

What 'lying-in-state' protocol?

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In news- The coffin of Britain's longest-reigning monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, is lying-in-state at Westminster Hall after its final journey from Buckingham Palace in London.

About 'lying-in-state' protocol-

- **Lying-in-state is a term used to describe a formal, solemn occasion during which a deceased person's coffin is placed on view at a primary government building** for the public to pay their respects before the last rites. The body, as per local customs, can be placed inside or outside the coffin.
- According to the UK Parliament, **lying-in-state in the UK is given to "the Sovereign, as Head of State, the current or past Queen Consort and sometimes former Prime Ministers"**.
- After her death in 2002, the Queen Mother lay in state for three days. **The lying-in-state tradition in the UK can be traced back to the Stuart dynasty that reigned in England and Scotland in the 17th century.**
- **In the US, lying-in-state is accorded to the president or, occasionally, another high-ranking official** or military leader. The coffin bearing the deceased's body is placed inside the US Capitol or a state capitol.
- About lying-in-state at the US Capitol, the decision is made by a concurrent resolution of the US House of Representatives and the US Senate. The states in the US have their own customs and rules to make that decision.
- **In the US the practice of lying-in-state began in**

1852 when Henry Clay, a US Senator from Kentucky, was the first person to lie in state in the US Capitol.

- **Abraham Lincoln was the first US President to lie in state in the US Capitol.**
- A deceased Pope customarily lies in state inside the chapel of the Apostolic Palace.

What is lying-in-rest/laying-in-repose?

- In the UK, **when the coffin of the high-ranking official is displayed at a place that is not the principal government building earmarked for lying-in-state, it is termed as lying-in-rest or lying-in-repose. It is so called as the setting is considered less formal.**
- **In Canada**, for example, when a deceased dignitary – governor generals or prime ministers – lie anywhere outside of the Centre Block of Parliament Hill, they are referred to as **lying-in-repose**.
- In the **US**, **another term – lying-in-honour** – is used instead of lying-in-state if the person who is being given this honour is not an elected official, but is considered to have made significant contributions to America.
- **In Westminster Hall, the Queen's closed coffin will rest on a raised, ornate platform called the catafalque.** It will be covered with The Royal Standard – a flag that “represents the Sovereign and the United Kingdom”, and is flown on royal palaces, the monarch's car or airplane.
- During the lying-in-state period the catafalque will be flanked by a military guard round-the-clock.
- The guard is made up of the **Sovereign's Bodyguard, Foot Guards or the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment.**

Lying-in-state protocol in India-

- **India accords 'state funerals' to departed dignitaries like the sitting president, prime minister, a former prime minister, president or governor** among others, with the Centre having the power to announce it for any individuals it deems fit for the honour.
- **Lying-in-state is observed during the time leading up to the state funeral**, which also has protocols that involve observing 'days of mourning' with the flag flying at half mast and no official entertainment.
- Guidelines by the Ministry of Home Affairs say that a state funeral will be accorded to any dignitary when ordered by the Government of India.
- As per the guidelines, before the arrangements are made for the funeral, and after the customary/religious rituals have been performed, the body will lie in state to enable last homage being paid to the deceased.
- **In the case of the death of the President a vigil party** from the senior officers of the three services down to the rank of Brigadier and equivalent will be on vigil duty while the body is lying-in-state.
- The lying-in-state general instructions state that the **body should be placed in an open ground or large verandah** on a raised mound or a platform; the path for mourners should be broad enough to enable 4-5 persons to walk abreast.
- Further, the lying-in-state can be of as long a duration as the religious and other considerations may permit.
- **After Mahatma Gandhi's death, his body lay in state at Birla House, while Indira Gandhi's body was kept at Teen Murti and Atal Bihari Vajpayee lay in state at the BJP headquarters.**