



**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: 23<sup>rd</sup> 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