

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer West Bengal

13, Strand Road, Kolkata 700001

No. 09/CEO/PN/2026

Dated: 23.03.2026

PRESS NOTE

In compliance with the directives of the Election Commission of India following the announcement of the General Election on 16.03.2026, the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is being rigorously enforced across all 294 Assembly Constituencies in West Bengal.

Enforcement and Seizure

Intensive monitoring has led to significant seizures. Since the announcement of the election, cumulative seizures of cash, liquor, narcotics, precious metals, and other freebies have been executed to curb illegal inducements / misuse of money power in elections.

The cumulative State wise enforcement report regarding itemized summary of seizures is provided in following table.

Seizure of Cash, Liquor, Drugs/Narcotics, Precious Metals & Freebies (As on 23.03.2026)

Sl. No.	Item	Cumulative Seizure (Since 26.02.2026)
1	Cash	₹ 300.04 Lakhs
2	Liquor	1088974.16 Litres / ₹ 2755.16 Lakhs
3	Drugs/Narcotics	2641355.28 gm / ₹ 2802.30 Lakhs
4	Precious Metals	114301.90 gm / ₹ 1321.83 Lakhs
5	Freebies/Other Items	67046330 quantity / ₹ 11219.00 Lakhs
	TOTAL VALUE	₹ 18398.35 Lakhs

Deployment of Force

Joint Force Deployment Committee meeting on 22 March 2026 finalized the deployment plan of 300 Coys of CAPF under different police districts and police Commissionerate by 31st March 2026. After that deployment total deployment of CAPF in the state would be 780 Coys. Highest will be Kolkata, 60 Coys, next in Purba

Medinipur district, 48 Coys and lowest in Bidhannagar PC, 11 Coys. ECI desires effective and maximum use of the deployed strength of CAPF for undertaking area domination and confidence building measures, with special attention to control law and order situation.

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Total deployment at Present
1.	Darjeeling	13
2.	Siliguri PC	08
3.	Kalimpong	05
4.	Cooch Behar	33
5.	Alipurduar	08
6.	Jalpaiguri	16
7.	Islampur PD	18
8.	Raigunj PD	13
9.	Dakshin Dinajpur	17
10.	Malda	33
11.	Murshidabad PD	33
12.	Jangipur PD	18
13.	Krishnanagar PD	20
14.	Ranaghat PD	14
15.	Howrah PC	23
16.	Howrah Rural PD	20
17.	Hooghly (Rural)	20
18.	Chandannagar PC	16
19.	Kolkata	60
20.	Barasat PD	20
21.	Bangaon PD	09
22.	Bashithat PD	30
23.	Barrackpore PC	24
24.	Bidhannagore PC	11
25.	Baruipur PD	30
26.	Diamondharbour PD	17
27.	Sundarban PD	15
28.	Purba Medinipur	48
29.	Purba Bardhaman	37
30.	ADPC	26
31.	Paschim Medinipur	35
32.	Jhargram	13
33.	Bankura	19
34.	Purulia	24
35.	Birbhum	34
Total		780

Review of Poll preparedness

In a significant step toward ensuring the integrity of the 2026 Assembly Elections, Deputy Election Commissioner Shri Gyanesh Bharti, along with Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Shri Maneesh Garg and Deputy Election Commissioner Dr. P.K. Sharma, chaired a comprehensive virtual review meeting today with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of West Bengal, District Election Officers (DEOs), and Superintendents (SPs) / Commissioners of Police (CPs).

The meeting focused on streamlining logistics and security protocols to ensure a transparent and peaceful electoral process across the state.

Comprehensive Review of Operations

The Commission conducted a granular assessment of the following operational areas:

- **Personnel & Equipment:** Final stages of EVM and polling personnel randomization, comprehensive training modules, and the availability of Micro Observers.
- **Inclusivity:** Strategic management of polling stations exclusively operated by Women and Persons with Disabilities (PwD).
- **Field Readiness:** Execution of mock polls, assessment of postal ballots, and the provision of Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at all booths.
- **Poll & Post-Poll Logistics:** Detailed planning for Dispersal Centers (DC), Receiving Centers (RC), and counting day arrangements.
- **Compliance & Monitoring:** Efficient management of the Suvidha permission portal, Expenditure monitoring, and strict enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).
- **Strategic Directives & Special Emphasis -** The Deputy Election Commissioner issued several critical mandates to the district leadership to eliminate any gaps in the election machinery:
- **Field Oversight:** DEOs and Returning Officers (ROs) have been directed to personally visit every polling station and monitor training centers to ensure personnel are fully prepared.
- **Security & CAPF Deployment:** The Commission emphasized that Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) must not be kept in reserve or idle. Every polling station area must be covered by CAPF personnel to build voter confidence.

- Integrity of the Voting Room: In a strict directive to maintain secrecy and order, polling agents are strictly prohibited from entering the actual voting compartment/room.
- Vulnerability & Law Enforcement: Vulnerability mapping must be treated with the "utmost care." Authorities were also directed to expedite the deposition of arms and the execution of pending Non-Bailable Warrants (NBWs).
- Combating Misinformation: Social media must be monitored round-the-clock to identify and neutralize fake news that could disrupt the harmony of the election.

Campaign from March 24th to Promote Fear-Free Voting

The Election Commission (EC) is initiating a statewide campaign to ensure that the upcoming Bengal polls are conducted in a free, fair and intimidation-free environment. Beginning March 24th, the campaign will emphasise that the elections should be viewed as a "festival of democracy", encouraging citizens to vote without fear. Detail of the campaign is as follows –

Venue: Women's Christian College, Kolkata, 6, Greek Church Row, Manoharpukur, Kalighat, Kolkata – 700026.

Date: 24.03.2026 **Time:** 3.00 P.M.

Programme: Interactive session on voters' awareness on electoral participation (SVEEP). The campaign will be followed in the next 3 days across the state through multiple platforms, including heritage trams, outdoor hoardings, posters, banners, and direct engagement by Election Commission officials

Law & Order

Election Authorities Intensify Air Port Monitoring to Ensure Free and Fair Polls

A comprehensive monitoring strategy across key air routes in the region has been taken. The primary objective is to intercept and prevent the illegal movement of cash, valuables, narcotics, and any other inducements that could influence the electoral process.

Strategic Surveillance Points

Strict surveillance and security protocols have been established at the following locations:

- Hasimara, Alipurduar: Focused on VVIP movements, with security arrangements managed by the Indian Air Force.
- Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport (Andal), Paschim Bardhaman: Under the direct supervision of the Asansol Police Commissionerate.
- Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport (Dum Dum), North 24 Parganas: Monitored by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).
- Bagdogra Airport, Siliguri: Monitored by the CISF.

Inter-Agency Coordination

To ensure seamless operations, a high-level coordination meeting was recently convened. Key stakeholders, including the CISF, Airport Authorities, Bureau of Immigration, and Customs Authorities, have aligned their protocols to tighten the security net around all air transit points.

Enhanced Ground Security

In addition to standard security checks within terminal buildings, localized enforcement has been bolstered. A dedicated NAKA point (security checkpoint) has been established at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport near Gate No. 1, situated at the critical junction of VIP Road and Jessore Road.

The administration remains committed to maintaining a level playing field and urges the public to cooperate with security personnel during this heightened screening procedure.

Interstate Border Security strengthened to Ensure Fair and Transparent

To maintain the integrity of the upcoming elections and eliminate the risk of bogus voting, authorities have announced a comprehensive security blanket across all interstate borders. These measures are designed to seal entry points and secure porous stretches effectively.

Strategic Border Controls

To prevent any unauthorized movement or electoral malpractice, dedicated interstate border check posts have been established at key entry points connecting with Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim, and Assam. The heightened surveillance covers the following districts:

- South Bengal: Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram, Purulia, Paschim Bardhaman, and Birbhum.
- North & Central Bengal: Murshidabad, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Cooch Behar, and Alipurduar.

Key Security Measures

The administration has deployed a multi-layered security strategy to ensure a peaceful voting environment:

- 24/7 Surveillance: Round-the-clock Naka checking is now operational at all identified border points.
- Joint Operations: Joint police teams from both sides of the interstate borders have been deployed to ensure seamless coordination and monitoring.
- Mobile Patrols: Regular patrolling is being conducted by RT (Radio Telephony) Mobile Units and QRT (Quick Response Team) vehicles to cover porous stretches and remote areas.
- 72-Hour Intensification: In accordance with standard security protocols, Naka checking will be significantly strengthened 72 hours prior to Poll Day to prevent the entry of outsiders or illegal materials.

Updated law and order report is placed below (upto 23/03/2026)

Sl. No.	Items	Cumulative from 15/03/2026
1	No of unlicensed arms/ explosives seized	
	a) Arms / Weapons	Arms / Weapons 67
	b) Cartridges / Explosives / Bombs (In Numbers)	Cartridges 96
		Explosives 0 and 10360 PCs
	Bombs 337	

2	Licensed Arms	a) Total Licensed Arms	52,814
		b) Deposited	29,775

Instruction of ECI to the Observers

Election commission of India has issued a high-priority directive mandating all Police Observers to undertake visits to police stations within their respective Assembly Constituencies. A virtual meeting was held at 7 pm on 22nd March, 2026 in this regard.

To ensure maximum ground-level oversight, Observers have been instructed to strategically divide overlapping jurisdictions. All field visits were completed today, with detailed compliance reports submitted immediately thereafter.

The Six-Point Objective for Fear-Free Voting

Readiness of Officers-in-Charge (OCs), local police, and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in upholding the Election Commission of India's (ECI) core safety pillars was evaluated. The Special Observer emphasized a Zero Tolerance policy toward:

- Violence
- Intimidation
- Inducements (Illegal gratification/bribery)
- 'Chappa' (Proxy voting)
- Booth Jamming
- Source Jamming

Key Assessment Areas

During inspections, Police Observers audited and reported on the following critical security parameters:

- Preventive Action: Neutralizing known troublemakers/history-sheeters and the execution of all pending Non-Bailable Warrants (NBWs) were initiated.
- Field Coverage: First round of polling station visits was conducted.
- Vulnerability Mapping: Vulnerable areas were identified to ensure every voter feels secure.

- Administrative Accountability: OCs were briefed on legal provisions and ensuring strict action against any errant or biased personnel.
- Public Awareness: Information regarding Section 135 of the RP Act were disseminated.
- Inter-Agency Synergy: Seamless coordination between local Police and CAPF units were verified.
- Grievance Redressal: Swift disposal of election-related complaints, including a review of recent FIRs and arrests have been ensured.

MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Extensive drives for removal of unauthorized political advertisements are ongoing. As per the latest reports, widespread public and private property defacements have been cleared across all districts and the District Election Officers have certified removal of defacement from all the public properties under their jurisdiction.

District-wise Status of Enforcement of Model Code of Conduct (As on 23.03.2026)

Sl. no	Name of District	Public Property Defacement Removed	Private Property Defacement Removed	Total Cases
1.	Cooch Behar	31254	4542	35796
2.	Alipurduar	8522	3449	11971
3.	Jalpaiguri	6212	65	6440
4.	Kalimpong	593	0	593
5.	Darjeeling	7928	783	8711
6.	Uttar Dinajpur	18249	799	19110
7.	Dakshin Dinajpur	8431	1282	14421
8.	Malda	3002	129	3131
9.	Murshidabad	9079	0	12506
10.	Nadia	8685	213	8918
11.	North 24 Parganas	31789	105	31920
12.	South 24 Parganas	18789	235	19348
13.	Kolkata South	8435	0	8435
14.	Kolkata North	5821	0	5821
15.	Howrah	7276	0	7460
16.	Hooghly	26638	1	33752
17.	Purba Medinipur	44648	763	45411
18.	Paschim Medinipur	29021	2568	31761
19.	Jhargram	5586	50	5647
20.	Purulia	11293	0	11293

21.	Purba Bardhaman	21110	445	24506
22.	Paschim Bardhaman	41832	4563	47461
23.	Bankura	12869	516	13385
24.	Birbhum	8426	4019	22136
	State total	375488	24527	429933

Postal Ballots

A coordination meeting has already been held to coordinate with State Nodal Officers of the different departments of AVES (Absentee Voters of Essential Services). Procedure of issuance of Form 12 D was briefed in detail with the following departments delivering essential services.

- Metro Railway
- Railway Transport (passenger & freight)
- State Milk union and Milk Cooperative services
- Health Department
- Road Transport Corporation
- Fire Services
- Traffic Police
- Jail
- Excise
- Treasury Services
- Information and Public Relation Department (Media Persons with authority letter)
- Ambulance services
- Police
- Civil Defence and Home Guards
- Food Civil Supplies
- Power
- Department of PWD

The Commission remains committed to strict compliance of the implementation of MCC in letter and spirit for ensuring a free & fair election.

Sd/-
(Arindam Niyogi)

Additional Chief Electoral Officer
West Bengal