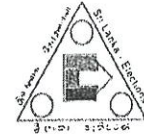




Election Commission



PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION – 2020.08.05

Notice on Marking of Postal Ballots

All Certifying Officers have been informed through Returning Officers that all necessary facilities be made available for the postal voters to exercise their franchise at their respective service stations at the election aforementioned and arrangements have been made to mark postal ballots as follows:

- since the staff of the Offices of Medical Officer of Health, is assigned with the task to supervise the compliance to health guidelines issued to control the spread of COVID -19 pandemic at work stations of all public institutions/statutory boards/security forces where postal votes will be marked on 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th of July 2020, marking of postal votes at only the Offices of Medical Officer of Health will be held from 09.00 a.m. to 04.00 p.m. on 2020.07.13;
- marking of postal votes at the public institutions other than all Police Stations, Security Forces Camps, Department of Civil Security and in the health sector and at all District Secretariats and District Election Offices, will be held from 09.00 a.m. to 04.00 p.m. on both 14th and 15th of July 2020;
- due to engagement in providing security and ensuring and supervision of compliance to health guidelines at postal voting centers, marking of postal votes at all Police Stations, Security Forces Camps, Department of Civil Security and in the health sector and at all District Secretariats and District Election Offices will be held from 09.00 a.m. to 04.00 p.m. on the 16th of July 2020 and from 09.00 a.m. to 02.00 p.m. on the 17th of July 2020;
- Postal voters who fail to mark their postal vote on aforesaid dates due to unavoidable circumstances are provided with the opportunity to mark their postal votes from 09.00a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on the 20th and 21st of July 2020 at the Elections Office of the District where the office of the Certifying Officer is located;
- Marking of postal votes at the Election Secretariat will be held from 09.00 a.m. to 04.00 p.m. on the 16th of July 2020 and from 09.00 a.m. to 02.00 p.m. on the 17th of July 2020.

02. In terms of the healthcare guidelines issued under controlled COVID -19 pandemic situation safety measures such as social distancing, wearing facemasks and hand sanitization should be followed and it would be appropriate to being a blue/black pen to mark the ballot.

03. Each candidate may appoint an agent and each observer organization may appoint an observer in order to observe the marking of the postal ballots, at offices of the Certifying Officers. People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) and Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) have been granted permission to observe the postal voting. No employee of the office of the Certifying Officer can function as an agent of any recognized political party/independent group or observer organization to observe the marking of postal votes at his work station.

- Certifying Officers are permitted to engage a small group of few officers and an assistant or two of his staff to assist him in the task.
- In addition, the Returning Officers of the districts will engage, Assistant Returning Officers and other supporting officers to observe the marking of postal ballots.

04. Only the persons referred to at paragraph 03 above and the eligible postal voters are permitted to enter the postal ballot marking centers.

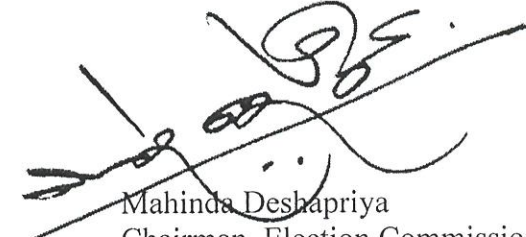
05. Taking photographs of or videoing the marking of postal ballots, the postal voting centers and their premises is prohibited.

06. No person shall commit any of the under mentioned offences as stipulated in the elections law at postal voting centers:

1. No photograph, notice, symbol or mark printed to promote any party/independent group or the candidacy of a candidate should be displayed at the premises of the office of the certifying officer who facilitates the postal voting, no handbill should also be distributed;
2. No canvassing to promote or demote any party/independent group or a candidate should be done at postal voting centers;
3. Nothing should be done in or around the postal voting centers that could hinder the marking of postal ballots.
4. Attempt to take a marked or unmarked ballot paper out of the premises is an offence.
5. Showing a marked ballot paper to another person is an offence.
6. Taking photographs of or videoing the marked or unmarked ballots or sharing of such photographs or videos through social media is totally prohibited and any attempt to do so will be treated as a violation of the directives of the Election Commission and will be dealt with accordingly.
7. Forcing a postal voter to show the marked ballot paper or willfully displaying a marked ballot paper will also be an offence.

07. Inspector General of Police has been requested to render assistance in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the process at the office of the Certifying Officer, when the assistance of the police is requested by any Certifying Officer or any officer deployed by the Returning Officer to observe.

08. It is hereby announced that when casting vote by post it is not traceable to whom the postal voter had marked his/her ballot, that arrangements have been made at the postal voting centers to ensure the secrecy and freedom in marking postal ballots; and that any attempt to cause interference or threat at the postal voting centers, will cause the polling at such center, to be annulled.


Mahinda Deshapriya
Chairman, Election Commission
(For the Election Commission)

Election Commission,
Sarana Mawatha,
Rajagiriya.
2020.07.04