

## **ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. ECI/PN/01/2022

05.01.2022

### **PRESS NOTE**

#### **ECI reviews poll preparedness for the forthcoming Assembly Elections in Manipur**

#### **Virtual Meeting held with Representatives of Political Parties, Chief Secretary, DGP, State Police Nodal Officer & CEO Manipur**

Chief Election Commissioner Shri Sushil Chandra along with Election Commissioner's Shri Rajiv Kumar and Shri Anup Chandra Pandey today held a virtual meeting to review the poll preparedness for the forthcoming Assembly Elections in Manipur. The term of State Assembly in Manipur is due to expire on 19th March 2022 and elections are scheduled for 60 ACs (40 Gen ACs; 1 SC and 19 ST AC) in the State.



During the review meeting, representatives of political parties namely All India Trinamool Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Indian National Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Naga People's Front (NPF), National People's Party, Peoples Democratic Alliance came to meet the Commission through video conferencing. The main issues raised by the political parties included concerns about use of money power, illicit liquor, narcotics drugs and intimidation to influence voters. Political parties requested for strict vigil on election expenses by candidates to ensure free and fair poll. While

expressing concerns about pre-poll violence, the political parties demanded deployment of adequate security forces during the poll process and other relevant measures. The political parties also raised concerns about implementation of strict COVID protocols for safety of everybody.

The Commission assured the representatives that it has taken cognizance of suggestions, issues and concerns of the political parties and ECI is committed to conduct free, fair, participative, inclusive, inducement free and COVID safe elections in the state.

With regard to the concerns raised on excessive use of money and other inducements to influence voters, the Commission reiterated that it has zero tolerance for misuse of money or muscle power or partisan behaviour of State machinery vitiating free and fair elections. CEC Shri Sushil Chandra underscored that strict action would be taken against such erring officials. He added that Expenditure Observers will be deployed for strict vigil to ensure inducement-free elections in the State. Shri Chandra also elaborated on ECI's cVIGIL App mechanism for registering complaints for prompt redressal of MCC violations as also the toll free number 1950.



The Commission assured the representatives that ECI will ensure measures like webcasting/videography, deployment CAPF personnel and Micro Observers wherever necessary in identified vulnerable polling areas, to ensure free, fair and peaceful polling.

The Commission highlighted that for the first time in the State, the option of a Postal Ballot facility would be provided during the elections for

Absentee Voters which includes 80+ Sr citizens, PwD electors and Covid-19 suspects or affected persons. The postal ballot facility is an optional facility and ensures total secrecy of voting. Representatives of candidates will be present during the process and the total procedure will be videographed. In the state, 14,565 Persons with Disabilities and over 41,867 senior citizens (80+) have been mapped.

Subsequently, the Commission discussed the administrative, logistics, budget, Law & Order and election related arrangements with the Chief Secretary and State Police Nodal Officer. The Commission reviewed the overall poll preparedness and law and order matters with the Chief Secretary & Director General of Police.



During the review meeting, the Commission emphasised focus on the conduct of safe elections with **100% vaccination** of all polling staff, proper sanitisation and social distancing at the polling stations. CEC Shri Chandra conveyed his concern to Chief Secretary, Manipur regarding the low vaccination rate in the state and asked for expediting the same.

Keeping in view Covid social-distancing norms, the Commission has specifically revisited some extant norms. As a result, the maximum number of electors' norm at a polling station has been reduced from 1500 to 1250. This will ensure substantially lower number of electors per polling station. CEO was directed to ensure Assured Minimum Facilities like drinking water facility, toilets with water facilities, ramps, wheelchairs, electricity, shades, etc. at all polling stations. The Commission directed identification of communication shadow polling stations for alternative arrangements. While reviewing the law-and-order issues, the Commission directed that deposition of licensed arms in the state should be expedited. It was directed to ensure that distribution of liquor, drugs, freebies and cash is effectively checked and the electoral process is not vitiated with unlawful activities.

CEC also directed for strict vigil on the international border to ensure no unlawful transit and infiltration across borders.

The Commission also directed the CEO to ensure quick disposal of complaints received during electoral process and ensure robust mechanism for the same. It was mentioned that subsequent to Special Summary Revision 2022, electoral roll has been published today, and there are a total of 20,34,966 electors enrolled in the state. The Gender Ratio in the state has risen to 1065 from 1046 in 2017 and 38,384 first time electors (18-19 years) are enrolled in the state which is 2.6% of total electors as compared to 0.56% in 2017.

The review meeting was also attended by senior officials from the Election Commission of India.

Anuj Chandak  
Joint Director (Media)