Government of West Bengal
Information & Cultural Affairs Department

No. 2791-ICA/11P(xii) – 4/2008 Dated. 25/10/2011

NOTIFICATION

The Governor is pleased hereby to make, in supersession of all previous rules on the subject, the following rules: -

RULES

1. Short title and Commencement-
   (1) These rules may be called the West Bengal Press Representative Accreditation (Amendment) Rules, 2011
   (2) They shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions - In these rules, unless the context otherwise requires,-

(i) "Kolkata" has the same meaning as in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act, 1980 (West Ben. Act LIX of 1980.) ;

(ii) "Chairman" means the Chairman of the West Bengal Press Accreditation committee, now can be referred to as P.A. Committee;

(iii) "P.A. Committee" means the West Bengal Press Accreditation Committee constituted under rule 4;

(iv) "Convener" means the Convener of the Committee;

(v) "Director" means the Director of Information, Government of West Bengal;

(vi) "District" means a district other than Kolkata;

(vii)"editor" has the same meaning as defined in the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867(25 of 1867);

(viii) "Government" means Government of West Bengal;

(ix) "Member" means the member of the P.A. Committee;

(x) "Newspaper" has the same meaning as given in the Press and Registration of Books Act 1867 in the Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955 (45 of 1955);

(xi) "Electronic News Media Organization" means Terrestrial, Satellite Channels as well as General Entertainment channel (GEC), Cable TV & Radio/Community Radio which are especially engaged in catering news and current affairs related programs for certain minutes / hours per day;

(xii) "Press representative," means any correspondent or staff reporter or cameraman / photographer / stringer / retainer / working for newspaper or news agency, electronic news media organizations, radio / community radio, news photo service or illustrated news journals/ magazines including person appointed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India or the representative authorized by the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of West Bengal or the person nominated by the Government of any other State in India to act as such correspondent or staff reporter or cameraman / photographer, having headquarters in Kolkata, and person specially recommended by the P.A. Committee for the above mentioned purpose, including freelance journalists or freelance photographers having at least 15 years of working experience in the field of journalism and subscribing articles / stories / photographs either to Electronic channels, Radio, Print Media and News Agency on regular basis;

(xiii) "Start-up media organizations" mean those organizations, which have just started their function but not completed one year of its commercial operation;

(xiv) "Accreditation" means recognition and facilitation of news media representatives (viz. working reporters and photographers) by the State Government for the purpose of access to sources of information in the said Government and also to news materials (written or pictorial) released by the News Bureau of the Information & Cultural Affairs Department and other agencies of the State Government.

(xv)"Premier News Agency" means Agency catering news to all over India to different News Organizations with at least annual turn over of Rupees. Fifty Lakhs.

3. Application of the rules.

(i) These rules shall apply to all press media representatives stationed in Kolkata or at district or at sub divisional headquarters of West Bengal.

(ii) These rules shall apply in the following manner:-

(a) to all representatives of regular publication of daily, weekly, by-weekly, fortnightly or monthly news papers or news Journals;

(b) to all representatives of 24 hours TV news channels;

(c) to all representatives of News and Entertainment TV channel (GEC) running at least for 12-24 hours a day and having news bulletins for more than one hour per day from the Districts of West Bengal or Kolkata;

(d) to all representatives of Cable TV running at least for 12-24 hours a day and having news bulletins for more than one hour per day from the Districts of West Bengal or Kolkata;

(e) to all representatives of Community Radio running at least for 12-24 hours a day and having news bulletins for more than forty minutes per day from the Districts of West Bengal or Kolkata;

Whether a journal can be classified as 'news journal', in this respect decision of the PA committee shall be final.

Explanation:- For the purpose of these rules,-

I. "Regular Publication" shall mean publication in a year, of at least:-

(a) 352 issues in respect of a daily newspaper or news journal;

(b) 52 issues in respect of a weekly newspaper or news journal;

(c) 26 issues in respect of a fortnightly newspaper or news journal;

(d) 12 issues in respect of a monthly newspaper or news journal;

II. "Regular Electronic channel" shall mean,-

(a) 24 Hours TV News Channels;

(b) News and Entertainment TV channels (GEC) running at least for 12-24 hours a day and having news bulletins for more than one hour per day;

(c) Cable TV running at least for 12-24 hours a day and having news bulletins for more than one hour per day;

(d) Community Radio broadcasting having news bulletins for more than forty minutes in a day.

4. Constitution of Committee.

(i) The Government shall constitute a Committee to be called the West Bengal Press Accreditation Committee consisting of not more than 30 members (including the Chairman) who are validly accredited Reporter/Photographer by the state of West Bengal.

(ii) The Government shall appoint the Chairman directly:

(iii) The Director or his nominee, not below the rank of Deputy Director of Information, shall be the ex-officio Convener but shall not have any right to vote.

(iv) All the members shall be nominated by the Government. The members shall hold office for a period of two years from the date of the first meeting of the Committee at which there is a quorum:

Provided that the Government may if it considers necessary so to do extend the term of appointment of any member for a period not exceeding six months :

Provided further that the Government may at any time dissolve the Committee and re-constitute the same as soon as or after such dissolution.

5. Meeting of Committee.

(i) The Committee shall meet at least once in every three months, but may meet more frequently if so required by the Chairman or the Convener of the P.A. Committee;

(ii) No meeting shall be convened without notice of clear seven days before the date of the meeting. In case of emergency, the meeting may be convened with the consent of the Chairman at shorter notice of not less than 24 hours.

(iii) One-third of the total numbers shall be a quorum for a meeting of the Committee.

6. Venue of Meeting.

The Committee shall ordinarily meet at the Calcutta Information Centre at 1/1, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Road, Kolkata, unless the Chairman decides to change the venue of any meeting of the Committee for the convenience of the members.

7. Members shall be entitled to draw traveling allowances.

Member shall be entitled to traveling allowances for attending the meeting of the P.A. Committee under these rules.

8. Secretarial Assistance.

The Committee shall be provided with such secretarial assistance and postage as the Government may think fit.

9. Functions of the Committee.

(i) The Committee shall advise the Government on the suitability of a press representative for the grant of accreditation. The decision of the Committee shall be taken on the basis of majority of the members present.

(ii) Every application for the grant of accreditation shall be placed before the Committee by the Convener for consideration and shall, for this purpose, be circulated to the members along with the notice convening the meeting of the Committee;

(iii) The Committee may also consider any application for the grant of accreditation, which has not been circulated to the members beforehand, but each such application shall be accompanied by a report from the Convener stating the reasons for not circulating the same.

(iv) The committee shall advise the Government for execution of the Journalists' Pension Scheme as per Government order in this respect. The Department of I & CA shall take decision on recommendation of the PA committee. If the PA committee desires, a sub committee may be constituted for this purpose. Members of this sub committee must be the members of the PA Committee.

10. Manner of application for the grant of accreditation.

(i) Every application for the grant of accreditation shall be addressed to the Director of Information, Writers' Buildings, and Kolkata, which shall be authenticated by the 'authorized person of the media organization' under which the applicant is employed.

Explanation. 'Authorized person of the media organization' means Editor/Executive Editor, Channel Head, CEO, Manager or Regional Manager (in case of news agency/news photo agency etc.) and Station Director/Director, News in case of Doordarshan and All India Radio.

(ii) The application shall be made in such form as the Government may prescribe which can be downloaded from the Government website www.banglarmukh.gov.in or any other website to be notified by the Information and Cultural Affairs Department, Government of West Bengal from time to time and send to the Director of Information, Government of West Bengal after being authenticated by authorized person of the media organization [as mentioned in rule 10 (i)].

11. Conditions for the grant of accreditation.

(i) No accreditation shall be granted to a press representative unless his basic profession is journalism or news photography or he is basically a cameraman of the electronic media or news agency having working experience not less than three years in the profession of journalism/news photography, or television news service & radio news service. His/Her application has to be duly authenticated by the authorized persons of the media organization [as mentioned in rule 10 (i)] which he/she represents, provided that a press representative working as a whole-time correspondent or working journalist or news photographer or cameraman in Kolkata or any district in the State, who has already completed three years in the profession of journalism or working as correspondent or journalist or news Photographer or cameraman in a print/ electronic media or news agency/news photo agency shall be eligible to apply to Director of Information for the grant of accreditation along with the application submitted by the authorized persons of the media organization [as mentioned in rule 10 (i)] concerned in which he or she represents. In case of district, media representative should submit the application to the Director of Information through the respective D.I & C.O along with the application from the authorized persons of the media organization [as mentioned in Rule 10 (i)] under which he or she works. News papers/journals published from the District shall get one reporter and one Photographer.

(ii) Accreditation will be given to such news media representatives within the limits specified in Schedule I, II & III of these rules except for the news papers/journals published from the district. The P.A. Committee will decide the quota for issuing PA cards to the daily news papers published from the Districts.

(iii) Accreditation to representatives of only those media organizations will be considered which have been functioning or operating for at least one year, continuously. Provided that provisional accreditation shall be given to the reporters correspondent, photographers or cameraman of start up media organizations within the limits of schedule-I , II & III for the period of six months for the first time and renewal for another six months.

(iv) National or Regional print and electronic media as well as news agency having their representatives in the districts will be entitled to have accreditation cards at the ratio of 1:1 basis (one for reporter / correspondent and one for photographer/ cameraman) up to the level of each Sub Division of each District in the State.

(v) Where a press representative is a correspondent or staff reporter / stringer / retainer or news photographer of a print media, electronic channel including radio and news agency working in Kolkata or Districts/Sub-Divisions shall be required to furnish the following particulars in the prescribed forms for the grant of accreditation:-

(a) RNI Registration Number/*Registration certificate from I &B Ministry, Govt. of India;*

(b) Nature and type of the Media (print/Electronic);

(c) Periodicity and regularity of publication;

(d) Circulation number supported by ABC Certificate/Audit Report;

(e) Self attested copies of credentials of past experience;

(f) Self attested copies of proof of date of birth, nationality and address;

(g) Two copies of recent passport size photograph.

(vi) Where a press representative is a news photographer of a news photo agency or news photo service or illustrated news journal he/she shall be required to furnish the following particulars in the prescribed form for the grant of accreditation: -

(a) List of subscribers.

(b) Clippings of published news/photographs for the last one year.

(vii) Every accreditation shall be personal and shall not be transferable.

(viii) No accreditation shall confer any official status on a representative nor shall it be construed to mean more than a mere recognition of the identity of a press representative and his relationship with the news paper or news agency or news photo service or television news service, cable channel or organization of this kind which employs him/her.

(ix) No press representative shall use any letterheads or visiting cards inscribed with the words "Accredited to the Government of West Bengal".

(x) A press accreditation card shall be issued to a press representative by the Director.

(xi) Every press accreditation card shall remain valid for one year from the date of issue and may, subject to the other provisions of these rules, be renewed, on the expiration of the period of validity for a further period, not exceeding one year at a time. In case of transfer of a P.A. Card or surrender of P.A. Card, the authorized person of the media organization [as mentioned in rule 10(i)] in writing may give intimation to the Director of Information within 7 days from the date of such occurrence.

(xii) The veteran journalists may be issued "GOLD Accreditation Card" as freelance Reporter/Photographer on application with life time validity. The Veteran journalist should have attained the age of 65 years and he had been in the profession for at least 25 years in news organizations. If P.A. Committee desires, a sub committee may be formed with the Chairman of P.A. Committee, Director of Information and two members of the P.A. Committee for recommendation and sanction of gold accreditation card.

(xiii) Freelance correspondents/photographers should have at least 15 years experience in the field of journalism.

(xiv) Freelance correspondents should submit 24 articles published in different daily news Papers/ news journal' in the year preceding to the date of application/renewal

(xv)Freelance photographers should submit 24 photographs published in different daily news

Papers/news journal' in the year preceding to the date of application/renewal.

(xvi) Accreditation for representatives of Govt. of India:

The News Editor/ correspondent / cameraman/ stringer /retainer of News section of Doordarshan and AIR, the representatives of Press Information Bureau may get accreditation.

(xvii) Accreditation criteria for Representatives of Govt. of West Bengal:

The Director of Information may issue PA cards to the officers of News Bureau and photographers working in the photo section under the News Bureau, representatives of State Government periodicals subject to the maximum limit of 25 members and all District Information and Cultural Officers and Sub Divisional Information and Cultural Officers may get PA Card.

12. Renewal of P.A. Card.

(i) In general cases no press accreditation card shall be renewed unless an application for such renewal both by the card holder & the authorized person of the media organization [as mentioned in rule 10(i)] and addressed to the Director, is submitted at least 10 days before the date of expiry, failing which the accreditation shall stand cancelled/rejected. Only under special circumstances renewal may be allowed after a maximum period up to 30 days from the date of expiry of the PA Card if applied for by the PA cardholder and the authorized person of the media organization [as mentioned in rule 10(i)] in which he/she belongs to, must have to assign the reason for such delay.

(ii) In case of freelance journalist and freelance cameraman the application for renewal must contain proof of at least 24 published articles / 24 photographs in the preceding year. All these articles and photographs must be self attested. News Agency/Photo News Agency shall have to submit latest list of subscribers. They shall have to submit clippings of published news/news photographs during last one year.

(iii) While the P.A. Card is under submission for renewal/transfer, temporary Pass may be issued to the media representative by the News Bureau officials particularly for the period of 7 days only.

(iv) Valid P.A. cardholder may seek transfer/change his P.A. Card in favour of any media house (electronic/print & news agency) at any point of time, which may be approved by the Director.

13. Loss of P A Card.

In case of loss of any press accreditation card during the period of its validity, an application addressed to the Director shall be made for issue of a duplicate P.A. card. Every such application shall be accompanied by a copy of the general diary lodged with the nearest police station and a certificate from the authorized person of the media organization [as mentioned in rule 10 (i)] in this regard. The duplicate card shall be issued for the remaining period of validity only and, on the expiration of such period, the provision for renewal shall apply.

14. Issuance of P.A. Card for District.

Press accreditation card issued to a press representative in a district shall, unless otherwise directed, be valid for such district only.

15. Transfer or renewal of P.A. Card during invalidity period.

Invalid card cannot be considered for renewal or house transfer. All such applications shall be placed before the P.A. Committee for consideration.

16. Admission to special events or in protected places.

(i) Admission to the place of special events and in protected places may be regulated only by invitations or admission tokens issued by the Police authority as well as by the organizers. The press representative should also carry valid P.A. card issued by the I & CA Department, Government of West Bengal for that purpose.

(ii) Admission to protected places or photography in restricted places shall not be permissible by virtue of press accreditation card.

(iii) In determining the number of press representatives to be admitted to an event or in place, the character and volume of coverage required in each case on merit.

17. Duty of press representative and the organization on the press representative's ceasing to represent the media organization.

(i) Every press representative shall, on ceasing to represent the Newspaper, News Agency, News Photo Service, or Electronic News Service including News Cable Channel or Community Radio on whose behalf a press accreditation card was issued to him/her or on ceasing to function as correspondent or staff reporter or retainer/stringer, news photographer of such Newspaper, News Agency, News Photo Service, Electronic News Service including News Cable Channel or Radio/Community Radio, report the fact forthwith to the Director within fifteen days from the date of such cessation, and such report shall also be furnished by the authorized persons of the media organizations[as mentioned in rule 10(i)] to the Director within the aforesaid period, failing which the facilities accorded to the organization concerned may be withdrawn by the Director without assigning any reason.

(ii) Any action taken under sub-rule (i) shall be reported to the Chairman by the Director.

18. Disqualification.

A press representative shall be unfit for accreditation if the newspaper or the illustrated news journal, electronic news channel including cable news channel and community radio, news agency & news photo agency etc. for which he or she represents, preaches or propagate communalism or castism or encourages divisive or fissiparous tendencies.

19. Disaccreditation of press representative.

(i) A press representative shall be liable –

(a) if he uses any information for non-journalistic purpose or facility accorded to him as an accredited representative or otherwise utilizes the contents, in full or in part, of any, classified official document, the publication, broadcast or use otherwise, of which is considered as detrimental to the maintenance of law and order or the security of the State or the relations with a foreign Government or the apprehension of criminal offenders or the administration of justice; or

(b) he behaves in the course of his duties in an undignified or unprofessional manner; or

(c) he ignores or violates the conditions on which information and facilities are provided by the Government or acts in a manner contrary to the provisions of these rules.

(ii) An order of disaccreditation shall be passed by the Director on the advice of the P. A. Committee after giving the press representative and the authorized person of the media organization [as mentioned in rule 10(i)] which he represents an opportunity of being heard, either in person or through a memorandum but not through any legal adviser or representative. A copy of the order shall be sent to all concerned by the Director by registered post with due acknowledgement.

(iii) Any press representative or the authorized person of the media organization [as mentioned in rule 10(i)] which he/she represents aggrieved by an order under sub-rule (ii) may make a representation to the Government in the Department of Information & Cultural Affairs, addressed to the Principal Secretary/Secretary of the said Department, within 30 days from the date of receipt of such order.

20. Maintenance of list of accredited press representatives.

Every media house whether print or electronic or news agency shall submit to the Director a list of accreditation cards issued in the name of the representatives of the media house by 31st December of every year. In case of Districts, such list shall be submitted to the Director by the concerned DI&CO by 31st December of every year.

21. Power of Director to issue provisional press accreditation card.

Provisional press accreditation card may be issued by the Director to any first time applicant (reporter/photographer) of a media house of Kolkata and District/Sub-Division for not exceeding a period of three months and in such cases the matter may be placed before the PA committee for issuing a fresh PA card within three months from the date of issue of provisional PA card.

22. Signing of correspondence.

All correspondence on behalf of the P.A. Committee shall be made in the name of the P.A Committee and shall be signed by the Convener (Director of Information or his nominee).

23. Attendance at and access to press conference in Government Offices.

A press representative may, for his/her access to or attendance at a press conference in a Government Office is required to produce the press accreditation card on demand for recognition of his identity.

24. Grant of accreditation to foreign representatives.

(i) A foreign press representative shall submit his application for the grant of accreditation to the Director. Such application shall be accompanied either by a letter or telegram of appointment from the editor of the newspaper or the news agency or the Head of the organization or any bureau or branch of the organization (in India) to which he belongs or by a letter of introduction from the Foreign Correspondents Association of India (New Delhi) or the appropriate diplomatic or a consular representative in India or the Principal Information Officer of the Government of India.

(ii) Every such application shall be referred to the P.A. Committee by the Director.

(iii) Every applicant shall be a bonafide press representative and shall be stationed in Kolkata during the period of his accreditation.

(iv) For the purpose of determining the status of the newspaper or the news agency or other organizations including news photo service, electronic news media organizations etc. or other news catering organizations to which the applicant belongs, the following shall be taken into consideration:-

(a) In case of newspaper -

(i) Regularity of its publication, and

(ii) Number of circulation and the class of persons among whom it is circulated;

(b) In the case of news agency or other media organization including news photo service, electronic news media organizations/GEC and radio:-

(i) the regularity of use of overseas telecommunication service for the transmission of news from West Bengal; and

(ii) the countries or the newspapers catered to.

(v) A newspaper or news agency or other media organizations including news photo service, and electronic news media organizations including radio and community radio shall be entitled to get two P.A. Cards (one for its correspondent and one for photographer).

(vi) Every accredited foreign representative shall be guided by the same rules.

(vii) An accredited foreign press representative shall be liable to disaccreditation for the same reasons as are referred to in rules 18 & 19, 19(i), 19(ii) & 19(iii) and the order of disaccreditation shall be passed in accordance with the procedure laid down therein.

25. Power to give directions.

Government may by order give directions to the P.A. Committee and the Committee shall comply with such directions.

26. Power to issue guidelines.

Government for the proper functioning of the P.A. Committee may issue guidelines from time to time and such guidelines shall be adhered to by the Committee.

27. Review the list of accredited journalist.

The PA Committee shall review the entire list of accreditation at the end of two years. If required the Committee may review the entire list of accredited journalists/photographers earlier than that. For the purpose of such review, the media organizations are to submit the required information.

28. The Director of Information may call for any information and documents considered necessary for the purpose of ensuring credibility and genuineness of cases of accreditation, at the time of accreditation or its renewal or any other time if so required.

29. Notwithstanding anything contained in these rules, the Government shall be free to take any action warranted by the circumstances in matters relating to accreditation/ disaccreditation and in all cases the Government decision shall be final.

Schedule I
SCHEDULE OF MAXIMUM
NUMBER OF ACCREDITATION
FOR VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF MEDIA HOUSE
Rule 11(ii)
Print Media
Daily Newspapers with average circulation of Kolkata edition.

	Reporter	Cameraman
Upto 10000	3	1
10,001 to 50,000	6	2
50,001 to 1,00,000	9	3
1,00,001 to 1,50,000	12	4
1,50,001 to 2,00,000	15	5
2,00,001 to 3,00,000	24	8
3,00,001 to 5,00,000	42	14
5,00,001 to 7,00,000	48	16
7,00,001 onwards	60	20

Schedule-II
SCHEDULE OF MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ACCREDITATION
FOR VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA
Rule 11(ii)

Types of media	Number of Reporter	Number of Photographer
1. 24 hours TV news channels	25	25
2. News & Entertainment TV channels (GEC) (Having news bulletins for more than two hours per day)	10	10
3. News & Entertainment TV channels (GEC) (Having news bulletins for more than one hour per day)	5	5
4. Cable TV	5	5
5. Community Radio	1	1

Schedule-III
SCHEDULE OF MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ACCREDITATION
FOR VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF NEWS AGENCY
Rule 11(ii)

Category	Reporter	Photographer
1. Premier National News Agency	12	5
2. International News Agency	2	2
3. Other News Agency	2	2

By order of the Governor