

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
PUDUCHERRY**

No.7-1/SEC/CE-2021/COVID/2021/ 733

Dated 21.9.2021

ORDER

WHEREAS, the Commission is vested with the responsibility of conducting elections to the 5 municipalities and 10 commune panchayats in the Union Territory of Puducherry by the Article 243ZA(1) and Article 243K(1) respectively of the Constitution of India.

AND WHEREAS, the Hon. Supreme Court of India vide its order dated 5th April 2021 in the case of the Contempt Petition (C) Diary No. 2364 of 2021 in Civil Appeal Nos.4994-4995 of 2018 dated 05.04.2021 filed against the State Election Commissioner, Puducherry for the non-conduct of civic elections after 2006, has entrusted the Commission with the task of completing the elections to the local bodies of the UT within a period of four months from the date of notification of the delimitation of municipal and commune / village panchayat wards. The said notification has subsequently been issued on 04.06.2021.

AND WHEREAS, the Commission is cognizant of the ongoing COVID19 pandemic, and has therefore issued a Standard Operating Procedure for event based COVID protocol during conduct of local bodies elections in the UT of Puducherry (copy enclosed) for the guidance and compliance of all stakeholders.

AND WHEREAS, the Commission is scrupulously complying with the orders of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), issued from time to time for containment of the COVID19 pandemic, and also the orders of the UT Government in this regard, and has directed compliance of all involved in election duty with such orders of the Central and UT governments.

AND WHEREAS, the Commission regards it as necessary to take additional precautions and issue further orders for the strict compliance of all concerned in view of the continuing threat of the pandemic and the possibility of a third wave.

NOW, THEREFORE, in view of the aforesaid and taking all material facts into consideration, the Commission orders that:

1. No processions/road shows/street plays shall be permissible during campaigning by parties/candidates.
2. No cycle/bike/vehicle rally shall be permissible during campaigning.
3. No public meeting beyond the limit of 100 persons at a place, subject to availability of adequate space with social distancing, adhering to COVID-19 safety norms, shall be permissible. However, the order prevailing at that time issued by Puducherry Disaster Management Authority / Puducherry State Executive Committee for public gatherings shall be adopted.
4. Subject to any other restriction(s) including extant COVID-19 guidelines, Door to Door Campaigning shall involve not more than a group of 5 (five) persons including candidates, excluding security personnel, if any.
5. Silence period for meetings and any gathering for campaign purpose shall be 72 hours before the close of poll.
6. In case parties/candidates don't abide by the laid down COVID protocols during campaign, necessary action under the relevant provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the IPC shall be taken immediately by the district authorities, and their permissions for further campaigning, if already granted, shall also be cancelled.

DEOs, REOs and ROs shall bring this order to the attention of all concerned for COVID appropriate behaviour and shall ensure strict compliance without fail.

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(ROY P. THOMAS)
STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER

To

1. The District Election Officer, Puducherry / Karaikal
2. The Regional Election Officer, Mahe / Yanam
3. All Returning Officers, Puducherry / Karaikal / Mahe / Yanam.