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Gopalkrishna Gandhi calls for virtual rallies

Former Bengal Governor writes to CEC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi on Sunday wrote to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) to immediately ban all political rallies and door-to-door campaigning in the State and switch to virtual rallies to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

In his letter, Mr. Gandhi said electoral democracy and public health should not be "out of harmony".

"Please consider placing an immediate ban on all public rallies and door-to-door campaigning in the State till the last vote has been cast on April 29. And direct them to move to virtual campaigning. It should not be said that India's electoral democracy and India's public health are out of harmony," he wrote in his letter to the CEC.

The former Governor said the surge in cases in West Bengal that has coincided with the ongoing Assembly election has jeopardised "the health of the



Gopalkrishna Gandhi

electors, the election staff and security personnel on duty simultaneously and staggeringly".

It places the election process at dire risk, apart from endangering public health, he said.

"Social distancing, a desideratum in the fight against the virus, is out of the question in election rallies. But very few candidates and campaigners, if any, are to be seen wearing masks either," Mr. Gandhi said. "They are subjecting themselves and those they come in contact with, to great, in fact, potentially fatal, risk."