

'MORAL ADVICE' FOR MIZORAM POLL

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The Mizoram Presbyterian Church, the largest Christian denomination in the State, has issued "moral guidelines" for political parties and candidates ahead of the election to the 40-member Assembly this year-end.

More than 87% of the 1.12 million people in the State are Christians, mostly associated with churches of 14 denominations.

"We expect all candidates to abide by the laws of the land, not to make promises they cannot keep and abstain from collaborating with the underground and other elements that will affect the integrity and communal harmony of Mizoram," the Presbyterian Church said in a statement. It also asked the parties to choose candidates obedient to the laws of the nation and those of the church.

Rs. 20 lakh ceiling

"The church supports the Rs. 20 lakh ceiling for election expenditure fixed by the Election Commission of India," it said, appealing to all affiliated churches to read out the decree in church services and distribute leaflets to all members. The Presbyterian Church has over six lakh members.

Judicial measures

Issuing election guidelines has been a practice for the church in Mizoram and Nagaland. Church organisations have been vocal about legislative and judicial measures considered contrary to Christian beliefs. For instance, MizoramKohhran Hruaitute Committee, an umbrella organisation of the churches, rejected the Supreme Court's ruling on Article 277 and said homosexuality should remain criminalised.

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