

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

CIVIL ORIGINAL JURISDICTION

WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) DIARY NO. 10871 OF 2020

IN THE MATTER OF:

JAMIAT ULAMA-I-HIND & Ors. Petitioners

-Versus-

UNION OF INDIA & Ans. Respondents

AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NOS. 1 & 2

FILED BY:-

ADVOCATE FOR THE RESPONDENTS

INDEX

SL. NO.	PARTICULARS OF DOCUMENTS	PAGE. NO.	REMARKS
1.	AFFIDAVIT	1 - 20	
2.	ANNEXURE R-1 A copy of letter issued by the Respondent No.1 (MHA) dated 01.04.2020.	21	
3.	ANNEXURE R-2 Copy of communication dated 02.04.2020 constituting the Fact Check Unit.	22-24	
4.	ANNEXURE R-3 Copy of communication dated 01.04.2020 sent to the stakeholders to this Ministry.	25	
5.	ANNEXURE R-4 A copy of communication dated 01.04.2020 sent to all the State Governments.	26	
6.	ANNEXURE R-5 A copy of the Press Council of India's Press release dated 01.04.2020	27	
7.	ANNEXURE R-6 Copy of the communication dated 01.04.2020 issued by News Broadcaster Association.	28	
8.	ANNEXURE R-7 Copy of the communication dated 02.04.2020 issued by Indian Broadcasting Foundation	29	

9.	ANNEXURE R-8 Copy of Article Why Flinging the Term 'Corona Jihad' at the Tablighi Jamaat Makes No Sense, published in The Wire on 02.04.2020	30-35	
10.	ANNEXURE R-9 Copy of Article Tablighi Jamaat Covid-19 case divides the internet, published in Times of India on 01.04.2020	36-37	
11.	ANNEXURE R-10 Copy of Article Tablighi Jamaat or Ayodhya - all defy social distancing rule. Stupidity can't be forgiven, published in The Print on 31.03.2020	38	
12.	ANNEXURE R-11 Copy of Article Don't communalise the battle against Covid-19-editorials, published in Hindustan Times on 01.04.2020	39-40	
13.	ANNEXURE R-12 Copy of Article Already rampant communal virus in India is gleefully piggy-back riding on coronavirus published in Indian Express on 04.04.2020	41-44	
14.	ANNEXURE R-13 Copy of Article Talking to Tablighis: Nizamuddin incident distressing and unfortunate, but don't make it a witch-hunt' published in Indian Express on 07.04.2020	45-55	
15.	ANNEXURE R-14 Copy of Article Breaking Silence, Tablighi Jamaat Makes Public Appeal for Members to Comply with Health Orders, published in The Wire on	56-62	

	02.04.2020		
16.	ANNEXURE R-15 Copy of Article 'Listen to doctors, avoid gatherings': Jamaat chief in message to followers, published in Hindustan Times on 04.04.2020	63-67	
17.	ANNEXURE R-16 Copy of Article As Tabligh's Nizamuddin centre is cleared, Kejriwal warns of a surge in cases, published in Indian Express on 01.04.2020	68-71	
18.	ANNEXURE R-17 Copy of Article Covid-19: Nizamuddin markaz says 1500 members broke away before quarantine, published in Hindustan Times on 31.03.2020	72-74	
19.	ANNEXURE R-18 Copy of News reports Call it a mistake, not conspiracy against India, say Muslim scholars on Tablighi Jamaat event, on 08.04.2020	75-77	
20.	ANNEXURE R-19 Copy of News reports such as Muslim IAS-IPS officers' Covid-19, appeal to community: Don't give anyone reason to blame you on 05.04.2020	78-79	
21.	ANNEXURE R-20 Copy of news report Cleric urges muslims in Navi Mumbai to cooperate in fight against coronavirus, published in Times of India on 05.04.2020	80	
22.	ANNEXURE R-21 Copy of Article Citizens must exhibit responsible behaviour/ Opinion-columns, published in Hindustan Times on 06.04.2020	81-83	

23.	ANNEXURE R-22 Copy of Article Orvanisers of Tablighi Jamaat have hurt the fight against the coronavirus, published in Indian Express on 03.04.2020	84-87	
24.	ANNEXURE R-23 Copy of Article Tablighi Jamaat blames 'govt planning' as BJP, AAP attack it for spike in Covid-19 cases, published in Indian Express on 31.03.2020	88-90	
25.	ANNEXURE R-24 Copy of Article Dear Muslims, Tablighi Jamaat committed a crime against humanity. Don't defend them, published in The Print on 01.04.2020	91-93	
26.	ANNEXURE R-25 Copy of Reports such as Police refute Amar Ujala report about Tablighi Jamaat members misbehaving with medical staff, published in Newslaundry on 05.04.2020	94-96	
27.	ANNEXURE R-26 Copy of Reports such as Nizamuddin: Minorities Panel Reports DU Teachers for Hate Speech Against Muslims, published in The Wire on 02.04.2020	97-99	
28.	ANNEXURE R-27 Copy of reports 'Aurangabad doctor booked for social media post calling Tablighi Jamaat chief a terrorist published in Indian Express on 06.04.2020	100-101	
29.	ANNEXURE R-28 Copy of reports 'Man booked for objectionable comment on Facebook\Cities News published in Indian Express on 03.04.2020	102	

30.	ANNEXURE R-29 Copy of reports 'Gujarat arrests seven for sharing hate messages/India News published in Indian Express on 04.04.2020	103-105	
31.	ANNEXURE R-30 Copy of reports 'Jamshedput:5 held for spreading online rumour on Tabligh event published in Indian Express on 05.04.2020	106-107	
32.	ANNEXURE R-31 Copy of reports 'Three arrested for posting 'obscene' content over Nizamuddin event published in Indian Express on 06.04.2020	108-110	
33.	ANNEXURE R-32 Copy of reports 'Not right that some tenants being asked to vacate due to communal divisions: Himachal Police' published in Indian Express on 07.04.2020	111-113	
34.	ANNEXURE R-33 Copy of reports 'Not fair to single out Tablighi Jamaat for Covid-19 spread': Jagan Reddy published in Hindustan Times on 04.04.2020	114-115	
35.	ANNEXURE R-34 Copy of reports 'Nod to Tablighi Jamaat gathering should have been denied, says Sharad Pawar published in Hindustan Times on 06.04.2020	116-117	
36.	ANNEXURE R-35 Copy of reports 'Don't give coronavirus communal colour, avoid sensationalisation: Kerala, Bengal' published in Indian Express on 02.04.2020	118-121	

37.	ANNEXURE R-36 Copy of Article Coronavirus and Nizamuddin: TV news returns to bigotry with a band, published on news portal Newslandry on 01.04.2020	122-130	
38.	ANNEXURE R-37 Copy of Article 'Dilli ke Nizamuddin Markaz me hue iztema se nikle log filhal desh ke karib 14 rajyo me gaye hain. Kul pidito me 25 fisadi bimar Tablighi Jamaat ke iztema me shamil hue log hain.', published on news portal Newslandry on 04.04.2020	131-136	

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CIVIL ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) DIARY NO. 10871 OF 2020

IN THE MATTER OF:

JAMIAT ULAMA-I-HIND & ORS. PETITIONERS

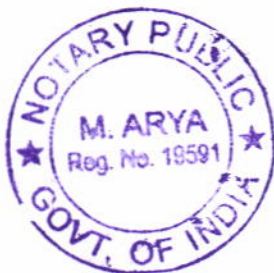
Versus

UNION OF INDIA & ANR. RESPONDENTS

AFFIDAVIT DATED 13.11.2020
ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENTS NO. 1 AND 2

I, Amit Khare, presently working as Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as under :-

1. I state that I am authorized in my official capacity to swear and depose to the present affidavit and as such, I am aware of the facts and circumstances based on the records of the case.



2. I state that the Union of India had earlier filed an Affidavit affirmed by Ms Sonika Khattar, Under Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. The said Affidavit dated 6.8.2020 may be permitted to be replaced with the present Affidavit which is in respectful compliance of the order dated 8.10.2020 passed by this Hon'ble Court in the captioned petition.

3. I state and submit that I have read and understood the contents of the captioned petition in which the following prayers are made:

“(a) Issue a writ in the nature of mandamus, or any other writ, order or direction to the Central Government to stop the dissemination of fake news and take strict action against the sections of the media spreading bigotry and communal hatred in relation to the Nizamuddin Markaz issue; and/or

(b) Issue a writ in the nature of mandamus, or any other writ, order or direction to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to identify and take strict action against sections of the media who are communalising the Nizamuddin Markaz issue; and/or



(c) *Issue a writ in the nature of mandamus, or any other writ, order or direction to all sections of the media to strictly comply, in letter and spirit, with the directions of the 25 Hon'ble Supreme Court dated March 31, 2020 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 468/2020; and/or*

(d) *pass such other/further order as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the present case."*

4. I state and submit that as pointed out hereunder, in exercise of the statutory powers under the existing regime, the Central Government has issued several directions to prevent dissemination of fake news leading to abrogation of communal harmony. It is submitted that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has been issuing advisories from time to time to TV channels to adhere to the programme code.

5. I further respectfully state and submit that Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has power to issue directions for blocking of information by public under section 69A of IT Act 2000 and Information Technology



(Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009.

6. It is submitted that in exercise of the aforesaid statutory power, MeitY has already issued the advisories categorically informing the intermediaries to remove false news /mis-information concerning COVID-19 which are likely to create panic among public and disturb the public order and communal harmony. Accordingly, so far MeitY has issued directions for blocking of such content u/s 69A of IT Act, 2000 to various intermediaries in month of April and details are as below:

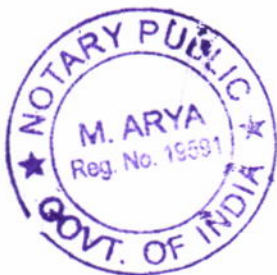
	CORONA RELATED CONTENT		
	NO. OF ACCOUNTS	NO. OF SPECIFIC URLS	TOTAL
FACEBOOK	2	111*	113*
TWITTER	2	613*	615*
YOUTUBE	0	3*	3*
INSTAGRAM	0	12*	12*



TOTAL	4	739*	743*
--------------	---	------	------

*It may be noted that some of the aforesaid URLs were related to Tablighi Jamaat and were communal in nature as they were giving religious colour on Corona issue and were anticipated to create public order situation.

7. It is respectfully submitted that as evident from the letter issued by the Respondent No.1 (MHA) dated 01.04.2020, a copy of which is annexed hereto and marked as **Annexure R-1**, it is clear that the Government of India took immediate and effective steps to prevent online fake news. Further, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting took decision to set-up a Fact Check Unit in the Press Information Bureau specifically for COVID-19. This Unit was set up on 2ndApril, 2020 and is mandated to receive communication/messages from public at large to which response is sent in a defined time-frame. Copy of communication dated 02.04.2020 constituting the Fact Check Unit is at **Annexure R-2**.



8. I respectfully state and submit that the aforesaid Fact Check Unit of the Union of India receives messages by email at pibfactcheck@gmail.com and send response in a defined time-frame. Facts can be checked through the link **<https://factcheck.pib.gov.in>**.

9. I respectfully state and submit that since its inception on 2nd April, 2020, this Unit had received communication in 8,150 cases as on 23rd October, 2020 out of which replies have been given in 7,350 cases, and reference has been made to states in 800 cases.

10. I further respectfully state and submit that in order to further strengthen the measures to prevent dissemination of fake news, MHA had written a letter dated 2nd April 2020 to all States and Union Territories, wherein, apart from requesting the respective states and UTs to strictly implement lockdown measures in letter and spirit, the MHA had also directed that in terms of this Hon'ble Court's order dated 31st March 2020



passed in the case of *Alakh Alok Srivastava Vs. Union of India*, requisite steps under Section 54 of the Disaster Management Act 2005 relating to preventing fake news should also be taken by the respective state authorities. It is further submitted that all these letters, advisories and communications are made available by MHA in their website for public viewing and access at <https://www.mha.gov.in>.

11. It is further respectfully submitted that in pursuance of this Hon'ble Court's direction dated 31.03.2020 in Civil Writ Petition No. 468/2020, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued a communication on 1st April, 2020 to the Print and Electronic Media through the Indian Broadcasting Foundation, the News Broadcasters Association, the Press Council of India, Registrar of Newspapers for India, Press Information Bureau and Prasar Bharati with the request to disseminate the judgement of this Hon'ble court to all stakeholders for appropriate action and for endorsing the communication sent to the stakeholders to this Ministry. The



said communication dated 01.04.2020 is annexed hereto and marked as **Annexure R-3**. A separate communication dated 01.04.2020 was also sent to all the State Governments by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. A copy of the said communication is annexed hereto and marked as **Annexure R-4**.

12. Furthermore, the Press Council of India vide its Press Release of 1st April, 2020 had also issued an advisory to the media "*to responsibly ensure dissemination of verified news on COVID-19 outbreak based on the news bulletins of Government of India in terms of Hon'ble Supreme Court's Order dated 31.3.2020*". PCI in its press release also referred to the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the aforementioned Writ Petition. A copy of the Press Council of India release dated 01.04.2020 is annexed hereto and marked as **Annexure R-5**.

13. In addition to the above, the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) and Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF)



have also issued communications to all its members with the request to the members for taking necessary action as per communication of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Copies of the communication dated 01.04.2020 and 02.04.2020 issued by NBA and IBF are annexed hereto and marked as **Annexure R-6** and **R-7** respectively.

14. I respectfully state and submit that on the issue of tackling false/fake news appearing on digital/electronic media, it is informed that the Press Information Bureau (PIB) already has a Unit which looks at matters relating to fake news appearing in Media. During the month of March and April, 2020, the PIB social media handle has done COVID-19 related fact checks in 119 cases appearing in the media, including 83 on social media, 7 on television, 3 in print media, 15 on WhatsApp and 11 on online newsportals.

15. I respectfully state and submit that the news relating to people who attended the Tablighi Jamaat event at the



Nizamuddin Markaz in the month of March, 2020 and tested positive for COVID-19, has been carried by various media platforms including print media, online newsportals, etc., and various views / opinions have been expressed relating to this incident. It was also the time when the country was under a national lockdown and the concerns regarding infection of COVID-19 loomed large across the country. Almost every new case of COVID-19 infection was being highlighted in the media. In this context, the news regarding the congregation of estimated 2500 people in the Nizamuddin Markaz, of which a number of persons tested positive for COVID-19, became a matter of concern both for the Central Government and the State Governments and of discussion in the media and amongst the public.

16. I respectfully state and submit that the majority of the leading national newspapers of the country including print editions such as The Times of India, The Indian Express and Hindustan Times have carried largely factual reports in this



context. Online newsportals such as The Print and The Wire have also undertaken objective reporting, through news reports, and analysis, through opinion and editorial articles, of events concerning the Tablighi Jamaat. By and large, issues relating to Health, Law & Order and the action taken by the Central Government and the various State Governments for handling the pandemic have been discussed.

17. I respectfully state and submit that the media has made a clear distinction between the organizers and attendees of the Tablighi Jamaat event and the larger Muslim community in general. This may be observed through a reading of **Why Flinging the Term 'Corona Jihad' at the Tablighi Jamaat Makes No Sense, published in The Wire on 02/04/2020 (Annexure R-8)**, and **Tablighi Jamaat Covid-19 case divides the internet, Times of India, 01/04/2020. (Annexure R-9)**. The majority of Opinion articles have also made this distinction clearly, such as may be observed in **Tablighi Jamaat or Ayodhya — all defy social distancing rule. Stupidity can't**



12

be forgiven published in The Print on 31/03/20 (Annexure R-10), Don't communalise the battle against Covid-19 - editorials from Hindustan Times on 01/04/2020 (Annexure R-11), Already rampant communal virus in India is gleefully piggy-back riding on coronavirus from Indian Express on 04/04/2020 (Annexure R-12), and Talking to Tablighis: 'Nizamuddin incident distressing and unfortunate, but don't make it a witch-hunt' from Indian Express on 07/04/2020 (Annexure R-13) .

18. I respectfully state and submit that the message by the chief of Tablighi Jamaat, urging followers to cooperate with the Government and follow prescribed procedures to check the spread of COVID-19, was covered by the media. Reports including **Breaking Silence, Tablighi Jamaat Makes Public Appeal for Members to Comply With Health Orders published in The Wire, on 02/04/2020 (Annexure R-14)**, and **'Listen to doctors, avoid gatherings': Jamaat chief in message to followers carried by Hindustan Times on**



04/04/2020 (Annexure R-15) are submitted in this regard. Statements by the spokesperson and advocate of the Markaz were also given wide coverage, as seen in articles titled **As Tabligh's Nizamuddin centre is cleared, Kejriwal warns of a surge in cases in Indian Express on 01/04/2020 (Annexure R-16)** and **Covid-19: Nizamuddin markaz says 1500 members broke away before quarantine in Hindustan Times on 31/03/2020 (Annexure R-17).**

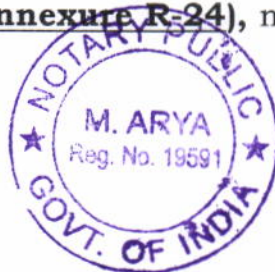
19. I respectfully state and submit that the media also covered statements by other prominent persons from the Muslim community, appealing to the people to cooperate with the Government in the fight against COVID-19. News reports such as **Call it a mistake, not conspiracy against India, say Muslim scholars on Tablighi Jamaat event, on 08/04/2020 (Annexure R-18)** and **Muslim IAS-IPS officers' Covid-19 appeal to community: Don't give anyone reason to blame you on 05/04/2020 (Annexure R-19)** carried by The Print may be seen in this context. A similar report Cleric urges



14

muslims in Navi Mumbai to cooperate in fight against coronavirus was published by Times of India on 05/04/2020 (Annexure R-20).

20. I respectfully state and submit that in opinion based articles, the irresponsible behaviour of the organizers of the event was discussed even by writers such as Javed Anand and Firoz Bakht Anand. However, the responsibilities of the Union and the State/UT Governments were also highlighted in these articles. Articles like **Citizens must exhibit responsible behaviour | Opinion - columns in Hindustan Times on 06/04/2020 (Annexure R-21)**, **Organisers of Tablighi Jamaat have hurt the fight against the coronavirus on 03/04/2020 (Annexure R-22)** ; and **Tablighi Jamaat blames 'govt planning' as BJP, AAP attack it for spike in Covid-19 cases in Indian Express on 31/03/2020 (Annexure R-23)** as well as **Dear Muslims, Tablighi Jamaat committed a crime against humanity. Don't defend them in The Print on 01/04/2020 (Annexure R-24)**, may be seen for reference.



21. I respectfully state and submit that the media highlighted the action taken by the authorities against persons posting objectionable content on social media. Such content includes rumours as well as obscene and hateful content related to the Tablighi Jamaat. Reports in this regard include **Police refute Amar Ujala report about Tablighi Jamaat members misbehaving with medical staff, in Newslandry on 05/04/2020 (Annexure R-25) ; and Nizamuddin: Minorities Panel Reports DU Teachers for Hate Speech Against Muslims in The Wire on 02/04/2020 (Annexure R-26). The Indian Express carried several such reports: Aurangabad doctor booked for social media post calling Tablighi Jamaat chief a 'terrorist' on 06/04/2020 (Annexure R-27) , Man booked for objectionable comment on Facebook | Cities News, on 03/04/2020 (Annexure R-28) , Gujarat arrests seven for sharing hate messages | India News on 04/04/2020 (Annexure R-29) , as well as Jamshedpur: 5 held for spreading online rumour on Tabligh event on**



16

05/04/2020 (Annexure R-30) , Three arrested for posting 'obscene' content over Nizamuddin event on 06/04/2020 (Annexure R-31) , and Not right that some tenants being asked to vacate due to communal divisions: Himachal Police on 07/04/2020 (Annexure R-32) .

22. I respectfully state and submit that statements from state Chief Ministers as well as other political leaders that were carried in the media included those which urged people to avoid communalisation and sensationalization of the event as well as those which expressed anguish over the irresponsible behaviour of the organisation and the attendees of the event. Wide coverage in this regard includes reports like **'Not fair to single out Tablighi Jamaat for Covid-19 spread': Jagan Reddy on 04/04/2020 (Annexure R-33)**, **Nod to Tablighi Jamaat gathering should have been denied, says Sharad Pawar on 06/04/2020 (Annexure R-34) in Hindustan Times;** as well as **Don't give coronavirus communal colour, avoid**



sensationalisation: Kerala, Bengal on 02/04/2020

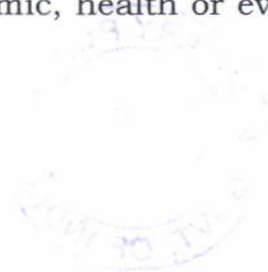
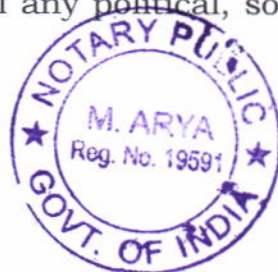
(Annexure R-35) in the Indian Express.

23. I respectfully state and submit that the petitioner has selectively picked up a few articles / reports appearing in some of the web portals and private fact check portals to create an impression that the media had communalised the issue of Tablighi Jamaat and to create a false narrative about the role of media. For instance, the petitioner has referred to an article titled **Coronavirus and Nizamuddin: TV news returns to bigotry with a bang (Annexure R-36)** of a news portal named NewsLaundry, dated 01.04.2020, in his petition. However, the same news portal NewsLaundry published an article titled *Dilli ke Nizamuddin Markaz mein huye Ijtema se nikle log filhaal desh ke kareeb 14 raajyon mein gaye hain. Kul peediton mein 25 feesdi beemar Tablighi Jamaat ke Ijtema mein shaamil huye log hain* on 04.04.2020 **(Annexure R-37)** in Hindi which has given an opinion about how the fight against COVID-19 has



been adversely affected by Tablighi Jamaat which has taken the country and the Muslims on the backfoot.

24. I respectfully state and submit that on the basis of preceding paragraphs 17-23, it may be said that news reports and other articles in this context have reflected multiple viewpoints of the stakeholders related to the events, and predominantly stuck to a balanced and neutral perspective. It is submitted that on any particular issue there could be several views and perceptions in the public domain. As a matter of journalistic policy, any section of the media may seek to highlight different events, issues and happenings across the world as per their choice. The said selection of the events, issues or happenings, the creation of content on the same and its projection in a particular way, may or may not eventually create a particular view in the mind of the viewer / reader. However, access to different sections of the media, with varying journalistic polices enables the viewer / reader to know various sides of any political, social, economic, health or even religious



issue thereby providing a choice on the source of knowledge/opinion.

25. It is submitted that the regime of forbearance allows different sections of the media to function with the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution giving a choice to the viewer either to see all or any sides of a particular view or to choose a particular side on any events, issues and happenings across the world.

26. It is respectfully submitted that the petition is based upon vague assertions based upon certain "fact checking news reports" to contend that entire media is perpetrating communal harmony and hatred towards one particular community and pray for the writ of this Hon'ble Court raising grievances against "a certain section of media". As has been demonstrated in paras 17-22, wide-ranging views and opinions have been expressed across media platforms on the Tablighi Jamaat issue, which are not communal in nature. In effect, the



Petitioners are seeking a wide ranging, vague, unrestrained pre-telecast restriction that too on the basis of unverifiable reports.

DEPONENT

amit khare
AMIT KHARE
Secretary
M/o Information & Broadcasting
Govt. of India, New Delhi

VERIFICATION

27. I, the deponent above named, do hereby verify that the contents of paras 1 to 20 of the affidavit are true to my knowledge, no part of it is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

28. Verified at New Delhi on 13th day of November, 2020

DEPONENT

amit khare

AMIT KHARE
Secretary
M/o Information & Broadcasting
Govt. of India, New Delhi



ATTESTED
[Signature]
NOTARY PUBLIC

13 NOV 2020



AJAY BHALLA, IAS



सत्यमेव जयते

गृह सचिव
Home Secretary
भारत सरकार
Government of India
North Block,
New Delhi
1st April, 2020

D.O. No. 40-1/2020-DM-I

Dear *Chief Secretary,*

As you are aware, Government of India has imposed lockdown measures to prevent COVID-19. The Apex Court while considering the Writ Petition (Civil) No 468 of 2020 had sought Status Report on the steps taken by Union of India. On 31st March, 2020, the Union of India filed the detailed Status Report and the Apex Court expressed satisfaction with the proactive and timely actions taken by the Union of India for preventing the spread of Corona Virus [COVID-19].

2. The Hon'ble Court while taking up the prayers made in ibid PILs took serious note of the panic created by fake news leading to mass movement of migrant labourers, their plight and untold suffering.
3. While referring to the provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Indian Penal Code the Hon'ble Court observed that (quote) "we trust and expect that all concerned viz., State Governments, Public Authorities and Citizens of this country will faithfully comply with the directives, advisories and orders issued by Union of India in letter and spirit in the interest of public safety" (unquote).
4. The Apex Court has also given observations and directions regarding provision of relief camps/shelters for the migrant labourers and the basic amenities such as food, medicines etc. to be provided in line with MHA/NDMA directives and other welfare activities to be taken by the State Governments.
5. The Apex Court has also given directions on taking effective measures to check circulation of the fake news.
6. In view of aforesaid directions made by the Apex Court, all the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations are requested to take necessary action and also to comply with the Directives/Advisories/Orders issued by the Central Government for containment of spread of COVID-19 in the country.
7. In this context, I would also like to apprise you that the Government of India is creating a web-portal where people can verify facts and unverified news promptly. States and Union Territories are requested to create a similar mechanism at State level for issues relating to the State.
8. The Action Taken Report on this may please be sent to this Ministry so as to apprise Hon'ble Court about the same. The next date of hearing is on 7th April, 2020.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Ajay Bhalla) 1/4/2020

Chief Secretaries of all the States

True Copy
[Signature]

No.42015/2/2019-BC.III
Government of India
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Shastri Bhawan,
Rajendra Prasad Road,
New Delhi – 110 001

April 2, 2020

Office Memorandum

Subject: Constitution of a Fact Check Unit in Press Information Bureau on COVID-19


It has been decided to set up a Fact Check Unit (FCU) in the Press Information Bureau (PIB) under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on COVID-19. The Unit will receive messages from public at large and send them response in a defined time-frame. The official version of any news on COVID-19 would be made available by the Unit.

2. The Unit will be headed by Shri Nitin Wakankar, Director General, BOC and shall be manned by officers as per list annexed. The Unit shall function 24x7 and shall be receiving messages/queries from public at large on its designated email, whatsapp and twitter handles. On receipt of any query/message, the FCU shall take following steps:-

- (i) The query/message should be immediately acknowledged.
- (ii) The FCU should send a reply promptly. Where considered necessary, it may forward the message/query to the concerned Ministry/Department in the Central Government with the request to send its comments/facts on the query to the FCU within 12 hours. Thereafter, an appropriate reply/response will be sent by the FCU to the person from whom the message/query has been received.

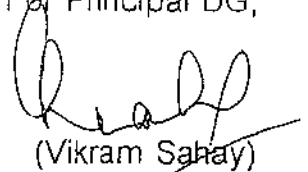
2. The FCU should be prompt in its response in order to address the various queries received by it and should also ensure that authentic and correct and updated information is shared with people at all times.

3. The PIB shall provide all logistical, physical and financial resources for the smooth and unhindered functioning of the Unit. The Unit shall be



operational from today and function till 30th April, 2020 or such time as extended by the Government.

4. The FCU shall work under the overall supervision of Principal DG, PIB.



(Vikram Sahay)

Joint Secretary to the Govt of India

T.No.011-23073775

To

1. Shri Nitin Wakankar, Director General
2. All Officers concerned

- Copy to:-
- (1) Pr DG PIB
 - (2) PS to HMIB
 - (3) Sr. PPS to Secretary, I&B
 - (4) Additional Secretary, I&B
 - (5) All Joint Secretaries in the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

AnnexureOfficers assigned to the Fact Check Unit in PIB

S.No	Name
1.	Ms. Himani Sarad, Director, DPD
2.	Mr. Savvy Hasan Khan, Assistant Editor, DPR Defence
Officers on Training (Assistant Directors)	
3.	Mr. Abhishek Mishra
4.	Mr. Ajeet Singh Meena
5.	Mr. Navin Sreejith UR
6.	Mr. Abhinav Dwivedi
7.	Ms. Aditi Agrawal
8.	Mr. Ashutosh Shukla
9.	Mr. Gaurav Singh
10.	Mr. Jairaj Kishore
11.	Mr. Nikhil Dubey
12.	Mr. Pankaj Atulkar
13.	Mr. Sushil Kumar
14.	Ms. Ismeet Kaur
15.	Mr. Parakhloukik Sumatilal
16.	Ms. Rini Choudhury
17.	Mr. Prayas Kaushik
18.	Mr. Koganti Rohit
19.	Mr. Arun Kumar Singh
20.	Ms. Ekta Khatri
21.	Mr. Kshitij Singha
22.	Mr. Pratibh Vijay Sirowa

True copy

Most Immediate

No.42015/2/2019-BC.III
Government of India
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Shastri Bhawan, Rajendra Prasad Road
New Delhi - 110001.

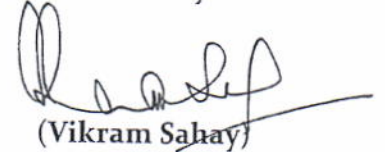
April 1, 2020

Office Memorandum

Subject: **Writ Petition (Civil) No.468/2020 in Supreme Court of India in the case of Shri Alakh Alok Srivastava Vs Union of India**

The undersigned is directed to enclose herewith judgement of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dated 31.3.2020 in Writ Petition (Civil) No(s) 468/2020 in the case of Shri Alakh Alok Srivastava Vs Union of India.

2. It is requested that the aforementioned judgement of the Apex Court may be disseminated to all the stakeholders for appropriate action. Any advisory/communication sent by your organisation to the stakeholders may be endorsed to the undersigned at the earliest.



(Vikram Sahay)

Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India

T.No.011-23073775

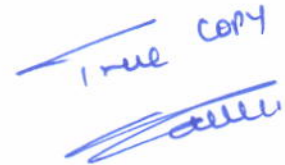
Email.: jspna-moib@gov.in

To

1. The Secretary General, News Broadcasters Association
2. Secretary, Press Council of India
3. Secretary General, Indian Broadcasting Foundation

Copy for information to:-

- (1) Pr DG, Press Information Bureau
- (2) CEO, Prasar Bharati
- (3) DG, Registrar of Newspapers for India
- (4) PS to HMIB
- (5) Sr PPS to Secretary, I&B

1 rule copy


No.42015/2/2019-BC.III
Government of India
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Shastri Bhawan,
Rajendra Prasad Road,
New Delhi – 110 001

April 2, 2020

Office Memorandum

Subject: **COVID-19: Fact Check Unit in States**

The undersigned is directed to inform that the Government of India has enforced lockdown measures to prevent spread of COVID-19 everywhere. In pursuance of the Order dated 31.3.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Writ Petition (Civil) No.468 of 2020, the Press Information Bureau (PIB) in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has set up a COVID-19 Fact Check Unit, which has become operational from today. This Unit, which is headed by Shri Nitin Wakankar (IIS), Director General (mail id: nitin.wakankar17@gov.in), will be receiving messages, etc. from the people at large on matters relating to COVID-19 and would be giving its response within a definite timeframe to such messages/queries. The official version of any news on COVID-19 can be obtained from this Unit.

2. Attention in this regard is also invited to the communication of the Union Home Secretary in D.O.No.40-1/2020-DM-I dated 1st April 2020 wherein each State Government/UT has been requested to create a similar mechanism at State level for issues relating to the State.

3. I am to inform that the queries received by the PIB Fact Check Unit relating to a particular State shall be transmitted to the Fact Check Unit of the particular State for giving at its end a time-bound response to the message/query.

4. I am directed to request you to send details of the Nodal Officer of the Unit of your State (name, designation, email ID, mobile number, etc.) at nitin.wakankar17@gov.in to enable the PIB Fact Check Unit in this Ministry to forward the queries to the State Government.

5. It is requested that this matter may be treated on top priority.



(Atul Kumar Tiwari)

Additional Secretary to the Govt. Of India

T.No.011-23387558

Email.: atulkt@gov.in

Chief Secretaries/Administrators
(All States/UTs)





सूचना भवन, 8 सी.जी.ओ. कॉम्प्लेक्स, लोदी रोड, नई दिल्ली - 110 003
Soochna Bhawan, 8, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003
☎ 24366745-46-47-49 / 24366403-04-05-25 फ़ैक्स Fax : विस्तार Extn. 224
ई-मेल E-Mail : pcibpp@gmail.com वेबसाइट Website : www.presscouncil.nic.in

PRESS RELEASE

PR/7/2020-PCI

Dated: 01/04/2020

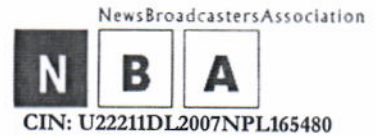
The Press Council of India advises media to responsibly ensure dissemination of verified news on Covid-19 outbreak, based on the daily bulletin by the Government of India in terms of the Hon'ble Supreme Court's Order dated 31.3.2020.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, in W.P. {Civil}No 468/2020, has given the following directions:-

"In particular, we expect the media (print, electronic or social) to maintain a strong sense of responsibility and ensure that unverified news capable of causing panic is not disseminated. A daily bulletin by the Government of India through all media avenues including social media and forum to clear the doubts of people would be made active within a period of 24 hours as submitted by the Solicitor General of India. We do not intend to interfere with the free discussion about the pandemic, but direct the media refer to and publish the official version about the developments".

The Print media is required to take note of the above.

True copy
[Signature]



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW DELHI, April 1, 2020.... News Broadcasters Association (NBA) welcomes the Supreme Court order dated 31.3.2020 and agrees that the media should report responsibly and weed out any “fake news” in social media while telecasting news on the Coronavirus crisis.

NBA is also pleased to learn that a daily bulletin by the Government of India through all media avenues including social media and forums will be made available to clear the doubts of people. This would help media immensely to clarify the doubts and enable them to do accurate reporting.

NBA appreciates that the Hon’ble Supreme Court has acknowledged the freedom of the press and has stated that it does not intend to interfere with the free discussion, debate and coverage about the pandemic.



**Rajat Sharma
President**

True copy


Fwd: MIB OM dated.1.4.2020 along with Supreme Court Judgement dated 31.3.2020

From : ibf@ibfindia.com
Subject : Fwd: MIB OM dated.1.4.2020 along with Supreme Court Judgement dated 31.3.2020
To : Vikram Sahay <jspna-moib@gov.in>

Thu, Apr 02, 2020 11:25 AM

1 attachment

Fyi

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **IBF India** <ibf@ibfindia.com>

Date: Wed, 1 Apr, 2020, 6:40 pm

Subject: MIB OM dated.1.4.2020 along with Supreme Court Judgement dated 31.3.2020

To:

Dear Members,

Please find enclosed a communication received from MIB regarding the judgement of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dated 31.3.2020 in Writ Petition (Civil) No(s) 468/2020 in the case of Shri Alakh Alok Srivastava Vs Union of India with regard to the relief/welfare of migrant labourers.

This is for your information and necessary action please.

Yours sincerely,

Radhakrishnan



True copy
[Signature]

INDIAN BROADCASTING FOUNDATION

B-304 • Ansal Plaza • Third Floor • Khelgaon Marg • New Delhi 110 049 • India
Phone +91 11 4379 4400 • Fax +91 11 4379 4455

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Vikram Sahay** <jspna-moib@gov.in>

Date: Wed, Apr 1, 2020 at 12:41 PM

Subject: OM dt.1.4.2020 along with Supreme Court Judgement dated 31.3.2020

To: News Association <nba@nbanewdelhi.com>, Krishna <secy-pci@nic.in>, Anupama <anupamab@nic.in>, IBF India <ibf@ibfindia.com>

WIRE

SUBSCRIBE

BECOME A
SUPPORTERPOLITICS
OPINIONECONOMY
VIDEOS

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SECURITY

LAW

SCIENCE

SOCIETY

CULTURE

HINDI

MARATHI

URDU

OPINION

RELIGION

Why Flinging the Term 'Corona Jihad' at the Tablighi Jamaat Makes No Sense

Far from waging 'Corona Jihad' as some right-wing politicians are alleging, the Jamaat is anathema to the Salafi ideologies of organisations like Al Qaeda and ISIS, who condemn it as having destroyed Islamic jihad.



People wearing masks leave for hospital in a bus from Nizamuddin area, after several people at the Tablighi Jamaat headquarters showed symptoms of COVID-19 in New Delhi, Monday, 30 March. Photo: PTI



Shail Mayaram



COMMUNALISM | SLAUGHTER | BILIGGON | 02/APR/2020

If there is one thing that does not define the Tablighi Jamaat, it is *jihad* as we know it in our times, a phenomenon that is better called suicide-murder. Nonetheless, social media posts went viral, many with inflammatory accusations, verbal and visual, under the hashtag, #CoronaJihad, in the wake of some two dozen cases of COVID-19 having tested positive in Nizamuddin West.

As I watched speakers on most television channels I realised the extent of mis-information regarding Muslims, the Tablighi Jamaat and even Nizamuddin. We live down the road from Basti Nizamuddin, one of the few neighbourhoods in Delhi that still remains an area of Muslim concentration after Partition. Much of it is a slum with narrow lanes and poor municipal upkeep.

Incredibly, in this very locale there are minimally three languages of Islamic religiosity. There is the Dargah, centred around the mausoleum of Nizamuddin and associated with the Chishti Sufi lineage that draws large numbers of Muslims and Hindus who seek succour for their suffering from Nizamuddin Awliya (1238-1325), who is Mahbub-i-Ilahi, the beloved of God and the saint of love. After the Ajmer Dargah of Muinuddin Chishti, Nizamuddin is the most popular pilgrimage for Muslims. The neighbourhood is appropriately named after him as he came

to live here said to have been directed in a dream to go to the village of Ghyaspur. The Dargah is rightly celebrated for its association with the poetic creativity of Amir Khusrau but also with Mirza Ghalib, preeminent Urdu poet whose Sufi proclivities are less well known. The Dargah has a well-known tradition of celebrating the Spring festival of Basant and each year the filmmaker-writer Muzaffar Ali commemorates the Sufi-disciple duo with his Jahan-i Khusrau festival, a tribute to the magic of this sacred centre by the Yamuna, itself a river of love (*'Yamuna dariya prem ka'*). Delhi (Dilli) was famously known for its two courts, the imperial-political darbar of the Sultan and that of the Sufi, eclectically non-political.

The second Islamic language in Nizamuddin is also Sufi and associated with the Dargah of Inayat Khan, named after Hazrat Inayat Rehmat Khan Pathan (1882-1927) who emphasised the inner life of the Sufi shaped by a spiritual guide. Inayat Khan crafted a universal religion inspired by the great Andalusian Sufi thinker, Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240) who was against exclusive monotheism and against confining oneself "to a particular belief and denying all else, for much good will elude you – indeed, the knowledge of reality would elude you. Be in yourself for all forms of belief, for God is too vast and tremendous to be restricted to one belief rather than another" (cited in Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, *Awakening – A Sufi experience*).

The third language is that of the Tablighi Jamaat, which I first learnt about during my fieldwork among the Mewatis. It had by the 1980s become a global operation working in some 150 countries and I was astonished that there was hardly any cognisance of this transnational religious movement in the social sciences. Mewat had been the first theatre of the Tablighi Jamaat experiment devised by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas in the 1920s.

Also Read: When Even a Pandemic Is Communalised

Maulana Ilyas's nodal contribution was primarily to shift the responsibility of preaching from Muslim clerics to ordinary, even illiterate Muslims. He first taught a few Mewatis at Nizamuddin's Banglewali Masjid, now the site of the Islami Markaz. His letters, however, report his dejection as despite his persistent teaching the Mewatis refused to keep beards or perform the namaz prayer and preferred what he saw as their *jahilliyat* (primitive state). It was only when Partition saw a genocide wreaked by mobs on Mewatis that they turned to this mode of religiosity. Hitherto they could be described as Hindu and Muslim in their celebration of Id and Govardhan Puja and the veneration of the cow (being both peasant and pastoral). At their camps, Tabligh volunteers told them the violence happened because of God's *azab* (punishment). As one Mewati told me, We decided then that it was better to ride one single horse.

The Tablighi Jamaat can be held responsible for many things. For socio-cultural distancing – like its Hindu counterparts, the Arya Samaj and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad – the Tablighi Jamaat is committed to the modern idea of religion that is about singular belonging. It is also deeply conservative. Its hugely popular major text, the *Tablighi Nissab*, emphasises ritualist Islam focused on six principles including the *kalima* (profession of faith), *salat* (namaz performed five times a day), *ilm-o-zikr* (remembering God).

The Tablighi organisation is also hierarchical. Despite Islamic egalitarianism the leadership continues to be hereditary, having been restricted to the Kandhlawi lineage of Maulana Ilyas. His own son, Maulana Mohammad Yusuf Kandhlawi (1917-1965) was associated with the internationalisation of the Tablighi Jamaat. Gujaratis and Mewatis do have significant authority within its structure.

The Tablighi Jamaat defines its purpose as Islami *da'wa* or Islamic proselytism, demonstrating how Christianity and its

missionary spirit has become a role model for most world religions. The organisation works through ordinary Muslims committing ideally 40 days time annually for *chilla* – to participate in group *jamaats* that might walk or travel by road, train and air. Camping in mosques in cities and villages, the jamaat, led by an *amir*, invite Muslims to learn to be “better Muslims”.

In the media, there have been repeated references to ‘why a Markaz was held’. The Markaz is not an event but the global headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat from where the jama’ats depart and return. Within the building, there is space to host some 10,000-12,000 persons.

The conservatism of the Tablighi Jamaat largely draws upon the theology of the Deoband seminary, which it reduces to a further capsule form. For them, none of the grand debates of Islamic thought of an Ibn Rushd (1128-1198) fired by Aristotle’s rationalism. They denigrate also the mystical-sensual practice of the Dargah.

Also Read: Coronavirus v. Free Speech: Modi Government Opens New Battlefield in Supreme Court

Nonetheless, the Tablighi Jamaat’s conservatism works as a bulwark against radical Islam, at least in India, even though the story in Pakistan, Afghanistan and elsewhere is quite different. Maulana Ilyas emphasised the *Jihad-i Asghar*, the Greater Jihad that is the battle over the self. The Tablighi Jamaat’s claim to be non-political ostensibly comes from its effort to keep a distance from ruling regimes, hence it is anathema to the Salafi ideologies of organisations like Al Qaeda and Daesh (ISIS) who condemn it in no uncertain terms as having destroyed Islamic jihad. There are occasions when it has been infiltrated or its adherents have been radicalised but that is largely exceptional and also happens because of its openness.

The Tablighi Jamaat's annual meet, or *ijtima*, was held earlier on February 24 near Delhi's Sadar Bazar. There are reports of a quarterly meeting from March 13-15 at the Markaz in the media but these have been denied by Tablighi officials. On March 19, a Janata curfew was declared for Sunday, March 22 and a national lockdown on March 24 at 8 pm. By then, it has been reported that the Tablighi Jamaat administration had already sent 1500 persons home but 1000-1200 remained and needed passes to transport them in vehicles.

Clearly, the inward-looking stance of its current head, Maulana Saad, also prevented him from realising and responding proactively to the global health crisis. There are recordings of him actually playing down the threat from the coronavirus. That there was gross failure and irresponsibility on the part of the Markaz administration is undeniable; but could not the state have anticipated this with the ever-deepening surveillance at its command?

Shail Mayaram is author of Resisting Regimes: Myth, Memory and the Shaping of a Muslim Identity (Oxford University Press, 2017, 2nd edition) which discusses the Tablighi Jama'at.

Support The Wire



₹200

₹1000

₹2400

[T & C](#) [Privacy](#)

True copy
[Signature]

ALSO READ

THIS STORY IS FROM APRIL 1, 2020

Tablighi Jamaat Covid-19 case divides the internet

TNN Apr 1, 2020, 05:27 IST



A-

A+



NEW DELHI: The case of Corona virus positive patients being detected from the Tablighi Jamaat international congregation at Nizamuddin divided the internet on Tuesday. The incident evoked sharp response from politicians, historians and activists. Hashtag NizamuddinMarkaz was the top trend in India on Tuesday

attracting nearly 107k tweets.

Several AAP leaders took to Twitter and asserted that the congregation was at fault as the lockdown in Delhi had begun before pan-India restrictions were announced. AAP MLA Atishi tweeted, "The 'iztema' happened much before the dates mentioned in this statement, from 13-15th March. On 13th, Delhi Govt issued an order banning gathering more than 200 people. Why did Markaz not stop the event? Why did @DelhiPolice not take action when police stn is next to Markaz?" The Delhi police works under the Central government.



BJP's East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir blamed the organisers and members of the congregation. "What were these people gathering at Nizamuddin thinking? Is it a joke that the entire country is under lockdown? One wrong action by anyone of us can lead to a disaster of gigantic proportions! Listen to the Government for heaven's sake!"

Several people pointed out that the congregation happened much before the nation-wide curfew was imposed. And some lamented at the communal twist being given to the incident. Around 3pm, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah tweeted, "Now the #TablighiJamat will become a convenient excuse for some to vilify Muslims everywhere as if we created & spread #COVID around the world."

True COPY
Sally

Tablighi Jamaat or Ayodhya — all defy social distancing rule. Stupidity can't be forgiven

ThePrint view on the most important issues, instantly.

THEPRINT TEAM

31 March, 2020 8:10 pm IST



Text Size: A- A+

Any congregation, religious or otherwise, is the exact anti-thesis of social distancing the battle against coronavirus demands. Whether the church cult in South Korea, prayer service in Louisiana church, Tablighi Jamaat gathering, super-spreader Punjab preacher or Yogi Adityanath in Ayodhya – there is neither divine cover nor forgiveness for human stupidity.

Subscribe to our channels on YouTube & Telegram

Why news media is in crisis & How you can fix it

India needs free, fair, non-hyphenated and questioning journalism even more as it faces multiple crises.

But the news media is in a crisis of its own. There have been brutal layoffs and pay-cuts. The best of journalism is shrinking, yielding to crude prime-time spectacle.

ThePrint has the finest young reporters, columnists and editors working for it. Sustaining journalism of this quality needs smart and thinking people like you to pay for it. Whether you live in India or overseas, you can do it here.

Support Our Journalism →

True copy
[Signature]

13 COMMENTS | SHARE YOUR VIEWS

India: Why is Everyone Excited Over This Rs. 2999 Smartwatch

FitX Pro Watch | Sponsored



Don't communalise the battle against Covid-19

All religious leaders must direct followers to abide by social distancing norms

EDITORIALS Updated: Apr 01, 2020, 19:08 IST

HT Hindustan Times



The Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Nizamuddin was, as this newspaper has argued, gravely irresponsible and most likely criminal. (PTI)

The Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Nizamuddin was, as this newspaper has argued, gravely irresponsible and most likely criminal. It should not have been held when social distancing norms were in force, and the government had issued clear directives against large congregations. It has singularly led to a spike in cases, with efforts to trace everyone present in the complex continuing across states. Action must be taken against the Jamaat leadership.

At the same time, it is important not to communalise the issue. There has been an unfortunate, disturbing trend of using this episode to blame the entire Muslim community, and perpetuate stereotypes about them. This must be resisted. Not only is it wrong, India cannot afford the deepening of the Hindu-Muslim divide at a time when every citizen — irrespective of religion, caste, class, gender and age — is confronting a common enemy.

In fact, the Nizamuddin gathering, where the leader of the sect seems to have made light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and also advised against social distancing, is a reminder that every religious leader, every sect, every religious institution, must come together with a common

40

message at this time. This message must focus on science, the need to obey government orders, help the poor and the more marginalised segments given the economic disruption to their livelihoods, and co-operate with frontline workers – particularly the medical fraternity. Religions offer faith, solace and hope; they help people tide over difficult moments. This is one such moment. Use religion to unite, not divide.

True copy
~~copy~~

OpinionColumnsAlready rampant communal virus in India is gleefully piggy-back riding on coronavirus 41

Already rampant communal virus in India is gleefully piggy-back riding on coronavirus

The Tablighi Jamaat is by no means the only body culpable of gross neglect and irresponsible conduct in the current crisis. But it must account for its own idiotic role in the escalation of the pandemic.

Written by **Javed Anand** | Updated: April 4, 2020 8:56:19 am



Parts of Nizamuddin West were cordoned off after six new cases were traced to the area. (Express Photo by Anil Sharma)

Until the other day, not many outside the Muslim community had heard of an organisation named the **Tablighi Jamaat**. Little did people know about this century-old India-born body which, today,

is the largest apolitical, Islamic revivalist global movement. Notwithstanding this, a vast majority of Muslims ridicule and dismiss this “nutcase” movement as good-for-nothing. “*Woh sirf zameen ke neeche aur aasman ke upar waali zindagi ki baat karte hain*” (They only talk of life in the grave and in the Hereafter).

Today, the Jamaat has, virtually overnight, earned for itself the ill-repute of being the “largest known” COVID-19 source in South and South-East Asia. In India, many participants at an international gathering of around 4,000 Jamaatis at the Tabligh’s global headquarters — Nizamuddin Markaz — in Delhi held from March 13 to March 15 have carried back the coronavirus with them to distant corners of the country. An earlier international gathering of over 16,000 participants in Malaysia in February led to the transmission of the COVID-19 disease to several countries, including neighbouring Thailand and distant Brunei. In Pakistan, the Jamaat’s proposed assembly in March of 1,50,000 participants near Lahore was cancelled at the last minute. But by then, delegates from across the world had already landed at the venue, living in close proximity to one another. Following a screening of 35 members at their headquarters in Raiwind, 27 of the Tablighis tested positive for coronavirus.

On March 30, the Delhi government cordoned off the entire Nizamuddin locality once it became known that a startlingly high number of Covid cases detected across India until now were traceable to the meet in the national capital. Two days later, a total of 2,346 persons still residing at the Markaz were evacuated; 536 were admitted to hospital and 1,810 quarantined. An FIR has been filed against the Amir (chief) of the Jamaat, Maulana Muhammad Saad Kandhalawi, and several others for disregarding several directives of the Delhi government under the Epidemic Diseases Act prohibiting the gathering of more than 200 persons. Pleading not guilty, the Jamaat claims non-response from the authorities to its repeated pleas for help with transport to disperse those “stranded” at the Markaz (centre). Only an impartial probe can establish the role of the Jamaat as also the government authorities in the build-up of this hotspot within shouting distance of the Nizamuddin police station.

The Jamaat is by no means the only body culpable of gross neglect and irresponsible conduct in the current crisis. But it must account for its own idiotic role in the escalation of the pandemic. On January 30, a full six weeks before the mid-March meet in Delhi, the World Health Organisation (WHO) had declared a global health emergency. By mid-February, the coronavirus had surfaced in a number of south-east Asian countries. In the fast deteriorating scenario, why did the Jamaat leadership not cancel the event which included participants from COVID-19 affected countries?

Opinion | Success of lockdown will depend on implementation

No less disturbing is the audio-tape reportedly containing a message to his flock from Maulana Saad: “Don’t pay heed if they ask us to lock down mosques”; “There is no better place to die than a mosque”; “Allah is punishing us for abandoning mosques”; “Won’t pay heed if even doctors advise to not pray in mosques”. That this may not be a doctored audio tape is indicated by the fact that similar shocking sentiments have been expressed by the maulana’s counterparts from across the Wajah. Meanwhile, a second audio tape, also purportedly of the maulana, has surfaced, advising fellow Tablighis thus: “I am in self-quarantine in Delhi as advised by the doctors and appeal to all Jamaat members wherever they are in the country to follow the directives of the law”. The message warns that the coronavirus is an expression of Allah’s wrath because of the sins of us human beings.

Such may be the views of the Tablighi Jamaat, but by no means are they the consensus among Muslims. On March 20, Saudi Arabia suspended congregational prayers at Mecca and Medina. Taking their cue from a saying of the Prophet, similar restrictions have been placed on mosques and other holy places elsewhere in the Arab world as also in the self-proclaimed Islamic Republic of Iran. In India, the doors of mosques across India have remained shut since the national lockdown just as those of temples, churches and gurdwaras.

Opinion | That Omar Sheikh is let off by Pakistan court should worry the world

Yet, even as the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, has warned that the world faces the most challenging crisis since World War II, the already rampant communal virus in India is gleefully piggy-riding on the novel coronavirus. The Tabligh’s highly irresponsible words and deeds are “fresh proof” to Hindutva that “Muslims are like that only”.

To their credit, the chief ministers of Kerala and West Bengal, Pinarayi Vijayan and Mamata Banerjee respectively, have been quick to caution against “sensationalising coronavirus” by giving it a communal complexion. Regretting that social media was being used for a “communal harvest” over COVID-19, Vijayan observed: “Coronavirus does not infect anyone looking at religion. What

44
is important is that we stay together and remain vigilant. We should remember the exemplary action of all sections of society who have abandoned public gatherings at the behest of the government.”

Also Read | The markaz in Nizamuddin has thrown light on a malaise — and a challenge

In this moment of grave national and international crisis, such sagacious words should, above all, have come from the prime minister. But that, sadly, seems most unlikely. What we have, instead, are warnings from BJP leaders of “Islamic insurrection” and “corona jihad”. The Jamaat episode has also come in handy to the country’s lapdog media. It can now gleefully scapegoat Muslims, help divert public attention from the colossal mishandling of the crisis by the authorities. If the Jamaat leaders deserve an FIR what about the prime minister who with his thoughtless four-hour countdown for a national lockdown triggered a stampede across urban India (social distancing?) and a “reverse migration” that reminded some people of Partition times?

The need of the hour is national unity and international solidarity, not hate-driven divisive politics. Is that too much to expect from the BJP, the Sangh Parivar and its servile media?

*This article first appeared in print edition on April 3 under the title “Tablighis, not Muslims”.
The writer is convenor, Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy, and co-editor, Sabrang India online*

True copy


ENGLISH தமிழ் বাংলা மலയാളം हिंदी मराठी

Follow Us:

**The Indian EXPRESS**

Monday, November 09, 2020

[Home](#) [India](#) [Cities](#) [Elections](#) [Opinion](#) [IPL 2020](#) [Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Video](#)

SUBSCRIBE

■ square

Home / India / Talking to Tablighis: 'Nizamuddin incident distressing and unfortunate, but don't make it a witch-hunt'

Talking to Tablighis: 'Nizamuddin incident distressing and unfortunate, but don't make it a witch-hunt'

The Tablighis we spoke to say the COVID-19 spread is deeply distressing. "It was definitely an oversight. The managers at the markaz should have had it emptied when the first rumbles of coronavirus were heard."

Written by Yashee | New Delhi | Updated: April 7, 2020 12:41:10 am



ANIL SHARMA

The Jamaat is amorphous – anyone can associate with it for as long as they wish. (Express File Photo)

The **Tablighi Jamaat** has been around for 94 years, born in India but today spread across different continents. Lakhs of people are associated with it. Yet, till about a week ago, few outside the Muslim world had heard of it, and the Jamaat did not concern itself much with affairs beyond its stated mission.

Now, as the coronavirus pandemic explodes in India with the **Tablighi Jamaat** as its startled centre, those associated with it say there is more to the body than the “oversight”, “irresponsible act”, and “pure bad luck” of falling victim to, and spreading, COVID-19.

“What happened at Nizamuddin Markaz is unfortunate and irresponsible. There is no getting away from that. But the kind of spin social media, and sections of news media, are giving to this is distasteful. The Tablighi Jamaat is not some shadowy, secret get-together of “radicals”. Its aim is to make Muslims the best possible version of themselves – true to their faith, contributing to the society, of help to their fellowmen,” says a 42-year-old employee of a New Delhi private firm, not wishing to be named.

Follow LIVE updates on coronavirus pandemic

So who can join the Tablighi Jamaat?

Anyone. There is no formal joining.



Buses head from Nizamuddin West to quarantine facilities in Delhi on Tuesday. (Express file photo by

Praveen Khanna)

“It’s not, say, the Communist Party, where you get a membership card and say “laal salaam”. It’s also not an order of monks,” says Sakib Zaya, a 22-year-old from Bihar studying in a Greater Noida college. “Jamaat volunteers come from all walks of life. They gather to read and discuss the Quran and other religious books, enrich their knowledge, and spread this knowledge.”

The Jamaat is amorphous — anyone can associate with it for as long as they wish. Some simply attend sessions. Some embark together on trips of three days, 10 days (ashra), 40 days (chilla) or 120 days. No ID proofs are sought for these trips, but people know each other locally, so there is a level of community verification.

What is a typical day for a Jamaat volunteer?

In the morning, after the namaaz, every Jamaat gathers together and decides their plan for the next 24 hours.

“This is a democratic process where everyone gives suggestions. The group elects an *ameer* (leader) from among themselves, generally a senior, learned member. Work is divided, some cook, some go out to meet other Muslims. But basically the three parts of the day are – readings and discussions on the Prophet’s life, inviting the local Muslim community to join our sessions, then a discussion or lecture on the Quran and the best way to practise Islam,” says Hasnain Beg, a PhD scholar at New Delhi’s Jamia Millia Islamia university. “In cities, the outreach visits can happen in the evenings. In villages, where people sleep early, they are done in the afternoon.”

At Ghaziabad hospital where some who were at the Markaz are admitted. (PTI)

“The Jamaat believes in six principles – Kalimah (faith in Allah); Namaaz (prayer); ilm and Zikr (education about and remembrance of God); Ikram-e-Muslim (service of humanity); Ikhlas-e-Niyat (purity of intention); and Dawat-e- Ilallah (call people towards God),” adds Beg.

The Jamaats generally stay in mosques. There are common meals. Every member pays their expenses. “You best learn lessons on which you spend your own time and dime,” says Beg.

Tablighi Jamaat explained: The proselytising movement aims to reach out to ordinary Muslims and revive their faith, particularly in matters of ritual, dress, and personal behaviour.

What does the Tablighi Jamaat wish to teach Muslims?

The common answer is – to take Muslims closer to the Prophet’s teachings, in letter and spirit.

But does this emphasis on religious education take people away from their worldly duties?

Waseem Ahmed Siddiqui, a Nizamuddin resident who runs a travel agency, says not. “The Prophet’s teachings are as much a guide to everyday life as to spirituality. For example, being a good Muslim entails being sincere in your profession, or you will have to answer to Allah why you did not give your job your best. It involves helping your wife with housework, because the Prophet did that and preached that. It means giving your daughter her fair share in your property. These are the kinds of habits the Tabligh volunteers try to inculcate in themselves and in others.”

An assistant professor in a reputable New Delhi university, not wishing to be named, gives an example. “Once, a group of students was to leave for a Jamaat. College vacations were from Tuesday. Most students had decided to mass-bunk Monday and start the vacation from the weekend. But the Jamaat guys were clear — they wouldn’t embark on the journey by bunking class. They would leave only on Tuesday. Similarly, if you stay away from your job to be involved in Jamaat activities, you are not being a good Muslim. You are not supposed to break any contract, neglect any duties.”

SDMC workers deployed a drone to sanitise out-of-reach areas in Nizamuddin, such as building tops and congested lanes. (Express photo by Tashi Tobgyal)

Zaya, the 22-year-old student, says: “From the correct way to drink water to how to behave with your elders, there is guidance on everything.”

And what is the correct way to drink water? “With your head covered, taking God’s name, sitting down, and in slow measured breaths instead of one great gulp.”

But is it always possible to cover one’s head while having water?

“Oh, there’s flexibility. The Quran says if you are starving, you can eat even prohibited food. The idea is to follow as much as you reasonably can in your circumstances,” Zaya says.

How is the teaching done?

Leading by example. The college professor gives the metaphor of a lamp. "Your own life should be so luminously upright that people wish to emulate it. There is no question of force or trying to regimentalise someone else. If you do that, people will revert to their ways the moment there is no supervision. But just like one lamp can light a hundred, one virtuous life can inspire many others."

Once people show an interest in learning, they must not be made to feel inferior, says Siddiqui. "You have to be respectful to the newcomer. Often, even senior citizens don't know the correct way to offer namaaz. Calling out can embarrass them. So you invite them to "please take a look" at your namaaz. They learn the right way, without being made to feel foolish."

"Say 12 Jamaatis are travelling in a bus and the conductor deducts money for only 10. So when you reach your destination, you buy two extra tickets. The idea is that the transport body should get its due," says the professor, giving an example of the principles the Jamaatis are supposed to follow.

Why do some Muslims consider them 'backward'?

The general consensus is "because of a lack of awareness".

The Tablighi Jamaat has been around for 94 years, born in India but today spread across different continents. (Express File Photo)

“When we say let’s return to the ways of the Prophet, we mean adopt the best practices of going about life,” says Beg, the PhD scholar. “For example, the concept of a *dastarkhwan* is that often, where tables are not available, people eat on the floor. The *dastarkhwan* ensures food falls on one cloth or paper that can later be gathered up, instead of dirtying the ground. But no one is asking anyone to swear off table-chairs.”

Most of them had a common query: “Yes, wearing kurta-shalwar and sporting a beard is encouraged. But don’t Sikhs keep a beard and a turban? Don’t Jews wear skullcaps, or Hindu women the sindoor?”

“I would say if you form your opinions about someone based on the clothes they wear, it’s your narrow-mindedness. One can wear a kurta-shalwar and be a nuclear scientist,” says Beg.

“Tablighis are inward-looking, focussed on the *deen*, yes. But that doesn’t mean they reject contemporary realities,” says the professor. “There were no trains during the Prophet’s time, but we do use trains and planes.”

What of the claims of Jamaatis keeping women at an arm’s length? “I have been talking to you for an hour, haven’t I? You can talk to anyone you need to talk to. The idea is to discourage unnecessary chatter with women who are not your immediate family,” says Beg. “Women participate in Jamaats too,” adds Siddiqui.

After Delhi Police FIR, ED considers probing Tabligh financial dealings

What of the recent Nizamuddin row?

“There are several complaints. What is this proselytisation claim? Jamaatis aren’t trying to convert anyone. They are trying to bring believers closer to the faith. Second, no one gathered at the markaz in one focussed exercise. There is always a 1,000-strong floating population at the Banglewaali mosque, people coming and going, or just passing through,” they said.

Drones being used to sanitise parts of Nizamuddin, New Delhi, on Thursday. (Express photo: Tashi Tobgyal)

Yes, the COVID-19 spread is deeply distressing, they say. "It was definitely an oversight. The managers at markaz should have had it emptied when the first rumbles of coronavirus were heard. They are so intent on their mission they failed to register what was happening around them," says the professor. The private firm professional agrees.

Beg, Zaya and Siddiqui point out that the authorities did try to send people out once coronavirus restrictions were imposed, but were prevented by the lockdown. Also, many had gone to other states much before the lockdown was talked about, they say.

All five say that the media “witch-hunt” is “exaggerated and motivated”. “Doctored, fake videos are being circulated. Whom do they benefit? There is one of Maulana Saad telling people it’s good to die in a mosque. But from what I know, this speech was made after the lockdown. People were panicky and afraid of dying. He was trying to reassure them by saying life is in Allah’s hands and if death must come, a mosque is a good place to die,” says Siddiqui.

What of the allegations of harassing nurses on some Jamaat members?

The consensus is that it is “extremely unlikely”, the “exact opposite of what the Tablighi Jamaat stands for”. But if the charges are proven, “the guilty must face the law and later answer to Allah”.

“The Markaz authorities should be punished for their irresponsibility, for the loss of life — of Muslims and of others — it has caused. But the glee and consummate ease with which some fell to Muslim-bashing after this is worrisome. This blind hatred, too, claims lives. Who should be punished for that?” says the private firm professional.



Subscribe to receive the day's headlines from The Indian Express straight in your inbox

Enter Your Email

Subscribe

📢 The Indian Express is now on Telegram. Click here to join our channel (@indianexpress) and stay updated with the latest headlines

For all the latest India News, download Indian Express App.

© IE Online Media Services Pvt Ltd

TAGS: Coronavirus COVID-19 Tablighi Jamaat

135 Comment(s) *

* The moderation of comments is automated and not cleared manually by indianexpress.com.

True copy
[Signature]

**THE
WIRE**

SUBSCRIBE

BECOME A
SUPPORTERPOLITICS
OPINIONECONOMY
VIDEOS

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SECURITY

LAW

SCIENCE

SOCIETY

CULTURE

HINDI

MARATHI

URDU

RELIGION

Breaking Silence, Tablighi Jamaat Appeals for Members to Comply With Health Orders

Message in Maulana Mohammad Saad Kandhalvi's audio a contrast to earlier, undated clips in which he had made light of the coronavirus and criticised those saying mosque prayers should be avoided.



Health workers prepare to sanitise an area near Nizamuddin mosque on April 1. Photo: PTI



The Wire Staff



02/APR/2020

New Delhi: Under attack for having allowed the Tablighi Jamaat's central premises in Nizamuddin to remain crowded with upwards of 2,000 people despite growing national and global concerns about the coronavirus, the sect's head issued an audio appeal to all followers who visited its headquarters in March event to cooperate with the government.

The TJ also released a video appeal from its lawyer urging all members across India to follow the government's lockdown order strictly and turn themselves in so that they can be tested and quarantined.

On March 31, Maulana Mohammad Saad Kandhalvi, the chief of the Islamic sect who has had an FIR filed against him under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 for violating government orders to refrain from organising gatherings of over 50 people, released an audio clip for TJ members. He said that the global pandemic is a "result of mankind's sins", and it is necessary for everyone to be their respective houses and eat and study well during this period.

"This is the only way to placate Allah's anger against us. We should all take adequate precautions, and follow doctors' instructions. We should all cooperate with our government in fighting the pandemic," he said.

He urged the Jamaat's followers to refrain from organising or attending any gathering.

Also read: Why Flinging the Term 'Corona Jihad' at the Tablighi Jamaat Makes No Sense

"This is also a time to extend all help to our government in their efforts," he said, adding that most individuals who stayed in the Markaz (the Tablighi Jamaat's headquarters) have self-quarantined themselves, according to doctors' instructions.

"We are not against medical prescriptions, and it is very important for all of us to follow their directives. In whichever part our Jamaat is active, they should all follow quarantine decrees according to the government's wishes," he said, adding that he has self-quarantined himself.

This advice was in stark contrast to his earlier sermons in which he said Muslims should not listen to those saying it was not safe to pray in mosques because of the coronavirus.

On April 1, the TJ also released a video message to the public. from Saad's advocate, Musharraf Ali Khan.

He said that because of the crowds at the Markaz in March, a lot of rumours have been floating against the Tablighi Jamaat, but this was not the time to address or debate the issue.

"In these troubling times, I want to send a message to one and all. Coronavirus pandemic has affected the whole world. Our country, India, has also not remained untouched by the deadly virus. We need to take it very seriously," Khan said.

"What is needed right now is a united fight against it. I request everyone, every Indian – Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Christian – should join this fight without discriminating

against each other on the basis of caste and faith. Our Central and state governments, all departments, and police are engaged in this struggle against the virus, and I urge all members to extend all possible help to them,” he said.

He asked the Tablighi Jamaat’s followers to “help each other and also help the needy get treatment” and requested everyone to refrain from going to temples and mosques.

At the same time, he asked followers to desist from debating on the “rumours” about the Tablighi Jamaat.

Also read: When Even a Pandemic Is Communalised

“All Jamaat members should help the government and that will allay people’s fears about us. Do not misbehave and argue with government officials,” Khan said.

While requesting all who attended the TJ event, he said “those who spent some days at Markaz should volunteer to report to police and health officials about their stay here.”

“If you want, write a detailed note about your stay and give it to government officials. Make yourself available for tests and quarantine, so that all of you stay healthy and fine,” he added.

“Whatever instructions it is giving is for our own benefit. If we get infected, then not only will our life be in danger but all those who will come into contact with you will also be put in danger. Do not take the virus casually. To follow government instructions is our duty today,” he said.

Khan said whether TJ could be faulted for the spread of the pandemic in India is a “different question”, but told followers that an FIR has been lodged against Maulana Saad and that he will be responding to the police officials soon.

“No Jamaat member should get into a debate with people on the FIR. We are doing the needful, and cooperating with the police on the case,” he said.

He rubbished the rumour that Maulana Saad has been absconding, and said that Saad received the government notice against him in person.

He finished his message by urging everyone, irrespective of faith, to pray to God so that the world is rid of the deadly virus soon.

Dismissive of virus threat in early days

If the message by Tablighi Jamaat leaders indicates a clear willingness to comply, it also perhaps represents a change in their thinking. In an undated audio clip which the group has not questioned the authenticity of so far, a man described by some TV channels as Maulana Saad is heard being dismissive of the enormity of the pandemic.

“If you think you will die if you assemble in a masjid, let me tell you, there is no better place to die,” he is heard as saying.

Also read: Questions Remain About How Delhi's Nizamuddin Became a Coronavirus Hotspot

“This is not the time when you leave your prayers or meet people just because doctors are saying. When Allah has given this disease, then no doctor or medicine can save us,” he says.

“This is the time when mosques should be populated. I feel pity for those who are saying that this is a time when people should not go or stay in mosques. This is not the time when we scatter and leave mosques. If we gather inside mosques then Allah will create peace in

61

the world,” he allegedly further says in the leaked audio clip that surfaced a few days ago.

The police are also investigating a sermon that he gave on March 23. He is alleged to have said in the sermon that social distancing warnings were a conspiracy to keep Muslims away from each other.

“Where will you run from death? Death is in front of you... This is an occasion to seek penance from God. Not an occasion where one comes under the influence of doctors and stops Namaaz, meeting each other... Yes, there is a virus. But 70,000 angels are with me and if they can't save me, who will? This is the time for more such gatherings, not the time to avoid each other...,” he allegedly says in the sermon.

The Tablighi Jamaat is an international Islamic evangelical organisation that has thousands of followers across the globe, the maximum being in South Asia. It organises annual religious gathering in many countries. One such gathering was planned from March 13 onwards at its New Delhi headquarters which thousands of its followers attended.

It appears to have acted irresponsibly and casually by continuing the event despite a ban on religious gathering. Since many foreign nationals from countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia etc, too attended the event, it is believed many followers contracted the virus there. Many Indian followers have been at the centre of government's attention as they appear to have infected many others once they returned to their respective states. Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Assam are some of the states which have reported a few COVID-19 positive cases who attended the event.

The Indian right-wing and a large section of the Indian media has since then been running an Islamophobic

campaign against the Tablighi Jamaat, although it appears that the casual attitude of the governments is also partly responsible for the spread of the virus through the organisation's office.



An Orcsnet partner website

[T & C](#) [Privacy](#)

Support The Wire

₹200

₹1000

₹2400

ALSO READ

True Copy
[Signature]

06 NOV

Bhopal Anti-Macron Protest: FIR Against Congress MLA, Others for 'Promoting Enmity'

'Listen to doctors, avoid gatherings': Jamaat chief in message to followers

Maulana Saad Khandhlawi is believed to be hiding at an undisclosed location and had earlier released an audio clip in which he had said that he is under self-quarantine.

INDIA Updated: Apr 02, 2020, 15:52 IST

HT Correspondent
Hindustan Times, New Delhi

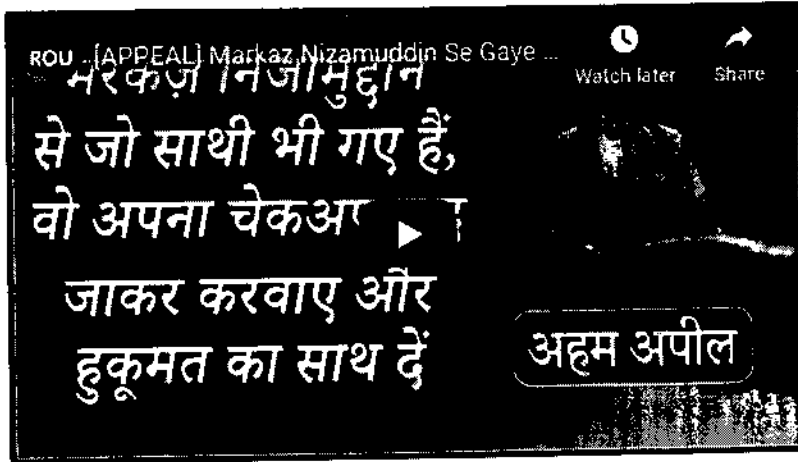


Men wearing protective masks sit inside a bus that will take them to a quarantine facility, amid concerns about the spread of coronavirus disease Covid-19, in Nizamuddin area of New Delhi, on March 31. (Reuters Photo)

Maulana Saad Khandhlawi, the chief of Tablighi Jamaat, has urged the followers to cooperate with the government and follow the prescribed procedures to check the spread of coronavirus disease Covid-19.

"We should follow the instructions given by the authorities, and listen to the doctors. For example, we should avoid gathering at places and provide support and help to the government in these times," Khandhlawi said in an audio message posted on the group's YouTube channel.

"We should not go against the law, it is against our principles," he further said in the audio message.



The message from the Jamaat chief came amid the ongoing raids by the police in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. Khandhlawi is believed to be hiding at an undisclosed location and had earlier released an audio clip in which he had said that he is under self-quarantine.

One of his lawyers too released a video message in which he said that this Covid-19 crisis should be taken seriously. "This is a serious thing. We should not indulge in any discussion on this, as to who is responsible for this disease. With folded hands, I urge all the countrymen to unite in fight against this disease," said the lawyer Musharraf Ali Khan.

Some 9,000 people were exposed to the country's biggest infection cluster at the gathering organised by the group at its global headquarters in Delhi's Nizamuddin area last month. The number of Covid-19 positive cases jumped by more than half to 1,965 on Wednesday, fuelled by infections among people who either attended prayers and lectures at the Jamaat's headquarters or came into contact with them later.

Khandhlawi claims to have over 100 crore followers in nearly 200 countries. The Nizamuddin markaz serves as the global headquarters of the Jamaat.

His family comes from Kandhla, a place near Shamli district of western Uttar Pradesh, around 80 kilometres away from Delhi.

Covid-19: Nizamuddin markaz says 1500 members broke away before quarantine

Markaz is a clearing house for these committed teams of Islamic missionaries known as Tablighi Jamaat. Individual missions are small, consisting of four or five men, each booked on flights and trains to various states and countries. The building isn't a mosque. It's a facility with bare dormitories.

INDIA Updated Mar 31, 2020, 22:41:51



Zia Haq
Hindustan Times, New Delhi



By early March, Covid-19 cases were surging across the world and in India. A lockdown in the country was several days away. Ignoring the pandemic, an estimated 2500 Sunni Muslim men belonging to several nationalities, each identically dressed in white gowns and skullcaps, checked into a five-storey house called Markaz in Delhi's Nizamuddin area, part of a year-round routine.

Markaz is a clearing house for these committed teams of Islamic missionaries known as Tablighi Jamaat. Individual missions are small, consisting of four or five men, each booked on flights and trains to various states and countries. The building isn't a mosque. It's a facility with bare dormitories. "It's actually a transit point, where logistics are planned," said Navaid Hamid, the president of All-India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushwarat.

Authorities now fear the markaz waypoint has become a coronavirus transmission hub, with 24 preachers testing positive, according to Delhi health minister Satyendra Jain's comment to NDTV.

The markaz facility is also known as the global headquarters of Tablighi Jamaat, a preaching movement founded in 1927 by Maulana Mohd Ilyas in Haryana's Mewat. Tablighi Jamaat (Arabic for 'group that propagates faith') is one of the most widespread missionary movements in Islam globally but seeks to be low-profile. It is not a sect in itself.

Members often describe Tablighi Jamaat to be non-political, committed to nothing more than goading Muslims into following Islam. Participation is purely voluntary and most members belong to professional occupations.

"Our groups aren't large. We can't afford it. It's at best three or four," said Syed Iran Malik, a resident of the old Delhi, who travelled to Malaysia and Indonesia in 2017 as a preacher.

Preachers usually put up in mosques and lecture people. Preachers usually carry nothing more than food stuff, sleeping bags and cooking stoves.

One key task is to make non-conformist Muslims to 'return' to the faith. They frequently quote from the Quran, highlighting passages that speak of certainty of hellish punishment for sinners and rewards for the virtuous.

Positive coronavirus cases among these preachers have set off alarm bells now, but the organisation says its members were trapped because of the lockdown. Authorities made no arrangement to evacuate them in time, it said in an official statement.

"On March 21, 2020, a large group of visitors who had to depart by railways got stuck in the markaz premises. On March 22, 2020, the Janata Curfew was observed and visitors were advised not to venture out until 9pm," the statement said.

According to the markaz's statement, on 24th March 2020, a notice was issued by police, seeking closure of the premises. "The same was responded to on 24th March 2020, stating the compliance of the directions regarding closure of markaz is already underway," it said.

Alarmingly, a day before the notice, i.e. on March 23, around 1500 preachers had already managed to leave for various destinations, thus leaving around 1000 visitors "belonging to different states and nationalities inside the markaz", the organisation said.

A few of them started developing symptoms, such as a temperature and cough, but nobody thought of the possibility of getting the coronavirus, a member of the markaz said. Members continued to be cramped because of the lockdown.

Tablighi Jamaat has no central administrative structure and its activities are coordinated by volunteers. Without an authority, there was no general guidelines to prevent Covid-19.

An administrator of the markaz house however said: "During this entire episode, markaz

Nizamuddin never violated any provision of law. It did not let them (preachers) violate medical guidelines," the statement said.

"Why did the authorities fail to move out the preachers to government quarantine facilities? Why were foreigners not separated from Indian nationals? The local magistrate should be sacked," said Hamid of the Majlis-e-Mushwarat.

Since the 9/11 attacks, the group has been under scrutiny everywhere, including in India, because terror outfits have been found to disguise themselves as Tablighi Jamaat members. "This is a conspiracy against us. Coronavirus is worrying but Allah will guard us," said Malik, the former Tablighi Jamaat member quoted above.

True copy

Home / India / As Tablighi's Nizamuddin centre is cleared, Kejriwal warns of a surge in cases

As Tablighi's Nizamuddin centre is cleared, Kejriwal warns of a surge in cases

Nizamuddin West continued to be under strict lockdown, with heavy police deployment on Tuesday, a day after 18 people from the area tested positive for COVID-19.



Written by Somya Lakhani, Sourav Roy Barman | New Delhi | April 1, 2020 4:40:16 am



On Tuesday, Kejriwal said the city should brace for a surge in cases as some of the 441 symptomatic people evacuated from the Markaz (centre) are expected to test positive. (File photo)

Over the past three days, 1,548 people have been evacuated from the Markaz Nizamuddin, the headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Tuesday. Of these, 441 are symptomatic and have been sent to the hospital for coronavirus testing, while others have been quarantined.

Nizamuddin West continued to be under strict lockdown, with heavy police deployment on Tuesday, a day after 18 people from the area tested positive for COVID-19. A gathering at a mosque in the area mid-March has emerged as the epicentre of the outbreak, with cases emerging not just in the national capital but in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, the Andaman islands, Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and other states.

Beginning Tuesday morning, people were brought out in batches of 30-35 from the Markaz Nizamuddin building and taken to hospitals or quarantine centres in DTC



buses. The drivers were made to wear protective suits.



At least 24 of the 97 coronavirus cases in Delhi are from this area. On Tuesday, Kejriwal said the city should brace for a surge in cases as some of the 441 symptomatic people evacuated from the Markaz (centre) are expected to test positive.

"Of the cases so far, 24 are related to the Markaz, 41 are people who returned from other countries, 22 are relatives of those who have tested positive. We are still looking at the nature of transmission in 10 cases. So far, we have not seen evidence of community transmission," Kejriwal said.

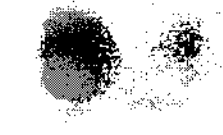
Calling the organisers of the gathering at the Markaz "irresponsible", Kejriwal said that on March 12 and 13, many people from across the country and abroad had gathered there. And while many left afterwards, several people stayed back.

"This disease has gripped the entire world. At a time like this, this (holding a gathering) was a very irresponsible thing. Navratras are on and there are usually many people in temples, but there is no one this time. Gurdwaras are shut, people are not coming to the masjid to pray and are praying at home. Mecca is empty, Vatican City is empty. At such a time, to have held such a big gathering was wrong," he said.

Kejriwal said the Delhi government has written to the L-G requesting that an FIR be registered against the organisers. He also said action will be taken against any officer who is found to have not followed orders on limiting gatherings.

On Tuesday, the Delhi Police registered a case against Maulana Saad and other members of the Tablighi Jamaat under section 3 of the Epidemic Disease Act 1897, and several IPC sections, including 120-B (criminal conspiracy). Delhi Police spokesperson M S Randhawa said, "The FIR has been filed for violation of government directions given to the management of the Markaz regarding restriction of social-political-religious gathering and for taking safety measures, including social distancing."

EXPLAINED



Cracking the cluster

NEW DELHI's Hazrat Nizamuddin cluster will significantly alter the nature of spread of the novel coronavirus disease. But because the new cases are in large groups and linked to one source, it may be easier to reliably trace the contacts. But this comes at a time when there are more examples which suggest community transmission. Full REPORT Page 5

Delhi Police also released a video dated March 24, wherein SHO Hazrat Nizamuddin police station can be seen speaking to six members of the Markaz about "clear-cut instructions that more than five people cannot congregate and all religious institutions are shut". In the video, the SHO says, "Despite telling you several times, this problem is not getting solved... if you don't clear it immediately, I will be forced to take strict legal action". A member of the Markaz then says, "We have evacuated 1,500 people but there are more people inside... over 1,000 from outside Delhi... They all want to go home but the borders are sealed." The SHO then asks them to speak to the SDM about the matter immediately.

Members of the Tablighi Jamaat, meanwhile, said that "at least 1,500 members, including 280 foreigners, were evacuated from the Bangliewali Masjid and Markaz Nizamuddin on March 23 — a day after the one-day 'Janta Curfew' announced by the PM.

Advocate Fuzail Ayyubi told The Indian Express, "As of March 22, there were at least 4,000 people living at the Markaz. The 1,500 were evacuated."

Asked about the Delhi government's order that barred large gatherings in the capital, sources at the Markaz said, "This is the international headquarter of the Tablighi Jamaat and people from all over the world come and live here though the year. There was a quarterly meeting of members of the Jamaat in the second week of March, but that was before the lockdown. Also, these people live inside the Markaz, nowhere does it say that's not allowed."

Sources said that "as long as trains were running, people were coming, and as long as planes were flying, people were coming to the area. As soon as lockdown was announced, we evacuated as many as we could and then stayed put."

Ayyubi said, "People visit through the year for a few days of teaching, and then go about 'chilla', which is 40 days of travelling through the country, across mosques, learning and then imparting that knowledge to Muslim households."

An official spokesperson of the Markaz claimed that "on March 24, the SHO of Hazrat Nizamuddin police station issued a notice that the Markaz should be closed down, and we stated that there are still people inside".

"We requested the SHO and the SDM to issue vehicle passes so that the rest of the people could be sent back to their states... We did not get the permission."

Sources at the Markaz said that most international visitors come from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, and from within India, many come from Tamil Nadu, Assam and Uttar Pradesh.

The spokesperson of the Markaz said that "on March 25, a medical team visited them for inspection and lists of visitors were provided to the authorities... on March 26, the SDM visited Markaz Nizamuddin and was apprised of the stranded visitors and once again (we) sought permission for the vehicles arranged by us. The tehsildar too visited with a medical team and on March 27, six people were taken for a check-up."

The Delhi government had issued an order banning gatherings of over 200 people on March 13. Responding to the Tablighi Jamaat's statement, AAP MLA Atishi tweeted: "The 'iztema' happened much before the dates mentioned in this statement, from 13-15th March. On 13th, Delhi government issued an order banning any gathering of more than 200 people. Why did markaz not stop the event? Why did Delhi Police not take action when police station is next to markaz?"

The Tablighi Jamaat is a conservative Muslim organisation that was set up in 1926 by Maulana Ilyas to spread religious knowledge among Muslims. It is supposed to be the largest Muslim religious movement in the world.


True copy



Covid-19: Nizamuddin markaz says 1500 members broke away before quarantine

Markaz is a clearing house for these committed teams of Islamic missionaries known as Tablighi Jamaat. Individual missions are small, consisting of four or five men, each booked on flights and trains to various states and countries. The building isn't a mosque. It's a facility with bare dormitories.

INDIA Updated: Mar 31, 2020, 12:41:57

 Zia Haq
Hindustan Times, New Delhi



By early March, Covid-19 cases were surging across the world and in India. A lockdown in the country was several days away. Ignoring the pandemic, an estimated 2500 Sunni Muslim men belonging to several nationalities, each identically dressed in white gowns and skullcaps, checked into a five-storey house called Markaz in Delhi's Nizamuddin area, part of a year-round routine.

Markaz is a clearing house for these committed teams of Islamic missionaries known as Tablighi Jamaat. Individual missions are small, consisting of four or five men, each booked on flights and trains to various states and countries. The building isn't a mosque. It's a facility with bare dormitories. "It's actually a transit point, where logistics are planned," said Navaid Hamid, the president of All-India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushwarat.

Authorities now fear the markaz waypoint has become a coronavirus transmission hub, with 24

preachers testing positive, according to Delhi health minister Satyendra Jain's comment to NDTV.

The markaz facility is also known as the global headquarters of Tablighi Jamaat, a preaching movement founded in 1927 by Maulana Mohd Ilyas in Haryana's Mewat. Tablighi Jamaat (Arabic for 'group that propagates faith') is one of the most widespread missionary movements in Islam globally but seeks to be low-profile. It is not a sect in itself.

Members often describe Tablighi Jamaat to be non-political, committed to nothing more than goading Muslims into following Islam. Participation is purely voluntary and most members belong to professional occupations.

"Our groups aren't large. We can't afford it. It's at best three or four," said Syed Iran Malik, a resident of the old Delhi, who travelled to Malaysia and Indonesia in 2017 as a preacher.

Preachers usually put up in mosques and lecture people. Preachers usually carry nothing more than food stuff, sleeping bags and cooking stoves.

One key task is to make non-conformist Muslims to 'return' to the faith. They frequently quote from the Quran, highlighting passages that speak of certainty of hellish punishment for sinners and rewards for the virtuous.

Positive coronavirus cases among these preachers have set off alarm bells now, but the organisation says its members were trapped because of the lockdown. Authorities made no arrangement to evacuate them in time, it said in an official statement.

"On March 21, 2020, a large group of visitors who had to depart by railways got stuck in the markaz premises. On March 22, 2020, the Janata Curfew was observed and visitors were advised not to venture out until 9pm," the statement said.

According to the markaz's statement, on 24th March 2020, a notice was issued by police, seeking closure of the premises. "The same was responded to on 24th March 2020, stating the compliance of the directions regarding closure of markaz is already underway," it said.

Alarmingly, a day before the notice, i.e. on March 23, around 1500 preachers had already managed to leave for various destinations, thus leaving around 1000 visitors "belonging to different states and nationalities inside the markaz", the organisation said.

A few of them started developing symptoms, such as a temperature and cough, but nobody thought of the possibility of getting the coronavirus, a member of the markaz said. Members continued to be cramped because of the lockdown.

Tablighi Jamaat has no central administrative structure and its activities are coordinated by volunteers. Without an authority, there was no general guidelines to prevent Covid-19.

An administrator of the markaz house however said: "During this entire episode, markaz Nizamuddin never violated any provision of law. It did not let them (preachers) violate medical guidelines," the statement said.

"Why did the authorities fail to move out the preachers to government quarantine facilities? Why were foreigners not separated from Indian nationals? The local magistrate should be sacked," said Hamid of the Majlis-e-Mushwarat.

Since the 9/11 attacks, the group has been under scrutiny everywhere, including in India, because terror outfits have been found to disguise themselves as Tablighi Jamaat members. "This is a conspiracy against us. Coronavirus is worrying but Allah will guard us," said Malik, the former Tablighi Jamaat member quoted above.

True copy
[Signature]

Call it a mistake, not conspiracy against India, say Muslim scholars on Tablighi Jamaat event

Muslim scholars Arshad Madani, Ahmed Bukhari and Mahmood Madani condemn Tablighi meet, but also criticise what they call the 'communalisation of the pandemic'.

FATIMA KHAN

8 April, 2020 11:02 am IST



File images of Muslim leaders Mahmood Madani, Arshad Madani and Syed Ahmed Bukhari | ThePrint

Text Size: A- A+

New Delhi: India's death toll from coronavirus crossed 100 this week, and over 4,000 cases have been reported so far. The health ministry Monday said 1,445 of these cases are linked to the Tablighi Jamaat congregation that took place at its Nizamuddin headquarters in Delhi in mid-March.

The Tablighi Jamaat has been widely criticised for holding the congregation that has emerged as a Covid-19 cluster.

ThePrint spoke to some of the leading Muslim scholars of different Islamic bodies on what they make of the incident and the controversies that followed.

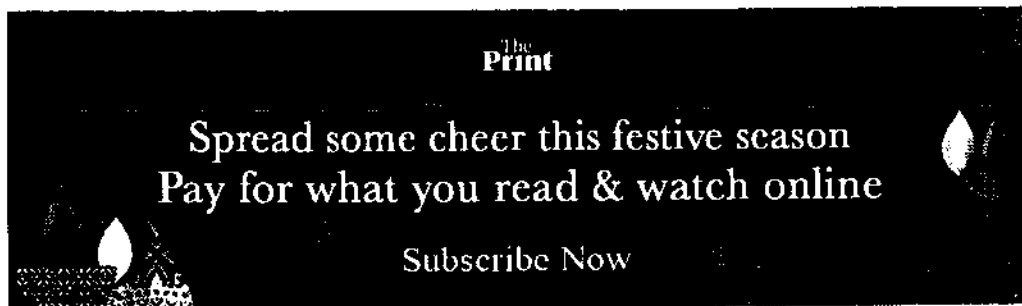
Arshad Madani, president of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (JUH), said the narrative around the Tablighi Jamaat incident has "served to make every Muslim an enemy in the eyes of the majority".

"Woh chahte hain har Hindu yeh soche ki sirf Musalman unhe khatra pahucha sakta hai, isliye Musalman ke saath apni doori aur nafrat ko barkarar rakho (They want all Hindus to think that only Muslims can cause them danger, so maintain your distance and hatred against them," Madani told ThePrint.

The Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind has filed a petition in the Supreme Court, seeking directions to the Modi government to stop dissemination of fake news pertaining to the Tablighi Jamaat congregation, and take strict action against those spreading communal hatred and bigotry.



"Each time there was a bomb blast in the country, the home ministry would find some Muslim men to blame. These men would then rot in jail for eternity, even if they were innocent," Madani said.



"This is a continuation of the same vilification. The government wants everyone to think that Muslims alone have brought upon this crisis to the nation."

"It's the misfortune of this country that even a pandemic can be reduced to a Hindu-Muslim issue," Madani added.

The Tablighi Jamaat congregation saw the participation of over 3,000 people, including foreigners from Indonesia and Malaysia. Following the outbreak, those who attended the congregation, have been kept under quarantine in different parts of the country.

Also read: What is Tablighi Jamaat? Organiser of Delhi event behind spike in India's Covid-19 count

'This isn't the time for blame-game'

Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, said Muslim scholars going to TV debates to talk about the incident are also doing everyone a disservice.

"TV channels should be calling WHO representatives and other health experts. The Muslims who are going on TV shows aren't helping anyone. No one made them the spokesperson of the community, they should stay at home," Bukhari told ThePrint.

"Tablighi Jamaat should have been more careful. But this isn't a time to point fingers and play the blame-game. It's the time to look ahead and make everything better," Bukhari added.

"No one is defending what the Tablighi Jamaat did," Ejaz Aslam, general secretary of the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind said.

"But to make it out to be some sort of a deliberate conspiracy against the country is downright deplorable," he added.

"The people of Tablighi Jamaat made a grave error, but so did Karnataka CM B.S. Yediyurappa, and so did all the leaders who continued to attend Parliament during the same period as the congregation."

Aslam was referring to Yediyurappa attending a wedding, which had 2,000 guests on 15 March — after issuing an advisory against such gatherings.

Also read: Tamil Nadu is worst-hit by Tablighi Jamaat event, but also seeing men admit participation

Muslims being 'harassed'

The scholars also argued that the incident and its coverage has led to many cases of harassment of Muslims.

"Some colonies are banning the entry of Muslims. A Muslim pregnant woman wasn't allowed entry into a hospital. A Muslim was mocked and forced to commit suicide. All of these are nothing but cases of widespread harassment of the community," Mahmood Madani, general secretary of another faction of the JUH, told ThePrint.

In the last few days, several such reports of harassment have emerged — of a pregnant Muslim woman's child dying after she was denied entry by a government hospital in Rajasthan, and a Muslim man in Himachal Pradesh, who was in touch with a Tablighi Jamaat member, committing suicide after he allegedly faced social boycott by the villagers even after testing negative.

"Sooner or later, there will emerge other patients who had nothing to do with the Tablighi Jamaat. Will we see them as criminals too?" Madani asked.

'Cooperate with the administration'

While condemning the 'communalisation' of the incident, the leaders said they have also asked the community members to cooperate with the administration.

"No one should see the government as their enemy. Whatever is in the public interest, it's in the community's interest as well," Bukhari said. "If anyone attacks doctors, they are doing wrong for themselves and for the entire country at large."

Mahmood Madani also said everyone should strictly follow the regulations.

"I would like to say to the members of the community that if anyone deliberately and knowingly flouts any of the advisories, then that person is a criminal," he said.

"If in the name of worship, you will defy the guidelines in place, then you will be nothing but a criminal. So please stay at home and don't do anything unadvisable," he added.

Also read: One in India's five Covid-19 patients is linked to Tablighi Jamaat and its Delhi event

Subscribe to our channels on YouTube & Telegram

Why news media is in crisis & How you can fix it

India needs free, fair, non-hyphenated and questioning journalism even more as it faces multiple crises.

But the news media is in a crisis of its own. There have been brutal layoffs and pay-cuts. The best of journalism is shrinking, yielding to crude prime-time spectacle.

ThePrint has the finest young reporters, columnists and editors working for it. Sustaining journalism of this quality needs smart and thinking people like you to pay for it. Whether you live in India or overseas, you can do it here.

Support Our Journalism 

True Copy
Sally

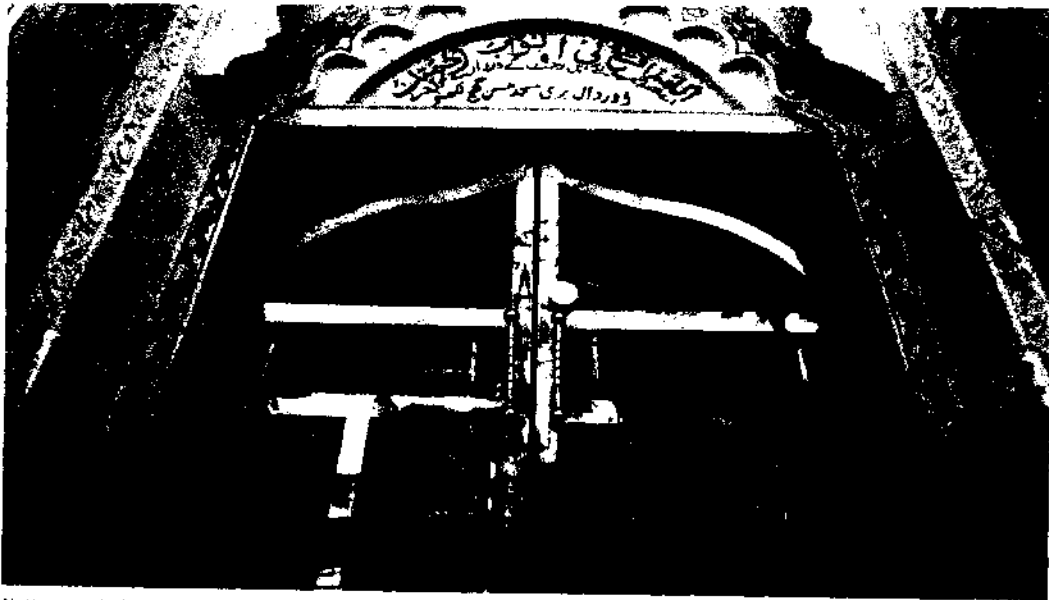
Muslim IAS-IPS officers' Covid-19 appeal to community: Don't give anyone reason to blame you

78

About 80 serving & retired officers have urged Muslims to practice social distancing, and cited the Quran to say courting disease through negligence is a 'sin'.

SANYA DHINGRA

5 April, 2020 3:15 pm IST



Notices pasted on the gate of a mosque in Lucknow, asking devotees to offer namāz from home | Photo: ANI

Text Size: A- A+

New Delhi: Nearly 80 serving and retired IAS, IPS and IFS officers belonging to the Islamic faith have appealed to the Muslim community to adhere to social distancing norms, and not give anyone the opportunity to accuse it of spreading Covid-19 in India.

The officers' appeal comes in the light of the Tablighi Jamaat event at New Delhi's Nizamuddin area last month, which has resulted in about one-third of the total Covid-19 cases in India as on 5 April.

"Of late, a message is going in the society at large that Muslims, as a group, in India are not adhering to 'social distancing' and other measures to counter the spread of the pandemic," the officers have written in their open appeal to Muslims.

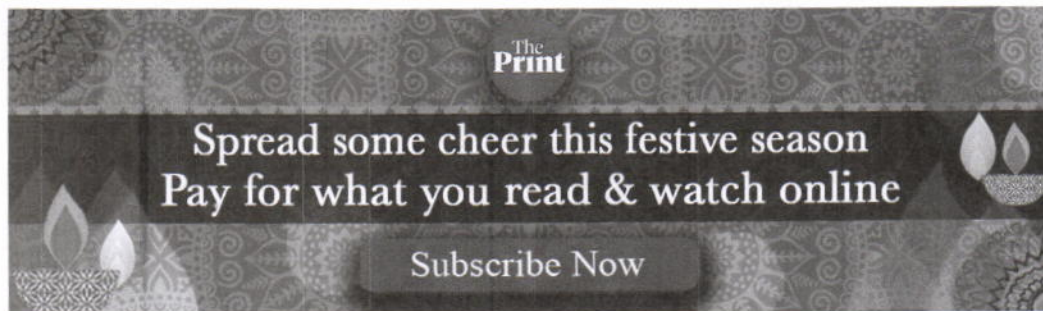
"Distressing videos are in wide circulation showing stone pelting at health workers, and clash of men from Muslim community with police personnel who were enforcing the law. In some videos, policemen are being forced to baton-charge the people hell-bent to go to a mosque for prayer," the officers state.

In this light, the officers have urged Muslims to "act responsibly and stand out as examples for fellow citizens in the fight against coronavirus".

They add that the community should ensure its actions do not offer anyone an opportunity to accuse Muslims for the spread of the epidemic in India.

"They must adhere to the guidance of the public health experts and the orders of the government, since what is correct must be followed irrespective of whether one finds support for that or not in religious scriptures," they state.





Also read: Pakistan trying to 'influence' Indian Muslims to violate the Covid-19 lockdown: Delhi Police

Invoking the Quran

The officers have invoked Islamic teachings to argue that contracting the virus through negligence is a "sinful act", even if you are the only person who gets infected.

"Suicide and courting danger and disease by one's rash and negligent act is *haram*," the officers state. "The virus does not remain confined to the body of the person who invited it to himself through his foolish act. It travels rapidly in the family and society, and brings indiscriminate deaths to innocents."

They add: "The Quran says if one kills an innocent human being, it is as if he had killed all mankind, and whosoever saves the life of one, it is as if he had saved the life of all mankind."

However, they also say that even in the absence of religious scripture, it is imperative that Muslims respect quarantine norms.

"Even if there were no religious sanctions to avoid a plague or remain in quarantine during a raging epidemic, adopting measures to safeguard oneself from it would still be the sensible thing to do," they say.

"Muslims can pray collectively at the mosques after the pandemic dies out and the normal life is restored."

Also read: Bigotry over Tablighi Jamaat is a familiar pattern. All Muslims will be blamed for acts of few

True copy
[Signature]

Subscribe to our channels on YouTube & Telegram

Why news media is in crisis & How you can fix it

India needs free, fair, non-hyphenated and questioning journalism even more as it faces multiple crises.

But the news media is in a crisis of its own. There have been brutal layoffs and pay-cuts. The best of journalism is shrinking, yielding to crude prime-time spectacle.

ThePrint has the finest young reporters, columnists and editors working for it. Sustaining journalism of this quality needs smart and thinking people like you to pay for it. Whether you live in India or overseas, you can do it here.



THIS STORY IS FROM APRIL 5, 2020

Cleric urges muslims in Navi Mumbai to cooperate in fight against coronavirus

George Mendonca | TNN | Updated: Apr 5, 2020, 10:20 IST



A-

A+



Picture for representational purpose only.

NAVI MUMBAI: A cleric of Tablighi Jamaat, Markaz Nizamuddin, has appealed to Muslims in Taloja to cooperate with police by offering namaaz at home. He also appealed to those who have returned from the Delhi congregation to inform police about their attendance there.

Senior inspector Kashinath Chavan said around 20% of

the 3 lakh population were Muslims in Taloja. After several of those who went there tested positive for Covid-19, it was necessary to create awareness as some people were secretly performing namaaz in groups on building terraces, he said. "We requested Yasin Kasmi to appeal to the community members to not assemble at mosques or on their building terraces to offer namaaz, so as to maintain social distancing. The cleric agreed and has made

a video of the appeal, which we have circulated to ensure that it reaches members of the community."

The copy
[Signature]

Chavan further said, "The cleric has even appealed to his community members who have returned from the Tablighi markaz in Delhi, to approach local police and civic administration. ." George Mendonca

TOP COMMENT

What a shame that this community will only listen to clerics and not follow the law of the land? How come God has given such a brain to these people.

Vish Dash


SEE ALL COMMENTS

ADD COMMENT

Citizens must exhibit responsible behaviour | Opinion

Lockdown gains have been undermined by poor planning, exit of migrant workers, and the Tablighi Jamaat gathering

COLUMNS Updated Apr 06, 2020 19:38 IST

 Shashi Shekhar



The lockdown has helped the government contain the disease, and prepare better. But the risks remain deep (AP)

The cry of the peacock, birdsong at dusk and dawn —these are sounds one now hears in the part of Noida where I live. Until a few weeks ago, the only noise that overwhelmed us was that of vehicles. But while the return of nature's sounds should occasion joy, the circumstances we find ourselves in with the relentless march of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) fill us with fear and trepidation. The number of positive cases is rising every day, and so is the death toll.

Scientists seem to believe that this pandemic will wreak more havoc on the world than those before it. This is why governments all over the world have prohibited the movement of people. Half the world is also under a lockdown, underlining the common challenge humanity confronts.

India has been under a complete lockdown for the last two weeks. Most people are voluntarily following the restrictions, but there are some, either due to ignorance or arrogance, who are not ready to make the sacrifices needed to deal with the pandemic. This is dangerous, for they are at risk of not just harming themselves, but communities around them.

On Friday, dozens of people gathered in Kannauj city to offer prayers. The police and administration tried to convince them that this was not the right time or way to do this.

Several Muslim scholars including the *ulemas* of Deoband, Bareilly and Firangi Mahal, have

already said that during this hour of crisis, it is appropriate to offer *namaz* at home. But the crowd was not willing to listen. The situation became tense and the gathered congregation attacked the police. They then proceeded to set fire to a police post. It was only when a large contingent of police arrived that the crowd was chased away.



This is not an isolated incident. There have also been cases on attacks of teams of health workers.

Who are these people who are attacking the true warriors at the frontline of this battle? Is this spontaneous or orchestrated? If it is the latter, who is planning it? Do these individuals not understand that by their appalling and criminal behaviour, they are putting in danger human lives?

The renowned poet, Rahat Indori, was so shaken up the incident of assault on doctors in Indore that he said, "Tell me which house was it where doctors and health workers were spat on, so that I can go there and touch their feet, plead that they should have mercy on themselves, their community and their country."

Ever since the Tablighi Jamaat incident, which has led to India's sharpest spike in cases, there has been a constant effort to vitiate the atmosphere. There must be no attempt to communalise the situation. At the same time, it must be recognised that not only was the gathering wrong but members of Jamaat, who were kept in quarantine, have behaved appallingly, completely at odds with what is expected from religious persons.

In the government hospital in Ghaziabad, where reports suggested they harassed health care workers, particularly women, their behaviour was outrageous. In Agra, their compatriots refused to eat the simple food served to them. Before this, some of them protested against being tested because this was against their religion. This is the first time that people have behaved in such an irresponsible manner on a vital public health issue, citing religious reasons.

According to the health ministry, as many as 1,445 people linked to the Tablighi Jamaat event tested positive for the coronavirus, accounting for 35% of all cases of infection in India. The health ministry has also pointed out that this has undermined the potential benefits of the lockdown.

This kind of uncivilised and irresponsible behaviour will only strengthen fundamentalists in other religions. Arguments and debates on social media provide ample evidence of this. Are we moving forward as education progresses or going back to some sort of medieval barbarism?

There is no doubt that by implementing the lockdown in time, the spread of Covid-19 has been limited. It has given the government enough time to prepare to contain the virus and ramp up

the health infrastructure. Optimists even thought initially that this would save us from entering the third phase: Community transmission, where the source of the infection is not known, thus showing its wide spread.

Unfortunately, poor planning of the lockdown, which resulted in the exodus of migrant workers from cities, followed then by the movement of infected people from the Jamaat congregation to 20 states, have raised new doubts and fears about the spread of the virus.

Will the government have to extend the lockdown after April 14?

The government will have to take a considered, careful decision.

*Shashi Shekhar is the editor-in-chief, Hindustan
The views expressed are personal*

*True copy
[Signature]*

Follow Us:

**The Indian EXPRESS**

Monday, November 09, 2020

[Home](#) [India](#) [Cities](#) [Bihar Elections](#) [Opinion](#) [IPL 2020](#) [Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Video](#)

SUBSCRIBE

■ square

[Home](#) / [Opinion](#) / [Columns](#) / Organisers of Tablighi Jamaat have hurt the fight against the coronavirus

Organisers of Tablighi Jamaat have hurt the fight against the coronavirus

The Muslim community, not only in India but across the world, must know that the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed the community to stay at home in case of emergencies such as this. In the case of epidemics and pandemics, the Prophet (PBUH) clearly stated that nobody should either go to somebody else's house or invite anyone.

Written by **Firoz Bakht Ahmed** | Updated: April 3, 2020 11:16:55 am



PRAVEEN KHANNA

The total number of confirmed cases of the infection in the national capital rose to 152 on Wednesday. (Express photo by Praveen Khanna)

Last week, I was asked by Prasar Bharati to send a one-minute clip asking my co-religionists to desist from congregational prayers, since these were still being held in many villages and smaller towns. I duly obliged. This is in the context of the **Nizamuddin Tablighi Jamaat** gathering at Banglewali masjid — which can accommodate up to 12,000 devotees — that is feared to have infected many across several states. This is deeply disappointing.

Opinion | How coronavirus crisis can be converted to opportunity to fundamentally strengthen Indian economy

The organisation, established by Maulana Ilyas of Mewat in 1926 for “puritanical” Islam, is under the scanner for something that is un-Islamic. Islam is a religion of caring and for sharing the blessings of Allah, not spreading disease. It is an irresponsible act on the part of the Tablighi Jamaat’s authorities. A social media clip, allegedly of Maulana Saad, who hosted the Jamaat, claimed that the government has tried to lock mosques and was trying to divide the community by not letting Muslims sit together to pray. Now, a community that is constantly under the scanner could be further sidelined and socially distanced by their non-Muslim brethren. The Maulana, meanwhile, is reportedly absconding.

Coronavirus update April 2: Spain touches 10,000 deaths



What is more shocking is that this has come after Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s address to the nation. He, like a concerned member of a family, requested everyone

with folded hands to stay at home and maintain social distance to break this deadly COVID-19 chain of transmission.

The spate of infections of coronavirus also highlights how the Muslim community has been woefully misled by their so-called representatives.

More often than not, community leaders are interested in feathering their own nests while the poor are pushed towards ignorance because of the obscurantist attitude of their “netas” who think they are accountable to no one. In this case, the residents of Zakir Nagar West area were sensible enough to complain to the police about the residents in this mosque from Nizamuddin Markaz.

Opinion | There is need for a calibrated approach to end the lockdown, testing will be key

Despite three major imams of India — Imam Syed Ahmed Bukhari, Imam Mufti Mukarram Ahmed and Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi — and a decree from the Darul Uloom Deoband, and many other mosques announcing that congregations may cause the spread of COVID-19, several gatherings continued. The argument was, our sahabas had prayed in the mosques even under the threat of the enemy’s swords. Why are they getting scared of this petty enemy, coronavirus?

These people don’t remember that Allah has also said that “He helps those who help themselves”.

The Muslim community, not only in India but across the world, must know that the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed the community to stay at home in case of emergencies such as this. In the case of epidemics and pandemics, the Prophet (PBUH) clearly stated that nobody should either go to somebody else’s house or invite anyone.

One day, when it was raining heavily, and it was the time of azaan, the Prophet (PBUH) had said, as-salatu-fi-buyutikum (pray in your homes). Not only this, once when a deadly and contagious disease broke out among the camels, he instructed that the healthy camels should not be allowed to mix with the affected ones.

But there is always a backlash against such an opinion. Through social media, when I urged people to maintain social distancing and pray at home, I was targeted with

abuse. PM Modi has rightly said: Jaan hai, to jahan hai!" Only when we survive, will we be able to do anything else in the world.

Opinion | SC order on migrant labour is premised on unchallenged claims of the government, it curtails press freedom

I faced brickbats for pointing this out in a time of crisis, by those who have perhaps missed the point that PM Modi was not delivering this lifesaving dose only for the BJP, RSS or non-Muslims, but for all. He was hoping that the lockdown may break the COVID-19 chain of transmission and, in the process, save millions of lives.


The tragedy of the already beleaguered Indian Muslim community has been the way they have been taken for a ride — treated as a vote-bank by their leaders, the Congress and the so-called secular parties. This has resulted in the state of affairs they find themselves in today. They are far from the mainstream, with the begging bowl of the Sachar Committee and some other commissions that have proved futile in addressing their social, economic and educational needs.

It is time for us, Muslims, to cooperate with the government to fight the deadly coronavirus and follow Islam in letter and spirit.

This article first appeared in print edition on April 3 under the title "Pandemic and the community". The writer is chancellor, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad.

Opinion | Policing a lockdown: Every day brings challenges, heartbreaks, acts of inspiration

Here's a quick Coronavirus guide from Express Explained to keep you updated: What can cause a COVID-19 patient to relapse after recovery? | COVID-19 lockdown has cleaned up the air, but this may not be good news. Here's why | Can alternative medicine work against the coronavirus? | A five-minute test for COVID-19 has been readied, India may get it too | How India is building up defence during lockdown | Why only a fraction of those with coronavirus suffer acutely | How do healthcare workers protect themselves from getting infected? | What does it take to set up isolation wards?

True copy


Tablighi Jamaat blames 'govt planning' as BJP, AAP attack it for spike in Covid-19 cases

Organisers of the Tablighi Jamaat congregation say it took place before the nationwide lockdown kicked in, and the sudden curfew stalled evacuation efforts.

FATIMA KHAN

31 March, 2020 7:33 pm IST



A Tablighi Jamaat centre in Indonesia | Representational image | Photo: Commons

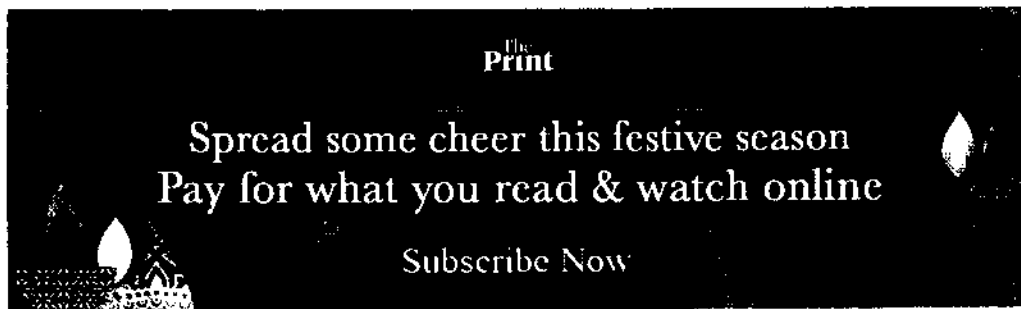
Text Size: A- A+

New Delhi: The organisers of the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi's Nizamuddin area have come under criticism from BJP and AAP leaders for going ahead with the 13-15 March gathering of around 2,500 people despite the Covid-19 crisis.

At least 10 people, including 9 Indians, who attended the meet have died of coronavirus, with over 400 hospitalised with Covid-19 symptoms. The organisers, however, have defended themselves, citing a 13 March Union Health Ministry statement that said Covid-19 wasn't a health emergency.

Delhi BJP MP Gautam Gambhir said in a tweet that the "wrong action" of the organisers "could lead to a disaster of gigantic proportions".

BJP general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santhosh and party spokesperson Sambit Patra also slammed the congregation, with the latter terming it an act of "criminal negligence".



Delhi Chief Minister and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal, meanwhile, has ordered an FIR against the maulana who led the congregation.

AAP MLA Atishi questioned why the congregation was held when the Delhi government had banned gatherings of over 200 people on 13 March.

"Moreover, notification by Delhi Govt on 12 March stated that anyone with a travel history from Covid-19 affected countries has to self-isolate, then why did the administrators of the Markaz not ensure isolation of residents coming from those countries?" she said.

AAP MLA Amantullah Khan said Tuesday he had tipped Delhi Police off about the presence of around 1,000 people at the Nizamuddin complex and questioned why they didn't make arrangements to evacuate them.

Also Read: How Tablighi Jamaat emerged as the 'largest known' Covid-19 source in South Asia

'No grand annual congregation'

The Tablighi Jamaat sect has its international headquarters at a 100-year-old mosque complex, which has a six-floor dormitory, in Delhi's Nizamuddin area. At any given time, this complex, Markaz Nizamuddin, houses several hundreds of followers.

Talking about the 13-15 March congregation, Rehman Mujeeb, an advocate with the Tablighi Jamaat, said it "wasn't some grand annual congregation as is being made out to be".

"The headquarters has the capacity for 12,000 people. There were around 2,500 people in the congregation at the time," he told ThePrint.

Between Sunday and Monday, nearly 200 people were reportedly evacuated from the complex by district authorities after developing Covid-19 symptoms. The area was also cordoned off. A cleric who had attended the event had died in Srinagar last week, while six similar fatalities were reported from Telangana Monday.

According to a statement issued by the organisers Tuesday, "Visitors/guests/devotees/worshippers from across the globe throng the place for pre-scheduled programs lasting for no more than 3-5 days... (and) decided a year in advance in order to facilitate visitors from far-off places to plan their participation".

The organisers defended themselves against charges of ignoring advisories, saying they had approached the local administration for safe evacuation but weren't provided help.



They said in a statement Tuesday that they had evacuated “hundreds” after the event got over on 15 March but the process stalled following the lockdown announcement the next week.

“When PM Modi announced the ‘Janta Curfew’, for 22 March 2020, the ongoing programme in Markaz Nizamuddin was discontinued immediately, however due to sudden cancellation of rail services across the country on 21st March 2020, a large group of visitors who had to depart by way of railways got stuck in the Markaz premises,” he added.

The organisers said the lockdown announced by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal from 23 March to 31 March further diminished “any chances of these visitors availing road transport for their journey back home”.

“Under such compelling circumstances there was no option for Markaz Nizamuddin but to accommodate the stranded visitors with prescribed medical precautions till such time that situation becomes conducive for their movement or arrangements are made by the authorities,” they added.

The organisation claimed they approached the local authorities “multiple times” seeking transport assistance.

“We requested the subdivisional magistrate for vehicle passes multiple times, to allow the remaining attendees to leave. But to no avail,” Mujeeb told ThePrint.

The organisers also cited a 13 March health ministry statement, which said coronavirus was not a health emergency.

“If till 13 March the government didn’t tell us how big a problem this will become, why are we being slammed? It is their ill-planning.”

Also Read: Buying time with Covid- 19 lockdown won't work. India's healthcare can't scale up in 21 days

Subscribe to our channels on YouTube & Telegram

Why news media is in crisis & How you can fix it

India needs free, fair, non-hyphenated and questioning journalism even more as it faces multiple crises.

But the news media is in a crisis of its own. There have been brutal layoffs and pay-cuts. The best of journalism is shrinking, yielding to crude prime-time spectacle.

ThePrint has the finest young reporters, columnists and editors working for it. Sustaining journalism of this quality needs smart and thinking people like you to pay for it. Whether you live in India or overseas, you can do it here.

Support Our Journalism →

*True copy
Guthu*



Dear Muslims, Tablighi Jamaat committed a crime against humanity. Don't defend them

I am not encouraging Islamophobia, it is a prejudice that needs fierce opposition but if this isn't plain stupidity in the name of Allah, then what is?

BISMEE TASKIN

1 April, 2020 1:03 pm IST



File image of Tablighi Jamaat attendees being moved out of the Nizamuddin Markaz mosque in New Delhi | Photo: ANI

Text Size: A- A+

Religion has often caused harm to the world and humanity as a whole, whether in the form of environmental damage by filling the Yamuna and Ganga with 'religious waste' or turning the densely populated and congested Nizamuddin Basti into a Covid-19 hot spot for the sake of an Islamic gathering.

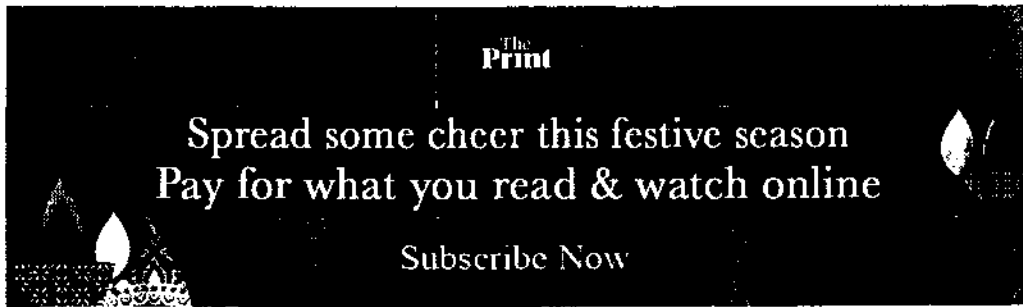
Tablighi Jamaat, an Islamic reformist group, had a large gathering of more than 3,000 people on 13 March in Nizamuddin with foreign nationals from Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Kyrgyzstan, and Malaysia, a hot spot for the deadly virus. Infact, the Jamaat has also been held responsible for having spread the virus to half a dozen nations in its February gathering in Malaysia.

Now, people across India who had participated in the Islamic congregation are testing positive for Covid-19 — from as far as Andaman and Nicobar Islands — and 10 have already died, including the Jamaat's Kashmir head. All of this happened because of an annual Islamic gathering.

I am not encouraging Islamophobia, it will always be a prejudice that needs vehement opposition. But if this isn't plain stupidity in the name of Allah, then what is?

Whether India had implemented strict travel restrictions by 13 March or not isn't the question here, the point is why gather in such huge numbers, with 'red' travel history for the sake of preaching religion? People from the gathering continued living in the area even after 13 March. Their orthodox movement has exposed all of us to a greater risk of contamination, from Assam to Telangana to the Andamans. And we can't justify it by saying that other religions had also kept their doors open for a long time. All doors should have been shut.

Also Read: Tablighi Jamaat congregation and how religion has been the 'super spreader' of coronavirus



Ignorance in Islam's name

Unfortunately, even amid this global crisis, some people are trying to veil the Jamaat's irresponsibility by bringing up a 13 March PTI report about government officials having still not declared coronavirus a public health emergency and hence the Sunni Muslim group didn't violate any norms.

Here is a fact-check; Delhi government on 13 March prohibited any gathering of more than 200 people under the Epidemic Diseases Act. Moreover, they also directed people coming from any Covid-19 affected country to self-isolate. Members of the Tablighi Jamaat in Nizamuddin violated both these directions.

Some have also argued that the Janata curfew was imposed a week later on 22 March and not during the Jamaat's celebrations, which is also completely ridiculous. The question here is of moral and social responsibility along with the Delhi government's order, which prohibited religious gatherings of over 50 people from 16 March. Covid-19 had already created chaos in the world by 13 March and the Jamaat made its contribution to it, not once, but twice.

Some others are now comparing this gathering with the exodus of migrant workers in the national capital. What these people fail to understand is that those workers had to walk home together because there was no other option. No one chooses to walk hundreds of kilometres with their children and no food if they have another option. But what Tablighi Jamaat did was sheer negligence and idiocy.

This outdated and orthodox movement has committed a crime that has put several others at the risk of coronavirus infection. No one knows the whereabouts of those 3000 people and who they have contacted in the last 16 days. Sadly, all of this was done in the name of Islam.

Also Read: More than 2,100 foreigners linked to Tablighi Jamaat entered India since 1 January

Liberals are missing

Surprisingly, India's 'liberals' including actors, journalists and authors are quiet on this. They have only tried to whitewash the Jamaat's doing by pointing out the loopholes of the government and the administration. This entire fiasco, caused solely for the purpose of preaching Islam, does not seem to be a matter of concern for them. Ironically, if such irresponsibility was shown by some other religious group in the country, the same liberals would have ridiculed it, like they did for Yogi Adityanath's Ayodhya celebrations.



We need to understand that speaking against a wrong committed by an orthodox religious group from a particular religious community doesn't mean you're stereotyping them. Of course, Muslims in India have always been discriminated and faced Islamophobia. However, this does not mean that you should not speak up against crimes committed by a group of orthodox people.

Not speaking up against this gross violation of human safety exposes your hollowness and your lack of balance. More so, it throws light on why there will never truly be an Indian liberal.

Also Read: What is Tablighi Jamaat? Organiser of Delhi event behind spike in India's Covid-19 count

Speak against Jamaat, not ISIS

When ISIS attacked a Gurdwara in Kabul last week, there were some who said they were ashamed of the crimes of this terrorist organisation in the name of Islam. There were others who not only tried defending Islam in the wake of the Islamic state's activities but also tried their best to establish the difference between ISIS and Islam.

The fact is ISIS is a global terrorist outfit that kills people, and rapes women. It has much less to do with Islam than it has to do with power. But Tablighi Jamaat should force us to think of our religious practices in every day life.

This congregation is probably the worst thing that these 3,000 Muslims could have ever inflicted on humanity in the name of preaching Islam. Ultimately, the brokers of Islam have added to this coronavirus mess.

Views are personal.

Subscribe to our channels on YouTube & Telegram

Why news media is in crisis & How you can fix it

India needs free, fair, non-hyphenated and questioning journalism even more as it faces multiple crises.

But the news media is in a crisis of its own. There have been brutal layoffs and pay-cuts. The best of journalism is shrinking, yielding to crude prime-time spectacle.

ThePrint has the finest young reporters, columnists and editors working for it. Sustaining journalism of this quality needs smart and thinking people like you to pay for it. Whether you live in India or overseas, you can do it here.

Support Our Journalism 

Inu Long
Callu

248 COMMENTS | SHARE YOUR VIEWS

India: Why is Everyone Excited Over This Rs. 2999 Smartwatch

FitX Pro Watch | Sponsored





SUBSCRIBE

Police refute Amar Ujala report about Tablighi Jamaat members misbehaving with medical staff

The Saharanpur police said the claims were investigated and found to be 'wrong and untrue'.

By NL Team 05 Apr, 2020



media shots



The Saharanpur police have put out a statement refuting media reports that members of the Tablighi Jamaat asked for non-vegetarian food and defecated in the open inside a quarantine facility in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur.

The claim appeared on the front page of the national daily *Amar Ujala* on April 5, 2020. It was also shared on the paper's official page on Facebook, where it received more than 4,000 likes and shares.



ने नॉनवेज न मिलने पर खाना फेंक दिया और खुले में ही शौच किया। एसडीएम एसएन शर्मा ने बताया कि जैन इंटर कॉलेज में बनाए गए क्वारंटीन वार्ड में दूसरे प्रदेशों से आए जमातियों को रखा गया है। संवाद

“After Uttar Pradesh’s Bijnor, a new case of Jamaatis has also come to light in Saharanpur. When they did not get non-vegetarian food, the Jamaatis here threw away the food and defecated in the open,” claimed the *Amar Ujala* report.

The report cited a similar incident that it alleged had happened at a quarantine facility in Bijnor.

The report cites Sub Divisional Magistrate SN Sharma as the source of the information. “SDM SN Sharma, SMI Irfan Ahmed, along with other police officers, arrived at the facility and pacified the Jamaatis. They were told clearly that only food prescribed by the government will be served. If they repeat their behaviour, strict legal action will be taken.”

A local media outlet, *News 1 India*, picked up the Saharanpur story and shared it on Twitter, adding that it was mutton biryani that members of the Tablighi Jamaat desired.

The Saharanpur police used its official Twitter account to reply to the tweet with a statement that the claims of the media outlets were investigated and found to be “wrong and untrue”.

Saharanpur Police 
@saharanpurpol



@Unnpolice @adazoneemeeut @igranemeeerut

@Oppoince @aujzonemeerut @igrangemeerut
@digsaharanpur @Dineshdcop

96



सहारनपुर पुलिस

खबर बनाम सच

अवगत कराना है, कि विभिन्न समाचार पत्रों, न्यूज चैनलों एवं सोशल मीडिया प्लेटफार्म पर प्रकाशित की जा रही खबर "क्वारेन्टाइन किये गये जमातियों ने खाने में नॉनवेज न मिलने पर किया जमकर हंगामा, जमातियों ने खुले में ही कर डाली शौच" की सत्यता की जांच व आवश्यक कार्यवाही करने हेतु धाना प्रभारी रामपुर मनिहारान को निर्देश दिये गये थे, जिनके द्वारा जांच की गई तो जांच में विभिन्न समाचार पत्रों, न्यूज चैनलों एवं सोशल मीडिया प्लेटफार्म पर प्रकाशित की जा रही उक्त खबर पूर्ण रूप से गलत एवं असत्य पायी गई है। अतः सहारनपुर पुलिस उक्त प्रकाशित खबर का पूर्णतः खण्डन करती है।

सोशल मीडिया सेल
सहारनपुर

12:36 PM · Apr 5, 2020

1.7K 1.5K people are Tweeting about this

In the past few days, there have been similar media reports of members of the Tablighi Jamaat allegedly misbehaving with staff at quarantine facilities in Agra, Kanpur and Ghaziabad as well.

True copy
[Signature]

COMMUNALISM

Nizamuddin: Minorities Panel Reports DU Teachers for Hate Speech Against Muslims

The Commission has highlighted posts on social media in which the teachers have asked for Muslims to be put into gas chambers.



Those suspected to have attended the Nizamuddin event are taken for testing in Agartala. Photo: PTI

98



The Wire Staff



LIVE LATEST 02/APR/2020

New Delhi: The Delhi Minorities Commission has taken strong offence to the use of hate speech against the Muslim community by a number of Delhi University teachers following the detection of coronavirus cases among a large number of people who had attended an event at Nizamuddin.

The chairman of the Commission, Zafar-ul Islam Khan, has issued a notice to the Vice-Chancellor of the Delhi University and urged him to constitute an inquiry committee to look at hate posts and take necessary action against teachers making them.

The panel expressed surprise that some teachers were “spewing venom against the Muslim community saying that they should be put in gas chambers and that doctors should not treat them, etc.” It added, “We find this very disturbing that such elements should be ‘teaching’ in a prestigious university like yours.”

Also read: When Even a Pandemic Is Communalised

Noting that it has quasi-judicial powers and functions as a civil court, the Commission has given the Vice-Chancellor a month’s time to file his reply and action taken report in the matter.

In its letter, the Commission also attached the links to some of the posts by the Delhi University teachers on Facebook, identifying six of them and their Facebook profiles. Another post, put up at 10.23 am on April 2 by a teacher, the Commission said, equated Muslims with pigs.

The Commission further cited that the comments below a certain shared video also showed the hatred the teachers harboured against the community.

While one of them commented that “doctors should not treat in such areas,” another ‘liked’ it. Other teachers wrote that “doctors should refuse to visit such areas” and “block them in their residential area, let them die for their God nonsense”.



ALSO READ

True copy
[Signature]

Follow Us:



The Indian EXPRESS

Monday, November 09, 2020

Home India Cities Bihar Elections Opinion IPL 2020 Entertainment Lifestyle Tech Video

SUBSCRIBE

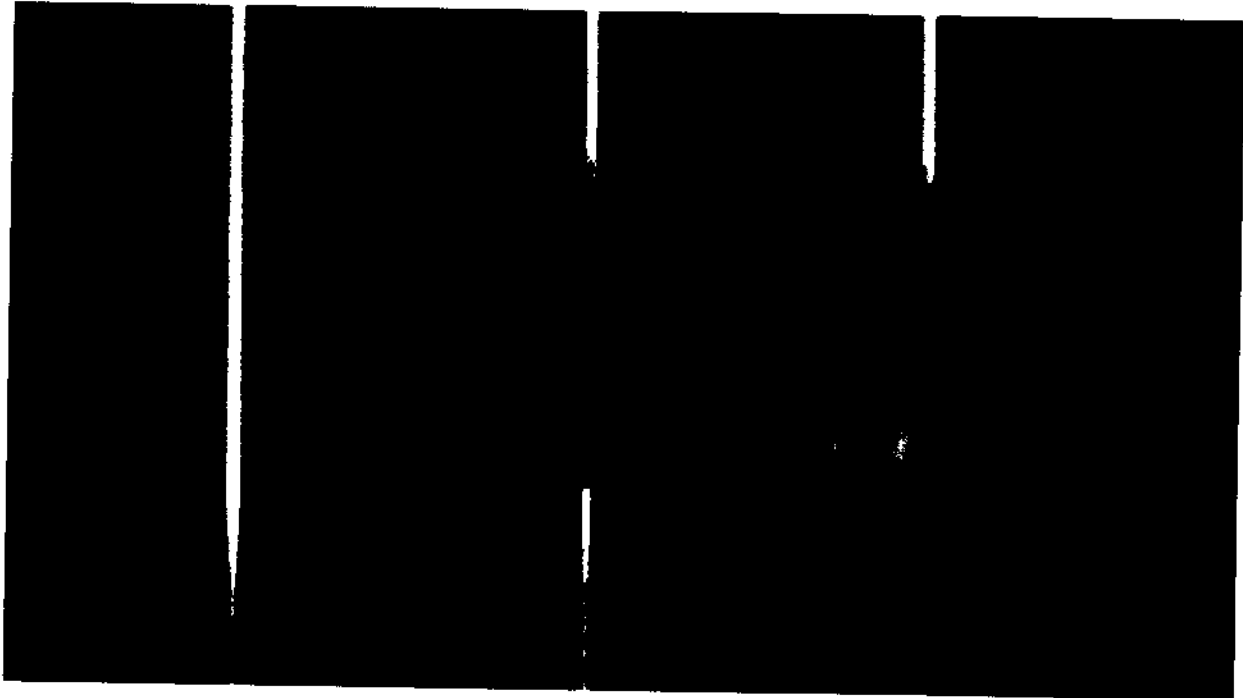
■ square

Home / Cities / Pune / Aurangabad doctor booked for social media post calling Tablighi Jamaat chief a 'terrorist'

Aurangabad doctor booked for social media post calling Tablighi Jamaat chief a 'terrorist'

A non-cognizable offence was lodged against the doctor at the Pundalik Nagar police station in Aurangabad.

By: Express News Service | Pune | April 6, 2020 10:05:25 pm



According to Aurangabad City Police, the doctor had posted Saad's photograph on social media, along with the comment "Wanted, please inform your local police if you have any input about location of this terrorist". (Representational Image)

The Aurangabad City Police has lodged a non-cognizable (NC) offence against a doctor for allegedly posting an objectionable message on social media, in which he called Tablighi Jamaat chief, Maulana Saad, a "terrorist".

Police have identified the doctor as Sambhaji Govind Chitale (38), who runs Cosmo Hospital in Kamgar Chowk in Aurangabad city's CIDCO area.


Maulana Saad is wanted in an offence lodged by the Delhi Police under sections of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and sections of the Indian Penal Code, for allegedly violating government directions on steps to be taken for avoiding spread of coronavirus. Hundreds of people who participated in a religious gathering, organised by Tablighi Jamaat at Nizamuddin in Delhi in mid-March, have tested positive for coronavirus.

According to Aurangabad City Police, Chitale had posted Saad's photograph on social media, along with the comment "Wanted, please inform your local police if you have any input about location of this terrorist".

A non-cognizable offence was lodged against Chitale at the Pundalik Nagar police station in Aurangabad on April 5.

As per the press release, Police Sub-Inspector Prabhakar Sonawane lodged the offence against Chitale in this case under Section 505 (b)(c) of the Indian Penal Code. "Offence was lodged against the doctor by police as preventive action. He was detained and issued notice as per law," said Assistant Police Inspector G B Sonawane of Pundaliknagar police station.

Police have also warned of action against anyone who posts communal content on social media.

 ***The Indian Express is now on Telegram. Click here to join our channel (@indianexpress) and stay updated with the latest headlines***

True copy
[Signature]

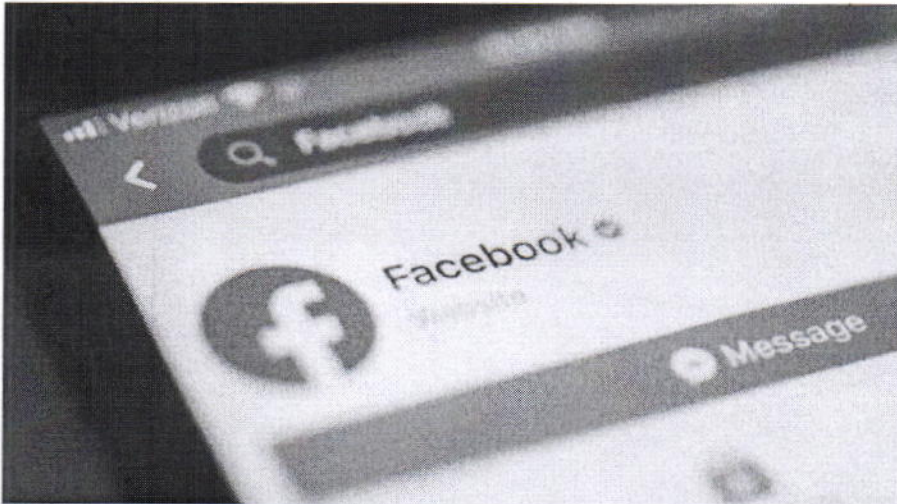
For all the latest Pune News, download Indian Express App.

Man booked for objectionable comment on Facebook

The man had allegedly made objectionable remarks on a news report posted on Facebook on the COVID-19 cases linked to Tablighi Jamaat held at Nizamuddin in Delhi.



By: Express News Service | Pune | April 3, 2020 10:08:45 pm



The man has been booked under Section 195 of the Indian Penal Code. (Bloomberg/Representational)

An offence has been lodged against a Pune resident for allegedly posting objectionable content against another community while commenting on a news report posted on Facebook about the coronavirus (COVID-19) cases linked to the Tablighi Jamaat meet held at Nizamuddin in Delhi.

Police have identified the accused as Sanjay Shendge, a resident of Kasarwadi. Police Naik Vinayak Warpe has lodged the first information report in this case at the Bhosari police station.

Police said one Jaywant Jadhav had posted the news report on Facebook, and on April 2, Shendge commented on the post, and allegedly made objectionable remarks.

Police have booked Shendge in this case under section 295 of the Indian Penal Code. "Offence has been lodged by a policeman in this case. We have not yet arrested the accused," said Assistant Police Inspector Nilesh Waghmare.

True copy
[Signature]

ENGLISH தமிழ் বাংলা மലയാളം हिंदी मराठी

Follow Us:

**The Indian EXPRESS**

Monday, November 09, 2020

[Home](#) [India](#) [Cities](#) [Bihar Elections](#) [Opinion](#) [IPC 2020](#) [Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Video](#)

SUBSCRIBE

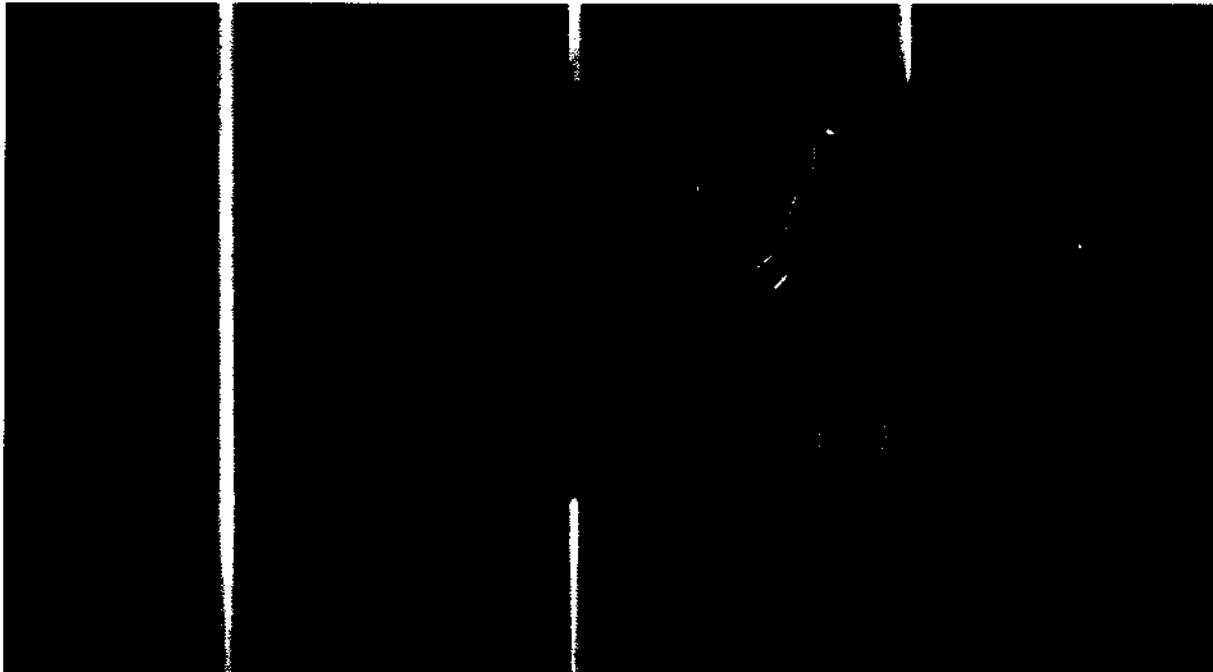
■ square

[Home](#) / [India](#) / [Gujarat arrests seven for sharing hate messages](#)

Gujarat arrests seven for sharing hate messages

Three more persons have been booked, but haven't been arrested so far. Police said the accused were residents of Navsari, Jamnagar, Amreli, Anand and Kutch districts.

Written by **Vaibhav Jha** | Ahmedabad | April 4, 2020 5:45:17 am



They have been booked under Section 505 of the IPC (statements conducing to public mischief).
(Representational Image)

Seven persons have been arrested across Gujarat for circulating a message on social media that cited the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi — which has emerged as a COVID-19 hotspot — to call for social and economic boycott of the minority community.

They have been booked under Section 505 of the IPC (statements conducing to public mischief).

Three more persons have been booked, but haven't been arrested so far. Police said the accused were residents of Navsari, Jamnagar, Amreli, Anand and Kutch districts.

In Amreli, Riken Singhav, a 27-year-old employee of a private firm, was arrested. "The accused has been booked under IPC Section 505 for public mischief, as well as under the Disaster Management Act," said Nirlipt Rai, SP, Amreli.

In Navsari, the accused have been identified as Umakant Rathod (50) and Ratilal Patel (70). Police said both had shared the message on different WhatsApp groups.

S G Rana, Deputy SP, Navsari, said: "Umakant works as a diamond polisher, Ratilal is not employed." Both were released on bail on Friday.

.READ | 'Wrong to blame religious minorities over origin of COVID-19': US to govts

The others who have been arrested are: Paras Vala (39), a driver, and Jayanti Giri (51), a businessman, in Jamnagar; Nirav Barwadi (30), a private firm employee in Anand, and Hareshsinh (42) in Kutch.

On Thursday, the Ahmedabad Police Special Branch, in a letter to police stations in the city, had warned about a hate message being circulated on WhatsApp regarding the Tablighi Jamaat congregation, and asked police to take all steps to prevent any untoward incident.

Read | Gathering of migrant workers, Tablighi Jamaat meet setback to control COVID-19: President Kovind

Saying that an inquiry had been launched, Ahmedabad City Police Commissioner Ashish Bhatia said "action will be taken against the persons who circulated the

message.”

Gujarat DGP Shivanand Jha said action was being taken against those spreading rumours on WhatsApp and trying to disrupt social harmony.

True copy
[Signature]

Follow Us:

**The Indian EXPRESS**

Monday, November 09, 2020

[Home](#) / [India](#) / [Cities](#) / [Bihar Elections](#) / [Opinion](#) / [IPL 2020](#) / [Entertainment](#) / [Lifestyle](#) / [Tech](#) / [Video](#)

SUBSCRIBE

square

Home / India / Jamshedpur: 5 held for spreading online rumour on Tabligh event

Jamshedpur: 5 held for spreading online rumour on Tabligh event

The messages were attempts to spread rumours by citing the Tablighi Jamat congregation in Nizamuddin, Delhi, in mid-March, the police said.

Written by [Abhishek Angad](#) | Ranchi | April 5, 2020 1:43:11 am



ANIL SHARMA

The messages were attempts to spread rumours by citing the Tablighi Jamat congregation in Nizamuddin, Delhi, in mid-March, the police said. (File)

Five people have been arrested in Jamshedpur over the last two days for allegedly posting social media messages that are offensive, inflammatory messages and flame religious hatred, the police said on Saturday.

The messages were attempts to spread rumours by citing the Tablighi Jamat congregation in Nizamuddin, Delhi, in mid-March, the police said.

Those arrested have been identified as Rakesh Sahu, Baldev Singh, Ramnarayan Singh, Mumtaz Khan and Khalid Majid. They were booked under IT Act and under IPC Sections 188, 295(A) and 120(B).

Jamshedpur SSP Anoop Birtharay said: "After reports that many people who attended the Nizamuddin congregation have tested positive for coronavirus, some people are posting inflammatory messages and spreading rumour on social media. We have arrested five people. We are tracking social media posts very closely and will put all such persons into jail."

Jharkhand Chief Secretary Sukhdev Singh said they are yet to ascertain the number of people from the state who attended the Nizamuddin congregation.

On March 30, the state police's Special Branch had sent out a list of 40 people who had ostensibly taken part in the Nizamuddin congregation and had returned to Jharkhand. But after many district officials said many people in the list had not moved out on the given dates, senior officers later conceded that the list was not completely accurate.

In some districts, deputy commissioners (DCs) have used that list to identify people who had visited Nizamuddin.

East Singh-bhum DC Ravi Shankar Shukla said: "From the list we contacted people, who claimed they have not visited. But we got details from him (one person in the Special Branch list) about others who had gone. We did contact-tracing and have put 58 people in quarantine."

📞 The Indian Express is now on Telegram. Click here to join our channel (@indianexpress) and stay updated with the latest headlines

For all the latest India News, download Indian Express App.

True Copy
[Signature]

Follow Us:

**The Indian EXPRESS**

Monday, November 09, 2020

[Home](#) [India](#) [Cities](#) [Elections](#) [Opinion](#) [IPL 2020](#) [Entertainment](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Tech](#) [Video](#)

SUBSCRIBE

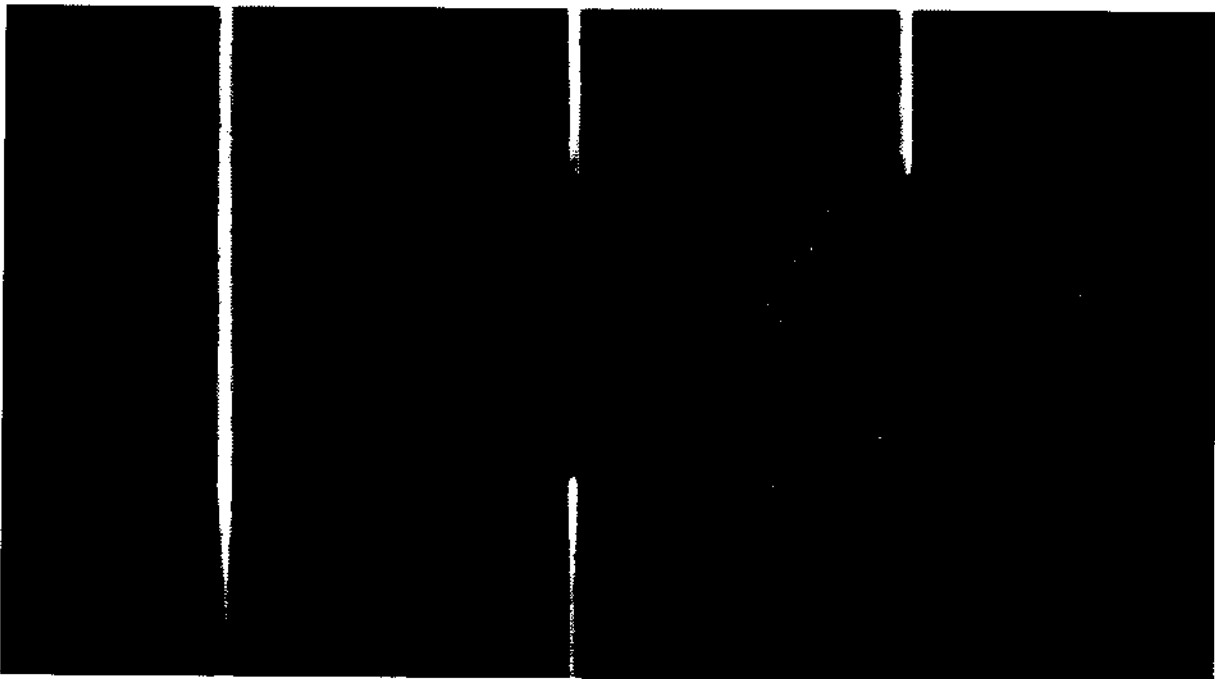
square

[Home](#) / [Cities](#) / [Ahmedabad](#) / Three arrested for posting 'obscene' content over Nizamuddin event

Three arrested for posting 'obscene' content over Nizamuddin event

The three men had posted inflammatory comments on Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter regarding the Markaz gathering at Nizamuddin in New Delhi.

By: Express News Service | Ahmedabad | April 6, 2020 10:31:38 pm



One of the accused had posted inflammatory content on WhatsApp groups asking for economic boycott of a community during the pandemic. (Representational Image)

Three persons were arrested on Monday for allegedly posting “obscene” content on social media in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic and the Markaz gathering at Nizamuddin in New Delhi.

According to police, in Ahmedabad, the Cyber Crime Cell arrested a 40-year-old cloth merchant from Kalupur for posting obscene comments on Facebook.

The accused, Umar Khalid Pathan, was held under Section 294 B (singing, reciting or uttering obscenity) of the Indian Penal Code and under the Information Technology Act.

“On April 1, the accused had posted a video on his Facebook profile ‘Umarkhan Pathan’ of a woman and her child who were walking on the road, during the country-wide lockdown. In a reference to media, the accused had posted an obscene slur as the caption of the video and asked the media to report such news instead of covering only the Nizamuddin incident. The Cyber Crime cell took cognizance of the video and arrested the accused on Monday,” said a senior police officer of the Cyber Crime Cell.

In Amreli, police arrested a 40-year-old man for sharing a video message on WhatsApp related to the Nizamuddin event that had allegedly inflammatory content. The accused has been identified as Hasan Jakhra, a resident of BD Kamdar society in Savarkundla. He was booked under IPC sections 153, 295 and 505 for promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, defiling place of worship with intent to insult and mischief along with the relevant sections of the IT act.

In Gandhinagar, a 29-year-old man from Kalol area was arrested for allegedly posting a message on WhatsApp groups, asking for the boycott of a particular community in the wake of the Nizaumddin event.

The accused, Priyank Patel (29), a resident of Inderlok society was held under IPC Section 505.

“The accused had posted inflammatory content on WhatsApp groups asking for economic boycott of a community during the pandemic,” said a police officer of the Gandhinagar Crime Branch.

Meanwhile, the district crime branch of Ahmedabad on Sunday night has booked one person for allegedly posting a comment on Twitter which “promotes enmity between religious groups”.

The accused was booked under IPC sections 153 A and 505.

The accused had posted the comments from a Twitter handle with the name ‘Irshad Siddique’.

“We have traced an Ahmedabad-based Twitter user by the name Irshad Siddique who had posted the comment. Efforts are on to trace the person,” said IS Rabari, Sub-Inspector, Crime Branch.

True Copy
[Signature]

Follow Us:

**The Indian EXPRESS**

Monday, November 09, 2020

[Home](#) / [India](#) / [Cities](#) / [Bihar Elections](#) / [Opinion](#) / [IPL 2020](#) / [Entertainment](#) / [Lifestyle](#) / [Tech](#) / [Video](#)

SUBSCRIBE

■ square

[Home](#) / [Cities](#) / [Shimla](#) / Not right that some tenants being asked to vacate due to communal divisions: Himachal Police

Not right that some tenants being asked to vacate due to communal divisions: Himachal Police

In a video address to the public, Himachal Pradesh DGP S R Mardi appealed to citizens to rise above their differences and put up a united front against the virus.

By: **Express News Service** | Shimla | April 7, 2020 8:28:40 pm



According to the DGP, a total of 421 people have been identified and quarantined in the State. (Express Photo by Pradeep Kumar)

The Himachal Pradesh Police on Tuesday said some tenants in the state had been asked to vacate their accommodations due to communal divisions.

“This is not right. During times like this, all of us must rise above our differences and put up a united front against the virus,” said DGP S R Mardi in a video address to the public, without elaborating on these instances.

The DGP also thanked members of Tablighi Jamaat for coming forward and reporting their travel history to the health surveillance authorities. “A total of 421 people, including those who went to Delhi and others who came in close contact with them, have been identified and quarantined,” he said.

Salary cut for CM

The state Cabinet, at a meeting held Tuesday, decided to make a 30 per cent deduction in the salaries/honorariums of the Chief Minister, Speaker and deputy Speaker of the Assembly, ministers, MLAs, chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of all boards and corporations, and all other “political appointees” for a period of one year. The Cabinet also suspended the Vidhayak Kshetra Vikas Nidhi Yojana for two years.

“These funds will be used to strengthen the government’s efforts in managing the challenges and adverse impact of COVID-19 in the state,” a statement by the

Government said.

113

The Cabinet also paid its tributes to para trooper Bal Krishan from Puid village in Kullu, and Subedar Sanjeev Kumar from Dehra village in Bilaspur, who died during an infiltration operation in Keran sector of North Kashmir on Sunday, the statement said.

41 lakh people covered in case-finding campaign


Additional Chief Secretary (Health) R D Dhiman said that teams of ASHA workers, in a door-to-door Active Case Finding Campaign launched a few days ago, have so far recorded the health and travel details of 41 lakh people in the state.

True copy
[Signature]

'Not fair to single out Tablighi Jamaat for Covid-19 spread': Jagan Reddy

The chief minister, in a televised appeal to the people on Saturday evening, said it was not correct to pin the blame on a particular religious congregation for the spread of Covid-19 in the country, as same could happen even in any such meeting in any other religious congregation.

INDIA Updated: Apr 04, 2020, 01:37 IST

 Srinivasa Rao Apparasu
Hindustan Times, Hyderabad



Jagan Reddy called upon the people to put up a united fight against Covid-19 irrespective of caste, creed or religion and asked them to join the nation in lighting a lamp at 9 PM to drive darkness away. (PTI photo)

At a time when the Tablighi Jamaat is being suspected to be the main reason for the sudden hike in the number of Covid-19 positive cases in the country, Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed a different view.

The chief minister, in a televised appeal to the people on Saturday evening, said it was not correct to pin the blame on a particular religious congregation for the spread of Covid-19 in the country, as same could happen even in any such meeting in any other religious congregation.

"Some people from our State went to a religious congregation at Delhi where members from foreign countries had also come. Some of them were said to be infected and the coronavirus has spread from there. It was an unfortunate development that happened there. That does not mean the spread of the disease should be attributed to the congregation," he said.

"Religious congregations are being held elsewhere by Ravi Shankar, Jaggi Vasu Dev, Mata

115

Amritanandamayi, Paul Dinakaran or John Wesley. There is no reason to discriminate against them (Tablighis) and attribute motives to them, as the spread was not intentional," he said.

"We should not discriminate against those people as it happened that way and was not premeditated. It is not fair to blame the spread on one particular community and single it out or see members of that community as culprits or that they have deliberately done it. No one should try to tag this spread to one community or caste," he said.

The chief minister said the people should show compassion towards those who tested positive. "We should not show any discrimination at this hour of world crisis," he added.

Jagan called upon the people to put up a united fight against Covid-19 irrespective of caste, creed or religion and asked them to join the nation in lighting a lamp at 9 PM to drive darkness away.

True Copy
[Signature]

Nod to Tablighi Jamaat gathering should have been denied, says Sharad Pawar

Sharad Pawar also stressed that the country needs to stand united and no attempt should be made that could lead to suspicion, animosity and social divide

INDIA Updated: Apr 06, 2020, 20:09 IST



Faisal Malik
Hindustan Times, Mumbai



People who took part in a Tablighi Jamaat function earlier this month walk to board buses that will take them to a quarantine facility amid concerns of infection at Nizamuddin West in New Delhi on, March 31, 2020. (Ajay Aggarwal/HT Photo)

Authorities in Delhi should not have given permission to the Tablighi Jamaat for holding an international congregation at Nizamuddin in the national capital between March 13 and 15 amid the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar said on Monday.

Pawar said Maharashtra, where the NCP is in the ruling alliance alongside the Shiv Sena and the Congress, earlier denied Jamaat permission for an event. The country wouldn't have experienced a spike in Covid-19 positive cases if the permission to hold the international congregation was denied to Jamaat, Pawar said, while interacting with people during a live Facebook chat.

"Tablighi Jamaat shouldn't have organised the international congregation in the first place. There was no reason to give permission to the organisation to hold the event amid the Covid-19 outbreak. In Maharashtra, too, a similar request was made, but both chief minister Uddhav Thackeray and home minister Deshmukh decided to deny the permission. If similar concern was shown by the authorities in Delhi, then we wouldn't have to see what is going on today," he said.

"Is there an attempt to create a perception about a particular community and foment a social divide? They wouldn't have got that opportunity," he added without pinning the blame on any individual or party.

Pawar cited another example of social distancing from Maharashtra, where a bull and horse race competition was organised at a village in Solapur district and a crowd in thousands were gathered. The district police authorities started booking people, who made a beeline for the event, he said. "If similar alertness was shown by the authorities in Delhi then we'd certainly have averted the unfortunate situation," he added.

He also stressed that the country needs to stand united and no attempt should be made that could lead to suspicion, animosity and social divide. "Whatever I'm watching on television and especially the messages being circulated on WhatsApp is of grave concern. Later, it was found that four of the five messages were fake. It appears these messages are being sent to create confusion and misunderstanding among people," he warned.

True copy
[Signature]

Follow Us:



The Indian EXPRESS

Monday, November 09, 2020

[Home](#) / [India](#) / [Cities](#) / [Sahar Elections](#) / [Opinion](#) / [IPL 2020](#) / [Entertainment](#) / [Lifestyle](#) / [Tech](#) / [Video](#)

SUBSCRIBE

square

Home / India / Don't give coronavirus communal colour, avoid sensationalisation: Kerala, Bengal

Don't give coronavirus communal colour, avoid sensationalisation: Kerala, Bengal

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, however, criticised the organisation, saying it had “damaged the country” and asking people to stay away from it.

By: Express News Service | Kolkata, Panaji, Thiruvananthapuram | Updated: April 2, 2020 1:05:48 pm



ANIL SHARMA

Parts of Nizamuddin West were cordoned off after six new cases were traced to the area. (Express Photo by Anil Sharma))

With many cases of coronavirus across the country linked to a gathering of the Muslim religious organisation Tablighi Jamaat, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday cautioned against giving the disease a communal colour.

At a press conference, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said there was no need to “sensationalise” the Tablighi Jamaat issue.

Coronavirus LIVE UPDATES

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, however, criticised the organisation, saying it had “damaged the country” and asking people to stay away from it.

Coronavirus on April 1: India sees biggest jump in cases



Regretting the fact that social media was being used for a “communal harvest” over COVID-19, Pinarayi said, “Coronavirus does not infect anyone looking at religion. What is important is that we stay together and remain vigilant. We should remember the exemplary action of all sections of society who have abandoned public gatherings at the behest of the government.”

Also Read | Chief Ministers will take up with PM today: Shortage of funds to next steps

While 60 people in Kerala have been identified as having attended the gathering held in Delhi, around 70 in West Bengal have been traced back to it. Pinarayi said

all those in the state who visited the meeting had been traced, and were under observation. "All of them have been quarantined. There is no need for any concern," he said.

The total number of confirmed cases of the infection in the national capital rose to 152 on Wednesday. (Express photo by Praveen Khanna)

Mamata said, "Fifty-four persons have been identified, including 40 foreigners. We came to know some persons in Dinajpur, Magrahat and other places are still unidentified. We are hopeful that within one day we will identify 30 more persons and will send them to quarantine."

Also Read | 10 Tablighi reached Telangana on March 13, met hundreds | TN traces 110 new cases to Tabligh congregation, other states zero in, too

(2)


Nine people in Goa were Wednesday linked to the Delhi gathering, with their questioning on to determine if they knew of others who attended it. The nine, who came to Goa on March 11, are in quarantine.

Even as the Goa government appealed to people to voluntarily come forward if they had attended or come in contact with anyone who had been at the congregation, Sawant asked for “severe punishment” for those who had been part of it.

Also Read | Govt considers shift in policy, milder cases may not require hospitalisation

“The Tablighi Jamaat has damaged the country. They have put the country in trouble by the manner in which they allowed (COVID-19) to spread,” the CM said at a press meeting. “We have to be careful about those from the Tablighi. They should be punished according to me.”

Here’s a quick Coronavirus guide from Express Explained to keep you updated: What can cause a COVID-19 patient to relapse after recovery? | COVID-19 lockdown has cleaned up the air, but this may not be good news. Here’s why | Can alternative medicine work against the coronavirus? | A five-minute test for COVID-19 has been readied, India may get it too | How India is building up defence during lockdown | Why only a fraction of those with coronavirus suffer acutely | How do healthcare workers protect themselves from getting infected? | What does it take to set up isolation wards?

 ***The Indian Express is now on Telegram. Click here to join our channel (@indianexpress) and stay updated with the latest headlines***

For all the latest India News, download Indian Express App.

© The Indian Express (P) Ltd

TAGS: Coronavirus Mamata Banerjee Pinarayi Vijayan Tablighi Jamaat

49 Comment(s) *

* The moderation of comments is automated and not cleared manually by indianexpress.com.

True Copy
[Signature]



Coronavirus and Nizamuddin: TV news returns to bigotry with a bang

Primetime debates talked up 'corona bombs' and 'Muslim enemies of Modi', completely ignoring the role of the government apparatus.

By Ayush Tiwari 01 Apr. 2020



For two weeks, a strange calm settled on Indian TV news channels. As the novel coronavirus pandemic made inroads into Indian states, primetime slots saw doctors, health experts and policymakers engage with viewers and inform them. The reluctance to question the Narendra Modi government remained, but the high tide of hate-mongering, which had started after the nationwide citizenship law protests, subsided.

On Tuesday, hate returned with a nicotine rush.



A religious congregation organised by the Jamaat in Delhi between March 13 and 15 became the talk of the town. Eighteen of the 25 cases of coronavirus reported in Delhi on Monday came from South Delhi's Nizamuddin West, the headquarters of the Jamaat and the site of the congregation.

The event was attended by over 2,000 delegates, with reportedly hundreds of them from outside India. At least eight attendees have already died of coronavirus — six in Telangana, one in Maharashtra, and one in Kashmir. Others who returned to different parts of the country after the event have tested positive for Covid-19, including at least 50 in Tamil Nadu.

Several parts of Nizamuddin West have been quarantined; they have been barricaded and are being monitored by drones. Over 150 people in the area have been hospitalised. The Indian government is tracking at least 1,600 people in India and Southeast Asia who might have attended the congregation.

The Delhi Police has filed an FIR against members of the Jamaat under the Epidemic Disease Act of 1897 and various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including criminal conspiracy.

Perfidy on primetime

India TV broadcast a "complete inside story" on the Nizamuddin cluster case. One of the banners it ran during the show was "Corona aaya...Maulana laya", meaning maulana brings coronavirus. The show also talked about a "superspreader maulana" who transmitted the virus to Kashmir, Jammu, Delhi, Telangana, Saharanpur, Deoband, Meerut, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

They were referring to a 65-year-old businessman from Srinagar who tested positive for the virus and died on March 26. *India TV's* claims are doubtful since only four people are known to have been infected by the businessman – all in Kashmir's Bandipora. There are currently no reports of this patient infecting others in Uttar Pradesh or the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This information can be sourced to the same *Press Trust of India* report that first used the term “super spreader” for the businessman.



'Corona aaya...bimari laya' on India TV on Tuesday.

On *News18 India*, Amish Devgan invited filmmaker Ashoke Pandit to offer his prized opinion on the matter.

Pandit, whose ability to craft fictions extends to the domain of news, said “those responsible” for the spread were “anti-national” and “enemies of the nation”. When another panelist told Pandit that he was stretching it by claiming that Muslims were deliberately spreading the virus across the world, he asked: “What is wrong with that?” The channel switched off his mike.

125

In another segment, when a Muslim panelist told Devgan that he should not introduce a Hindu-Muslim angle to the issue, the anchor feigned rage and asked him to "shut up and sit down". This panelist was also muted.

Earlier in the day, the channel showed snippets of a man claiming that "some Muslim extremists" were flouting the lockdown because of their enmity with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The channel also inexplicably ran a segment on how the Tablighi Jamaat had helped convert Pakistani cricketer Mohammad Yousuf to Islam.



Ashoke Pandit calls Jamaat spokesperson an 'anti-national' on News18 India.

On his Zee News show, Sudhir Chaudhary accused the Jamaat of "lying and betraying the nation in the name of Islam". Chaudhary's segment was so replete with anti-Muslim dogwhistling that at one point, he tried to preempt it: "We know we'll be accused of being communal and bringing religion into the coronavirus discussion," he said, adding that he was aware that people of "a certain religion" were angry with his channel. "But these are the same people who have problems with Ramayana being broadcast during the pandemic," Chauhary exclaimed indignantly.

Chaudhary then speculated on why the Delhi police couldn't interfere with "those who make a mockery of law and order and the Constitution in the name of religion". His theory? "There are areas in every city where the police are scared to go. Nizamuddin is one such area. Those who live in Delhi know what it's like to cross Nizamuddin. It is just like Shaheen Bagh."



Sudhir Chaudhary's DNA on Zee News on Tuesday. The map shows 'Palestine' but in Africa.

News Nation also used the Shaheen Bagh ploy, but there were more disturbing things in their segment. Their primetime show started by flashing pictures of Muslims. The anchor asked: "Are there corona bombs in your neighbourhood?"

The man who told *News18 India* that the cluster case was a result of "enmity" with Modi found space on *News Nation* too. Here, he went even further, comparing the case with suicide bombing and terrorism. The anchor's running commentary asked if the Jamaat's "corona bombs" were "treasonous".

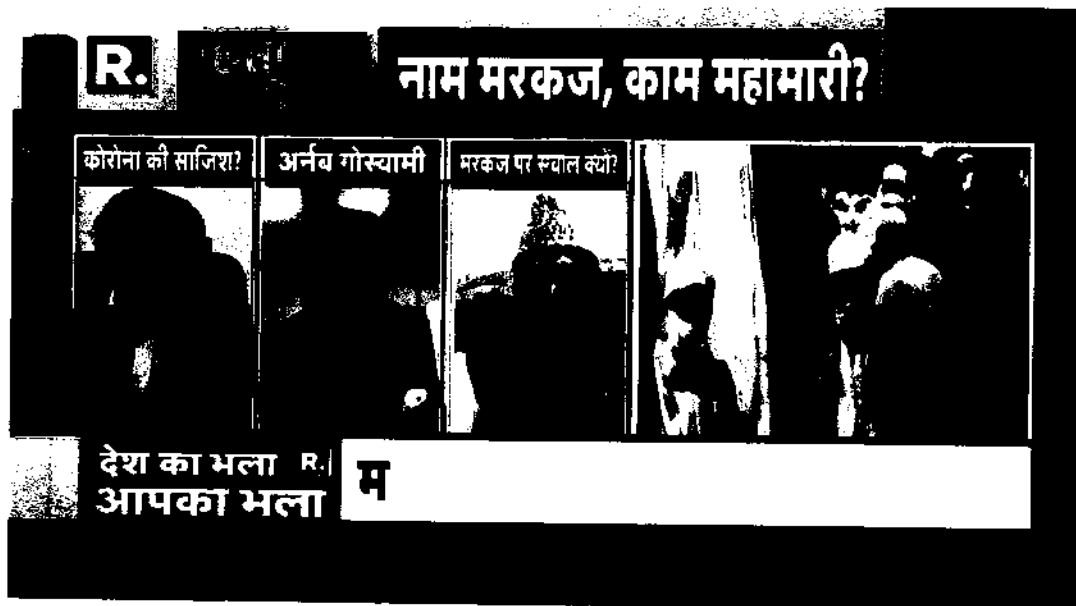


News Nation's primetime show on Tuesday.

On *Republic Bharat*, Arnab Goswami launched into a spiel accompanied by repeating visuals of Muslims in Nizamuddin. "Is this being done deliberately? Is this a conspiracy to turn Delhi to Italy?" he asked. The show claimed the whole nation was paying for one mistake, and that the entire process had begun at Shaheen Bagh.

A good portion of the remaining show, which stretched over 45 minutes, had Goswami shouting at Jamaat members, including once when he asked them if they were part of India or a separate nation altogether.

Navin Kohli, a BJP spokesperson who joined the show as a panelist, pursued *Republic's* line of questioning (or vice versa). "Is this a conspiracy? What is the source of funding?" Kohli asked.

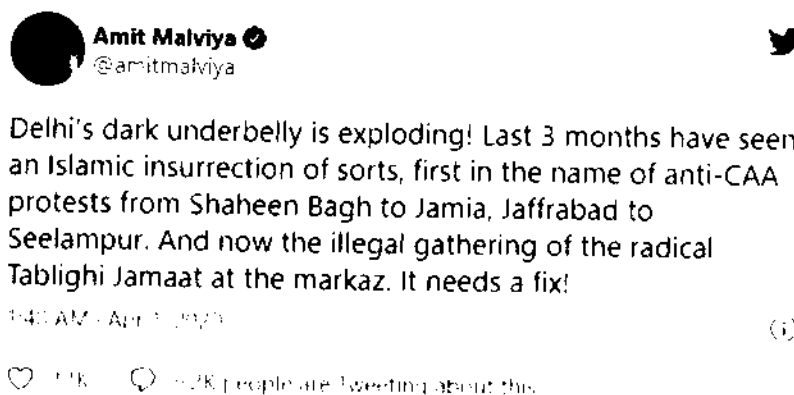


The primetime debate on Republic Bharat on Tuesday.

On Republic TV, Goswami said, "We have seen people die in traffic jams because of Shaheen Bagh and now Tablighi is spreading coronavirus deliberately in India".

No one died in traffic jams because of the Shaheen Bagh protest.

BJP IT cell chief Amit Malviya, probably sleepless after witnessing Goswami beat him at his own game, tweeted around 2 am. He grouped the cluster case with the anti-CAA protests and called it an "Islamic insurrection of sorts". "It needs a fix!" he declared.



Some questions

The central and state governments will not walk into our newsrooms and present the shortcomings of their pandemic strategy. The shortcomings will have to be revealed through questions and investigations by the media.


The negligence involved in the Tablighi Jamaat congregation could have been avoided had Delhi's government and police gone beyond cramming bureaucratic decrees down the throats of their citizens. The Aam Aadmi Party government issued two orders between March 13 and March 16. The first was a vaguely worded 50-word order prohibiting "sports gathering/conferences/seminars" with over 200 people.

The second order came on March 16, a day after the congregation ended. It banned all social, political, religious and academic gatherings with more than 50 people. It also ordered the closing of gyms, clubs and spas.

But if the Delhi government took the Jamaat event as seriously as it's projecting – Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called it a "criminal act" – then why did its governance reach only as far as the papers and not the streets of Delhi? Organisations such as Tablighi Jamaat did not flout the order because of some larger conspiracy, but because they could get away with organising a big function while the state machinery was missing in action. The local police station and the AAP government did not do anything to deter the thousands who crammed into a dense Delhi neighbourhood.

The Delhi police's directive to evacuate the mosque came only on March 24. Their public relations officer, Mandeep Singh Randhawa, has claimed that the guilty would be punished.

On Tuesday, the Delhi police released a video showing the station house officer of Nizamuddin West police station scolding members of the Jamaat for not evacuating the Markaz mosque. He dismisses them when they pose their problems, and even shouts at one of them for not having the phone number of the sub-divisional magistrate.





A screenshot from the video released by the Delhi police.

But problems like these could be nipped in the bud if the media were in the habit of questioning governments instead of ordinary countrymen.

The Jamaat has offered a half-hearted defence that it did not flout the law and tried to evacuate its delegates. They also claimed that the body cooperated with the police.

The Jamaat is right to point out that the lockdown disrupted its evacuation process. The migrant exodus across North India, the street celebrations in Indian cities after the janta curfew, and the bustling vegetable markets in metropolitan centres emanate from a common error: blaring decrees that are either ill-conceived or not enforced.

With inputs from Jigyasa Agarwal

True Copy
[Signature]



क्यों तबलीगी जमात ने देश और मुसलमानों को कोरोना से लड़ाई में हार की ओर धकेल दिया है

मीडिया ने कैसे तबलीगी जमात के बहाने अपनी मुस्लिम विरोधी मानसिकता को उजागर किया.

By मोहम्मद ताहिर शब्बीर 04 Apr, 2020



गुरुवार को स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय के ज्वाइंट सेक्रेट्री लव अग्रवाल ने अपनी रोजाना प्रेस ब्रीफिंग में ये हैरान करने वाली जानकारी दी कि- “बीते तीन दिनों में कोरोना से जुड़े मामले दोगुना हो गए हैं. 31 मार्च को कोरोना पॉज़िटिव मरीजों की संख्या 1251 थी जो 3 अप्रैल को 2547 हो गई है.” लव अग्रवाल इसके आगे जो बात कहते हैं वह बेहद चिंताजनक है. उन्होंने पत्रकारों को जानकारी दी कि- “कुल मामलों में से 647 मामले तबलीगी जमात के जलसे में शामिल लोग हैं. यानि कुल पीड़ितों में 25 फीसदी बीमार तबलीगी जमात के इफ़्तेमा में शामिल हुए लोग हैं.”



संक्रामक रोग से लड़ रहे हैं और एक आदमी की मूर्खता ने सारे प्रयासों पर पानी फेर दिया है।”

केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय की ओर से जारी आंकड़े के मुताबिक देश में अब तक 62 लोगों की कोरोना से मौत हो चुकी है. ये आंकड़ा लगातार बढ़ रहा है. पिछले 24 घंटे में 478 नए मामले सामने आए हैं. यह एक दिन में हुई सबसे बड़ी वृद्धि है.

दिल्ली के हजरत निजामुद्दीन मरकज़ को तब्लीगी जमात का दुनिया में सबसे बड़ा केंद्र माना जाता है. इसकी स्थापना हजरत मौलाना इलियास कांधलवी ने 1926-27 में सुन्नी मुसलमानों के संगठन “तब्लीगी जमात” के तौर पर की थी. तभी से इसे जमात का मुख्यालय माना जाता है. यहां साल भर देश-विदेश से लोग इस्लामी शिक्षा के प्रचार-प्रसार के उद्देश्य से आते-जाते रहते हैं. साथ ही साल में कई बार यहां इस्लामी आयोजन होते रहते हैं.

इसी तरह का तब्लीग-ए-जमात का एक आयोजन 13 से 15 मार्च तक निजामुद्दीन में हुआ था. जिसमें यूपी, बिहार, बंगाल, तमिलनाडु, केरल सहित देश के कोने-कोने से लोग आए थे. इसके अलावा मलेशिया, इंडोनेशिया, सऊदी अरब और किर्गिज़स्तान सहित अन्य देशों के 5,000 से अधिक प्रतिनिधियों ने भी इसमें हिस्सा लिया था.

इस कार्यक्रम में शामिल होकर वापस लौटे तेलंगाणा के 6 लोगों सहित 7 कोरोना वायरस संक्रमितों की मौत के बाद पिछले सोमवार को निजामुद्दीन मरकज़ में रुके लोगों को बाहर निकालने की कार्रवाई शुरू की गई थी. जिसे एक अप्रैल सुबह 4 बजे तक खाली करा दिया गया. यहां से निकले लोगों में बड़ी संख्या में कोरोना पॉजिटिव लोग मिले. इस दौरान तब्लीग नेतृत्व द्वारा बोले गए कुछ और झूठ भी सामने आए मसलन पुलिस को दी गई जानकारी में तब्लीग ने बताया था कि मरकज़ में एक हजार के करीब लोग हैं जो कि 23 मार्च से शुरू हुए देशव्यापी लॉकडाउन के कारण फंस गए हैं. लेकिन सोमवार को पुलिस ने जब मरकज़ से लोगों को निकालना शुरू किया तो इनकी संख्या 2361 तक पहुंच गई. इसमें से 617 को हॉस्पिटल में और बाक़ी को क्वारंटाइन किया गया है. दिल्ली के उपमुख्यमंत्री मनीष सिसोदिया ने ट्वीट कर यह जानकारी दी.





SUBSCRIBE

10:09 PM · Mar 31, 2020



♥ 20.1K ↗ See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

दिल्ली पुलिस ने मरकज़ मामले में निज़ामुद्दीन थाने के एसएचओ मुकेश वलियान की शिकायत पर कुल सात लोगों मौलाना मोहम्मद साद, मोहम्मद असरफ, मुफ़्ती शहजाद, मोहम्मद जीशान, मुर्सलीन सैफी, मोहम्मद सलमान और यूनुस पर एफआईआर भी दर्ज की है. इस मामले की जांच अब क्राइम ब्रांच करेगी. केंद्र द्वारा इसे कोरोना वायरस हॉटस्पॉट (जहां कोरोना संक्रमित लोग बड़ी संख्या में मौजूद हों) घोषित किया गया है.

गृह मंत्रालय ने तब्लीग के कार्यक्रम में शामिल 960 विदेशियों को ब्लैकलिस्ट किया है और उनका वीजा भी रद्द कर दिया है. माना जा रहा है कि इन्हीं विदेशियों में शामिल मलेशिया से आए कुछ कोरोना पॉज़िटिव लोगों ने यह स्थिति पैदा की है.

मरकज से निकाले गए लोगों को अलग-अलग क्वारंटाइन किया गया है. साथ ही सभी 14राज्यों को भी निर्देश दिया गया है जहां के लोग मरकज में शामिल हुए हैं, उनकी तलाश कर उन्हें भी क्वारंटाइन किया जाय.

इसका सबसे ज्यादा असर दक्षिणी राज्य तमिलनाडु में देखने को मिला. यहां कोरोना के 309 मामले सामने आए हैं जिनमें से 264 केस दिल्ली के तबलीगी जमात कार्यक्रम में शामिल हुए बताए जा रहे हैं. इसी तरह अन्य राज्यों में इस कार्यक्रम में शामिल हुए लोगों की तलाश जारी है, जिससे संक्रमण को काबू में किया जा सके.

इसी बीच मरकज़ का दावा है कि वे 24 मार्च से लगातार पुलिस और प्रशासन के संपर्क में थे और उन्होंने 17 वाहनों के लिए कर्फ्यू पास मांगा था. मरकज़ की ओर से 25 मार्च को निज़ामुद्दीन थाने के एसएचओ को लिखा एक पत्र सोशल मीडिया पर वायरल हो रहा है. जिसमें लिखा है कि 24 मार्च को एसएचओ निज़ामुद्दीन ने हमें नोटिस भेजकर धारा 144 के उल्लंघन का आरोप लगाया. हमने इसके जवाब में कहा कि मरकज को बन्द कर दिया गया है. 1500 लोगों को उनके घर भेज दिया गया है. अब 1000 बच गए हैं, जिनको भेजना मुश्किल है. हमने ये भी बताया कि हमारे यहां विदेशी नागरिक भी हैं. इसके बाद हमने एसडीएम को अर्जी देकर 17 गाड़ियों के लिए कर्फ्यू पास मांगा ताकि लोगों को घर भेजा जा सके. लेकिन हमें अभी तक पास जारी नहीं किया गया है. हमने किसी को भी बस अड्डा या



मरकज की ओर से पुलिस प्रशासन को लिखा पत्र

लेकिन इसी दौरान एक ऑडियो भी सामने आया है जिसमें मौलाना मोहम्मद सोज़ लोगों को मस्जिद में नामज़ पढ़ने के लिए प्रेरित कर रहे हैं. उसमें तमाम लोग लगातार खांसते सुने जा सकते हैं.

इस पूरे प्रकरण में पुलिस की भूमिका पर भी कई सवाल उठ रहे हैं. एक सवाल यह भी है कि जब 12 मार्च को ही दिल्ली सरकार ने एडवाइज़री जारी कर दी थी कि 50 से ज्यादा लोगों के किसी भी आयोजन की इजाजत नहीं है फिर भी 13 से 15 मार्च के बीच इतने बड़े पैमाने पर लोग इकट्ठा हुए, धारा 144 का उल्लंघन किया. मरकज से चंद कदम की दूरी पर ही पुलिस थाना है. देशव्यापी लॉकडाउन 23 मार्च को घोषित होने के बाद मरकज के भीतर इतनी बड़ी संख्या में लोगों को रहने दिया गया जिसे 31 तारीख यानि आठ दिन बाद निकालने की कार्रवाई शुरू हुई. इससे स्थिति और ज्यादा बिगड़ गई. पिछले 4 दिनों में देश में कोरोना पीड़ितों की संख्या दोगुनी हो गई है.

न्यूज़लॉन्ड्री ने दिल्ली पुलिस के प्रवक्ता मनदीप सिंह रंधावा से इस बारे में बात करनी चाही लेकिन वो उपलब्ध नहीं हुए.

मीडिया का शर्मनाक चेहरा

तब्लीग प्रकरण ने भारतीय मीडिया के एक हिस्से का बेशर्म चेहरा सामने रख दिया है. पिछले कुछ दिनों से इसे एक अलग ही रंग देने में जुटा हुआ है. इसमें बीमारी की चिंता से ज्यादा एक समुदाय विशेष के प्रति नफरत का भाव पैदा करना और इस ग्लोबल महामारी के लिए मुसलमानों को जिम्मेदार ठहराने की कोशिश की जा रही है. हमेशा की तरह ये तथाकथित राष्ट्रवादी पत्रकार इस महामारी में भी हिन्दू-मुस्लिम द्वंद्वने में कामयाब हो गए.

इस प्रकरण की शुरुआत तेलंगाना के मुख्यमंत्री कार्यालय (सीएमओ) द्वारा 30 मार्च को किए एक ट्वीट से हुई. इसमें उन्होंने लिखा, "13 से 15 मार्च तक नई दिल्ली के निजामुद्दीन इलाके के मरकज में आयोजित धार्मिक सम्मेलन से लौटे तेलंगाना के 6 लोगों की कोरोना वायरस के संपर्क में आने के बाद मौत हो गई है. इनमें से दो की मौत गांधी अस्पताल में, जबकि चार



SUBSCRIBE

@TelanganaCMO

Six people from Telangana who attended a religious congregation at Markaz in Nizamuddin area of New Delhi from 13-15 March succumbed after they contracted #Coronavirus. Two died in Gandhi Hospital while one each died in Apollo Hospital, Global Hospital, Nizamabad and Gadwal

जैसे ही ये बात सामने आई की संक्रमित लोगों ने दिल्ली के निजामुद्दीन मरकज में हिस्सा लिया था, सोशल मीडिया पर सक्रिय एक वर्ग विशेष ने पूरी बहस को कोरोना महामारी से हटाकर हिन्दू-मुस्लिम की ओर मोड़ दिया और इसे "कोरोना जिहाद" और "जमात जिहाद" जैसे नाम दिए गए. लोग बीमारी को भूल पूरे दिन सोशल मीडिया पर मुसलमानों के खिलाफ नफरत भरे बयान दिए जाने लगे. जो गलती तब्लीगी जमात ने की थी उसकी आड़ में पूरे इस्लाम और मुसलमानों को निशाना बनाया जाने लगा. 31 मार्च को लगभग पूरे दिन #कोरोनाजिहाद ट्विटर पर टॉप ट्रेंड करता रहा.

इस मामले ने बड़ा रूप तब ले लिया जब तथाकथित राष्ट्रवादी मीडिया का एक हिस्सा, जो अब तक टीवी पर लाइव अंताक्षरी खेल रहा था भी इसमें शामिल हो गया. मानो ये लोग मौके के इंतजार में बैठे थे, इसे इन्होंने खूब हाथों-हाथ लिया. और "कोरोना की जमात!", "निजामुद्दीन का विलेन कौन?", "तब्लीगी जमात का देश से विश्वासघात" जैसे शो टीवी पर प्रसारित किए गए. जिसमें कोरोना वायरस के बुनियादी मुद्दे को हवा हवाई कर साम्प्रदायिक रंग देने की कोशिश की गई.

Kavita Krishnan 
@kavita_krishnan



#BoycottNewsNation which uses hate speech like "Corona Bombs" to communalise the Covid-19 crisis.

#BoycottHateTV

Shirdi Temple devotees, Sikh gatherings, Vaishno Devi pilgrims, all gathered in large numbers. The culprit is Govt which failed to issue clear, timely advisory.



SUBSCRIBE

9:50 AM May 21 2020

दो दिन पहले तक कोरोना के डर से घर से ही टीवी पर लाइव "अंताक्षरी" खेल रहीं "आज तक" चैनल की एंकर श्वेता सिंह का बीमारी का डर भी इस प्रकरण से गायब हो गया. श्वेता ने निजामुद्दीन पहुंचकर बताया कि मरकज में फंसे लोगों को निकलकर जब उन्हें बस में बिठाया गया तो ये लोग बस में बैठे हुए भी 'थूक रहे थे.' हालांकि आज तक डॉटकॉम पर छपी एक खबर की ही मानें तो मरकज के लोगों ने पुलिस से लोगों को बाहर निकालने के लिए वाहन पास की मांग की थी. जो पूरी नहीं हो पाई थी.

स्वघोषित राष्ट्रवादी एंकर सुधीर चौधरी भी इस मौके की तलाश में थे. उन्होंने भी "तब्लीगी जमात का देश से विश्वासघात", "कोरोना से संक्रमित 'जमात' का 'एंटी वायरस'" जैसे शो कर डाले.

इसके अलावा अन्य न्यूज़ चैनलों और अखबारों ने भी इस मुद्दे को साम्प्रदायिक रंग देने में कोई कसर नहीं छोड़ी. पूरे घटनाक्रम को एकदम से घुमा कर दूसरी दिशा में मोड़ दिया गया. ये सिर्फ उस समुदाय को ढूंढने की कोशिश में लगे रहे, जिसे इस बीमारी का जिम्मेदार ठहरा सकें.

TAGS

Coronavirus

Tablighi Jamaat

True Copy
[Signature]

Pay to keep news free

Complaining about the media is easy and often justified. But hey, it's the model that's flawed.

SUBSCRIBE

