

the
reporters'
collective

Kumar Sambhav Shrivastava

URGENT: Media Query from Al Jazeera

Kumar Sambhav Shrivastava

10 March 2022 at 11:03

To:

Mr. Sushil Chandra
Chief Election Commissioner
Election Commission of India

Ms. Sheyphali B. Sharan
Director General (Communication)
Election Commission of India

Dear Sir and Ma'am,

I am a journalist currently working on a series of stories commissioned by Al Jazeera. The reportage has references to the Election Commission of India's regulations and their implementation.

In this regard we have the following queries.

Kindly respond to the queries by 11 am on Saturday, March 12, so that we can appropriately incorporate the information you provide into our reportage.

1. Is The Election Commission (ECI) of India aware of proxy and surrogate entities and Indian companies placing advertisements favouring any political party, including the BJP, without disclosing associations with the political parties, on any social media platforms, including Facebook, during the period February 2019 - November 2020?

If so, what action has ECI taken against such advertisements?

2. Is the Election Commission aware of proxy and surrogate entities and Indian corporates placing political advertisements on Facebook with misleading information, incendiary content during various assembly and general election campaign periods without disclosing their association with political parties? If so, what action has ECI taken against such advertisements?

3. Proxy or surrogate political advertisements are not allowed in the Print and Television media. Why has the ECI not ordered similar regulations and restrictions on political advertisements on social media platforms, such as Facebook?

4. Media has [reported](#) that documents leaked by Facebook whistle-blower Frances Haugen show Facebook had pushed industry body Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) to lobby with the Election Commission of India to not impose stiff regulations on social media platforms during Parliamentary elections. Any comments that you would like to make on these facts?

5. Is the ECI aware that the social media platforms such as Facebook's algorithm charge different prices to different political parties for placing political advertisements on Facebook? This allows some political parties to consistently reach more voters for less money than their competitors. Has ECI taken any action in this regard?

We look forward to your responses. The information you provide is important to comprehensively report the facts in the story.

Thank you,

Kumar Sambhav

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