

New Indian Express

NHRC seeks report on Covid violations in poll rallies in India

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/apr/11/nhrc-seeks-report-on-covid-violations-in-poll-rallies-in-india-2288666.html>

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought for an Action Taken Report (ATR) from the Chief Election Commissioner and the Union Home Secretary over Covid guidelines violation during the electoral process in several states and Union Territories.

Acting on a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer and human rights activist from Odisha Radhakanta Tripathy, the apex human rights panel has directed the authorities to submit the report within four weeks.

While the assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam and Puducherry ended recently, four more phases of the eight-phase election in West Bengal are left. Similarly, by-polls in 14 assembly seats, including one in Odisha are scheduled on April 17.

Tripathy alleged the political parties have been conducting unregulated election rallies, public meetings and mass congregations in contravention of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's slogan of 'Do Gaz ki Duri, Mask hai Jaruri' and the congregations are responsible for the surge of coronavirus in the country.

"The infection is rising rapidly and people are subjected to sufferings due to inaction of the Election Commission, the Central and state governments. Forget about social distancing, a majority of people even do not use mask putting their life in risk. This amounts to serious human rights violation during the pandemic," he contended.

Tripathy had initially lodged a complaint before the Election Commission of India and when he failed to get any relief, he approached the rights commission seeking its urgent intervention.

While restrictions have been imposed on social gatherings like marriage, religious events and even funeral, surprisingly the political parties care two hoots and continue to organise big rallies and congregations endangering the lives of poor and unsuspecting people, he pointed out.

In Odisha, the political parties, mainly BJD, BJP and Congress have announced thirty numbers each as their star campaigners for Pipili by-poll. There are night curfew and other methods of restraint by the governments to combat the spread of virus, but the same goes in vain for elections indicating serious discrimination among public and violating the right to life, Tripathy added.

He has requested the NHRC to ensure compensation for the voters who suffered due to the negligence of election officials and lack of necessary precautionary measures by the government.

New Indian Express

COVID-19 wreaking havoc on Indian lives due to Modi govt's policies: Congress

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/apr/11/covid-19-wreaking-havoc-on-indian-lives-due-to-modi-govts-policies-congress-2288685.html>

The Congress on Sunday attacked the Centre over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic, alleging that COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc on Indian lives and economy due to the Modi government's "arrogance and incompetence".

The Opposition party also alleged that every section of the society was troubled due to the policies of the government.

In an apparent dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted in Hindi, "No control over coronavirus, not enough vaccines, no employment, labourers and farmers not being given a hearing, no protection for MSMEs, nor the middle class is satisfied...It was okay to eat 'aam' (mango), but should have at least spared 'aam aadmi (common person)'" The Congress, from its official Twitter handle, also slammed the government over the situation in the country.

"One year on, COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc upon Indian lives & the Indian Economy, all thanks to Modi govt and its arrogance & incompetence," the party lashed out in a tweet.

In another tweet in Hindi, the party claimed that every section of the society in the country is troubled due to the policies of the government.

"Coronavirus is spreading unchecked, there is shortage of vaccines, farmers-labourers are troubled, economy is collapsing, small businesses are closing down and the middle class is also a worried lot," the party said.

The Congress-led opposition has been criticising the government over its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccination drive, while the Centre has maintained that its timely steps have been instrumental in effectively dealing with the pandemic.

Daily Pioneer

Covid guidelines flouted during elections

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2021/state-editions/covid-guidelines-flouted-during-elections.html>

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought Action-Taken Reports (ATRs) from the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the Union Home Secretary over violation of Covid-19 guidelines in several States where elections are being held.

The commission sought the report within five weeks, taking cognisance of a report filed by human rights activist and lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy.

Tripathy pointed out that unregulated election rallies, mass protests and get-togethers defeat the slogan of “Do Gaj Duri, Mask hei Zaruri” and is responsible for surge of coronavirus cases in India. Due to negligence, inaction and failure of Election Commission of India, Central and State Governments to check, regulate political and electoral process, infections have been increasing and people are suffering immensely, he stated.

Seeking intervention of the NHRC, Tripathy pointed out that more than forty-one countries in the world have delayed and postponed their elections.