

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, TELANGANA
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION (ELECTIONS) DEPARTMENT
5th Floor, North Block, Buddha Bhavan, Secunderabad -500 003.

Memo No.3133/Elecs.D/A2/2021-6

Dated:09.11.2021

Sub:-Biennial Election to the Telangana Legislative Council from 09 Local Authorities' Constituencies for 12 seats due to retirement of sitting members on 04.01.2022– **Schedule of Election** -Communicated -Reg.

Ref:- ECI, Press Note No. ECI/PN/92/2021, dt: 09.11.2021

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A copy of the ECI Press Note dated: 09.11.2021, wherein the ECI has communicated the following programme for conduct of Biennial Election to the Telangana Legislative Council from 09 Local Authorities' Constituencies for 12 seats due to retirement of sitting members on 04.01.2022 is forwarded herewith for taking further necessary action.

EVENTS		DATES & DAYS
1	Issue of Notifications	16.11.2021, (Tuesday)
2	Last date of making Nominations	23.11.2021, (Tuesday)
3	Scrutiny of Nominations	24.11.2021, (Wednesday)
4	Last date for withdrawal of candidatures	26.11.2021, (Friday)
5	Date of Poll	10.12.2021, (Friday)
6	Hours of Poll	08.00 am to 04.00 pm
7	Counting of Votes	14.12.2021 (Tuesday)
8	Date before which election shall be completed	16.12.2021, (Thursday)

Dr. SHASHANK GOEL,
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER &
E.O. SPL.CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVT.

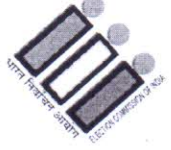
To,
The Director General of Police, Hyderabad. (w.es.)
The Addl.D.G.P (Law & Order), Telangana, Hyderabad.
All the District Superintendents of Police / Commissioner of Police, Telangana State
(through the all Collectors & District Collectors concerned) (w.e.)
All Departments of Telangana Secretariat.

Copy to:

All Officers in G.A. (Elecs) Dept. (w.es.)
All Sections in G.A.(Elecs.) Dept (w.es.)
PM(IT)
SLA

// FORWARDED BY ORDER //


SECTION OFFICER



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India

निर्वाचन सदन
NIRVACHAN SADAN
अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली- 110001
ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

No. ECI/PN/92/2021

Dated: 09th November, 2021

PRESS NOTE

Sub:- Biennial Election to the Telangana Legislative Council from 09 Local Authorities' Constituencies for 12 seats due to retirement of sitting members on 04.01.2022-reg.

The term of office of the 12 sitting members of Telangana Legislative Council from 09 Local Authorities' Constituencies is going to expire on 04.01.2022 as per details given below:

TELANGANA

S.No.	Name of Local Authorities' Constituency	No of Seat(s)	Name of the Member	Date of Retirement
1.	Adilabad	01	Puranam Satish Kumar	04.01.2022
2.	Warangal	01	Pochampally Srinivas Reddy	04.01.2022
3.	Nalgonda	01	Tera Chinnapa Reddy	04.01.2022
4.	Medak	01	V. Bhoopal Reddy	04.01.2022
5.	Nizamabad	01	Kalvakuntla Kavitha	04.01.2022
6.	Khammam	01	Balasani Laxminarayana	04.01.2022
7.	Karimnagar	02	T. Bhanuprasad Rao Naradasu Laxman Rao	04.01.2022
8.	Mahabubnagar	02	Kasireddy Narayan Reddy Kuchukulla Damoder Reddy	04.01.2022
9.	Ranga Reddy	02	Sri Patnam Mahender Reddy Sunkari Raju	04.01.2022

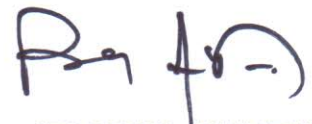
2. Now, the Commission has decided to hold biennial election to Telangana Legislative Council from above mentioned 09 Local Authorities' Constituencies in accordance with the following programme:-

S. No	Events	Dates
1.	Issue of Notifications	16 th November, 2021 (Tuesday)
2.	Last date of making nominations	23 rd November, 2021 (Tuesday)
3.	Scrutiny of nominations	24 th November, 2021 (Wednesday)
4.	Last date for withdrawal of candidatures	26 th November, 2021 (Friday)
5.	Date of Poll	10th December, 2021 (Friday)
6.	Hours of Poll	08:00 am to 04:00 pm
7.	Counting of Votes	14 th December, 2021 (Tuesday)
8.	Date before which election shall be completed	16 th December, 2021 (Thursday)

3. Broad Guidelines of Covid-19 as already issued by ECI as well as the recent guidelines issued by ECI as contained in para 06 of Press Note dated 28.09.2021 available at link <https://eci.gov.in/candidate-political-parties/instructions-on-covid-19/> to be followed, wherever applicable, during entire election process for all persons.

4. The Model Code of Conduct concerning the said election will come into force with immediate effect in the concerned Constituency. Please see the details in Commission's website under <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/4070-biennial-bye-elections-to-the-legislative-councils-from-council-constituencies-by-graduates%E2%80%99-and-teachers%E2%80%99-and-local-authorities%E2%80%99-constituencies-%E2%80%93-mcc-instructions-%E2%80%93-regarding/>

5. The Chief Secretary, Telangana is being directed to depute a senior officer from the State to ensure that the extant instructions regarding COVID-19 containment measures are complied with while making arrangements for conducting the election.



(PRAFULL AWASTHI)
UNDER SECRETARY



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India

निर्वाचन सदन
NIRVACHAN SADAN
अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली - 110 001
ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI - 110 001

No. 322/ECI/INST/FUNC/BIEN-LC /2016

Dated: 26th December, 2016

To

- The Chief Electoral Officers
1. Maharashtra, Mumbai,
 2. Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow,
 3. Bihar, Patna,
 4. Karnataka, Bangalore,
 5. Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.
 6. Telangana, Hyderabad.

Subject: Biennial/Bye-Elections to the Legislative Councils from Council Constituencies - by Graduates' and Teachers' and Local Authorities' Constituencies- MCC-instructions - regarding.

Sir,

I am directed to state that some experience during conduct of elections to Legislative Councils shows that there is lack of clarity with regard to applicability of provisions of Model Code of Conduct in such elections.

2 The Commission constituted a Working Group to examine the matter. The Commission, having considered the report of the Working Group and the matter in its entirety, has directed that all provisions of Model Code of Conduct for the political parties and candidates' shall apply *mutatis mutandis* in Biennial including Bye Elections to the State Legislative Councils from Graduates' & Teachers' Constituencies as well as Local Authorities' Constituencies. Consequently, various instructions issued by the Commission from time to time in clarification of the MCC provisions would also apply for such elections.

3. I am further to say that the following instructions of the Commission which have been issued from time to time to ensure level playing field and also to ensure that a party in power doesn't misuse its position for electoral gains, shall also be applicable in connection with Biennial/Bye Elections to the State Legislative Councils from Graduates' & Teachers' Constituencies as well as Local Authorities' Constituencies (from the date of announcement of election till the date of completion of election).

1 of 5

- I. Ministers, whether Central or State (including Chief Minister) may make official visit to any district(s) in which any Biennial/Bye-election from a Council Constituency is being held subject to the following conditions: -
 - a. They shall not do any inauguration/laying of foundation stones of any educational institution, which are constituents of Graduates' and Teachers' Constituencies.
 - b. Official visit shall not be combined with the election related work/tours.
 - c. There shall be no announcement of new policy programme/ policy likely to influence the graduates, the teachers and members of Local Authorities who form the electorate of the Constituencies going to poll.
- II. No official of any rank of the district(s) dealing with election related work where the biennial/bye-elections are being held shall be called to attend any meeting by any Minister at any place, even in another district, where election is not being held. Any official who meets the Minister on his private visit to the constituency where elections are being held shall be deemed to be guilty of misconduct under the relevant service rules; and if he happens to be an officer mentioned in Section 129 (1) of the Representation of People Act, 1951, he shall also be additionally considered to have violated the statutory provisions of that section and liable to penal action provided there under.
- III. No member of any Local Authority which forms part of the electorate of a Local Authorities' Constituency shall be called for any meeting/video conference by any Minister (in his capacity as Minister). Routine meetings of the Local Bodies, when essential, may be held with the prior permission of the District Election Officer of the District concerned.
- IV. No pilot car(s) or other car(s) with beacon lights of any colour or car(s) affixed with sirens of any kind making his presence conspicuous shall be used by any Minister during his private visit to the constituency, even if the State administration has granted him a security cover requiring presence of armed guards accompanying him on tour.
- V. No policy announcement or programme, which influences the electorate either directly or indirectly, shall be initiated in the Government Departments till the completion of elections.

- VI. On need basis and in consultation with CEO of the state/ECI Observer, the DEO/RO should put in place for every tehsil a special video team to videograph political meeting at public places and to record visits of the Ministers and other important political functionaries. The ECI observer shall see the video recording in the evening of the same day so that he can report any violation to the Commission in prescribed format.
- VII. In case of elections from Local Authorities' Constituencies, the restrictions on "Official Tours" by Central & State Ministers will also be applicable to the use of any "Official Cars" by "Office Bearers" of Local Authorities, like, Mayors of Municipal Corporations, Presidents of Municipal Councils & Zilla Parishads. The use of official cars by them shall only be allowed for travel to & from Office to Residence.
- VIII. Public places such as maidans etc., for holding election meetings, and use of helipads for air-flights in connection with elections shall not be monopolized by the party in power. Other parties and candidates shall also be allowed to use them on first-cum-first served basis.
- IX. No fresh Sanction of work using the IT Platform to be used depending upon the MP/MLA/MLC schemes for work that would amount to influencing the electorate.
- X. There shall be a total ban on the transfer of Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers appointed for Biennial elections/bye-elections to State Legislative Councils after the announcement of elections and this ban will be in force till the completion of elections. The transfer orders in respect of the above officers issued prior to the date of announcement but not implemented should not be given effect to without obtaining the specific permission of the Commission. In those cases, where transfer of an officer is necessary on account of administrative exigencies, the State Govt. may with full justification approach the Commission for prior clearance.
- XI. In order to conduct free and fair elections to keep a check on adverse role of money power and to check the movement of black money during biennial elections/bye-elections to Legislative Council, the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued on 29.05.2015, excepting deployment of Static Surveillance Teams, should be made applicable.

- XII. State and District Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) shall be appointed, as prescribed in the Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring, immediately on announcement of biennial/ bye elections for pre-certification of election advertisements as in case of TV Channels / Cable Network, Radio including private FM Channels, Cinema Halls, Audio-Visual displays in public place and social media and also monitoring the general conduct of political functionaries during campaign.
- XIII. The bulk SMSs/Voice messages on phone in election campaigning shall also be in the purview of pre-certification of election advertisements as in case of TV Channels / Cable Network, Radio including private FM Channels, Cinema Halls, Audio-Visual displays in public place and social media. The legal provisions, as applicable to other modes of electronic media shall also be applicable to bulk SMSs/ Voice messages.
- XIV. Under Section 29 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 read with Rule 69 of the Conduct of the Election Rules, 1961, a place of poll is fixed for conducting poll in respect of election to the Council of States and the State Legislative Councils by MLAs. As per Section 135C, "dry day" is to be declared in Polling Areas and polling area is defined in Section 25 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which is applicable to elections from Constituencies i.e. for elections to Lok Sabha, Legislative Assemblies and elections to Legislative Councils from Graduates', Teachers' and Local Authorities' Constituencies.
- XV. The provision regarding prevention of misuse of vehicles and regulation of convoys during campaign period as in the case of elections to House of People / Legislative Assemblies shall be made applicable for Council elections also.
- XVI. Restriction on the presence of political functionaries in a constituency after the campaign period is over i.e., 48 hours before the closure of the poll as in the case of elections to House of People / Legislative Assemblies shall be made applicable for Council elections from Council Constituencies also.
4. In the context of certain queries that have been raised in this connection, it is clarified that: -
- (a) The practice of keeping the electors in hotels/resorts and other similar places during election period would amount to bribing of electors. It is clarified that

such practice shall be construed as violation of sub Para (4) of Para I-General Conduct of MCC apart from being violation of Section 171 B of IPC.

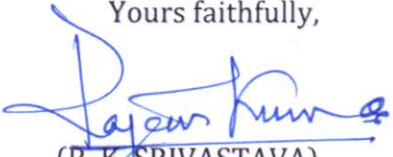
(b) The phrase 'the rest houses/dak bungalows or other Government accommodation' in paragraph (VII- (iii)) of MCC would also include *Guest Houses* of all institutions that are getting Government assistance in any form of grant-in-aid etc.

(c) With regard to paragraph (VII-(v) & (vi)) of MCC, it is clarified that these would be made applicable only with regard to the Graduates'/Teachers'/Local Authorities' Constituencies where the election is being held.

Kindly inform all concerned including all registered and recognized parties based in your state.

Please ensure compliance.

Yours faithfully,



(R. K. SRIVASTAVA)
SR. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

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ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Ashoka Road, Nirvachan Sadan, New Delhi-110001

No: ECI/PN/50/2020

Dated 21st August, 2020

PRESS NOTE

E.C.I.
covering letter

Election Commission of India approved the broad guidelines for conduct of general/bye elections during COVID-19 period. These are available at <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/12167-guidelines-for-conduct-of-general-electionbye-election-during-covid-19>.

After onset of COVID-19 pandemic in India, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) have been issuing guidelines from time to time. In their latest circular dated 29th July, 2020, MHA has issued comprehensive guidelines/directives to be followed countywide. Similarly, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has also issued SOP on disinfection, sanitization, and prevention for containing COVID-19.

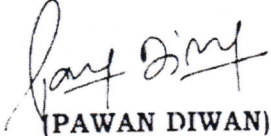
Earlier, Commission, on 17th July, 2020, had sought views/suggestions of National/State Political Parties till 31st July, 2020, and had further extended the period till 11th August, 2020 on request of the Political parties. Commission has considered the views/suggestions received from various Political Parties and Chief Electoral Officers of States/UTs on election campaign and public meetings.

Salient features of the guidelines include the following:

The Commission has revised the norms of number of persons accompanying the candidate and number of vehicles at the time of nomination. It has also created optional facility to fill the nomination form and the affidavit online and submission of the same, after taking print, before the RO concerned. For the first time, the candidates will have the option to deposit security amount for contesting the elections online. Keeping the containment guidelines in view, the Commission has limited the number of persons including candidate for door to door campaign to five.

Public meeting and road shows shall be permissible with suitable instructions subject to containment instructions issued by the MHA/State. Face Mask, Sanitizer, Thermal scanners, gloves, face shield and PPE kits shall be used during the electoral process ensuring social distancing norms. Hand gloves shall be provided to all the electors for signing on the voter register and pressing button of EVM for voting.

The Chief Electoral Officers of concerned States/UTs, shall make comprehensive State/District & AC election plans regarding arrangement and preventive measures following these guidelines taking local conditions into account. These plans will be prepared in consultation with Nodal Officer for COVID-19 in their respective States/UTs.


(PAWAN DIWAN)
UNDER SECRETARY

**ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI – 110001**

No.4/2020/SDR/VOL-I

Dated: 9th October, 2020

To,

The President/General Secretary of
the recognized National/State Political Parties

Subject: Campaign during the period of pandemic COVID-19-reg.

Sir/Madam,

Election Commission of India has announced the schedule for conduct of the General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Bihar on 25.09.2020 (Press Note No. ECI/PN/64/2020) and of the Bye-Elections of various State on 29.09.2020 and 05.10.2020.

2. It would be recalled that on 21.08.2020, Election Commission issued broad guidelines setting the paradigm for the conduct of elections during the period of COVID-19 after taking inputs from political parties and Chief Electoral Officers of the States/UTs. These guidelines were widely circulated and are available at <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/12167-broad-guidelines-for-conduct-of-general-electionbye-election-during-covid-19/>.

3. Further, Election Commission on 7.10.2020, after wide ranging consultations in Bihar during its visit from 29.09.2020 to 01.10.2020 with National/State Political Parties, Senior Officers of the State, CEO, DEOs, SPs, etc. and deliberations in Delhi with a view to ensuring the conduct of **free, fair, peaceful, transparent, ethical and safe** elections during COVID-19, Commission has **revised the norms concerning Star Campaigners for all ongoing and future elections during the period of pandemic COVID-19** in the following

manner **with immediate effect**: (<https://eci.gov.in/files/file/12343-revised-guidelines-of-star-campaigners-for-elections-held-during-the-period-of-pandemic-regarding/>)

1) The **maximum limit** on the number of star campaigners for recognized National/State political parties **shall be 30 in place of 40** and for unrecognized registered political parties it **shall be 15 in place of 20** during the period of pandemic.

2) Accordingly, **the period of submission** of the list of star campaigners is extended **from 7 days to 10 days from the date of notification**. Political parties, which have already submitted a list of star campaigners shall resubmit a revised list within the stipulated period.

3) Request for permission for the campaigning by star campaigners shall be submitted to the district election authorities **at least 48 hours** before the start of campaign so that all necessary safety measures are put in place by all concerned stakeholders well in time.

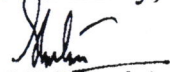
4. COVID-19 pandemic has affected the electoral process world over. In these challenging times, COVID-19 related guidelines issued by MHA, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and State/UT Governments from time to time have prescribed detailed preventive measures including wearing of masks, use of sanitizers, observance of social distancing at all stages wherever public interface in physical form is involved. Observance of these preventive measures is a duty cast upon all the stakeholders in the larger interest of public health. This would require advance planning, prior permission from the district authorities, massive awareness activities, and ensuring strict discipline by all concerned. As representatives of public, this onerous responsibility rests with the political parties to ensure that they not only cooperate with the district machineries in following the due norms of

public health safety as prescribed, but also instill a sense of discipline for civic behavior in their cadre while doing ground management during campaign times. It is requested that you may like to issue advisory to all your field representatives to demonstrate utmost vigil and care to abide by all the extant instructions in larger interest of public health and avoid any penal action for breaching the provisions.

5. District Election machinery is making all necessary electoral arrangement, taking into account safety requirements, as directed by Commission. However, as an important stakeholder of electoral process, you are requested to demonstrate the utmost vigil and care during the period of campaign in larger interest of public health.

6. Election Commission is confident that it will receive fullest cooperation from political parties in this regard.

Yours faithfully,


(N T Bhutia)
Secretary

Copy to: - The Chief Electoral Officers of all States and UTs with the request that a copy of this letter may be sent to all registered political parties with headquarters in the State/UT including the State Units of the recognized National and State Parties.

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI -110001

No. 4/2021/SDR/Vol.I

Dated: 9th April, 2021

To,

The President/General Secretary
of recognized National/State political parties.

Subject - Reiterating Guidelines for strict observance of Covid Protocols during election rallies, meetings, campaigning, etc. - regarding

Sir,

It would be recalled that Election Commission issued detailed guidelines for conduct of general election/bye election on 21.08.2020, in view of COVID-19 pandemic in the country, after having considered views/suggestions of various National/State political parties and Chief Electoral Officers of States/UTs. In the said guidelines, it was inter-alia stated in Item no. 13(3) **that the political parties and candidates concerned should ensure that all COVID-19 related requirement like face masks, sanitizers, thermal scanning etc. are fulfilled during each of these activities. It was further stated that non-compliance of instructions during the period of public interface will attract actions as per provisions of Sections 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, besides invocation of Section 188 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 and as also specified in MHA Order no. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 29.07.2020.**

2. Those guidelines were followed during general election to Bihar state assembly and several bye-elections in 2020.

3. While announcing the election schedule of Legislative Assemblies of 5 States/UTs on 26.02.2021, the Commission again stipulated that the same guidelines should be followed during these elections. **Guidelines were further reiterated vide letter no. 4/2021/SDR/Vol-I dated 12.03.2021** to all recognized political parties and CEOs of all States/UTs for compliance (copy enclosed).

4. It is widely known that in the recent weeks, COVID cases are being reported in larger numbers. **However, instances of election meetings/campaigns have come to the notice of the Commission, where norms of social distancing, wearing of masks etc. have been flouted in disregard to the Commission's above guidelines.** Instances of star campaigners/political leaders/candidates not observing COVID protocols including non-

wearing of masks themselves at stage or while campaigning have come to notice. By doing so, the political parties and candidates are exposing themselves as well as the public attending such election meetings to the grave danger of infection.

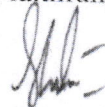
5. **The Commission has taken a serious view of the laxity** in maintaining the norms, particularly not wearing masks and not keeping social distance by political leaders on dais/ stage and therefore, reiterates the said guidelines issued on 21.08.2020 referred to above **for observance in all seriousness.**

6. **Political parties, leaders, campaigners, candidates, existing or aspiring policy makers are expected to be torch bearers for the campaign against COVID** and hence are expected to not only set an example by maintaining social distancing, wearing masks and following prescribed protocols but also by exhorting all the local formations who attend programmes to follow COVID protocols.

7. The Commission seeks fullest cooperation from the political parties and candidates of strictest observance of the protocols so that all the COVID guidelines are adhered to by all the participants including organizers in the electioneering. **It is advisable that political leaders/candidates who have incumbent duty to control spread of Covid, demonstrate by their personal example and nudge all supporters in the beginning of rally, meetings, campaign itself to wear masks, use sanitizers and put in place crowd control measures as per social distancing norms.**

8. It is clarified that the Commission, in cases of breach, will not hesitate in banning public meetings, rallies etc. of the defaulting candidates/star campaigners/ political leaders without any further reference.

Yours faithfully,



(N. T. Bhutia)
Secretary

By Speed Post/Email

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI - 110001

No. 464/WB-LA/2021

Dated 16th April 2021

To,

President/Chairperson/General Secretary

National/State Political Parties

Madam/Sir

The Commission, cognizant of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, has issued detailed guidelines **dated 21.08.2020** prescribing arrangements at polling stations for voters, for polling officials, as well as for political campaign to be followed during the conduct of Assembly Elections in the State of Bihar. The same guidelines were prescribed for all Bye Elections that were conducted in 2020. These Covid **guidelines were reiterated** while announcing the Assembly Elections for the States of Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and UT of Puducherry on **26.02.2021**.

2. It had been brought to the notice of the Commission that at some occasions, during public meetings, rallies, etc. these guidelines had not been followed. In view of this, the Commission **reiterated Covid Guidelines on 09.04.2021** for the conduct of safe elections wherein it also gave a strict warning that in case of breach Commission will not hesitate in banning public meetings, rallies, etc.

3. In addition to the guidelines, the Commission has also taken the following measures to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic during the period of elections:

- 1) Initiatives have been taken for generating intensive awareness among voters and all stakeholders connected to the election process regarding the process of fighting against the Covid pandemic.

- 2) The maximum number of electors per booth has been reduced to 1000 from 1500.
- 3) Facilities of casting of postal ballot has been extended to PWD electors, 80 yrs +, and Covid suspect/positive.
- 4) Mandatory use of mask, sanitisers maintaining distance among the polling personnel during training, imparting training in small batches in big rooms.
- 5) The handling of the EVM and VVPATs during different stages of its preparation like First Level of Checking (FLC), Randomisation and Assembly Constituency wise physical segregation, Commissioning were done, following all Covid norms like use of gloves, sanitising of the area, use of mask, placement of tables maintaining distancing protocols.
- 6) Mandatory use of mask, face shield, sanitizer, gloves by the Polling Personnel during the poll process.
- 7) Mandatory use of masks by every voter. Stock of reserve masks is kept at the booth for providing to default electors.
- 8) Hand Sanitizer for all voters before entry.
- 9) Checking of body temperature of all electors by IR thermometer by health workers. If any person has a temperature higher than normal temperature, he/she will need to come in the last hour of the poll fixed for Covid patients.
- 10) Use of disposable gloves for right hand use of voters to push the button of the Ballot unit of EVM.
- 11) Disposal of gloves at exit in bins and disposal of such bio medical waste by Agency after poll is over
- 12) Marking of 6 feet distance for queue outside the polling station to maintain social distancing between voters.
- 13) Sanitisation of polling stations.
- 14) Declaring all polling officials as frontline workers for getting them vaccinated against Covid-19. More than 85% polling personnel have been vaccinated till date. Moreover, vaccination was also done for all officials i.e civil and police who are associated with the election process, in addition to Polling Personnel.
- 15) Providing PPE kits for facilitating voting by Covid suspect/positives.
- 16) Sector level health regulators have been appointed for monitoring and supervision.

Aforesaid guidelines issued by the Commission are supplementary to the directions prescribed from time to time by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and orders issued by the Central and State Governments under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 to contain the spread of Covid-19.

4. The Commission on 16.04.2021 invoking its powers under Article 324 has already ordered the following:

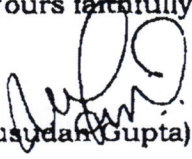
1. **No rallies, public meetings, street plays, Nukkad sabhas, shall be allowed on any day during the days of campaign between 7pm and 10 am w.e.f 7pm of 16.4.2021.**
2. **Silence period for rallies, public meetings, street plays, Nukkad Sabhhas, bike rallies or any gathering for campaigning purposes shall be extended to 72 hours before the end of the poll for Phase 6, Phase 7 and Phase 8 in the State of West Bengal. Thereby, for these phases, campaign shall end at 6.30PM on 19.04.2021; on 23.04.2021; and on 26.04.2021 respectively.**

5. The Commission has further considered the matter and after taking the prevailing unprecedented public health situation has ordered the following:

- 1) **Candidates and Political Parties shall ensure absolute repeat absolute adherence to Covid guidelines in letter and spirit. Violations, if any shall be sternly dealt with and action, including criminal action, taken as per extant legal framework.**
- 2) **It shall be the responsibility of the organisers of public meetings, rallies, etc to provide of masks and sanitisers to every person attending these meetings, rallies, etc at their cost which shall be added and counted within limits of prescribed expenditure. Organisers shall also ensure proper usage of masks, sanitisers and also be responsible for maintaining minimum social distance by everyone.**
- 3) **Star campaigners/political leaders/candidates/aspiring policy makers shall demonstrate by their personal example and nudge all supporters in the beginning of the rally, meeting and any other event during campaign to wear mask, use sanitisers and maintain social distance and put in place such crowd control measures as are necessary for observance of extant guidelines.**
- 4) **District Election Officers and Returning Officers shall take strict measures to enforce Covid guidelines during campaign. They shall cancel public meetings, rallies, etc. if any violations are observed, in addition to invoking penal sections.**
- 5) **Special Observers and General, Police and Expenditure Observers shall strictly monitor compliance of covid norms during campaign.**

- 6) **Chief Secretary, West Bengal, CEO, West Bengal , all DEOs and ROs** of the remaining three phases shall ensure strict compliance of this order and enforcement of extant guidelines. Special observers and other district/ constituency (ies) level observers shall regularly monitor compliance.

Yours faithfully


(Madhusudan Gupta)

Secretary

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

No. 437/WB-LA/2021

Dated :21st April, 2021

To,

President/General Secretary
of all recognized National/State Political parties

Subject: Guidelines in relation to campaigns etc. during the Covid-19 pandemic - reg.

Sir,

The Election Commission of India, in view of Covid-19 pandemic, has issued detailed guidelines dated 21.08.2020 prescribing covid safe arrangements at polling stations for voters/officials as well as for election campaigns. These guidelines were reiterated while announcing Assembly Elections for the states of Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and UT of Puducherry on 26.02.2021. These were further reiterated on 09.04.2021 warning that "in cases of breach Commission will not hesitate in banning public meetings, etc. of the defaulting candidates/ star campaigners/political leaders".

However, finding violations Commission on 16th April 2021 invoking Art 324 has extended the silence period in ensuing West Bengal Assembly elections 2021 and has instructed that:

(a) No rallies, public meetings, street plays, Nukkad sabhas, shall be allowed on any day during the days of campaign between 7pm and 10 am w.e.f 7 pm of 16.4.2021.

(b) Silence period for rallies, public meetings, street plays, nukkad sabhas, bike rallies or any gathering for campaigning purposes shall be extended to 72 hours before the end of the poll for Phase 6, Phase 7 and Phase 8 in the State of West Bengal.

The Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta, vide its common Order dated 20.04.2021 passed in WPA No. 117 of 2021 and WPA No. 118 of 2021, while taking a view of the Affidavit filed by CEO West Bengal detailing steps taken for implementation of Covid-19 instructions/guidelines was pleased to observe as under:

"That being so, it would be open to the Election Commission of India and the Chief Electoral Officer to take requisite steps as stated in paragraph 43 of the report and also to ensure successful implementation of COVID Protocols by requiring strict compliance of prescribed guidelines and orders by all political parties, electoral candidates and all other concerned with the election process "

Commission therefore once again warns that in case parties/candidates don't abide by the laid down Covid protocols during campaign, necessary action under Disaster Management Act 2005, Epidemic Diseases Act 1897, etc. will be initiated immediately by the district authorities and their permission for further campaigns, even if granted previously, shall also be cancelled. Chief Secretary West Bengal, Chief Electoral Officer West Bengal, and all District Election Officers are also being directed to scrupulously follow Hon'ble High Court's directions and extant guidelines.

Thanking you

Yours Faithfully

Sudeep Jain
(Sudeep Jain)

Deputy Election Commissioner

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No.464/WB-I.A/2021

Dated: 22nd April, 2021

ORDER

Whereas, the Commission, cognizant of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, has issued detailed guidelines dated 21.08.2020 prescribing arrangements at polling stations for voters, for polling officials, as well as for political campaign to be followed during the conduct of Assembly Elections in the State of Bihar. The same guidelines were prescribed for all Bye Elections that were conducted in 2020; and

Whereas, the above Covid guidelines were reiterated while announcing the Assembly Elections for the States of Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and UT of Puducherry on 26.02.2021; and

Whereas, the Commission observed violation of the Covid guidelines during public meetings, rallies, etc and again reiterated Covid Guidelines on 09.04.2021 for the conduct of safe elections in which the Commission also gave a strict warning that in case of breach the Commission will not hesitate in banning public meetings, rallies, etc.; and

Whereas, the aforesaid guidelines issued by the Commission are supplementary to the directions prescribed from time to time by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and orders issued by the Central and State Governments under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 to contain the spread of Covid-19; and

Whereas, the Commission is vested with the responsibility of conducting free and fair elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures and to the Offices of the President and the Vice-President of India; and

Whereas, it is a well settled law that Article 324 of the Constitution of India confers upon the Commission the widest possible power in the matter of "*superintendence, direction and control of... and the conduct of, all elections... to the Legislature of every State...*"; and

Whereas, the Commission has noted several instances of election meetings and campaigns wherein norms of social distancing, wearing of masks etc. have been flouted in blatant disregard of the Commission's aforesaid guidelines; and

Whereas, the Commission has also taken a serious view against repeated violations by star campaigners/political leaders/candidates who are supposed to be torch bearers for the campaign against Covid-19, grossly violating Covid-19 protocols, thereby exposing themselves as well as the public to the danger of infection; and

Whereas, in view of unprecedented public health concerns, the Commission on 16.4.2021, invoking its plenary powers under Article 324, ordered the following:

1. No rallies, public meetings, street plays, Nukkad sabhas, shall be allowed on any day during the days of campaign between 7pm and 10am w.c.f. 7pm of 16.04.2021.
2. Silence period for rallies, public meetings, street plays, Nukkad Sabhas, bike rallies or any gathering for campaigning purposes shall be extended to 72 hours before the end of the poll for Phase 6, Phase 7 and Phase 8 in the State of West Bengal. Thereby, for these phases, campaign shall end at 6.30PM on 19.04.2021; on 23.04.2021; and on 26.04.2021 respectively; and

Whereas, on 21.04.2021, the Commission further ordered that in case parties/candidates don't abide by the laid down Covid protocols during campaign, necessary action under pandemic act etc will be initiated immediately by the district authorities and their permission for further campaigns, even if granted previously, shall also be cancelled; and

Whereas, the Commission has noted with anguish that many political parties/candidates are still not adhering to the prescribed safety norms during the public gatherings and this is making difficult for the State/District election machineries to enforce the aforesaid directions fully; and

Now, therefore, in view of aforesaid and taking all material facts into consideration, and in addition to Commission earlier orders dated 21.08.2020, 26.02.2021, 16.04.2021 and 21.04.2021, the Commission invoking its powers under Article 324 further orders that w.c.f. from 7.00pm of 22.04.2021, in the State of West Bengal -

1. No road show/ *Pad-Yatra* shall be permissible;
2. No cycle/bike/vehicle rally shall be permissible.
3. No public meeting beyond the limit of 500 persons at a place subject to availability of adequate space with social distancing, adhering to COVID-19 safety norms, shall be permissible.
4. Permission for road show, cycle/bike/vehicle rally, if granted already, stands withdrawn. Permission for public meeting, if granted already, stands modified to the extent above.

CEO West Bengal, all DEOs and ROs shall bring this to the notice of all concerned immediately and shall ensure compliance repeat ensure compliance without fail.

By Order of the Commission


(RAKESH KUMAR)
SECRETARY



Election Urgent

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग सचिवालय

**SECRETARIAT OF
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

निर्वाचन सदन,
अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली-110001

Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 464/WB-LA/2021

Dated: 23rd April, 2021

To,

Chief Secretary,
State of West Bengal,
Kolkata.

Subject: Compliance of COVID-19 norms, under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, during public campaign in the ongoing elections in the State of West Bengal-regarding.

Sir,

It has been brought to the notice of the Commission that in public campaigns during the ongoing elections, the COVID appropriate behaviour, as mandated under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, has not been adhered to by the public in general and by the political parties/candidates in particular. It is also observed that the authorities under the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) have not been enforcing the norms with promptitude, prescribed under the said Act, despite the Act providing penal consequences as a sanction for such violations.

2. It would be recalled that since the advent of pandemic, NDMA/SDMA have been prescribing guidelines for appropriate COVID behaviour during public gatherings to stop the spread of COVID-19. On 21.08.2020, the Commission framed broad guidelines which provided that the State specific guidelines would be drawn up by the State authorities taking into consideration local conditions. The Commission announced the ongoing elections on 26.02.2021 and it was expected that all would adhere to the extant instructions as specified by NDMA/SDMA and the concerned authorities under the 2005 Act would take appropriate action for enforcement. After observing the violations during public campaigns, the Commission has issued series of orders/advisories on 09.04.2021, 16.04.2021, 21.04.2021, and 22.04.2021 for adherence to COVID-19 norms during the public campaign. However, the Commission has observed that a few actions have been taken by the authorities empowered by the 2005 Act on the ground. It seems that very little fruitful actions have been done by the SDMA against such omissions by the district authorities in the State.

4. In view of the aforesaid, the Commission has directed that all necessary measures must be taken for strict compliance with COVID safety norms during all public campaigns in the State under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 by the concerned empowered authorities on the ground.

Yours faithfully,

(RAKESH KUMAR)

Secretary

By Speed Post/Email

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Tel: 011-23052246
Fax 011-23052001
Website: www.eci.gov.in

निर्वाचनसदन,
अशोकरोड, नई दिल्ली-110001.
NirvachanSadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.464/INST/2021/EPS

Dated: 28 April, 2021

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
all States/UTs

Subject: General Election to Legislative Assemblies of West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry, 2021 and bye election in various states - Broad Guidelines for Covid-Safety During Counting of votes on 2nd May, 2021- Regarding.

Sir,

The Commission had issued Broad Guidelines for conduct of General Election/ Bye- Election during Covid-19 after on 21st August, 2020 incorporating views/suggestion of National/State Political parties. The Commission also considered the views and suggestion given by the Chief Secretaries before finalizing the broad Covid-19 guidelines.

2. After issuing the above guidelines, the Commission conducted General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Bihar and other Bye-Elections to various State during Covid-19 period by strictly following these Guidelines in 2020.

3. Even though the spread of pandemic had reduced in the month of February 2021 Commission continued with same strict regime of Covid safety guidelines and announced the election of 5 poll going States/UT's. The Commission has already conducted polls of ongoing General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry along with Bye-Election to Various States and has also conducted 7 Phases of Election in West Bengal and 8th Phase of West Bengal Election is due on 29th April, 2021.

4. Counting of votes for all these elections is due on 02.05.2021.

5. In view of second wave of pandemic and in order to ensure a completely Covid safe arrangements during counting the Commission has

been regularly consulting the Chief Secretaries and the Chief Electoral Officers of all 5 poll going States/UT and has taken their views and safety Measures/protocol to be followed during the pandemic.

6. After considering the views and inputs from Chief Secretaries, Health Secretaries and the Chief Electoral Officers of all poll going States/UT, the Commission has directed all the poll going states/UT to adhere the following instructions during the counting process of the General Elections/Bye-Elections-

- i. **DEO shall be the Nodal Officer at each Counting Centre to ensure adherence to the following the COVID-19 related norms at Counting Centres, with assistance of Nodal Health Officer.**
- ii. **Compliance Certificate in respect of Counting Centre that all arrangement has been made as per extant COVID guidelines shall be obtained from the concerned Health Authorities.**
- iii. **No candidates/agents will be allowed inside the counting hall without undergoing RT-PCR/RAT test or without having 2 doses of vaccination against Covid-19 and will have to produce Negative RT-PCR report or RAT report or Vaccination reports within 48 hours of start of counting. The DEO shall make arrangement of RT-PCR/RAT Test to Candidates/Counting agents before the day of Counting. List of counting agents shall be made available by the contesting candidates to the RO concerned by 1700 hours on the day three days prior to the date fixed for counting of votes. (para 15.12.2 of RO handbook)**
- iv. **No public gathering outside the counting venue shall be allowed during the process of counting.**
- v. The Counting Hall should be sufficiently big to maintain Social Distancing, and should have proper ventilation, windows, exhaust fan etc. as per available protocol of SDMA.
- vi. The counting centers shall be disinfected before, during and after the counting.
- vii. Sealed outer boxes of EVM/VVPAT shall also be sanitized/disinfected.
- viii. Number of Counting tables to be allowed in a counting hall as per the size of Hall and keeping in view safety norms prescribed for Covid-19.

Hence, counting of votes of a constituency may be considered at 3-4 halls by appointing additional Assistant Returning Officers.

- ix. At the entry of hall/ room/ premises-
 - a. Thermal Scanning of all persons shall be carried out;
 - b. Sanitizer, soap and water shall be made available and every person entering in hall shall sanitize his/her hand.
- x. No one having any symptom of COVID-19 like fever, Cold etc. shall be allowed to enter in the Counting Hall.
- xi. Candidate may appoint/replace the counting agents in case report is positive.
- xii. Social distancing shall be maintained inside Counting Hall, seating arrangement of Counting Personnel/Agents etc. should be made as per extant COVID-19 guidelines of NDMA/SDMA.
- xiii. There shall be sufficient number of PPE Kit for Counting Agents/Candidates. The Counting Agents sitting arrangement shall be made in such a way that between 2 counting agents 1 agent shall be in PPE.
- xiv. The following items shall be provided to every counting official and security personnel in addition to other prescribed items:
 - a. Mask
 - b. Sanitizer
 - c. Face-Shield
 - d. Gloves
- xv. For counting of Postal Ballots, additional number of AROs may be deputed. If required, Postal Ballots may also be counted in a separate hall under the supervision of the Returning Officer/Assistant Returning officer.
- xvi. As per the government guidelines, there shall be proper arrangement of disposal of COVID related wastage viz Mask, Face Shield, PPE Kit, gloves etc.
- xvii. There shall be proper display of guidelines "Does & Don't" at convenient places including entrance gate and inside counting hall.

The Commission vide instruction No.464/INST/2021/EPS dated 27th April, 2021 has already directed that

- i. No victory procession after the counting on 02.05.2021 shall be allowed.
- ii. Not more than two persons shall be allowed to accompany the winning candidate or his/her authorized representative receive the certificate of election from the Returning Officer.


Non-compliance of Instructions - Anybody violating instructions on COVID-19 measures will be liable to proceeded against as per the provisions of Section 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, besides legal action under Section 188 of the IPC, and other legal provisions as applicable, as specified in Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 29th July, 2020 of Ministry of Home Affairs. District Election Officer should bring this to the notice of all concerned.

Based on these broad guidelines, a detailed COVID-19 related comprehensive plan for counting arrangements will be prepared at the State level, taking local conditions into account. Three-layer plan will be prepared in consultation with the concerned Nodal Health Officers: AC, District, and State levels. In case of bye-elections, the plans will be prepared at the District and AC levels in consultation with respective Nodal Health Officers.

The above instructions shall be followed strictly in letter and spirit by all concerned authorities.

These instructions shall be brought to the notice of all political parties/contesting candidates immediately.

Yours faithfully,


(SUMIT MUKHERJEE)
SR. PR. SECRETARY

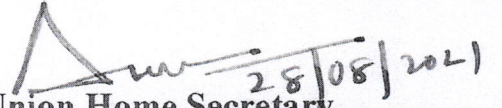
No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A)
Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs

North Block, New Delhi-110001

Dated 28th August, 2021

ORDER

In exercise of the powers, conferred under Section 10(2)(1) of the Disaster Management Act 2005, the undersigned hereby directs that the Order of Ministry of Home Affairs of even number dated 29th June, 2021, to ensure compliance to the containment measures for COVID-19, as conveyed vide Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) DO No. Z.28015/85/2021-DM Cell dated 28th June 2021, will remain in force upto 30th September, 2021.


Union Home Secretary

and, Chairman, National Executive Committee (NEC)

To:

1. The Secretaries of Ministries/ Departments of Government of India
2. The Chief Secretaries/Administrators of States/Union Territories
(As per list attached)

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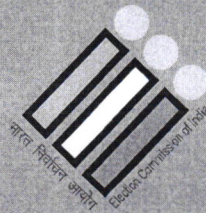
- i. All Members of the National Executive Committee
- ii. Member Secretary, National Disaster Management Authority



BROAD GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT OF GENERAL ELECTIONS/ BYE-ELECTIONS DURING COVID-19

AUGUST 2020

Document No. 324.6.EPS.OT.001.2020



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

'No voter to be left behind'

**BROAD GUIDELINES
FOR
CONDUCT OF
GENERAL ELECTIONS/BYE-ELECTIONS
DURING COVID-19**

AUGUST 2020

Document No. 324.6.EPS.OT.001.2020



ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

BROAD GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT OF GENERAL ELECTIONS/ BYE-ELECTIONS DURING COVID-19

After onset of COVID-19 pandemic in India, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare(MoHFW) have been issuing guidelines from time to time. In their latest circular dated 29th July, 2020, Ministry of Home Affairs has issued comprehensive guidelines/directives to be followed countrywide. Similarly, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has also issued SOP on disinfection, sanitization, and prevention for containing COVID-19.

The Commission on 17th July, 2020, sought views/suggestions of National/State Political Parties till 31st July, 2020, which on request, Commission further extended the period till 11th August, 2020. The Commission has considered the views/suggestions received from various Political Parties, and Chief Electoral Officers of States/UTs on election campaign and public meetings.

Keeping in view the above, following broad guidelines have been framed with respect to key activities of the conduct of elections, considering the upcoming General Elections and bye-elections in various States/UTs during the period of COVID-19 :

Sl. No.	Guidelines to be followed
1.	GENERAL GUIDELINES TO BE FOLLOWED DURING ENTIRE ELECTION PROCESSES FOR ALL PERSONS 1) Every person shall wear face mask during every election related activity. 2) At the entry of hall/ room/ premises used for election purposes: (a) Thermal Scanning of all persons shall be carried out; (b) Sanitizer, soap and water shall be made available. 3) Social distancing shall be maintained as per the extant COVID-19 guidelines of the State Govt. and Ministry of Home Affairs. 4) As far as practicable, large halls should be identified and utilized to ensure social distancing norms. 5) Adequate number of vehicles shall be mobilized for movement of polling personnel, security personnel to ensure compliance of COVID-19 guidelines.

Sl. No.	Guidelines to be followed
2.	<p>NODAL HEALTH OFFICER</p> <p>Nodal Health Officer shall be designated for the State, the District and the Assembly Constituency to oversee COVID-19 related arrangements and, preventive measures during entire electoral process.</p>
3.	<p>EVMs/VVPATs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) First & Second randomization and preparation of EVMs/VVPATs shall be done in large halls. 2) Sanitizers shall be provided in sufficient quantity for use during the process. 3) Gloves shall be made available to each official handling EVM/VVPAT.
4.	<p>TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As far as practicable, training of election officials will be organized in decentralized manner at large halls. 2) Training for election officials may be organized through online mode. 3) All PPTs, training materials, relevant documents, topic wise video clips, question papers for self-assessment may be uploaded in app/ portal so that any election official can access it as per requirement. 4) Sufficient number of Polling/Counting/Poll related staffs shall also be kept in reserve by DEO/RO, to replace in case any polling personnel displays COVID-19 symptoms.
5.	<p>NOMINATION PROCESS</p> <p>I. Following additional options to facilitate online mode are hereby provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Nomination form will also be available online on the website of CEO/ DEO. An intending candidate may fill in it online and its print may be taken for submitting before the Returning Officer as specified in Form-1 (Rule-3 of Conduct of Election Rules 1961). 2) Affidavit may also be filled in online on the website of CEO/DEO and its print can be taken and after notarization it may be submitted along with the nomination form before the Returning Officer. 3) Candidate may deposit security money through online mode at the designated platform. However, a candidate will continue to have the option of deposit in cash in the treasury.

Sl. No.	Guidelines to be followed
	<p>4) Candidate may have the option to seek his/her elector certification for the purpose of nomination online .</p> <p>II. Further, Commission has directed:</p> <p>1) Number of persons to accompany candidate for submission of Nomination is restricted to two (2). (This is in supersession of existing Para 5.8.1 of Returning Officer's Handbook 2019)</p> <p>2) Number of vehicles for the purposes of nomination is restricted to two (2). (This is in supersession of existing Para 5.8.1 of Returning Officer's Handbook 2019)</p> <p>3) Returning Officer's chamber should have sufficient space to perform the functions of nomination, scrutiny and symbol allocation following social distancing norms.</p> <p>4) Returning Officer should allot staggered time in advance to prospective candidates.</p> <p>5) Large space for waiting for candidate(s) should be arranged.</p> <p>6) All steps required to be taken for the submission of nomination form and affidavit shall continue to operate as per the provisions contained in the Representation of the People Act, 1951.</p>
6.	<p>ELECTION MATERIAL</p> <p>Election Material Kit will be prepared in a spacious and sufficiently large hall following all safety, sanitation and social distancing measures.</p>
7.	<p>DISTRIBUTION AND COLLECTION OF ELECTION MATERIAL</p> <p>1) Large halls/spaces should be identified for distribution/collection of election material.</p> <p>2) As far as practicable, it should be organized in decentralized manner.</p> <p>3) Prior staggered time should be allocated to the polling teams for distribution/ collection of election material.</p>
8.	<p>TIMING OF 3rd RANDOMIZATION:</p> <p>Timing for 3rd randomization of polling staff be increased from 24 hrs to 72 hrs in order to avoid large gathering of polling staff at dispatch centres.</p> <p>(This is in supersession of ECI No. 464/Inst/2008/EPS dated 19th September , 2008)</p>

Sl. No.	Guidelines to be followed
9.	<p>NO. OF ELECTORS IN POLLING STATION</p> <p>There shall be maximum 1000 electors instead of 1500 electors in a polling station.</p> <p>(Commission's Instruction No.23/SEC/2020-ERS, dated 23rd July, 2020)</p>
10.	<p>POLLING STATION ARRANGEMENTS</p> <p>Commission has issued detailed instructions for assured minimum facilities at each polling station. Now, in view of COVID-19 situation, following additional facilities/steps should be taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mandatory sanitization of Polling Station, preferably, a day before the poll. 2) Thermal Scanner at the entry point of every polling station location. 3) Thermal Checking of voters at entry point of polling station location/ Polling station, either by polling staff or Para Medical staff or Asha worker. 4) If temperature is above the set norms of MoHFW at first reading, then it will be checked twice and if it remains, then the elector shall be provided with token/certificate and will be asked to come for voting at the last hour of poll. At the last hour of poll, such electors shall be facilitated voting, strictly following COVID-19 related preventive measures. 5) Help Desk for distribution of token to the voters of first come first basis so that they do not wait in the queue. 6) Marker to demonstrate social distancing for queue. 7) Earmarking circle for 15-20 persons of 2 yards (6 feet) distance for voters standing in the queue depending on the availability of space. There shall be three queues each, for male, female, and PWD/ Senior citizen voters. 8) The services of BLOs, volunteers etc may be engaged to monitor and regulate social distancing norms strictly. 9) One shaded waiting areas with chairs, dari etc. will be provided, for male and female separately, within the polling station premises so that voters can participate in voting without safety concerns. 10) Wherever possible, Booth App shall be used at the polling station. 11) Soap and Water shall be provided at the entry/exit point of every polling station. 12) Sanitizer should be provided at the entry/exit point of every polling station.

Sl. No.	Guidelines to be followed
	<p>13) Face Masks in reserves for those electors who are not carrying the mask will be kept.</p> <p>14) Awareness posters on COVID-19 should be displayed at visible locations.</p> <p>15) Sitting arrangement in polling station for the polling personnel and polling agents shall be made as per the norms of social distancing.</p> <p>16) If polling agent or counting agent is having temperature above the prescribed limit, then their reliever shall be allowed by Presiding Officer, who will keep a record accordingly.</p> <p>17) During the process of identification of voter, the voters will require to lower the facemask for identification, when required.</p> <p>18) At any given time, only 1(one) voter shall be allowed to stand in front of each polling official maintaining social distance.</p> <p>19) Hand gloves shall be provided to the voter, for signing on the voter register and pressing button of EVM for voting.</p> <p>20) Sanitizers shall be kept inside the booth at appropriate locations with clear direction for the use by voters.</p> <p>21) COVID-19 patients who are quarantined will be allowed to cast their vote at the last hour of the poll day at their respective Polling Stations, under the supervision of health authorities, strictly following COVID-19 related preventive measures. Sector Magistrates shall coordinate this in their allocated polling stations.</p> <p>22) In case of those voters who are residing in the area notified as containment zone, guidelines shall be issued separately.</p>
11.	<p>KIT FOR POLLING OFFICER</p> <p>The following items shall be provided to every polling official and security personnel (Other than those where PPEs are needed) in addition to other prescribed items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mask ii. Sanitizer iii. Face-Shield iv. Gloves

Sl. No.	Guidelines to be followed
12.	<p>POSTAL BALLOT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Option of Postal Ballot facility has been extended to the electors of following categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Electors, who are marked as Persons with Disabilities (PWD) b. Electors above the age of 80 years c. Electors employed in notified Essential services d. Electors who are COVID- 19 positive/suspect and in quarantine (home/ institutional) 2) Guidelines for each of these categories are being issued separately.
13.	<p>CAMPAIGN BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES/CONTESTING CANDIDATES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Door to Door Campaign- Subject to any other restriction(s) including extant COVID-19 guidelines, a group of 5 (five) persons including candidates, excluding security personnel, if any, is allowed to do door to door campaigning. 2) Road Shows - The convoy of vehicles should be broken after every 5 (five) vehicles instead of 10 vehicles (excluding the security vehicles, if any). The interval between two sets of convoy of vehicles should be half an hour instead of gap of 100 meters. (In supersession of Para 5.8.1 of Returning Officer’s Handbook 2019) 3) Election Meetings - Public gatherings/ rallies may be conducted subject to adherence to extant COVID-19 guidelines. District Election Officer should take following steps for this purpose: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) District Election Officer should, in advance, identify dedicated grounds for public gathering with clearly marked Entry/Exit points. (b) In all such identified grounds, the District Election Officer should, in advance, put markers to ensure social distancing norms by the attendees. (c) Nodal District Health Officer should be involved in the process to ensure that all COVID-19 related guidelines are adhered to by all concerned in the district. (d) District Election Officer and District Superintendent of Police should ensure that the number of attendees does not exceed the limit prescribed by State Disaster Management Authority for public gatherings.

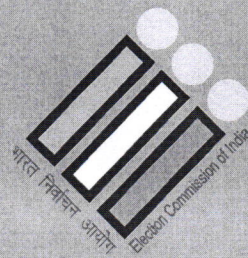
Sl. No.	Guidelines to be followed
	<p>(e) DEO should depute Sector Health Regulators to oversee that COVID-19 instructions/guidelines are being followed during these meetings.</p> <p>(f) The political parties and candidates concerned should ensure that all COVID-19 related requirement like face masks, sanitizers, thermal scanning etc. are fulfilled during each of these activities.</p> <p>(g) Non-compliance of Instructions – <i>Anybody violating instructions on COVID-19 measures will be liable to proceeded against as per the provisions of Section 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, besides legal action under Section 188 of the IPC, and other legal provisions as applicable, as specified in Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 29th July, 2020 of Ministry of Home Affairs.</i> District Election Officer should bring this to the notice of all concerned.</p> <p>4) Allocation of public spaces must be done using Suvidha app in the manner already prescribed by Commission.</p>
14.	<p>STRONG-ROOM ARRANGEMENT</p> <p>1) Strong Room should be sanitized after completion of poll day.</p> <p>2) Social Distancing and other safety norms shall be followed for each activity.</p>
15.	<p>COUNTING OF VOTES</p> <p>1) Not more than 7 counting tables should be allowed in a counting hall. Hence, counting of votes of a constituency may be considered at 3-4 halls by appointing additional Assistant Returning Officers. (In supersession of instructions dated 30th April, 2014)</p> <p>2) Carrying cases of CUs/VVPATs should be sanitized before placing over counting tables.</p> <p>3) De-sealing of CUs/VVPATs and displaying Result on CU should be done by one official on each table.</p> <p>4) Display of result from the Control Units may be displayed on a large screen to avoid accommodation of large number of counting agents.</p> <p>5) The counting centers shall be disinfected before, during and after the counting.</p>

Sl. No.	Guidelines to be followed
	6) For counting of Postal Ballots, additional number of AROs may be required. If required, Postal Ballots may also be counted in a separate hall under the supervision of the Returning Officer/Assistant Returning officer.
<p>Based on these broad guidelines, a detailed COVID-19 related comprehensive plan will be prepared at the State level, taking local conditions into account. In case of General Elections, three-layer plan will be prepared in consultation with the concerned Nodal Health Officers: AC, District, and State levels. In case of bye-elections, the plans will be prepared at the District and AC levels in consultation with respective Nodal Health Officers. In case, more than one district is involved, such plans will be prepared by the Returning Officer of the Parliamentary Constituency in coordination with the DEOs, wherever required.</p>	

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'No voter to be left behind'



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001
<https://eci.gov.in/>

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भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Tel: 011-23052097
Fax 011-23052001
Website: www.eci.gov.in

निर्वाचन सदन,
अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली-110001.
Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001.

No.464/INST/EPS/2021

Dated: 6th October, 2021.

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of,
Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh,
Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Meghalaya,
Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Telangana and West Bengal.

Subject: Bye-elections in various Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies, 2021 – Clarification regarding double vaccination of Candidate/Election Agent/Polling Agent/Counting Agent/Driver etc.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer various references received from States seeking clarification on the subject cited and to state that the Commission has considered the following:-

1. Candidate/Election Agent/Polling Agent/Counting Agent/Driver etc., **who has been vaccinated 1st dose** and not eligible for 2nd dose as per vaccination protocol, may be allowed with RTPCR negative report within **72 hours** of the date of poll/counting, in poll process and inside the counting hall.
2. Candidate/Election Agent/Polling Agent/Counting Agent/Driver etc., **who has not been vaccinated even 1st dose**, may be allowed with RTPCR negative report within **48 hours** of the date of poll/counting, in poll process and inside the counting hall.
3. No nomination will be denied in the absence of vaccination.

The above situation may be brought to the notice of all concerned.

Yours faithfully,



(AMIT KUMAR)
UNDER SECRETARY

1. Andhra

124-Badvel (SC)

Kadapa