

Free India's first terrorist was a Hindu, his name is Nathuram Godse: Kamal Haasan

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Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse was independent India's first terrorist, Kamal Haasan said at a campaign event on Sunday.

File photo: PTI

Aravakurichi: Actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan, whose party made its debut in the national election, said on Sunday that the first extremist in Independent India was a Hindu. Mr Haasan was referring to Nathuram Godse who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi in 1948.

"I am not saying this because this is a Muslim-dominated area, but I am saying this before a statue of Gandhi. Independent India's first extremist (theevravaadi) was a Hindu, his name is Nathuram Godse. There it starts," Kamal Haasan said in Tamil while campaigning in the town of Aravakurichi in Tamil Nadu's Karur district on Sunday night.

Aravakurichi is one of the four assembly constituencies where bypolls are scheduled on May 19. Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) has fielded a candidate from that seat.

Standing out of the sunroof of a vehicle, Mr Haasan, 64, said he is the Mahatma's "great-grandson in spirit" and that he came there to question the his assassination.

"Good Indians desire for equality and want the three colours in the tricolour to remain intact. I am a good Indian, will proudly proclaim that," he added.

The BJP was quick to hit out at the Makkal Needhi Maiam chief.

"We strongly condemn Kamal Haasan for talking about Hindu extremism in his poll campaign. He is triggering communal violence in a place where there are a lot of minorities. The Election Commission must take stringent action against Kamal Haasan for this speech," Tamil Nadu BJP chief Tamilisai Soundararajan tweeted in Tamil.

In November 2017, the Tamil mega-star had stoked a controversy by saying that extremism has infected right-wing groups, provoking a confrontation with the BJP. "In the past, Hindu, right-wing groups would not indulge in violence. They would hold a dialogue with opponents. But now they resort to violence," Mr Haasan said.

Months later, he said he is not "anti-Hindu" nor against any other religion.

Earlier this year, Kamal Haasan had blamed the right-wing the widespread protests that erupted in Kerala over the Sabarimala temple issue.

The actor launched his party in February last year and fielded candidates in all 39 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu.

The other superstar from Tamil Nadu, Rajinikanth, who has also joined politics, skipped the mega polls to focus on the 2021 Tamil Nadu election.

- IT, NDTV