

Justice Jaishree Thakur (Retd.)
Judge, Punjab and Haryana High Court
Returning Officer
Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana, Chandigarh



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Ref. BCPH/ELECTION/ 6588 /2026

Dated 22.01.2026

To
The Chairperson and Committee Members
High-Powered Election Committee – Phase III
Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana
Chandigarh

Subject: Clarification sought on certain issues.

Dear Members,

Elections to the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana will commence on 30.01.2026 and in this regard certain clarifications are being sought.

i) As per Chapter II of the Bar Council of India Uniform Rules (and Guidelines) for the Elections of Bar Councils, 2016:

“In the elections of State Bar Council, every voter shall be required to exercise at least 5 preferences/options on their ballot papers failing which the ballot may be declared invalid depending on the discretion of Returning Officer.”

The above provision confers discretion upon the Returning Officer to determine whether a ballot in which fewer than five preference votes have been exercised should be treated as valid or invalid.

In my considered opinion, where a voter has clearly and unambiguously exercised even a single preference, such a ballot should be treated as a valid vote.

Kindly advise whether, under the aforesaid Rules, a ballot paper on which only a single preference has been marked is required to be treated as valid, or whether it may be declared invalid?

J. Thakur

ii) Secondly, certain cases have come to light wherein the names of advocates have been omitted from the Final Electoral Roll pursuant to objections raised under the "Bulk Payment" category. Representations have been received, both through e-mail and in person, wherein it has been explained that in some instances payments were made on behalf of advocates who are related by blood, marriage, resulting in multiple payments being made from a single source. Several advocates have appeared in person explaining that they were unaware of the rule that an advocate has to make the payment himself. It was pointed out that one person has made a payment on his own behalf and on behalf of his chamber-mate as well. In such a situation, the payment made should not be considered as "bulk payment", and hence their vote(s) should be considered.

In this context, guidance is sought as to whether any numerical cap ought to be prescribed on the number of payments that may be made from a single source (for instance, limiting such payments to three or five advocates) ?


Justice Jaishree Thakur (Retd.)

Returning Officer
Elections to the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana
Chandigarh.

Justice Ranjit Singh (Retd.), Chairperson
Justice M.M.S. Bedi (Retd.), Member
Kuljit Singh Sidhu (Sr. Advocate), Member
High-Powered Election Committee
Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana, Chandigarh



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Ref. BCPH/ELECTION/ 6501 /2026


Dated ...27.../11.../2026

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE HIGH-POWERED ELECTION COMMITTEE OF
THE BAR COUNCIL OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA, HELD TOAY I.E.
27.01.2026, CHAIRED BY THE HON'BLE CHAIRMAN MR. JUSTICE RANJIT
SINGH (RETD.), JUDGE PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT.**

In the Committee meeting held on 29.11.2025, the fate of payment made in bulk regarding verification form was kept pending. The Committee has considered the issue and is of the view that in cases where payment is made in respect of close blood relation or by husband or wife then such payment can be considered validly made.


Justice Ranjit Singh (Retd)
Judge Punjab & Haryana High Court
Chairperson
High Powered Election Committee Phase III-C


Justice M. M. S. BEDI (Retd)
Judge Punjab & Haryana High Court
Member
High Powered Election Committee Phase III-C


Mr. Kuljeet Singh Sidhu, Sr. Advocate
Punjab & Haryana High Court
Member
High Powered Election Committee Phase III-C

Justice Ranjit Singh (Retd.), Chairperson
Justice M.M.S. Bedi (Retd.), Member
Kuljit Singh Sidhu (Sr. Advocate), Member
High-Powered Election Committee
Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana, Chandigarh



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Ref. BCPH/ELECTION/ 6502 /2026

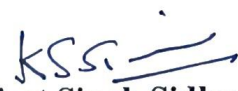
Dated .27.01.2026

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE HIGH-POWERED ELECTION COMMITTEE OF
THE BAR COUNCIL OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA, HELD TOAY I.E.
27.01.2026, CHAIRED BY THE HON'BLE CHAIRMAN MR. JUSTICE RANJIT
SINGH (RETD.), JUDGE PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT.**

As per the Committee, declaring a ballot paper invalid on the ground of one not having exercised at least five preferences would sound unfair. The Committee is of the view that even if such preferences is cast, then the ballot should be considered valid.


Justice Ranjit Singh (Retd)
Judge Punjab & Haryana High Court
Chairperson
High Powered Election Committee Phase III-C


Justice M. M. S. BEDI (Retd)
Judge Punjab & Haryana High Court
Member
High Powered Election Committee Phase III-C


Mr. Kuljeet Singh Sidhu, Sr. Advocate
Punjab & Haryana High Court
Member
High Powered Election Committee Phase III-C