OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, DELHI.

No. 292/PRO/PHQ dated Delhi, the 11.04.2020.

To

The Editor,
Navbharat Times,
New Delhi.

Subject :- Rejoinder to the news-item captioned "Laaparwahi Police Kee, Corona Ka Kalank Markaz Ke Maathe Parr".

Sir,

This is with reference to the above-mentioned news item, which appeared in your esteemed newspaper, today. It is found to be factually incorrect and misleading.

The facts of the matter are that – In exercise of the powers conferred under The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, the Government of NCT of Delhi, Health & Family Welfare Department, issued detailed regulations for COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease - 2019) dated 12.03.2020. Any person / institution / organization found violating any provision of the regulations was to be deemed fit to have committed an offence punishable under section 188 of Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860). The regulations were to come into force immediately and to remain valid for a period of one year from the date of publication of the notification. Further on 16.03.2020, the Government of NCT of Delhi, Health & Family Welfare Department issued directions that all events, socio / cultural / political / religious / academic / sports / seminar and conferences (except marriages), were to be restricted to a maximum of 50 persons in the NCT of Delhi till 31st March, 2020.

On 21.03.2020, the authorities of Markaz at Tablighi Jamaat Headquarters were contacted by Delhi Police, Mufti Shahzad was apprised of the situation arising out of the spread of COVID-19 and was asked to take immediate action for preventing the spread of this disease. He was directed to send the foreign devotees back to their respective countries and other Indian persons to their respective native places. However, no one paid any heed to the lawful directions of Delhi Police. Moreover, an audio recording purportedly by Maulana Mohd. Saad, head of the Tablighi Jamaat, was found in circulation on WhatsApp on 21.03.2020, in which the speaker was heard asking his followers to defy the lockdown and social distancing and to attend the religious gathering of the Markaz.

Then in view of the pandemic spread of the highly infectious Corona Virus (Covid-19) infection, the Govt. of India had ordered a complete lock-down for the entire country on 24.03.2020, for a period of 21 days, w.e.f. 25.03.2020.

ACP/Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi promulgated Prohibitory Orders under 144 Cr.P.C. on 24.03.2020, thereby restricting social / political / religious gathering in the area and to take safety measures by following social distancing for prevention/treatment i.e. Home Quarantine/Isolation etc.

The menace and hazard of COVID-19 viral infection during large gatherings was verbally conveyed to Maulana Mohd. Saad and the management of Markaz on several occasions, including during meetings held in the police station in this regard. The meeting in the police station was held by the SHO on 24.03.2020 and was attended by members of Tablighi Jamat Markaz Management. However, Maulana Mohd. Saad and the Markaz Management did not inform any Health Department or other Government Agency about the huge gathering inside the Markaz. They deliberately, willfully, negligently and malignantly disobeyed the lawful directions promulgated in this regard.

Written notices were also issued to Maulana Mohd. Saad and the Markaz Management. However, they refused to pay any heed. The premise was inspected by SDM/Defence Colony on various dates, between 26.03.2020 and 30.03.2020.

Delhi Police being a professional force handled the Markaz situation as per law.

In the light of above, it is requested that the above stated facts may kindly be published in your esteemed newspaper with the same prominence, in order to put the matter in proper perspective for your esteemed readers.

Yours faithfully,

(Mandeep S. Randhawa)IPS
Public Relations Officer,
Delhi Police, Delhi.