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BJP MLA says stop buying vegetables from Muslim sellers, defends remark

When contacted, Suresh Tiwari confirmed to have made the remark and clarified that he suggested it as a precautionary measure to check the spread of infection after people complained to him about the role of Tablighi Jamaatis in spreading the deadly virus.

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ht HT Correspondent
Hindustan Times, Gorakhpur



BJP MLA Suresh Tiwari.

f A Bharatiya Janata Party MLA from Uttar Pradesh’s Deoria district kicked off a political row when he suggested to people of his constituency not to buy vegetables from Muslim vendors to avoid contracting the [coronavirus infection](#).

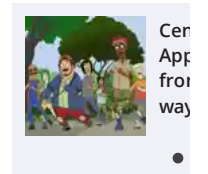
in In a video, now gone viral, Suresh Tiwari is seen appealing to people: “You all should keep one thing in mind, I am telling you openly: do not buy vegetables [from Mia \(Muslims\)](#).”

e When contacted, Tiwari confirmed to have made the remark and clarified that he suggested it as a precautionary measure to check the spread of infection after people complained to him about the role of [Tablighi Jamaatis](#) in spreading the deadly virus.

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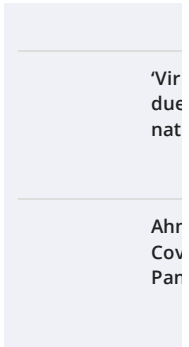
There have been several instances of the people from the minority community complaining of discrimination and harassment after a [global religious congregation](#) in New Delhi in mid-March, held by Tablighi Jamaat, an Islamic movement of preachers, turned into a hotspot of Covid-19 cases.

“On April 18, I was distributing masks among people in Deoria when I came across general complaints from people who expressed fear that Tablighi Jamaatis are spreading the infection in Deoria. Many of them were worried that Muslim vendors are infecting vegetable with saliva. As a responsible MLA, I asked them not to take law in their hand, but simply stop buying vegetables from them. Tell me, what wrong have I done by saying such things,” said the Barhaj MLA.

Tiwari’s remark drew sharp reaction from the opposition parties.

UP Congress president Ajay Kumar Lallu blamed the legislator’s party for spreading hatred even at the time of a pandemic .

“At a time when the country and state are facing the coronavirus crisis, BJP leaders are busy fanning hatred .It’s a shameful act which has exposed the real face of the BJP. The Tablighi Jamaatis who were under attack and blamed for spreading the coronavirus have set an example by donating their plasma to cure patients. I am confident that the countrymen will put up a united fight against Covid-19 by neglecting such comments,” said the Congress leader.



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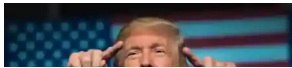
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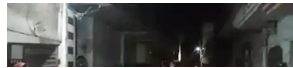
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