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ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

No. 437/6/1/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2026 **Dated: 15th March, 2026**

To

1. **The Cabinet Secretary,**
   Government of India,
   Rashtrapati Bhawan,
   New Delhi.

2. **The Chief Secretaries** to the Governments of
   (i) Assam, Dispur;
   (ii) Goa, Panaji;
   (iii) Gujarat, Gandhinagar;
   (iv) Karnataka, Bengaluru;
   (v) Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram;
   (vi) Maharashtra, Mumbai;
   (vii) Nagaland, Kohima;
   (viii) Puducherry,
   (ix) Tamil Nadu, Chennai;
   (x) Tripura, Agartala; and
   (xi) West Bengal, Kolkata.

3. **The Chief Electoral Officers** of
   (i) Assam, Dispur;
   (ii) Goa, Panaji;
   (iii) Gujarat, Gandhinagar;
   (iv) Karnataka, Bengaluru;
   (v) Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram;
   (vi) Maharashtra, Mumbai;
   (vii) Nagaland, Kohima;
   (viii) Puducherry,
   (ix) Tamil Nadu, Chennai;
   (x) Tripura, Agartala; and
   (xi) West Bengal, Kolkata.

Sub: Application of Model Code of Conduct — General Elections to Legislative Assemblies of the States of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and UT of Puducherry, 2026 and bye-elections to Assembly Constituencies of various States/UT — reg.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to state that the Election Commission has announced the schedule for General Elections to Legislative Assemblies of the States of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and UT of Puducherry, 2026 and Bye-elections in Goa (21-Ponda AC), Gujarat (111-Umreth AC), Karnataka (24-Bagalkot AC & 107-Davanagere South AC), Maharashtra (223-Rahuri AC & 201-Baramati AC), Nagaland (28-Koridang(ST) AC) and Tripura (56-Dharmanagar AC) *vide* Press Note No. ECI/PN/029/2026 & No. ECI/PN/030/2026, both dated 15th March, 2026, available at the Commission's website — *www.eci.gov.in*).

2. With this announcement, **the provisions of the 'Model Code of Conduct for the guidance of the Political Parties and Candidates' have come into force with immediate effect and will be in force till the completion of the General Election to the Legislative Assemblies of the States of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and UT of Puducherry, and the aforesaid bye-elections.** This may be brought to the notice of all Ministries/Departments/offices of the Union Government/the State/ UT Government. A copy of instructions issued by you to this effect may be sent to the Commission for its information and record.

3. Your particular attention is drawn to the provisions of 'Model Code of Conduct for the guidance of Political Parties and Candidates' and various instructions issued by the Commission, which, *inter-alia*, state that the party in power whether at the Centre or States/Union Territory concerned, shall ensure that no cause is given for any complaint that it has used its official position for the purpose of its election campaign and in particular:—

(i) (a) The Ministers shall not combine their official visit with electioneering work and shall not also make use of official machinery or personnel during the electioneering work;

(b) Government transport including official air-crafts, vehicles, machinery and personnel shall not be used for furtherance of the interest of the party in power;

(ii) Public places such as maidans etc., for holding election meetings, and use of helipads for air-flights in connection with elections shall not be monopolised by the party in power. Other parties and candidates shall be allowed the use of such places and facilities, on the same terms and conditions, on which they are used by the party in power;

(iii) Rest houses, dak bungalows or other Government accommodations in the States/Union Territories where elections have been announced or are taking place can be given to the political functionaries who are provided security by the State in 'Z' scale or above or equivalent by various State/UT Governments or the Central Government under provisions of their laws, on equitable basis. This shall be subject to condition that such accommodation is not already allotted or occupied by election related officials or the Commission's Observers. Such political functionaries shall not carry out any political activity while staying in the Government Guest Houses/Rest Houses or other Government accommodation etc.;

(iv) Issue of advertisement at the cost of public exchequer in the newspapers and other media and the misuse of official mass media during the election period for partisan coverage of political news and publicity regarding achievements with a view to furthering the prospects of the party in power shall be scrupulously avoided;

(v) Ministers and other authorities shall not sanction grants/payments out of discretionary funds from the time elections are announced by the Commission; and

(vi) From the time elections are announced by Commission, Ministers and other authorities shall not:—

(a) announce any financial grants, in any form or promises thereof; or

(b) (except civil servants) lay foundation stones etc. of projects or schemes of any kind; or

(c) make any promise of construction of roads, provision of drinking water facilities etc.; or

(d) make any ad-hoc appointments in Government, Public Undertakings etc. which may have the effect of influencing the voters in favor of the party in power.

4. As will be observed from Para 3{Clause iv} above, no advertisement shall be issued in electronic and print media highlighting the achievements of the Govt. at the cost of public exchequer. If any advertisement has already been released for telecast/broadcast or publication in the print media, it must be ensured that the telecast/broadcast of such ads on electronic media is stopped forthwith and that no such ad is published in any newspapers, magazines, etc., i.e. in print media, from today itself and it should be immediately withdrawn.

5. The instructions of the Commission contained in its letter No. **437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024(MCC ENFORCEMENT)**, dated 2nd January, 2024, is available on the Commission's website at path — https://www.eci.gov.in/issue-details-page/instructions for your information and necessary action. For instructions related to bye-elections, the Commission's letter No. **437/6/INST/ECI/FUNCT/MCC/2024(BYE ELECTIONS)**, dated 2nd January, 2024, available on the Commission's website at the same path, may be referred to. The 'Compendium of Instructions on Model Code of Conduct' and other relevant instructions of the Commission are also available on the Commission's website for your guidance.

6. The Commission further directs that there shall be a total ban on the transfer of all officers/officials connected with the conduct of the election. These include but are not restricted to: -

i) The Chief Electoral Officer and Additional/Joint/Deputy Chief Electoral Officers;

ii) Divisional Commissioners;

iii) The District Election Officers, Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers and other Revenue Officers connected with the conduct of election;

iv) Officers of the Police Department connected with the management of election, like range IGs and DIGs, Senior Superintendents of Police and Superintendents of Police, Sub-Divisional Police Officers like Deputy Superintendents of Police and other Police officers who are deputed to the Commission under section 28A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951;

v) The transfer orders issued in respect of the above categories of officers prior to the date of announcement but not implemented till date should not be given effect to without obtaining specific permission from the Commission in this regard;

vi) This ban shall be effective till the completion of the election. The Commission further directs that the State /UT Governments should refrain from making transfers of senior officers who have a role in the management of election in the State/UT;

vii) In those cases where transfer of an officer is necessary on account of administrative exigencies, the concerned State/UT Government may with full justification approach the Commission for prior clearance.

7. The receipt of the letter may kindly be acknowledged.

8. Hindi version will follow.

Yours faithfully,

(PRAFULL AWASTHI)
UNDER SECRETARY