



STATE ELECTION COMMISSION, HARYANA

NIRVACHAN SADAN, PLOT NO. 2, SECTOR- 17

PANCHKULA, HARYANA – 134109

Website: www.secharyana.gov.in

Phone : +91172 258 4810

Email id: sec@hry.nic.in

Fax : +91 172 258 5904

URGENT

No. SEC/1ME/2021/ 1662-1671

Dated: 14th.07.2021

To

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

Subject: Reiterating Guidelines for strict observance of Covid Protocol during Local Bodies (Panchayat and Municipal Institutions) election rallies, meeting campaigning etc.-regarding.

Sir/Madam,

State Election Commission, Haryana had issued detailed "guidelines for conduct of Local Bodies (Municipal and Panchayat) General/Bye-elections during COVID-19" vide letter No. SEC/1ME/2020/2769-3069 dated 27.11.2020. In these guidelines, it was inter-alia stated in item No. 13 (4) that the political parties and the contesting candidates should ensure that all COVID-19 related requirements, like wearing of face masks, use of sanitizers, thermal scanning etc. are fulfilled during elections of local bodies (Panchayat and Municipal Institutions). It was further stated that non-compliance of these instructions during the period of public interface will attract action as per provisions of section 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, besides invocation of section 188 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 and as also specified in Ministry of Home Affairs Government of India's Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 29th July, 2020. The Election Commission of India during the period of elections of Legislative Assemblies of 5 State/UTs held in March and April, 2021, observed that norms of social distancing, wearing of masks etc. have been flouted in utter disregard to the Election Commission of India's guidelines. The star campaigners/political leaders/candidates were not observing COVID protocols. Some of them were

found not wearing masks themselves at stage or while campaigning. By doing so, the political parties and candidates were exposing themselves as well as the public attending such election meetings to grave danger of COVID infection. The State Election Commission, Haryana has also to conduct General Elections of Panchayati Raj Institutions and some Municipal Institutions shortly. COVID 19 pandemic situation continues to be grim and serious and there are very little chances of subsiding of pandemic in near future. On the other hand health experts say that there is a possibility of third wave of pandemic. In view of General Elections of Panchayati Raj Institutions and some Municipal Institutions to be conducted in near future, the State Election Commission, Haryana hereby further directs as under:-

- i) The guidelines issued by the State Election Commission, Haryana vide letter No. SEC/1ME/2020/2769-3069 dated 27.11.2020 referred to above be observed in all seriousness.
- ii) **Political parties, leaders, campaigners, candidates are expected to be torch bearers for the campaign against COVID** and hence they are expected to not only set an example by maintaining social distancing, wearing masks and following prescribed protocols of COVID-19 but also by exhorting members of general public who attend electioneering campaign, rallies etc. to strictly follow COVID protocols.
- iii) The Commission seeks fullest cooperation from the political parties and candidates of strict observance of COVID-19 related protocols so that all pandemic related guidelines are adhered to by all the participants including organizers during electioneering. **It is advised that political leaders/candidates who have moral and bounden duty to control spread of COVID-19, 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.**
- iv) **In case of breach of COVID-19 related protocol, the State Election Commission will not hesitate in banning public meetings, rallies etc. of the defaulting candidates/star campaigners/political leaders/parties without any further reference.**