

Video from Bijnor viral with false allegation that elderly Muslim vendor sprinkled urine on fruits

Priyanka Jha 24th April 2020

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On April 21, two videos of an elderly fruitseller were massively circulated on social media. In the first video, the fruitseller is seen standing near his cart. When asked if he urinated in a bottle, he moves ahead saying, "Don't talk stupid". Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) media panellist **Rohit Chahal** posted both the videos and said, "This Mulla had urinated in the bottle and was sprinkling it over bananas."

ये मुल्ला जी बोतल में पेशाब भर के केलो पर छिड़क रहे थे ।।

pic.twitter.com/gpmUgFv26G

— ROHIT CHAHAL (@rohit_chahal) April 21, 2020

In the second video, the elderly man is seen standing in front of a house and profusely apologising. He is doing situps while a person behind the camera claims that the man urinated in a bottle, then sprinkled the urine on bananas. The fruitseller says, "I made a mistake, I am poor labourer, I have a heart problem." He then tries to leave the spot but the person who is probably filming the video shouts, "Don't go anywhere. Stay right there. If you go, you will get a bad [beating]. It's because of you, the problem will arise. Bijnor will be destroyed."

Facebook user Rupendra Singh, who claimed to be associated with the RSS, **posted** the videos and said, "In Bijnor, this 'Mulla' (Muslim man) urinated in a bottle, then sprinkled it over bananas. He has been arrested. Be careful." At the time of writing this article, this post was shared more than 17,000 times.

A video of the incident was also **tweeted** by Suresh Chavhanke, editor-in-chief of *Sudarshan News*, along with the message, "In UP's Bijnor, this Jihadi was caught [filling] bottles with urine and sprinkling it on fruits." In his tweet, Chavhanke talked about economic boycott [of the Muslim community] and proclaimed that his claim is a hundred per cent true.

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बिजनौर UP में बोलतों में पेशाब कर के फलों पर छिड़कते पकड़ा गया एक जेहादी.. पोल खुलने के बाद शुरू हो गया था विक्टिम कार्ड.
बहकावे में मत आइए.. न वामपंथी पोर्टलों के और न ही हिन्दू विरोधी फैक्ट चेकरो के..

जो भी हम दावा कर रहे, वो शत प्रतिशत सत्य है..#BindasBol #आर्थिक_बहिष्कार
pic.twitter.com/mEgo0LwSna

— Suresh Chavhanke “Sudarshan News” (@SureshChavhanke) April 21, 2020

[Also read: Sudarshan News and its history of dangerous, communally-divisive misinformation]

On April 22, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra [tweeted](#) the video with the same claim.

और ज़रा इन बाबा के भी कारनामे देखो ...ये बेचारे बाबा सिर्फ़ बोतल में पेशाब कर उसे केले के ऊपर छिड़क रहे थे ..
फिर भी पुलिस बड़े अदब से पेश आ रही है..
कोई ज़रा आरती की थली लाना ..बाबा की आरती करनी है क्योंकि कुछ अन्यथा बोलो तो फिर ISLAMOPHOBIA की complaint कर देंगे Gulf में!!
pic.twitter.com/SwzdfFjXm7

— Sambit Patra (@sambitswaraj) April 22, 2020

Fact-check

As stated above, the person who is recording the video can be heard saying, “Bijnor will get destroyed.” This confirmed that the video is from Bijnor. In one of the comments, one Rupendra Singh [informed](#) that the video is from Bukhara colony in Bijnor.

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**Ritesh Kumar** Kaha ka video hai bhai

Like · Reply · 2h

**रूपेन्द्र सिंह** Ritesh Kumar उम्र बिजनौर- बुखारा कालोनी

Like · Reply · 2h

**Ritesh Kumar** रूपेन्द्र सिंह 000000

Like · Reply · 2h

**Ritesh Kumar** Bhaiya aap mera WhatsApp par video send karoge please bhai

Like · Reply · 2h

On the basis of the above clue, we contacted Bijnor police. They were sent the link to the Facebook post on WhatsApp. We were informed that the videos have been forwarded to their Surveillance Team. After several hours, we received a message from Bijnor police stating the old man seen in the video is Irfan Ahmed who sells seasonal fruits roaming around the city. On April 20, he was selling fruits in Bukhara colony when he went to urinate in a lane. Subsequently, he washed his hands with water from a bottle kept on his cart and later sprinkled the water over the fruits and drank water from the same bottle. A passer-by started creating ruckus claiming that he sprinkled urine over the fruits. However, in the video, the man cannot be seen doing the same. the police informed that prima facie the video appears to have been made for spreading rumours. Irfan Ahmed was initially arrested but he has now been given bail and sent to a quarantine ward. Police are looking for the people who uploaded the video on social media.

You can see the screenshot of Alt News's WhatsApp conversation with the police below.

Alt News also found a copy of the FIR filed in the matter. It was tweeted by a Twitter handle *Najibabad Express*. In the FIR as well, there is no mention of the man sprinkling urine over fruits. The FIR matches with the police's statement. It says, "This person had washed his hands with the water from this bottle after urinating and he later sprinkled the dirty water on the fruits placed over his cart."

We spoke to one of the people who had filed the FIR and confirmed that it was not about sprinkling urine over fruits.

On Twitter, Bijnor police gave a response to an individual which **said** that “a case has been registered in the matter and the accused has been arrested.”

To clear the doubts over the arrest, we again reached out to Bijnor police. The police clarified, “To get information about the incident, the old man was taken into custody. He has been sent to quarantine for the time being. Now the police are searching for the people who had first shared the video with the false context.”

प्रकरण की जाँच की जा रही है। संबंधित व्यक्ति को कोरेनटाईन कराया गया है और उसके घर पर राशन भेजने के लिए संबंधित विभाग को सूचित कर दिया गया है।

— Bijnor Police (@bijnorpolice) April 22, 2020

Furthermore, *Najibabad Express* sent us a video of the fruit seller where he can be heard answering the questions raised by another person. We were informed that the video was shot on April 22, 2020. When the fruit seller is asked about the incident, he responds, "I did Istanja (cleaning oneself with water after using the toilet) after urinating. I started moving after washing my hands. Later, 10-12 men surrounded me." *Najibabad Express* [tweeted](#) the video explaining the incident.

*कल से एक विडियो वायरल हो रहीं हैं और अब खुद बुजुर्ग ने भी बताया है कि कल उसके साथ
क्या हुआ था,,*

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*बिजनौर पुलिस के अनुसार बुजुर्ग के पास एक पानी की बोतल थी जिसमें पानी था पेशाब करने  
के बाद वह उससे इस्तंजा करता था कल भी उसने वहीं किया धोने के बाद पानी की बोतल  
ढेले पर रख दी थी, [pic.twitter.com/hlJyd917Dj](https://pic.twitter.com/hlJyd917Dj)*

— *Najibabad Express (@NajibabadExpre1) April 22, 2020*

The issue raises some points worth noting. What was the need for the excessive surveillance on a common fruit seller roaming in a locality? Furthermore, the person who filed the FIR neither shot the videos nor was he a part of the group that filmed the man. He informed Alt News that he was just present at the spot. This raises several doubts over the incident itself.

Keeping all these aspects and the police's response in perspective, it is understood that the claims made on social media are baseless. They were promoted with a specific intent and the people amplifying the video seem to be furthering an anti-Muslim agenda. Most of the prominent social media users who shared the video are often seen promoting unreasonable claims around communal issues. Amplifying this video was a step in the same direction. The police found that the elderly man had not sprinkled his urine on bananas. Even the FIR registered in the matter mentions no such claim. After the police informed that they are looking for the people who first shared the video with an anti-Muslim angle, several users are editing their posts. You can see one such example posted below. [Rupendra Singh](#), whose post we found on Facebook, had initially claimed that a "mulla" was sprinkling urine on bananas. He later added "as it is being claimed" to the message to rid himself of the responsibility of peddling misinformation. "The man accepted his mistake," was also added to the message even though all that viewers can see is the old man apologising when he is hounded by locals. He does not "accept" that he sprinkled urine on the bananas.

## Video viral with false claim

Twitter user [Ashutosh](#), who is followed by PM Modi, also posted the video with the false claim. Among other prominent users who furthered the disinformation was Pakistani-Canadian author [Tarek Fatah](#).

[\[Also read: Tarek Fatah – A case study of unrelenting divisive misinformation\]](#)

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