

**Consulate General of India
Birmingham (UK)**

Date:01/05/2024

Subject: Guidelines for Foreign journalists (or OCI cardholders) travelling to India for election coverage

Regarding issue of visa/ special permit (for OCI cardholders)

- (i) All foreign nationals travelling to India for election coverage must obtain J visa (or special permit in case of OCI cardholders).
- (ii) OCI Cardholders who wish to travel to India to cover elections may apply on the OCI Portal for special permit to undertake journalistic activities.
- (iii) Applicants are hereby advised to focus their reportage as per the purpose outlined in their visa application/special permit application.
- (iv) Applicants are also advised to refer to the Election Commission of India's guidelines on Media Coverage during General Elections available at the following link:
<https://www.eci.gov.in/eci-backend/public/api/download?url=LMAhAK6sOPBp%2FNFF0iRfXbEB1EVSLT41NNLRjYNJJP1KivrUxbfqkDatmHy12e%2Fzye%2BFD1PRcKxhOuiYZ2Ra30zsZVuncZbKMyY%2FE405%2FpuGkEVZcoePgF3iBugVR%2FhzCSv%2B1yJkuMeCkTzY9fhBvw%3D%3D>

2. Travel to Restricted Areas

Foreign journalists (J visa and OCI cardholders with special permit to undertake journalistic activities) who wish to travel for election coverage to Restricted areas such as Northeastern States, Union Territories of J&K, Ladakh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep and certain parts of Himachal Pradesh, parts of Uttarakhand, border areas and other sensitive locations etc may apply for permit as per the process outlined at <https://www.mea.gov.in/facilitation-of-foreign-media.htm>

3. Authority letter by Election Commission of India (ECI) for coverage inside polling booth and counting centre

Foreign journalists are allowed to cover polling booth and counting centre. For this, they need an Authority Letter from ECI. Please refer to PIB's circular dated 8 April 2024 (<https://pib.gov.in/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=518>)

As per Section(e), Foreign National Journalist not based in India and travelling specifically for limited time period for coverage of Indian Elections may submit their request for issue of Authority Letter for Polling and Counting during General Elections, directly to the External Publicity Division of MEA.

The attached form may be printed on the letter head of the media organization. Duly filled-in ink signed hard copy of the form along (i) copy of passport, (ii) copy of J visa or OCI Card with permission for undertaking journalistic activities, (iii) media organization card and (iv) three stamp size photographs (2.5 cm x 2.5 cm), may be sent to the XPD Division by post or delivered by hand at the following address: -

Publicity Officer (XFM)
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
EXTERNAL PUBLICITY & PUBLIC DIPLOMACY (XPD) DIVISION
140-A, A Wing,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001
Tel: [\(011\) - 23385193](tel:011-23385193)
Email: poxfm@meaindia.in, uspr@meaindia.in

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