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# Tablighi Jamaat is a Talibani crime, not negligence: Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

Minister for minority affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said World Health Organisation guidelines were already in place in March when the Jamaat was holding its conclave.

By Vasudha Venugopal, ET Bureau | Last Updated: Apr 02, 2020, 07.43 AM IST



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Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The Tablighi Jamaat committed a "Talibani crime" by allowing gatherings at its Nizamuddin centre or Markaz in the capital and encouraging members to travel across the country when India was trying to contain the spread of Covid-19, minister for minority affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi told ET on Thursday.

Naqvi said World Health Organisation guidelines were already in place in March when the Jamaat was holding its conclave.

"It is nothing but a criminal act by the group-- they have put every one's lives at risk," he

said. When Saudi Arabia has stopped pilgrims from visiting the Ka'aba, Islam's holiest site, and mosques had closed their doors "asking the faithful to pray at home, the group should have called off all its community congregations and dispersed all its members."

The minister said he had asked Muslim religious leaders to appeal to the people to strictly adhere to lockdown conditions to control the virus. "This is a wrong message they sent. This was the time to stand united in the fight against a medical emergency, not put faith above rules," the minister said. "This is not negligence. Because of them, an already stressed medical system is being over burdened."

## Over 2000 foreigners came for Tablighi work since Jan 1

The Tablighi Jamaat said that all its international members had arrived at the Markaz before the lockdown was announced and that on March 24 it had asked police officials to help foreign and Indian nationals with curfew passes and transport to reach their respective destinations.

According to the home ministry, about 2,100 foreigners have visited India for Tablighi activities since January 1 and hundreds of members had been staying at the organisation's Nizamuddin building for a gathering in March.

The group, with members in 150 countries, is headquartered in the Nizamuddin Banglawaali Masjid that also functions as a transit centre for its members who are known to undertake long journeys through various cities, urging Muslims to lead a life based on

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undertake long journeys through various cities, urging Muslims to lead a life based on religious tenets. Members of the group are said to have carried the disease to several states between March 1 and March 24, leading to a spike in Covid-19 cases across the country.

An estimated 300 cases have been traced to the meeting--150 in Tamil Nadu, 63 in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and around 21 in New Delhi, among them. Responding to the Jamaat's version of events, Naqvi said, the group shouldn't "make excuses, but own up to the wrongdoing... Anyway, an enquiry will be conducted into how the rules have been flouted."

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