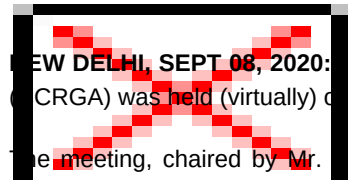


Govt ads - SC-constituted Panel takes serious note of lapses by States

## By TIOL News Service



**NEW DELHI, SEPT 08, 2020:** THE 19th meeting of Supreme Court-mandated Committee on Content Regulation in Government Advertising (CCRGA) was held (virtually) on September 4, 2020.

The meeting, chaired by Mr. M. Prakash Rawat, former Chief Election Commissioner of India, was attended by two other members, Mr. Ramesh Narayan of Asian Federation of Advertising Associations and past President, IAA and Mr. Ashok Kumar Tandon, Part-Time Member, Prasar Bharti Board.

As per directions of the Supreme Court, states are mandated to set up their respective three member committees on Content Regulation of Government Advertisements. Karnataka, Goa, Mizoram and Nagaland States have already constituted state-level Three Member Committees. The State Government of Chhattisgarh has given its consent to the Central Committee to monitor the content of their government advertisements.

The CCRGA meeting took a serious note of the fact that other states have yet to constitute their respective state level Committees.

The CCRGA was of the view that some state governments' delay in setting up the state-level committees may be construed as contempt of Supreme Court's order.

The CCRGA's attention was also drawn to the fact that some respondents were yet to furnish their replies to the notices issued to them in response to the complaints received by the Committee.

In view of the current Covid19 pandemic the Committee decided to allow further time to respondents to furnish their replies to the notices in all the pending complaints lodged with the Committee.

The CCRGA felt that non-compliance of its decisions was a serious matter. It was of the considered opinion that in the event of any non-compliance of CCRGA's Orders, the Committee may be constrained to put embargo on issue of further advertisements by nodal agencies of concerned governments, which come under purview of this Committee.

The Committee may, if necessary, also decide to summon the concerned official of the Govt. agencies dealing with release of advertisements in the event of undue delay in responding to Committee's notices.

It may be recalled that as per the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court on 13th May, 2015, the Government of India on 6th April, 2016 had set up a three member body consisting of "persons with unimpeachable neutrality and impartiality and who have excelled in their respective fields" to look into content regulation of government funded advertisements of all media platforms. Under the Hon'ble Supreme Court's guidelines dated 13th May, 2015 "the content of Government Advertisement should be relevant to the government's constitutional and legal obligations as well as the citizen's right and entitlements". Hon'ble Supreme Court has also observed that "Advertisement materials should be presented in an objective, fair and accessible manner and designed to meet the objectives of the campaign", "Advertisement materials should be objective and not directed at promoting political interests of ruling party", "Advertisement Campaigns be justified and undertaken in an efficient and cost effective manner" and "Government advertising must comply with legal requirement and financial regulations and procedures".

The Committee is empowered to address complaints from the general public on violation of the Supreme Court's guidelines and make suitable recommendations. The complaints may be filed before the committee on its address: The Member Secretary, Committee on Content Regulation in Government Advertising (CCRGA), Room No. 469, 4th Floor, Sochna Bhawan, C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003 (Contact No. 011-24367810, whatsapp No. +91 9599896993 ) or to its email: ms.ccrga@gmail.com .