

**SECRETARIAT OF THE  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110 001

No. 154/WB/2024-P.Admn

Dated: 17.07.2025

To

The Chief Secretary to the  
Government of West Bengal,  
Kolkata.

**Sub: Functional Independence and Administrative Strengthening of the Office of Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal – regarding.**

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Commission's Notification dated 28.03.2025, issued under Section 13A of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, whereby Shri Manoj Kumar Agarwal, IAS, was designated as the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) for West Bengal. In the Notification No. 525-HR/O/IAS/8P-28/23(Pt.) dated 02.04.2025 and Corrigendum No. 550-PAR(IAS)/8P-28/2023 (Pt.) dated 03.04.2025 of the Government of West Bengal appointing Shri Manoj Kumar Agarwal, IAS as CEO, West Bengal, he has been made ex-officio Additional Chief Secretary, Home and Hill Affairs (Election) Department, Government of West Bengal.

2. In this regard, the Commission has noted lack of financial and administrative autonomy available to CEO, West Bengal in the existing arrangement, wherein CEO's office functions with limited financial powers relying on a minor permanent advance from the Finance Department. Further, the CEO's office has been categorized as a subordinate branch of the Home & Hill Affairs Department, which is led by a Principal Secretary level officer whereas the CEO himself is of ACS rank.

3. In light of the above, and keeping in view the requirements of functional and institutional independence, the Commission has directed that following action be taken immediately by the State Government:

- i) Creation of a separate Election Department, completely delinked from any other department of the State Government. The Election Department should have a dedicated budget head. This will facilitate full financial and administrative autonomy to the CEO, as required for the effective and impartial conduct of elections.
- ii) Delegation of suitable financial powers at par with ACS/Pr. Secretary/Secretary of other department be given to the Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal. A separate Financial Advisor needs to be posted in the Election Department to assist the CEO in effective discharge of his official duties.

4. Further, in view of upcoming General Election to Legislative Assembly of West Bengal, to ensure institutional preparedness and seamless coordination, you are also requested to fill up the four vacant posts of Addl./Joint/Deputy CEOs in the O/o CEO, West Bengal in consultation with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,



(ASHUTHOSH M.)  
UNDER SECRETARY

Copy to: The Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal, Kolkata.