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Government of Gujarat

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PRESS RELEASE

Chief Minister holds video-conference in presence of Deputy Chief Minister

Gujarat Government to reopen different types of religious places as per Centre's guidelines in non-containment zones, but only for viewing

Entry by token to avoid crowding as spectre of COVID-19 still continues

Religious heads assure that devotees would maintain six feet distance and wear masks, and will not allow any ritual, offerings, etc

Gandhinagar, Friday: Gujarat Government today decided to reopen religious places, including Mandir, Masjid, Church, Derasar, Gurudwara, etc. for devotees, but only for viewing, as per the Central Government's rules and regulations in non-containment zones.

This was decided by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in a video-conference in presence of Deputy Chief Minister Nitinbhai Patel from here with religious heads and trustees, sants, mahants, maulvis, priests present at district places. He also sought suggestions from them.

The temple managements and organisers will have to ensure the devotees observe the protocols issued during the global pandemic novel coronavirus COVID-19, to avoid crowding like maintaining sex feet distance between two, wearing mask and washing hands with sanitisers to be provided by the temple authorities. They should further coordinate protocols with the local government authorities.

Mr. Rupani said that big places of pilgrimage should start registration counter and control entry by issuing tokens for specific hours. Since there are many Derasars and Upashryas in the state, they should also observe the guidelines issued from time to time.

He said the temple authorities have to ensure no other religious rituals, like offering prasad and sprinkling holy water, etc are performed. He asked devotees not to take senior citizens above 65 and children along.

Mr. Rupani appealed to all religious groups not to hold religious functions, fairs and festivals for another one-two months to check the spread of the highly contagious corona virus.

Notable among those present during videoconferencing included Swami Brahnavihariji of BAPS, Jagannath Mandir trustee Mahendrabhai Jha, Kalupur Mandir Swami Nirgundasji, Kheda Vadtal's Sant Swami, Bhavnagar Palitana trustee Shripalbhai, Gandhinagar Mahudi Mandir trustee Rajeshbhai, Somnath Mandir trustee Shri Chavda, Pavagadh Mandir trustee Surendrakaka, Santaram Mandir Ramdasji Maharaj, Dakor Mandir Manger Arvindbhai Mehta, Junagadh Juna Akhada Tansukhgiri Bapu, Virpur Mandir Rghuram Bapa, and that of Ambaji, Devbhumi Dwarka, etc.

Also present were Surat Roman Catholic Church trustee Kori, Rajkot Christi College Director Fr John, Vadodara Catholic Church Fr Stanley, Nadiad Methodist Church Emanuel Kant, Ahmedabad Roman Catholic Church Fr Rethanswami, North India Church Fr Sylvan Christian.

Similarly, there were Surat Khwaja Dargah Mufti Kesar Alam, Surat Darul-uluman Mufti Abdul Kaleem, Ahmedabad Juma Masjid Iman Shabbir Maulvi, Vadodara Dargah Kamaluddin Bawa, Rajkot Sadar Juma Masjid Afiz Akram.

They assured they would maintain the Central and State Government guidelines.

The State Home Department is preparing detailed SOP to reopen the temples and places of pilgrimage.

Deputy Chief Minister Nitinbhai Patel called for arranging proper system down to the village level.

Others present during the videoconferencing included Education Minister Bhupendrasinh Chudasma, Minister of State for Home Pradipsinh Jadeja, Chief Minister's Chief Principal Secretary K. Kailashnathan, Additional Chief Secretary Pankaj Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary for Home Sangeeta Singh, Director-General of Police Shivanand Jha.

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