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# 'Puncturewallah' comment taken out of context, says Surya

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BANGALORE South MP Tejasvi Surya, who was slammed for his 'puncturewallah' comment at a pro-CAA rally recently defended himself, saying his words were taken out of context.

Speaking to *TNIE*, the seven-month-old MP said, "I have done so much good work which no one has spoken about. I have also made hundreds of other statements, but everyone is focusing only on this one statement. This shows the nature of public discourse." Surya has been at the forefront in defending his government, be it about the CAA or NRC, and he has also organised many programmes and created videos to address the concerns regarding these laws.

While the 'puncturewallah' statement has been accepted with open arms by some extreme-right groups, many were left stunned by its insensitivity. One expert questioned, "When PM Modi elevated the status of a chaiwallah, does not his statement on those who repair flat tires not amount to disrespecting them?"

Asked if the NRC and CAA have dented the BJP's image, Surya said, "It has not dented the party's image. In fact, it has

exposed the bankruptcy of the Opposition, who are busy indulging in mischief of national proportions."


When asked about the results of the Maharashtra and Jharkhand elections, he said, "In Maharashtra, we are still the single largest party. We have retained seven per cent of our seats, former CM Fadnavis is still popular. In Jharkhand, some degree of anti-incumbency is there. We have retained some strong-

holds. The national leadership will deliberate on this, I am not in a position to comment."

He added, "CAA, NRC, NPR were originally proposed by the Congress. The BJP merely wants to implement the laws, and for that, the Opposition is kicking up a storm. If Manmohan Sing implements it, it is secular, if Narendra Modi implements, it is communal. They are indulging in fearmongering."

Surya said, "The country belongs to Indian Hindus, Indian Muslims and other Indians. A lot of false information is going around about CAA and NRC, which has to be corrected."

Asked about what he has learnt in these seven months as an MP, Surya said that he has learnt to listen to people with his "head and heart".

  
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