

CEYLON TODAY

ANFREL urges polling station accessibility audits

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By Ruwan Laknath Jayakody

Making recommendations regarding the electoral process, the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) recommended that the Election Commission (EC), with the assistance of Local Government units, should promote accessibility by performing polling station audits prior to election day and reconsider the use of any polling station which does not fit accessibility guidelines.

ANFREL also called for polling officials to be provided sensitivity training concerning voting by vulnerable persons.

These recommendations were made in the ANFREL International Election Observation Mission Report titled The 2019 Sri Lankan Presidential Election: A Deepening Political Divide.

The ANFREL further proposed that EC guidelines should also clarify the role of the Police within the polling area, and noted that the participation of the Police aside from providing security should be avoided.

ANFREL was also of the view that the EC should provide aggregated information on the number of spoilt and tendered ballots.

'All stakeholders should strive to protect voter secrecy by reconsidering the existing guidelines on the set-up of polling stations and ensuring that no person remains behind the voters as they vote. The EC, civil society organisations, the Media, and the academia should conduct wider voter education on the requirements to vote.

Polling officers should receive better instructions on the identification of voters. Further, stakeholders should work to create a set of policies which enable the voting rights of migrant workers, students, and workers through postal voting or other alternative voting procedures.'



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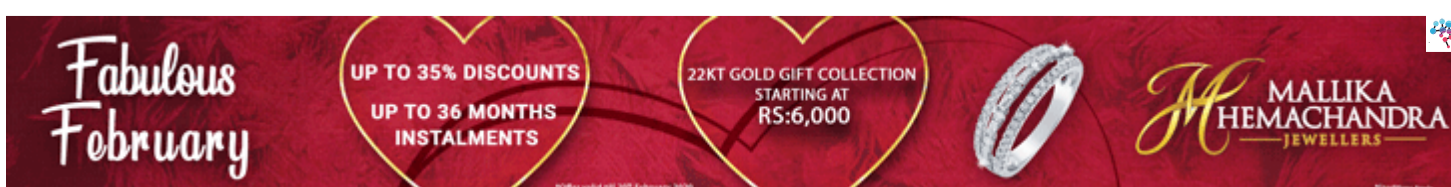
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