

NFP receives a 'setback' as SEC turns down its 'registration' plea

ECMO OF ARUNACHAL - 17/04/2013

ITANAGAR, Apr 16: Naga People's Front (NPF) - a political party based in the neighbouring state of Nagaland - has apparently received a major "setback" with State Election Commission (SEC) of Arunachal Pradesh turning down its plea to get it registered as a "State Party" in this frontier state.

The Commission "would not be in a position to recognize NPF as a State Party in Arunachal Pradesh and allot their party symbol 'Cock' to contest the ensuing General Elections for Panchayati Raj Institutions in Arunachal Pradesh" - came the avowal from the SEC while responding to a "letter" (of dated 15th April) from NPF on the subject mentioned above for contesting the elections to the PRIs in Arunachal.

"The State Election Commissioner has examined your request in light of the provisions made under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order 1968 of the Election Commission of

India and decided as under: A reading of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order 1968 would make it clear that the said Order contemplates Registration of Political Parties and also Recognition thereof as National or State Parties. Every Political Parties must be a Registered Party but not every Registered Political Party would automatically become either a Recognized National party or State Party.

The recognition would be dependent on the percentage of votes that a Political Party secures in the previous election or the number of returned candidates in a particular State for which it seeks recognition.

The State Election Commission cannot accept any application for registering any Political Party in the State of Arunachal Pradesh under the provisions of Election Symbols (Reservation & Allotment) Order, 1968 and the said power is vested only with the Election Commission of India," affirms the SEC.

"At this stage, it would be

pertinent to recall the judgment dated 17th November 2005 of the High Court of Karnataka in W.P.No. 24228/2005 (C M Ibrahim vs. State Election Commission and others), wherein a categorical finding has been rendered that the State Election Commission is not the competent authority to either allot symbols or to decide disputes relating to recognition of political parties," it added.

Call for strict adherence to model code of conduct

Taking serious note of the complaints that some govt servants including officers have started canvassing for their favoured candidates of ensuing PR election "in gross violation of model code of conduct", the State Election Commission has directed all Deputy Commissioners cum District Election Officers and Returning Officers to report such cases of "misconduct" to the Commission without loss of any time and take immediate deterrent and punitive action as per relevant Act and Rules.

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State Election Commissioner K D Singh has said, the DEOs shall prepare a list of all those govt servants against whom complaints have been received from various quarters including aggrieved political parties, and keep a close watch on them. In addition to it, if any govt servant including GB, PI, contingency/contractual employee, govt honorarium paid persons is found involved in the political activities shall be dealt with as per the provisions of the relevant rules such as IPC, AIS and CCS (Conduct) Rules.

Moreover, no persons on election duty (would) do any act for the furtherance of the prospects of the election of any candidate. And no member of a police force shall endeavour to persuade or dissuade, any person at an election. Any person who is found guilty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 6 months, or with fine or both. In case of police force, such electoral offence is cognizable, he said.

Urging for strict compliance of the model code of conduct, the SEC said, "In case of complaints received during the process of conduct of election by any political party or candidate or individual, such complaints shall be dealt with promptly by the DEOs/ROs and disposed of within 24 hours. DEOs/ROs are directed to maintain a register of such complaints and record the date and time of receipt and disposal of such complaints."