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Congress leaders detained at airport; lock horns with cops

State facing
'undeclared
Emergency', says
Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU/MANGALURU,
DHNS

Top Congress leaders were detained at the Mangaluru airport on Friday with former chief minister Siddaramaiah declaring that Karnataka was facing an "undeclared Emergency" and likened the current situation to the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini.

A delegation of Congress leaders, including former speaker K R Ramesh Kumar and others, were not allowed to exit the Mangaluru airport, unfolding a drama that saw them lock horns with the police. "Where were you when my people were killed," Kumar yelled angrily while the security personnel dragged him by the hands. He was referring to the deaths of two people killed by police bullets.

Siddaramaiah, who was slated to fly into Mangaluru, had to cancel after his flight was denied permission to land.

"There was no need to impose Section 144 in Karnataka. Scuttling the freedom of people is what Hitler did in Germany and Mussolini in Italy," Siddaramaiah told reporters. "It's like an undeclared Emergency," he said.

Congress leaders planned to visit Mangaluru to take stock of the situation and also visit the families of Jaleel and Nauseen, who were killed in police firing.

"In Mangaluru, people were just shouting slogans. They had no weapons. Instead of allowing them to protest peacefully, it looks like the police themselves incited violence," Siddaramaiah said, asking Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa to come clean. "On the one hand, the chief minister said he had directed the police not to use force. Still, the police killed two people. Either the chief minister is lying, or the police gave two hoots to his instruction."

Siddaramaiah demanded a judicial inquiry by a sitting High Court judge to look into

the killing of Jaleel and Nauseen.

Former minister D K Shivakumar attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for "disturbing" India's unity, while criticising the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register for Citizens.

"If you ask for documents, people like me can submit. But what about villagers and those who have settled here for their daily bread? From where they will show their certificates and documents when they have not even enrolled in schools? What will you do if people don't submit documents? Will you put them into jail," he asked.

He added that Yediyurappa and Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai should take responsibility for the protests against the CAA.

The delegation comprising leaders Ugrappa, Ramesh Kumar, M B Patil, S R Patil, B Rayareddy and Nazir Ahmed was detained on arrival at the airport. They were ferried away in a vehicle and later brought back to the airport. The delegation later returned to Bengaluru in the evening flight.