejection.

AFTER COMPLETING PRE-COUNTING FOR ALL THE ETPB RECEIVED THE ETPB TRAY “TO BE COUNTED” BE TAKEN TO THE COUNTING TABLE. FURTHER COURSE OF ACTION FOR COUNTING WILL BE AS PER THE PROVISIONS OF RULE 54A OF THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS RULES, 1961 AND THE COMMISSION’S INSTRUCTIONS ON THE SUBJECT.
