

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

No. 437/WB-LA/2021

Dated :21<sup>st</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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