Punjab's 'Election Before the Election': Repoll in 52 Wards on 28 November on SC Orders



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Why in News

Repolls will be held on 28 November 2026 in 52 municipal wards of Punjab. The repoll follows a Supreme Court order - over allegations of nomination papers being torn and snatched, candidates being intimidated and some being prevented from filing their papers in the December 2024 municipal elections, the court cancelled the elections in these 52 wards and ordered fresh elections within six weeks.

The Full Schedule and Details

- **Where:** 30 wards of the Patiala Municipal Corporation, 15 wards of the Bagha Purana Municipal Council (Moga) and 7 of the 13 wards of the Dharamkot Municipal Council - 52 in all.
- **Schedule:** Nominations from 13 to 19 November; scrutiny of papers on 20 November; withdrawal of names on 21 November; polling on 28 November from 8 am to 4 pm. The schedule has been issued by the State Election Commission.
- **The 2024 result:** Of the Patiala Municipal Corporation's 60 wards, the AAP had won 50 (BJP and Congress four each, Akali Dal two). Of the 30 wards going to repoll, 27 were held by the AAP; all 22 repoll wards in Moga were also with the AAP.
- **Political significance:** Punjab's Assembly election is due in early 2027, so this repoll has become an 'election before the election' - parties see it as a test of organisation, candidates and voter sentiment.

Basic Information: Who Conducts Municipal Elections

Elections to urban local bodies (municipal corporations, municipalities, nagar panchayats) are conducted by the State Election Commission - under **Article 243ZA**; the same arrangement for panchayats sits in **Article 243K**. This framework came from the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992); urban bodies figure in Part IXA of the Constitution. The Election Commission of India conducts elections to Parliament and state legislatures, not to local bodies - this distinction is often tested in the prelims.

Why Judicial Oversight

Free and fair elections are the foundation of democracy. Interference in the nomination process cuts at the credibility of an election at its root, which is why the Supreme Court cancelled the polls in the affected wards and paved the way for fresh voting. Such orders show the role of both the election commission's autonomy in local self-government and the judiciary's oversight.

The Way Forward

The results of 28 November will give an early indication of the Punjab parties' strength ahead of the 2027 Assembly election. Institutionally, the debate on securing the nomination process and building the capacity of State Election Commissions will continue.

Prelims Practice Questions

Question 1. With reference to the repoll to be held in Punjab on 28 November 2026, consider the following statements:

Statement 1: This repoll is being held on a Supreme Court order, which cancelled elections in 52 wards over nomination-related irregularities in the December 2024 elections

Statement 2: It covers 30 wards of the Patiala Municipal Corporation, 15 of Bagha Purana and 7 of Dharamkot

Statement 3: These municipal corporation elections are being conducted by the Election Commission of India

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

Answer and explanation

Answer: (b)

Statements 1 and 2 are correct; Statement 3 is incorrect - elections to urban local bodies are conducted by the State Election Commission (Article 243ZA), not the Election Commission of India.

Question 2. Elections to urban local bodies are conducted under whose charge?

(a) The Election Commission of India

(b) The State Election Commission

(c) The district administration

(d) The state government's urban development department

Answer and explanation

Answer: (b)

Under Article 243ZA, elections to urban bodies are conducted by the State Election Commission; a similar arrangement for panchayats sits in Article 243K - both came through the 73rd/74th Amendments (1992).

Sources

- Indian Express (16 November 2026): indianexpress.com
- Hindustan Times (13 November 2026): www.hindustantimes.com

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Short answer: The Supreme Court cancelled the December 2024 Punjab municipal elections in 52 wards over nomination-related irregularities; repolls will now be held in these wards of Patiala, Bagha Purana and Dharamkot on 28 November 2026.

Question: In which bodies will the repoll be held?

In 30 wards of the Patiala Municipal Corporation, 15 wards of the Bagha Purana Municipal Council (Moga) and 7 wards of the Dharamkot Municipal Council - 52 wards in all.

Question: Who conducts municipal elections?

The State Election Commission - under Article 243ZA. This arrangement came through the 74th Constitutional Amendment (1992); the Election Commission of India conducts Parliament and Assembly elections.

Question: Why is this repoll politically significant?

Punjab's Assembly election is due in early 2027. Most of the repoll wards were won by the AAP in 2024, so parties see it as an 'election before the election' - a test of voter mood.

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