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No victory processions after counting: ECI

Vandana Nampoothiri

KOCHI: In the wake of the sudden rise in Covid-19 cases in the country, the Election Commission of India (ECI), in a statement on Tuesday, banned all victory processions to be held on May 2 after the counting of votes. This is in addition to the guidelines released earlier by ECI.

"In view of the surge in Covid-19 cases throughout the country, the Commission has decided to make more stringent provision to be followed during the process of counting, in addition to the exiting broad guidelines dated 21st August, 2020 and has directed that no victory procession after the counting on 2.05.2021 shall be permissible," ECI said in the statement.

In addition to that, ECI further stated that "no more than two persons shall be allowed to accompany the winning candidate or his/her authorised representative to receive the certificate of election from the Returning Officer concerned."

The statement comes a day after the Madras High Court heavily criticised the ECI for allowing political rallies and campaigns to be held in the midst of the pandemic. The court held the institution 'singularly responsible' for the surge of Covid cases.

Less panic as 14-day lockdown hits Karnataka

Alwin Benjamin Soji

BENGALURU:With shops dealing in essential items only allowed to operate from 6 a.m to 10 a.m during the 14-day complete lockdown in Karnataka, shop owners and citizens might face certain challenges during this period. We, at The Beacon, spoke to a few people to know their views on the lockdown.

Praveen Nair who works at Family Shopping Mart said, "There has been a lot of rush for the past couple of days. People have been buying all the essential items in bulk. We usually open our shop at 9 a.m, but due to the lockdown, we will be operating from 6 a.m to 10 a.m."



Representational Image

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Kenneth George, a student of Christ (Deemed to be University) said, "I usually do all my shopping online. I

buy in bulk from Grofers in the first week of every month, so this lockdown will not affect me much. But if I

need something on an urgent basis, that might become a problem as shops would only be open in the early hours

every day.

Infancia Divya, a student of Mount Carmel College said, "I never shop for groceries online. I totally depend on going to the shop and purchase them myself. I'll focus on buying everything from the 6 a.m to 10 a.m slot and make sure that I don't miss out on anything. During the lockdown, shopping online would be my last resort."

The Karnataka Government imposed a 14-day lockdown in the state starting from 9 p.m on April 27. Schools, colleges, educational institutions, cinema halls, malls, gyms and similar places along with public and private transport would be closed for this period.

Covid-19: India to import oxygen tanks

Sudarshani

In response to the shortage of oxygen tankers, the Indian Government on Monday imported 20 oxygen tankers from Singapore and Bangkok. The import of these cylinders was coordinated by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) according to the ministry's spokesperson.

"Some glimpses of airlift of oxygen containers from Bangkok by IAF last night



Oxygen tanks airlift mission at Singapore

Twitter

The airlift is being coordinated by MHA. It will enhance oxygen availability amid current Covid-19 surge," the spokesperson

tweeted with a few images of IAF loading the oxygen containers.

The ministry's spokesperson added that IAF C17 aircraft

air-lifted additional oxygen containers from Singapore, to boost the availability of oxygen in the country amidst the second wave of Covid-19.

The government has imported 20 oxygen tankers of 10 metric tonnes (MT) and 20 metric tonnes (MT). Two 20 MT tankers were allocated each to the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. Four 10 MT tankers were allocated to the states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and two for Gujarat.

EGI vouch for fair trial of Siddique Kappan

Akshara DM

The Editors Guild of India (EGI) took to Twitter on Monday to address the "inhuman" treatment meted out to Journalist Siddique Kappan and furthered its efforts to ensure a fair trial to the journalist by appealing to the Supreme Court.

Kerala-based Journalist Siddique Kappan has been in custody since October 2020, under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for reporting the rape and death of the Dalit girl in Hathras.

The statement signed by the EGI President Seema Mustafa said, "It is shocking that the Supreme Court has not intervened in this case, to ensure a fair trial of this journalist, even though a habeas corpus petition challenging his arrest has been pending before the court for the past six months. All this goes against the constitutional canons of democracy where independent journalistic enterprises must be protected rather than being repressed." Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was criticised for not responding to requests.

UAE, UK offer solidarity to India

Nishitha Rachel

As India battles a devastating second wave of coronavirus, support from several countries continue to pour in. UAE, UK, Germany, Russia and more have expressed their solidarity towards the citizens of the country and have offered help to fight coronavirus.

On Sunday night, UAE landmarks lit up in solidarity with India. The world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa in Dubai and the Adnoc headquarters in Abu Dhabi were illuminated with the



Burj Khalifa

Twitter

Indian flag as a support for the country. The Indian Air Force has also begun airlifting 12 ready-to-use cryogenic tankers from Dubai to India. The delivery was arranged by the Adani Group who also made the

delivery from Saudi.

The United Kingdom is reportedly sending in 600 pieces of medical equipment to India. Ventilators and oxygen concentrators were due to leave on Sunday, with the first shipment expected to land on Tuesday in India.

"We stand side by side with India as a friend and partner during what is a deeply concerning time in the fight against Covid-19," said the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The President of France, Emmanuel Macron expressed European Union's solidarity towards India.

Voting percentage goes down in West Bengal

Megha Bhattacherjee

WEST BENGAL: With the rising Covid-19 cases in the country, voters, especially senior citizens are sceptical to go out and vote. This has resulted in a significant drop in voting percentage as Assembly Elections are in full swing in West Bengal.

The urban sexagenarian did not cast their vote due to the fear of Covid-19, leading to low polling. Shri Arun Halder, a retired citizen from Howrah said, "Life is way more precious than anything else and Election

Commission has failed to maintain its duty during voting in the booths. There is a crowd for the queue and lack of social distancing poses the risk of spreading Covid-19. Therefore I refrained from voting this time."

B. Bhattacherjee, a former State Govt Employee expressed his opinion, "All parties are the same. No one will do anything for the betterment of the people of the state, then why to risk my life by inviting Covid-19 while standing in a long crowded queue for voting?"