RASHTRA JYOTI

ANALYSIS BRIEF
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# Why Lockdown Vendors Put Saffron Flags on Their Carts

Original analysis by **Swati Goel Sharma**

The author argues that some vendors displayed saffron flags to retain customers who were avoiding Muslim sellers during the pandemic. A Begusarai vendor says the flag spared him repeated identity checks, and a Nalanda volunteer says vendors asked him for flags and put them up themselves.



A fruit seller with a saffron flag on his cart. (Twitter)

## THE ESSENTIAL POINTS

- Reports from Telangana, Jharkhand and Bihar described sellers displaying saffron flags or Hindu banners. Police intervened across the three states and criminal charges followed.
- Begusarai vendor Toona Mahto said a saffron flag was visible from farther away than an Aadhaar card and he feared losing sales without one.
- In his letter to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, Dheeraj Kumar said he supplied spare Ram Navami flags and the sellers chose to put them up.
- A Nalanda resident told Sharma she avoided buying from Muslims because she feared they were spreading Covid-19, citing local newspaper reports for that belief.

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Updated from an original written by Swati Goel Sharma in May 2020. Summary prepared by Rashtra Jyoti Staff. Facts refer to the original reporting date.