

COMMUNAL RIOTS - 2007

(January to December 2007)

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Liberhan panel gets last extension (7)

New Delhi, Jan. 2: The term of the Liberhan Commission, set up to inquire into circumstances that led to the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, has been extended by three months, with a clear direction that it should submit its report either on or before March 31. Significantly, the expiry of the term comes at a time when the process to elect a new Assembly in Uttar Pradesh would be at a peak. In political circles, it is being seen as an attempt to seek political advantage by blaming the BJP top-brass. The term of the Commission, headed by retired Justice Manmohan Singh Liberhan, ended on December 31. Union home minister Shivraj Patil had said in Lok Sabha last year that the Commission would submit its report and the role of all leaders involved in the incident would be out in the open. Sources in the home ministry said the Commission would be given additional staff to finalise the report before the end of its current term. Although constituted on December 16, 1992, the Commission could begin work only in March 1993, after the conclusion of the stipulated three-month deadline to submit its report. Once the Liberhan Commission started its work, there was some eagerness to get on with the work. However, enthusiasm wore off in six months. In fact, Justice M.S. Liberhan, retired as Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh high court on November 11, 2000. The BJP, which has of late been asserting its commitment to building a Ram temple in Ayodhya, scoffed at the Centre's decision to extend the term of the Commission deriding its long tenure. BJP spokesman Prakash Javadekar said, "This longest-serving Commission should find a place in the Guinness Book. By extending its term, the government cannot hide the truth as mentioned in the Archaeological Survey of India's findings that a grand temple predated the disputed structure." His comments came in the wake of the government's giving a three-month extension to the Liberhan Commission. "We firmly believe that a grand Ram temple will be built at that site," Mr Javadekar said. (Asian Age 3/1/07)

Godhra riots : Gujarat seeks more time to submit reply (7)

AHMEDABAD: The Gujarat Government has sought more time from the G.T. Nanavati and K.G. Shah judicial inquiry commission to reply to the arguments of the Jansangharsha Manch, which had rejected the conspiracy theory and the claim that the attack on kar sevaks in the Godhra train carnage was "pre-planned." The panel's sitting on Saturday was called off at the request of Government Pleader Sumit Shah and was rescheduled for January 22 when he would reply to the arguments by Manch advocate Mukul Sinha, appearing on behalf of the riot victims. Dr. Sinha had pointed out a series of loopholes in the conspiracy theory. He claimed that Muslims in Godhra neither had any knowledge about the travel plans of the kar sevaks to conspire to attack them nor was it possible to stop the train from outside the coach after the railways changed to the vacuum system. Dr. Sinha claimed that stone-throwing on the outskirts of the Godhra station was from both sides and was a sequel to the quarrel the passengers had with local vendors over payment for tea and snacks. He did not hazard a guess on the origin of the fire in the S6 coach of the Sabarmati Express, but ruled out the use of hydrocarbons to set it afire. (THE HINDU 7/1/07)

Plea for transfer of suits against Narendra Modi turned down (7)

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed three petitions seeking the transfer of suits filed against Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi and the State Government, claiming damages of over Rs. 22 crore for the loss sustained in the Godhra riots. A Bench of Justice K.G. Balakrishnan and Justice D.K. Jain "dismissed as withdrawn" the petitions filed by Imran Mohammad Salim Dawood, a British national, and two others seeking the transfer of three suits pending in Gujarat to a competent court in Mumbai. The Bench told senior counsel Indra Jaisingh,

appearing for Mr. Dawood, that except for some vague allegations, there was nothing in the petition to justify the claim for damages to the tune of Rs. 4.36 crore. The Bench said the petitioner had merely stated that he sustained an injury in one such riot incident. Pointing out that the petitioner was a British national, the Bench said that even by U.K. standards, the damages claimed were very high for such an injury. Counsel said the damages claimed were not for the injury alone as they were punitive damages for the failure of the State and the Chief Minister to protect the lives of the citizens. The other two suits seeking damages of over Rs. 18 crore were filed by widows, who had lost their husbands in the riots. The Bench said: "We cannot assume that you will not get justice in the State of Gujarat. If you have a case against the State, you can adduce evidence in the trial court." When the Bench indicated that it would dismiss the petitions, counsel pleaded that the suits be transferred from the trial court at Himmat Nagar to the Gujarat High Court. Rejecting the plea, the Bench said: "Tell us which question of law the district court cannot decide. We have the same confidence in the district court as we have in the High Court." "The acts of the respondents in as much they continue with the policy of instilling fear and alienating the minority communities in the State of Gujarat coupled with the fact that Mr. Modi continues to be the Chief Minister of the State, with the whole law and order machinery at his command, create reasonable apprehension that the petitioner will not be able to get justice if trial is conducted in the State of Gujarat." (The Hindu 9/1/07)

Violence over 'cow slaughter' (7)

Jaipur, Jan. 15: The authorities imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC in Arthuna village of tribal-dominated Bans-wara district in Rajasthan after a violent mob ransacked 17 houses and makeshift shops of the minority community after alleging that one of them had been involved in slaughtering cows. Two houses belonging to members of the minority community were set on fire. The police had to use force to quell the mob. (Asian Age 16/1/07)

Fresh communal clashes leave Bangalore tense (7)

BANGALORE, January 21 : Communal tension simmering since Friday's clash over a Muslim rally to protest Saddam Hussein's execution spilled over to Sunday. Shops and buses were set ablaze and several people injured in group clashes near one of the three places at which Virat Hindu Samaveshas were being held. The violence took place in the eastern part of the city, which has sizeable Hindu, Muslim and Christian populations. Businesses were closed and people stayed indoors. The roads were strewn with glass from the many buses and cars that were pelted with stones. The rest of the city remained unaffected but tense. Police Commissioner N Achutha Rao attributed the violence to the tension built up in the area in the wake of Friday's rally against Saddam Hussein's execution, organised by the People's Front, floated by former Union minister Jaffer Sharief. That day groups of protestors marching through a largely-Muslim locality had pulled down banners, flags, and posters for Sunday's Virat Hindu Mahasabha, being held as three Samaveshas across the city. This had led to clashes. The eastern part of the city, which grew around the British cantonment, is a much-desired residential area and has generally been peaceful. Traditionally, the eastern region has been a stronghold of Muslim leaders. But in the last election, it voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Both MLAs from the region belong to the party. Also the MP, former police commissioner H.T. Sangliana, who wrested Sharief's seat. The BJP, which is in government with the Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka, has over the past month been organising Virat Hindu Mahasabhas across the state in association with Sangh Parivar bodies on the occasion of the birth centenary of former RSS Sarsanghchalak M S Golwalkar. Most of its conventions have passed without event. A meeting in Mysore on January 8, however, saw VHP general secretary Praveen Togadia make some inflammatory remarks leading to protests by Muslim leaders. (Indian Express 22/1/07)

Violence-affected Bangalore returns to normality (7)

BANGALORE: Life in the riot-hit eastern part of Bangalore city returned to normal on Monday. Except for a solitary stone-throwing incident, no violence was reported from any area. The affected areas are close to prominent commercial locations in Central Bangalore and have witnessed communal violence in the past but have enjoyed relative peace in the last two decades. After the curfew on Sunday night, the police at dawn allowed the shops selling essential

commodities to open in the violence-affected areas, including Commercial Street, Kamaraj Road, Seppings Road and Thimmaiah Road, for three hours. At 9 a.m., the police asked shops to shut citing prohibitory orders. "Get inside. Do not sit outside your house," a loudspeaker announced. "Despite curfew relaxation not many shops opened in the morning," said Ramamurthy, a retired teacher living on Seppings Road. "There was not much time for us to purchase milk and other essentials," he added. The situation in Seppings Road, which saw the worst of the violence over the last three days, was tense in the morning. The street was deserted barring the contingent of policemen. Barricades were put up at 100-metre intervals to check the movement of people and vehicles. At a few places, police were seen wielding lathis at people travelling in autorickshaws and two-wheelers. By noon, the police allowed unhindered movement in the area. A Rapid Action Force company consisting of 120 personnel arrived to secure the peace. In the afternoon, a flag march was held. There were isolated cases of stone throwing on the RAF van. The identity of the 11-year-old boy who died in the police firing on Sunday is yet to be ascertained, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) P. Muniswamy. Nobody has come to claim the body. Home Minister M.P. Prakash said the body would be kept in the mortuary of Victoria Hospital till he is identified. The city police have arrested 65 persons and recovered 15 litres of acid stocked by the rioters. The police have recovered 60 weapons such as knives and machetes, said Additional Commissioner of Police (CAR) N.S. Megharik. He said 21 platoons of Karnataka State Reserve Police have been deployed in the troubled areas. Security has been tightened in other communally-sensitive areas of the city. Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMT) has estimated the losses that it incurred on Sunday evening at Rs. 30 lakh. According to BMT General Manager Hemraj, 14 buses were stoned and one bus was set on fire. Mr. Prakash, legislators Zamir Ahmed, Mirajuddin Patel and Abdul Azim, and former Railway Minister Jaffer Sharief, visited the victims of alleged police action and the injured police constable Thimmaiah, who have been admitted in Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital. (The Hindu 23/1/07)

'Who cares for the fate of victims?' (7)

Bangalore: "So many Ministers and big people come here to give apples and oranges. Their pictures appear in the newspapers. But who really cares for the fate of these innocent people," G.M. Yusuf asked members of Souharda Karnataka who visited the victims of the communal violence in Shivajinagar, on Wednesday. "Politicians are using this incident to pay lip sympathy and play a blame game," he said. Mr. Yusuf, a volunteer helping the victims, said that 400 people — Hindus and Muslims — had been rounded up. But only 110 of them had been produced before the court. Many did not know in which jails their relatives were, he said. Mr. Yusuf said that politicians and other people should instead pay attention to the future of those who had been injured and had lost all their belongings. The police had entered the houses of innocent people and arrested them at random, he alleged. "So many people, including minors, have been booked under Section 307 (attempt to murder). What will be the future of the children who have been pushed into jails," he asked. Noor Ullah (72), with a fractured hand and back injuries, had only one request to make to every visitor: "All my children and grandchildren are in jail. Please release them." He alleged that the police had barged into the house claiming that some miscreants were hiding there and hit him before taking away his sons and grandsons. The youngest of them is a 13-year-old. Hameed (23), an autorickshaw driver from Banashankari, was taking a commuter to Ulsoor when trouble broke out. His autorickshaw was completely damaged and he does not know what his future will be when he comes out of the hospital. G.K. Govind Rao, actor and member of Souharda Karnataka, said, "The accumulated bitterness in the victims does not forebode well for the future of the country." The programmes conducted with "ulterior motives," — the rally held at Shivajinagar against the hanging of Saddam Hussein and the Virat Hindu Samajotsava functions being held by the Sangh Parivar — had brought on the situation, he alleged. (The Hindu 25/1/07)

Two months after study, riot-displaced await Centre's special package (7)

AHMEDABAD, JANUARY 26 : Although more than two months have passed since the Union Home Ministry announced it would send a Central team to study the condition of riot-displaced people living in resettlement colonies to be able to come up with a special package for them, no step has been taken so far. To add to the predicament of those living in such colonies, the state government has said there are no "displaced persons" in Gujarat, and that those staying in

makeshift colonies are doing so “voluntarily”. The Ministry of Home Affairs had announced a compensation package for the 2002 riot victims, on the lines of the compensation for survivors of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. The MHA announcement had come after the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) had submitted a report in November 2006. Now, those living in makeshift houses have decided to campaign for their cause. They want to be recognised as “internally displaced persons” as recommended by the NCM, so that they would be entitled to a compensation package. The displaced families have been living in sub-human conditions in various resettlement colonies built by Muslim organisations and NGOs on the outskirts of Ahmedabad and other towns. There are over 5,000 displaced families living in 66 resettlement colonies across Gujarat. They had been forced to leave their homes and live in makeshift houses in resettlement camps. They had also been denied compensation apart from the meagre Rs 1,200 as “ghar vakhari”. These people have formed a state-level Aantarik Visthapit Hak Rashak Samiti (Committee for Protection of Rights of Internally Displaced) to fight for their cause. They also plan to hold a state-level convention in Ahmedabad on February 1, to highlight the Centre’s “inaction” and the state government’s “apathy”. At the meet, Planning Commission member Syeda Hameed, film-maker and director Mahesh Bhatt, Justice (retd) RA Mehta, National Integration Council member Shabnam Hashmi and members of NHRC would be present to hear the grievances of the displaced. According to social activist Gagan Sethi, it is the duty of the Gujarat government to rehabilitate the displaced as per the Constitution and the United Nations Guiding Principles of Internally Displaced. “But the government, instead of compensating and rehabilitating the displaced persons, returned Rs 19.1 crore out of the money it received from the Central government for the purpose,” remarked Sethi. Sethi is one of the two social activists — the other being Farah Naqvi — on whose complaint the NCM had visited the displaced families and submitted a report to the Centre. In its report, the NCM had recommended that a national policy on “internally displaced due to violence” be framed and a fair compensation be paid to them. Sethi and his colleagues — Mukhtiar Sheikh and Yusuf Sheikh — working for the rehabilitation of displaced persons are demanding a compensation of Rs 4 lakh per “internally displaced family”. They say, of this Rs 4 lakh, Rs 2 lakh will be deposited in fixed deposit for a permanent monthly income, Rs 1 lakh to be spent on improving the existing infrastructure of the colonies, and the balance to be used for generating a source of livelihood for the family. (Indian Express 27/1/07)

1 killed in communal clash (1)

LUCKNOW: One person was killed and six were injured in a group clash in Gorakhpur town, Uttar Pradesh on Friday night. An indefinite curfew has been imposed on the three police station areas of Tiwaripur, Rajghat and Kotwali. The situation was described as tense but under control. According to a spokesman of the police headquarters, the incident was sparked by a dispute over payment to an orchestra, which had been engaged to perform at a wedding reception. The orchestra leader reportedly demanded payment in excess of what had been agreed upon. The financial dispute took a bizarre turn and degenerated into a communal clash. The orchestra leader, who was beaten up, sought refuge in a Moharram procession and when the processionists intervened a clash broke out. Raj Kumar Agrahari was killed in an exchange of fire between the two groups, while several were injured in stone-throwing. The arrival of the police brought the situation under control. (The Hindu 28/1/07)

Indefinite curfew in Gorakhpur areas (7)

LUCKNOW: One person was killed and half-a-dozen injured in a group clash in Gorakhpur town of Uttar Pradesh on Friday night. An indefinite curfew has been imposed in three police station areas of Tiwaripur, Rajghat and Kotwali. The situation was described on Saturday as tense but under control. According to a spokesman of the State Police Headquarters here, the incident was sparked off by a dispute over payment to an orchestra party engaged to perform at a wedding reception. What started off as a financial dispute allegedly degenerated into a communal clash. The police spokesman said the marriage reception of one Neeraj Tewari was held at DAV Degree College under the Kotwali police station area on Wednesday night. After the orchestra party finished its performance, the leader of the group asked for payment, which was refused by the hosts on the ground that the amount quoted was much higher. This led to an altercation between

the two. The orchestra leader was allegedly thrashed by some inebriated young men who later gave him a hot chase. The spokesman added that the man fearing for his life sought refuge in a Moharram procession passing from nearby. The members of the procession objected to those who were chasing the orchestra leader. The spokesman said that violence broke out soon with the groups indulging in heavy brick-battling. One person, identified as Raj Kumar Agrahari, was killed in an exchange of fire between the two groups, while several others sustained injuries on account of stone throwing. Arrival of the police brought the situation under control. Considering the communally sensitive nature of Gorakhpur, curfew was imposed in the Tiwaripur, Kotwali and Rajghat police station areas. Over a dozen persons were later rounded up by the police. With the 10th of Moharram falling on January 30, heavy police force has been deployed in the curfew-bound and other sensitive pockets of the town. (The Hindu 28/1/07)

Curfew relaxed for 8 hrs in Jabalpur (7)

Jabalpur, Jan. 28: As peace prevailed after tension erupted between the two communities over damage to posters and a gate put up for a Jain festival, curfew imposed in six areas of the city was on Sunday relaxed for eight hours, official sources said. The curfew, imposed in Kotwali, Lordganj, Belbagh, Gohalpur, Omti and Hanumantal was relaxed from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm to enable people to purchase essential articles. Though no untoward incident was reported, curfew will still be imposed in the night and prohibitory orders under Section 144 will remain clamped across the city as a precautionary measure, they added. Security personnel from anti-riot Rapid Action Force, Special Armed Force and Homeguards were deployed in strength to avert any flare up, sources said. Tension gripped the city after posters and a gate decorated for "Gajrath Mahotsava", being observed by the Jain community in Bada Fwwara area, was damaged on the intervening night of January 25-26. Trouble deepened as Jain community accused Muslims of committing the act ahead of Moharrum procession slated to pass through the route, they said. Members of Jain community, including MLA Sharad Jain and former state minister Anchal Sonkar, staged a dharna while Muslims held a meeting at the local Mufti's house. (Asian Age 29/1/07)

NGOs for Parzania show in Gujarat (7)

New Delhi, Jan. 29: Social activists and NGOs keen on getting Parzania screened in Gujarat have started an online petition to urge the Gujarat government to ensure that the film is shown without any untoward incident occurring in the state. The film, based on a true life story of a Parsi family whose only son went missing in the 2002 violence during the Gujarat carnage, is directed by Rahul Dholakia. The online petition has been started by Dristi, an Ahmedabad-based NGO, has already garnered more than 800 signatures online from all over the country. The founder of Dristi, K. Stalin, who began the campaign said, "It is unbelievable that such a film which depicts reality which occurred in Gujarat is not being screened in the state." He was surprised that multiplex owners are not at all interested in screening the film and are giving lame excuses. However giving his point of view, former president of Association of Multiplexes in Ahmedabad, Ashok Purohit, who is the owner of City Pulse group of multiplexes said, "There is nothing great about the movie. From our point of view, it is a small film and many such small films are not shown in theatres. It is a controversial film for the media, but for us, we do not need to screen a controversial film when it is not even commercially viable." Mr Purohit added saying, "We are under no pressure to not show the film but it's just not a film which excites us." He accepted that the film was based on events which occurred in Gujarat but he was not sure whether it would still be commercially viable. But NGOs differ on this and are sure that theatre owners are under pressure to not screen the film. The online petition, which can be viewed on www.petitiononline.com reads, "We, the people of Gujarat and elsewhere in India, strongly condemn the Sangh Parivar's unlawful 'ban' on Parzania, a film that portrays the devastating story of a family caught in the vortex of violence unleashed on innocent people of Gujarat in 2002." It further adds, "This is not the first time that the goons of Bajrang Dal, backed by the BJP (in this case the cinema owners) have got away with such undemocratic and unconstitutional actions in Gujarat. This film needs to be screened in Gujarat more than any other state in India. The state government, instead of tacitly supporting the unlawful actions of such goons, should encourage the screening of this film and ensure total protection." The petition also expressed

solidarity with the family of Dara Modi and Rupa Modi who lost their only son Azhar in the violence. Meanwhile, negotiations were still continuing between the director Mr Dholakia and film theatre owners to get the film screened in Gujarat. (Asian Age 30/1/07)

Gujarat riots: NCM doubts Centre's promise (7)

New Delhi : While the Centre promised last year to give compensation to the Gujarat riots victims comparable to that of 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) is apprehensive that the UPA Government is not fulfilling the commitment. The NCM has shot a letter to Home Secretary VK Duggal to know the status of the promises made. "We have not seen any visible movement as to whether any steps are being taken in pursuance of the Union package for Gujarat riot victims," the NCM letter written on January 9 asked. As per the compensation given to anti-Sikh riots victims, Rs 7 lakh ex-gratia should be paid to each of the affected families. It was estimated that there were 2,000 affected families of Gujarat violence in 2002. (Pioneer 30/1/07)

Violence spreads in eastern Uttar Pradesh (7)

LUCKNOW: As the communal violence in Gorakhpur escalated and spread to the neighbouring districts, the State Government on Monday removed District Magistrate Hari Om and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Raja Srivastava. Curfew was extended to the Gorakhnath police station area. Curfew was imposed in Rajghat, Kotwali and Tewaripur when violence broke out on Saturday. One person was killed in the clashes on Saturday night. Even as the situation was officially described as tense but under control, security was tightened in Gorakhpur and neighbouring towns in eastern Uttar Pradesh to ensure that the 10th of Moharram ("Yaum-e-Ashoorah") passed off peacefully on Tuesday. While Mr. Hari Om has been replaced by Sitapur DM Rakesh Goel, Special Task Force SSP S.K. Bhagat has succeeded Mr. Srivastava. Both assumed charge late on Monday. According to the Secretary, Appointments and Personnel, Umesh Sinha, Mr. Hari Om has been placed on the waiting list. The decisions were taken at a high-level review meeting called by Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav at his residence. The violence in Gorakhpur on Monday came after protests by Hindu Yuva Vahini activists against the arrest of Bharatiya Janata Party MP Yogi Aditya Nath. The Yogi was arrested on Sunday after he addressed a meeting in defiance of prohibitory orders. Reports said three to four godowns belonging to members of a particular community were torched by the goons, who also set ablaze a truck and tractor-trolley near the Gorakhnath temple. Violence and arson were also reported from the neighbouring districts of Maharajganj, Kushinagar, Deoria, Basti and Siddhartnagar. Protests by the Hindu Yuva Vahini activists and BJP supporters were also held in Varanasi. The Special Secretary, Home, Manju Chandra, told journalists that two persons were arrested by the police on Sunday on the charge of inciting violence. Meanwhile, the Leader of the Opposition in the Vidhan Sabha, Lalji Tandon, said the communal violence was sponsored by the Samajwadi Party Government for electoral gains. Stating that the situation in Gorakhpur was critical, he said the violence was a result of administrative failure. (The Hindu 30/1/07)

Violence spreads in U.P. (7)

LUCKNOW: As the communal violence in Gorakhpur escalated and spread to the neighbouring districts, the State Government on Monday removed District Magistrate Hari Om and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Raja Srivastava. Curfew was extended to the Gorakhnath police station area. Curfew was imposed in Rajghat, Kotwali and Tewaripur when violence broke out on Saturday. One person was killed in the clashes on Saturday night. Even as the situation was officially described as tense but under control, security was tightened in Gorakhpur and neighbouring towns in eastern Uttar Pradesh to ensure that the 10th of Moharram ("Yaum-e-Ashoorah") passed off peacefully on Tuesday. While Mr. Hari Om has been replaced by Sitapur DM Rakesh Goel, Special Task Force SSP S.K. Bhagat has succeeded Mr. Srivastava. Both assumed charge late on Monday. According to the Secretary, Appointments and Personnel, Umesh Sinha, Mr. Hari Om has been placed on the waiting list. The decisions were taken at a high-level review meeting called by Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav at his residence. The violence in Gorakhpur on Monday came after protests by Hindu Yuva Vahini activists against the arrest of Bharatiya Janata Party MP Yogi Aditya Nath. The Yogi was arrested on Sunday after he

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CPI (M) sees pattern in communal violence (7)

NEW DELHI: Seeing a pattern behind the spate of incidents of communal violence in various parts of the country, including Gorakhpur, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Tuesday underlined the need for firm action by State Governments to put down communal activities. Referring to the incidents in Jabalpur, Bangalore, Tirur in Kerala and Mandsaur in Madhya Pradesh it said: "the consequences of the Bharatiya Janata Party's aggressive communal stance at its Lucknow session are becoming evident," the party's Polit Bureau said in a statement. It said a common feature in these incidents was the "involvement of the RSS outfits," which were observing the Golwalkar birth centenary. In places like Bangalore and Tirur, Muslim fundamentalists caused the provocation, it pointed out. In Gorakhpur, it said: "the notorious activities of the BJP MP and Mahant Adiyath are primarily responsible for the incidents of attacks on the Muslim minorities of the region." In many of these instances, the statement noted, the State failed to realise the calculated plan to stir up trouble by the communal forces. (The Hindu 31/1/07)

Gorakhpur violence continues (7)

Lucknow, Jan. 30: Gorakhpur continued to simmer with communal rage on Tuesday as violence spread to neighbouring districts. One person was killed in firing between two groups in the city and over the dozen persons were injured in different incidents. In view of the tension prevailing in the city, Muslim clerics held a meeting with the district officials and decided not to take out Muharram processions. "Our main concern is to maintain peace in the city and because of this, we have asked our people not to take out Muharram processions which could fuel tension", Maulana Farukh Adnan Shah, Miyan Saheb of the Imambara, told reporters. Curfew continued in the Tiwaripur, Rajghat, Kotwali and Gorakhnath areas and all school and colleges have been closed till further orders. Paramilitary forces staged a flag march in Gorakhpur while the new district magistrate and SSP, Mr Rakesh Goyal and Mr S.K. Bhagat, who took charge late on Monday night, held meetings with officials and senior citizens to ease the situation. Violent mobs, however, continued to stalk the streets of Gorakhpur despite curfew and a heavy deployment of forces. In Khorabar, miscreants set two government jeeps on fire. The police had to resort to lathicharge to disperse the crowds. In Deoria, former BJP MLA Surya Pratap Shahi and his supporters took out protest march and tried to get shops closed. The police lathi-charged the BJP workers leaving over two dozen persons injured. Mr Shahi was taken into custody while BJP workers staged a dharna in the city centre. Shops remained closed in Azamgarh district on Tuesday to protest against the Gorakhpur incident. In Basti, protesters attempted to set a dak bungalow on fire but timely intervention by the police prevented any untoward incident. BJP leaders Kesri Nath Tripathi and Lalji Tandon were detained while they were on their way to Gorakhpur on Tuesday. BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh was arrested with his supporters in Balrampur and former BJP minister Ramapati Shastri was detained in Gonda. Later, talking to reporters in Lucknow, state BJP president Kesri Nath Tripathi and leader of Opposition Lalji Tandon termed the communal riots in Gorakhpur as state-sponsored. The two leaders said that the riots were fallout of several incidents that had taken in Gorakhpur during the past one month. "If the administration had acted on time, this could have been prevented," they said. The BJP leaders announced that if BJP MP Yogi Adityanath was not released within 24 hours, the party would launch a state wide agitation. Meanwhile, talking to reporters, BSP president Mayawati said that the riots were being engineered by the Samajwadi Party and the BJP, both of whom were hand-in-glove, with the intention of polarising votes on the eve of elections. Ms Mayawati

asked the UP governor to visit Gorakhpur and make an assessment of the situation there. She said that the governor could ask the centre to send an all-party delegation of MPs to Gorakhpur and also recommend dismissal of the Mulayam Singh government. (Asian Age 31/1/07)

Flag march in Gorakhpur (7)

LUCKNOW: Security forces staged a flag march in Gorakhpur town of eastern Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday. After four consecutive days of communal violence and arson, which claimed two lives, the situation remained peaceful on Wednesday. However, curfew was not relaxed in four police station areas of Tewaripur, Rajghat, Kotwali and Gorakhnath. A Home Department spokesman said other eastern towns were incident-free. The Government replaced Inspector-General of Police (Gorakhpur Zone) Vinay Kumar Verma with IG, Meerut Zone, Jagmohan Yadav. As miscreants have targeted trains, it has been ordered to deploy adequate security personnel in all mail and express trains passing through Purvanchal. State Home Secretary Arun Kumar Sinha said the accused in the killing of two persons had been arrested. In all, 200 persons were arrested for alleged involvement in violence. Mr. Sinha said DGP Bua Singh visited the town on Wednesday and was expected to submit a report to the Government. The Home Secretary said till now there was no move to release BJP MP Yogi Aditya Nath and other leaders held. Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee President Salman Khurshid, and Congress Legislature Party leader Pramod Tiwari and other party workers were arrested at the Mohammadpur police outpost on Lucknow-Barabanki border while going to Gorakhpur. They were later released. (The Hindu 1/2/07)

NCM for bill on communal riot (7)

New Delhi, Feb. 1: National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has urged the Centre to pass the proposed Communal Violence (Prevention, Control And Rehabilitation) Bill at the earliest and has called upon Central and state governments to enforce it rigorously. NCM is alarmed and concerned with reports of communal incidents in different parts of the country and has expressed alarm and deep concern at the reports of communal incidents occurring in various places like Bangalore and some towns in Uttar Pradesh. Speaking on the concern of the commission, NCM chairman Hameed Ansari said, "It is important to maintain communal peace guaranteed the right of citizens to live in peace, which is a fundamental duty of all governments. It is important to pay attention to these matters and remind society that there are important issues." In a statement, NCM said that these communal incidents has resulted in the disruption of normal civil activities and have led to loss of innocent lives and damage to property. They convey the message of a society that is not at peace with itself. NCM further maintains that the right to life is the foundation on which the structure of the fundamental right of citizens is built. The recurrence of communal violence and its unavoidable consequences can only be viewed as a failure of our society to honour its basic social compact. (Asian Age 2/2/07)

Gorakhpur tense, arsonists attack trains (7)

Lucknow : Gorakhpur and its adjoining areas in eastern Uttar Pradesh remained tense but under control on Thursday. Union Minister of State for Home Sriprakash Jaiswal, after visiting Gorakhpur, said additional paramilitary forces would be rushed to the region to maintain peace. A PTI report late Thursday night said suspected Hindu Yuva Vahini activists set ablaze three compartments of two trains, one of them near Gorakhpur, to protest the arrest of BJP MP from Gorakhpur Yogi Adityanath. Police sources said the activists set on fire two coaches of Mumbai-Gorakhpur Godan Express at Mohammadabad railway station, about 300 km from Lucknow. No loss of life was reported although some passengers sustained minor injuries while they were trying to jump out of the compartments, sources said. The burning compartments were detached from the train and fire tenders reached the spot, sources said. In another incident, the activists set afire a train compartment near a goods yard at the Naugarh Railway Station in Siddharthnagar district near Gorakhpur. "The goods train compartment had been lying abandoned in the yard for a long time and there was no casualty," District Police chief Ramit Sharma told PTI. Ten persons were arrested for torching two state roadways buses at Nichloul in Maharajganj district on Wednesday night. Reports said that the buses were torched at the Nichloul depot by activists of the Hindu Yuva Vahini and the trouble-makers included two roadways staff. As many as 68

passenger trains to and from Gorakhpur have been cancelled after an arson attempt on 213 up Gorakhpur-Gonda passenger train at Tulsipur in Balrampur on Wednesday. Long-distance mail and express trains were being run with GRP escort as a precautionary measure, the sources said. Sporadic incidents of violence were reported from different districts of eastern UP, as security forces staged a flag march in curfew-bound areas. Reports said that in Dumariyaganj, the Siddharth Nagar block development office (BDO) office was set on fire by arsonists. However, the Home Department officials claimed that a short circuit was the reason behind the fire at the BDO office. The situation in Padrauna, where curfew was imposed on Tuesday evening following violence in the wake of arrest of local BJP MP Yogi Adityanath, remained tense, reports reaching here said. In Ballia, BJP workers forced closure of shops and other establishment during a bandh to protest arrest of party MP Adityanath and other leaders. (Pioneer 2/2/07)

Displaced Godhra riot victims live in fear (7)

Ahmedabad, Feb.2: Though five years have passed, many post-Godhra riot victims living in makeshift shelters still dread to step out alone at night fearing reprisal and are facing social ostracism and government apathy. This was the opinion of many post-Godhra riot victims, who spoke their hearts out at a gathering organised on Friday at the convention for internally displaced people, by an NGO here. Zahedaben Diwan, presently living at a makeshift shelter in a government colony in Kalol town of Panchmahals said, she feared stepping out alone at night, faced social boycott and government apathy that prevents her from earning for her family. Diwan was among 2,000 odd post-Godhra riot victims who had lost family members and were displaced during the last five years. The convention also marked the largest such gathering of riot victims since the communal carnage, that was triggered after Kar Sevaks were killed onboard the Sabarmati train at Godhra on February 28, 2002. "My husband was killed by a mob in our village in Kalol and I had to flee with my minor child. We have been living in another colony since then and still it is tough to muster the courage to go back," another riot victim said. • Riot victims came packed in hired buses from different parts of Ahmedabad, Baroda, Panchmahals, Sabarkantha, Anand and Mehsana districts. The riot-affected people complained of shabby and ill-equipped makeshift shelters they were living in since past five years, lack of educational facilities and documents like ration and Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards. "You ask any woman in my area about the riots and they begin to cry. We are suffering emotionally, economically and socially. Yet we are fighting everyday in daily life and in courts also," Pakizanben Mansuri, a displaced riot victim from Sabarkantha told the gathering. According to members of the Antarik Visthapith Hak Rakshak Samiti, 23,000 people belonging to approximately 5,000 families were displaced after the riots and are still denied their basic citizenship 'rights. Noted social activist Shabnam Hashrni, who is working closely with riot victims and NGOs aiding them said, "The state government and even the chief minister refuses to even acknowledge that there are so many displaced riot victims in Gujarat." (PTI) (Asian Age 3/2/07)

UP revokes suspension of Gorakhpur DM (7)

Lucknow: : The Uttar Pradesh government today revoked the suspension of former District Magistrate and SSP of Gorakhpur, action against whom had been taken following widespread violence and rioting in the city, sources said. DM Hariom and SSP Raja Srivastava were suspended for their alleged failure in controlling the situation in Gorakhpur following the arrest of national president of Hindu Mahasabha and BJP's member of Parliament Yogi Adityanath on January 29. Both have been kept on the waiting list, the sources said. Meanwhile, Special Secretary Housing and Urban Planning Uday Pratap Singh has been made new District Magistrate of Gonda, the sources said. (Indian Express 5/2/07)

'No' to Parzania in Gujarat (7)

AHMEDABAD: Parzania, low-budget English film based on the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat, will not be released in the State. Theatre owners, after a meeting with director-producer Rahul Dholakia, here on Tuesday, conveyed the final "no" to screening the film for fear of disturbances, apparently by the Sangh Parivar. Though no organisation has come out in the open opposing the release of the film, the booking agent in Mumbai said there were "telephone calls" threatening disruption. Gujarat Exhibitors Association president Manubhai Shah, owner of one of the

multiplexes here, said the exhibitors asked Mr. Dholakia to discuss the issue with those "opposing the release of the film" and screen it for them. But this suggestion was not acceptable to him. "Whether they see the film or not, they are going to say `no' to its release," Mr. Dholakia said about the Parivar. The director said he had discussed the threat perception with Ahmedabad Police Commissioner, who was prepared to provide all protection. "And yet the theatre owners are not prepared to release it." He would consider other options, including organising "private viewing" by large groups and releasing the film on the Internet. (The Hindu 7/2/07)

Curfew relaxed in Indore (7)

BHOPAL: Curfew was relaxed in Indore between 3 and 6 p.m. on Tuesday and no untoward incident was reported from the city. Three police station areas were brought under curfew on Monday following clashes between members of two communities. A peace march, which Ministers Himmat Kothari and Kailash Vijayvargiya joined, was taken out through a two-km route passing through the disturbed areas in the afternoon. Community leaders and people belonging to different religions participated. They raised slogans to reassert the spirit of secularism and communal amity. Home Minister Nagendra Singh told The Hindu that the situation in Indore was under control. He said extra police force had been rushed. (The Hindu 14/2/07)

BJP MP's son held for riot in Gujarat (7)

Ahmedabad, Feb. 15: Bhavesh, the son of BJP member of Parliament Babu Katara, was among four persons arrested in connection with a 2002 post-Godhra riot case, the police said on Thursday. • They were arrested on Wednesday, for their alleged involvement in a murder, arson and loot case in Jhalod town of Dahod district, in Gujarat, during the post-Godhra riots. The other three who have been arrested are Mr Chandrakant Patel, Mr Jignesh Patel and Pappu, alias Yogendra Aganval. Mr Katara represents Dahod Lok Sabha constituency. Dahod superintendent of police A.K. Pandya said the four accused were not mentioned by the victims in the original police complaint, registered in 2002 after the riot incident. However, the victims submitted an affidavit in court in 2004, two years after the incident, saying that these four people were also involved in the riot case in Jhalod town, he added. "We have arrested the four, including the son of the Lok Sabha MP* based on the affidavit in the court," Mr Pandya said. (PTI) . (Asian Age 16/2/07)

Special programme planned on Godhra anniversary (7)

Gandhinagar : Twenty-five human rights and social service organisations will commemorate the fifth anniversary of the communal carnage of 2002, with a week-long programme beginning February 26 in Ahmedabad. The programme titled Sach ki Yadein, Yadon ka Sach will include seminars, a convention with survivors, film shows, dramas, street plays and painting exhibitions. Almost as a reaction to the attempts to prevent the screening of films like Parzania about 25 films and documentaries, which deal with such and related themes, will be shown at a special screening in Ahmedabad during the week. The show will include the Final Solution, a documentary by Rakesh Sharma set in the backdrop of 2002 Gujarat riots, which will be shown on March 2 at Ambedkar Hall and is expected to be attended by the filmmaker himself, according to coordinator Hiren Gandhi Others include The Survivors Speak and Anand Patwardhan's Ram Ke Nam and Narmada Dairy besides The Black Road, a documentary by an American journalist William Nessen and Naata, which is on two Dharawi residents Waqar Khan and Bhau Korde, whose film Ekta Sandesh sends out message of peace and unity in the face of the riots of 1992-93. Paintings by the survivors of Naroda Patiya titled Narratives of Strengths and Survival will be part of the six-day event. (Pioneer 26/2/07)

Government's apology sought for Gujarat riots (7)

AHMEDABAD : On the eve of the fifth anniversary of the post-Godhra communal riots in Gujarat, a group of voluntary organisations demanded the Narendra Modi Government to publicly apologise for what happened in 2002 and take immediate steps to rehabilitate those still living in make-shift camps. Launching the week-long programme, "Sach ki Yadein, Yadon ka Sach," the speakers said the Gujarat Government's "false pretensions" that everything was normal and the

riot-hit were "happily" resettled must be exposed. Convenor of the Mumbai-based Citizens for Justice and Peace Teesta Setalvad said nothing was more misleading than to claim that life had returned to normality even for the riot-affected. (The Hindu 27/2/07)

When Vadodara witnessed Best Bakery (7)

VADODARA, February 27: The most infamous case in the city was, undoubtedly, the Best Bakery incident, in which 14 people were killed. And this was also one of the major cases where the court verdict had come first. Vadodara was also the first city to witness the first murder after the Godhra carnage. The Best Bakery incident took dramatic twists and turns. After testimonies that battled the lies and truths through media statements, it was the first riot case that was shifted outside Gujarat. While the fast track court in Vadodara acquitted the accused after the witnesses turned hostile, the trial court in Mumbai sentenced them to imprisonment. Having lived in constant media glare, chief protagonist Zaheera Sheikh is now in jail, for having lied to the court. Her mother, younger brother, sister and brother-in-law are on the run. In tribal-dominated Pavnad and Kant areas of Vadodara district, unprecedented violence took place but there were not many deaths. Jayanti Rathwa, of Bodeli, who had led a mob during the riots went on to become a BJP leader later in the area. The situation was no better in Central Gujarat, also known as Charotar region, which witnessed village-wise loots and attacks on Muslim houses. In the Ode case, 16-year-old Rehana Vohra is the key witness. While it is one of the major cases the proceedings of which were stayed by the Supreme Court in Gujarat, it took the lives of 28 people, including young ones, all burnt and buried in a debris of a building that was set afire. Some of the accused have since made their way to foreign shores. The region also saw one of the rare convictions in riot cases — in Ghodasar incident, where 15 were sentenced to imprisonment for the massacre of 14 people, though 48 were set free. But what is worse, even five years after the riots, there runs a sense of mistrust among people, and some victims are still afraid of going back to their native homes. One such village is Mogri on the outskirts of Anand. There was, though, an exception. In Pundori village in Petlad taluka of Anand district, affected Muslims did not have any problem in returning to the damaged homes. And this happened with the efforts of a retired schoolteacher Vasudev Gaur, who went to the refugee camp in the Petlad town, assuring the affected of their security and bringing them back within three days in the first week of March, 2002. The act earned him a letter of praise from the President. (Indian Express 28/2/07)

Communal Violence Bill with changes headed for House (7)

New Delhi, March 1: The government will re-introduce the Communal Violence Bill in Parliament during the ongoing session after incorporating some changes. The Union cabinet, which met here this evening, approved reintroduction of the Bill, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Priyaranjan Dasmunshi said. The Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, introduced in Rajya Sabha in 2005, had stirred a controversy with several states opposing provisions, including one which empowers the Centre to notify an area as "communally disturbed" and deploy central forces there. The Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Home Affairs headed by BJP leader Sushma Swaraj, which cleared it with amendments last December. The Bill had been formulated in the backdrop of the Gujarat communal violence in 2002 and is one of the promises in the UPA's common minimum programme. It will empower the Centre to prevent communal violence and in case of incidents, provide justice and rehabilitation to the victims. With the Cabinet clearing its reintroduction, the government is keen to get approval of both Houses during this session itself. The standing committee had taken a close look at reservations expressed by several states and political parties. On one controversial provision, the committee had observed that "adequate safeguards" had been provided when it came to the clause vesting the Centre with power to issue directions to state governments and issue notifications on communal violence. A majority of the states and political parties, the committee contacted for views, opposed the proposal. But the committee in its report said it was for retaining this proposal in its present form to maintain the country's secular fabric, unity and integrity. But it was against another important provision of the Bill that empower the Centre to transfer a case from one High Court to another, saying this power should remain with the judiciary. The committee, however, disagreed with Clause 24 of the Bill, which provides that the state

government shall establish one or more special courts for the trial of scheduled offences committed during the period of disturbance (Indian Express 2/3/07)

Rally in Ahmedabad for communal harmony (7)

AHMEDABAD: Thousands of men, women and children, both Hindus and Muslims, marched shoulder to shoulder through the once worst riot-infested areas in the heart of Ahmedabad to "herald a new era of communal harmony" in Gujarat. The rally was timed to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the "Gujarat Bandh" day on February 28 in 2002 when hundreds of Muslims were burnt alive in several parts of the State in retaliation for the Godhra train carnage the previous day. The rally was organised by the "New Social Movement," an offshoot of the Jansangharsha Manch, which was fighting the cases of the riot victims in courts and before the G.T. Nanavati-K.G. Shah judicial inquiry panel probing the train carnage and the post-Godhra communal riots in the State. Several other voluntary organisations working for the rehabilitation of the riot victims and supporters of the Left parties also joined the rally. Family members of many riot victims as well as survivors of the communal attacks also took part in the rally to plead for communal harmony. The rally carrying placards and shouting slogans for communal harmony wound its way through the most-congested and narrow minority-dominated areas in old Ahmedabad before it converted itself into a public meeting addressed by leaders of both Hindu and Muslim communities and Gandhians. On its way through some of the mixed localities, the rally received enthusiastic response from the people watching from both sides of the road indicating that there were no hard feelings left in their hearts. The speakers at the public meeting asked the Narendra Modi government to stop playing the "politics of divide and rule" to increase the chasm between the two communities for political benefits. (The Hindu 2/3/07)

Gujarat riot victims want the guilty to be punished (7)

AHMEDABAD: With both fear and anger in their eyes, survivors of the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat poured out their frustration at the "denial of justice" to them in the last five years. The riot-affected had gathered at the Gujarat Vidyapith here under the aegis of the "Sach ki Yadein, Yadon ka Sach," an umbrella organisation formed by over 25 voluntary organisations to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the post-Godhra riots. Their number surpassed the estimates of the organisers. More than 6,000 people from different riot-affected parts of the State turned up to narrate their experience. Teesta Setalvad, convener of the Mumbai-based non-governmental organisation Citizens for Justice and Peace, said more than 6,000 signatures were collected on a 10-point demand of the riot-affected which would be sent to the President, the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India and the leaders of various political parties. The demands included ensuring proper justice for all, protection for witnesses in various riot cases against threats from fundamentalist elements and adequate compensation to the affected. Asserting that there could be no lasting peace until justice was done to the riot-affected, the gathering took oath in the name of Mahatma Gandhi to fight peacefully to ensure that the perpetrators of crime were punished. Many speakers complained that even after five years, they were unable to return to their homes as an atmosphere of hatred prevailed among the members of the rival community. Among those who attended the "hearing" of the survivors were Zakia Jafri, wife of the former Congress member of Parliament Ehsan Jafri, who was among those burnt alive in Gulberg Society, and Rupa Modi, mother of the missing boy whose story the film "Parzania" tells. (The Hindu 3/3/07)

12 injured in clash in Darbhanga (7)

Darbhanga: Nearly a dozen people were injured in a communal clash after a person was allegedly found defecating in a graveyard in Darbhanga town of Bihar, official sources said on Monday. Several people belonging to a particular community gathered at a place and started throwing brickbats and stones on others after they received information about the incident in Biji near here yesterday, sources said. All the injured were sent to the Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital, they said. Patrolling was intensified as tension prevailed in the area after the clash, the sources said, adding they were keeping close watch on trouble-makers. (The Hindu 6/3/07)

Documenting testimonies of Godhra victims (7)

NEW DELHI: Yet to fathom the difference between a prison and a cage, Mohammed Zaheer Iqbal's five-year-old son thinks that his father lives in a cage. Iqbal is one of the 221 people arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) and now languishing in jails in Gujarat. "Whenever our son misses his father, I take him to the jail where Iqbal is lodged. The little boy thinks that we are visiting his father in a cage," said Afrin, who has been fighting for the release of her husband. In the capital on Tuesday to narrate her story that is being documented at the Independent People's Tribunal (IPT), Ms. Afrin said: "My husband was taken away for an inquiry by the Crime Branch officers in 2003. When he was picked up in the dead of night, we were assured that he will return home in the morning. He never came home, instead he was charged with the conspiracy of carrying a tiffin bomb. When that case was discharged, they promptly slapped another case, this time he was accused of being an ISI agent." Ms. Afrin alleged that the families were not even allowed to be present at hearings. Another victim of the communal violence in Gujarat, Niyaz Ben Malek, who now lives in Rahat Colony, recalled how she was driven out of her village Ognaj by people who grew up with her sons. "I have filed a case against the people who attacked us with tridents and swords, my houses have been razed and all I have got is a compensation of Rs. 2,500 against the loss of property worth Rs. 10 lakh." Sharing their harrowing experiences during the riots that followed the Godhra carnage, over 200 victims, activists and academicians from across 17 States have come together to testify before the IPT. Their testimonies on the rise of fascist forces in India will later be released as a report. "We are documenting the testimonies of these people, trying to make sense of it and present it as concrete evidence of people's experiences. We will try to reflect on what happened and also suggest what can be done," said Akoijam Bimol, who, along with Subharanjan Dasgupta, Nikhil Waghle and Sandeep Pandey, is a member of the jury on Gujarat. Accusing the Government of "shying away from recognising the growth of fascism in the country," Shabnam Hashmi of non-governmental organisation Anhad said: "At this two-day event, we are trying to show that fascism is on the rise and not just in Gujarat. But surprisingly both the civil society and the Government are refusing to acknowledge it. These testimonies will help us push for action." Organised by the Human Rights Law Network and Anhad, the IPT is being supported by organisations such as Aman Samudaya, Antarik Visthapit Hak Rakshak Samiti (Gujarat), Insaaf, and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). (The Hindu 21/3/07)

Violence issue rocks Rajasthan Assembly (7)

JAIPUR: Even as the Rajasthan Assembly was rocked on Wednesday by the issue of recent communal violence in Begun town with the Opposition Congress blaming the State Government, Muslim groups accused the State police of conniving with rioters to terrorise the minority community and break its morale. Prohibitory orders have been in force in Begun town of Chittaurgarh district since March 17, when violence broke out following the passage of a "Rangteras" (colour splashing) procession through a Muslim-dominated locality. The processionists allegedly raised inflammatory slogans and torched 26 shops and kiosks belonging to Muslims. The Rajasthan Muslim Forum, a team of which returned here on Wednesday after probing into the incidents of violence in Begun, charged the State police with abetting the rioters who indulged in arson and looted the shops on March 17 and 18 with impunity. Police did not take any action to stop violence and allowed the rioters to roam freely and threaten Muslims. Jamat-e-Islami Hind State president Mohammed Salim, who led the team to Begun, said the attacks on shops were meticulously planned and carried out with the help of police after the processionists gathered in a public park and gave a call to destroy economic foundation of local Muslims. Police confined Muslims to their homes by making a false announcement of curfew having been clamped and gave full freedom to rioters. The Muslim Forum pointed out that the complicity of police in the communal violence was proved by the fact that they arrested all Muslims who wanted to lodge complaints against rioters. It said police were completely under the influence of local Bajrang Dal leaders, who were in high spirits with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party backing them. Mr. Salim said the pattern of communal violence in various towns in the State since the BJP came to power in 2003 indicated that a conspiracy was being hatched by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its affiliates to vitiate the atmosphere before the Assembly elections next year. "The BJP wants to contest next elections on the Gujarat pattern by polarising the society on communal lines," he said. The issue in the Assembly was raised by Congress MLA

Sanyam Lodha through an adjournment motion. His remarks that the incidents of communal violence had increased during the BJP rule and the State Govt. had withdrawn cases against Bajrang Dal activists led to an uproar in House with the treasury members accusing Congress of appeasing Muslims and indulging in vote bank politics. Social Welfare Minister Madan Dilawar said blaming the BJP-led Govt. for violence amounted to an insult to Hindus who had a right to take procession to any locality as "this country belongs to them". (THE HINDU 22/3/07)

Riot victims denied relief by Gujarat can approach us: Centre (7)

New Delhi, March 22: The Centre today announced a Rs 106.57 crore relief and rehabilitation package for post-Godhra riot victims that is on par with that given to victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and said it is open to respond to "cases not reported by the state (Gujarat) in terms of death and injury." The decision, taken at a Cabinet meeting, means that riot survivors left out in the state's relief packages, as some NGOs and official teams have alleged in their reports, can seek such help from the Centre. Reopening the debate on the number of people killed or injured in the post-Godhra riots, Parliamentary Affairs Minister P R Dasmunsi said that riot-hit people with complaints against the state government could approach the Centre. He said the Union Home Ministry would "consider, monitor and review" their cases. The decision comes in the run-up to forthcoming Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh (in April-May) and Gujarat (by the year-end). According to the Gujarat government's figures, 1,169 people died in the riots. Their next of kin, Dasmunsi said, will get Rs 3.5 lakh ex gratia in addition to the amount paid by the state government. And the 2,548 injured, as per state figures, will get an additional Rs 1.25 lakh each. He said the package includes ex gratia for damage to property. In addition, children and family members of those who died in the riots will get preference for recruitment in paramilitary forces, state police forces, India Reserve Battalions, PSUs and Central departments. Those who were forced to leave their jobs owing to the riots will be allowed to rejoin while pension will be paid to those who retired. (Indian Express 23/3/07)

Rs. 106.5-crore package for Gujarat victims (7)

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved a Rs. 106.57-crore relief and rehabilitation package for the victims of the 2002 Gujarat communal riots. It includes an ex gratia payment to the next of kin of 1,169 persons who died. The payment will be made at Rs. 3.5 lakh a victim, in addition what was already given by the State Government. An ex gratia payment of Rs. 1.25 lakh will be made to each of the 2,548 injured persons. It will be reduced by the amount already paid by the State Government. The package consists of part-reimbursement of an ex gratia of Rs. 30.1 crore paid by the State Government for damage to residential property and an ex gratia of Rs. 17.18 crore for uninsured commercial/industrial property. Cabinet spokesperson Priyaranjan Dasmunsi said children and family members of those who died in the riots would be given preference, with age relaxation, in recruitment to paramilitary forces, IR battalion, the State police forces, public sector undertakings and State and Central government departments. The Central and State Governments might launch special recruitment drives to accommodate eligible members from the riot-affected families. Those who lost their jobs would be allowed to rejoin duty by treating the period of their absence as dies non, and those who had to leave their jobs because of the riots and had since crossed the age of superannuation might be given pension benefits by relaxing rules. The figures for the dead and the injured were found in State Government records. If there were any more dead or injured, not included in the State lists, the affected persons could approach the Centre. (The Hindu 23/3/07)

Apex court seeks Gujarat's response (7)

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday sought the Gujarat Government's response to the suggestions given by the amicus curiae for entrusting to the CBI the investigation of the 17 sensitive cases arising out of eight major incidents relating to the Godhra riots. The cases include four Godhra-related incidents; Gulberg Society/Chamanpura; Naroda Patiya and Naroda Gaon; Sardarpura town, Mehsana district; two Panchamahals district cases; Sesan, Banaskantha district; Abasana and cases pertaining to Ode in Anand district. A three-judge Bench comprising Justice Arijit Pasayat, Justice P.K. Balasubramanyan and Justice D.K. Jain was hearing petitions filed by the National Human Rights, Teesta Setalvad and some other NGOs seeking

reinvestigation by the CBI and to shifting of the cases for trial outside Gujarat as was done in the Best Bakery case. Amicus curiae Harish Salve submitted to the court a summary of the 17 cases and the suggestions on the larger issues to be decided including maintainability of the petitions seeking transfer of the cases for trial outside Gujarat. Mr. Salve said that since most of these cases were related in one way or another, initially the Gulberg Society case could be investigated by the CBI so that the veracity of the mutual allegations could be established. He said that the ends of justice would be served better if the substantive aspects of the allegations were examined by an independent agency. He wanted the court to lay down proper guidelines on the rights of victims in criminal cases. He said larger issues like the extent of witness protection that could be granted and whether the apex court could issue directions to the trial court by-passing the procedure contemplated under the Cr.PC were to be decided in this case. In the light of these suggestions the Bench asked the Centre, Gujarat and the accused in these cases to file their response before April 5 and posted the matter for further hearing on April 16. The Gujarat Government admitted before a Bench headed by Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan that the husband of a woman, who had gone missing two years ago, was killed in a fake encounter with the police and action would be taken against those responsible. The Bench was hearing a petition filed by Rubabuddin Sheikh. (THE HINDU 24/3/07)

Modi: Riot package politically motivated (7)

Gandhinagar, March 23: Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi today hit out at the Centre for announcing a compensation package for the 2002 post-Godhra riots victims which he called "discriminatory and politically motivated". If the Centre is serious about the welfare of riot victims then it should also extend the package for all the victims of communal riots that have happened in the state after the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and also to the victims of the Akshardham terrorist attack, he told reporters here. The package seems to be politically motivated. There are 11,000 riot victims who have been killed in different riots in the state after the 1984 anti-Sikh riots of New Delhi," he said. In New Delhi, BJP vice-president Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said the package was part of the Congress' attempts to win Muslim support in the Uttar Pradesh elections. "The Election Commission should take note of such events. Rahul's comments on Babri and the riot package are both linked together. The Congress is desperately trying to use religious passions in these elections," he said. (Indian Express 24/3/07)

Curfew imposed in Mendhar (7)

MENDHAR: Curfew was imposed in Mendhar belt of Poonch district on Saturday after 30 persons were injured in recent group clashes. A land dispute between two locals, Ibrahim and Mahesh Chandra, reportedly led to the clashes. Mr. Chandra alleged that at the behest of Mr. Ibrahim, a religious leader erected temporary structures on the prime piece of land to start a madarassa (religious school). Hence, he lodged a complaint with the police. On Thursday, the police tried to remove the structures, which was opposed by the locals. The situation became polarised when the two mobilised the support of their communities. The two sides resorted to stone pelting in which 30 persons were injured. The police fired in the air to disperse the mob. On Friday, temporary structures were again erected, which were brought down by the police. In order to avert further clashes, curfew was imposed on Saturday. Mendhar is one of prime infiltration routes of the militants. Deputy Superintendent of Police Jugal Manhas said: "We have imposed curfew to prevent any untoward incident. At the same time, we are taking steps to cement the relations between the two communities through various means." Meetings involving prominent citizens of both communities continued till late evening to avert any incident of violence. (THE HINDU 25/3/07)

Package for riot victims hailed (7)

NEW DELHI: The Centre's latest relief package for the 2002 Gujarat carnage victims is "modest but long overdue and welcome," activist groups have said. However, specific attention needs to be paid to the plight of the 5,000 Muslim families who continue to live in temporary camps and colonies. In a statement, the Aantarik Visthapit Hak Rakshak Samiti urged the Centre to expand the scope of the Rs.106.57-crore package "to bring into its framework the rights to relief, rehabilitation and reparation for the thousands who still remain internally displaced due to the

violence in 2002 and who have really been in the forefront of this latest chapter in the struggle for recognition." According to the activists, the package focussed primarily on payment of ex gratia for those who died or sustained injuries and only to a lesser extent on providing compensation for damage to residential and commercial properties or those still displaced. The statement, signed by Samiti convener Yusuf Shaikh and activists Gagan Sethi, Shabnam Hashmi and Farah Naqvi, pointed to the October 2006 report of the National Commission for Minorities, recommending that the Gujarat Government and the Centre provide basic amenities and livelihood to internally-displaced persons (IDPs) living in makeshift camps. The NCM also called upon the Centre to implement a comprehensive economic package that would address their concerns of livelihood as well as availability of credit and raw materials. In a separate statement, Teesta Setalvad of the Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) described the package as the "first significant and concrete step and acknowledgement of the State-sponsored violence." She said: "The fact that injured persons have also been granted some reparation is an acknowledgement of the extent of the violence. It is a shame that the Centre has been compelled to intervene in violence that was left uncontrolled by a State (Government) that failed to perform its constitutional commitments and duty." The CJP stressed the need for a package for the IDPs. It expressed the hope that the Centre's package in its final form would provide reparation for victims of sexual violence and those who suffered complete damage to homes and businesses. It accused the Gujarat Government of "mala fide intentions" in returning Rs.19 crore of relief monies to the Centre and not disbursing enough compensation for damage caused to houses. "When the scheme announced Rs. 50,000 per house damaged, barely 20 per cent of those whose homes have been destroyed have received the full amount." (THE HINDU 25/3/07)

Modi leaves Cong behind in relief package politics (7)

The Union Government's relief package for the 2002 riot victims of Gujarat, announced last week, was almost a googly that caught both the BJP and Congress off-guard. If anything, the BJP was quick to capitalise, with the state unit of the Congress not immediately off the mark. Inside the Assembly, an elated Modi government had found its groove, its ministers and party MLAs at their sloganeering best. For a moment it looked as if Narendra Modi's image of a 'development man', carefully cultivated over the last couple of years, would go for a toss in the well-orchestrated frenzy of secular-communal sloganeering that engulfed the Gujarat Assembly. Outside the House, Modi made a statement before the media raising doubts over the timing of the package, questioning the motives of the Centre in not including victims of the Akshardham, Mumbai bomb blasts, and of all the riots between 1984 and 2002. But outside the Assembly, mum has been the word on the package. Since Friday, the jet-setting Chief Minister has addressed four public rallies — one each in Banaskantha, Dahod, Godhra, and Bhuj — not mentioning the word 'package' even once in his speeches. Modi has continued with his development plank, focusing on his mission of changing the adverse sex ratio of Gujarat, speaking of water, power and development, with a special focus on women. Two of the rallies were women-only as part of his Beti Bachao campaign. Those close to him say that an astute politician like Modi would not get confused by the Centre's googly. The CM would wait for the right time, to use the 'Hindutva' versus 'Appeasers' ammo. An earlier opportunity, unfolding the 'package politics', would come during his campaign trips to Uttar Pradesh. Modi's itinerary is getting ready by the end of this month, and he is sure to rake up the issue of the 'appeasing package' before the UP electorate. In contrast, the opposition Congress put forward a sorry reminder of its 2002 soft-Hindutva, with Leader of the Opposition Arjun Modhwadia speaking of how the package was also for the 257 Hindus who died during the riots, adding that it was up to the state government to decide whom to give the money to, including the kar sevaks who died in the Godhra carnage. Only some sting came in the tail of his statement when he said it was the BJP that was responsible for what happened in Gujarat in 2002. In effect, from now on the Congress would only be responding on similar lines whenever Modi chooses to raise the issue in Gujarat. Possibly the Congress high command has sacrificed its Gujarat unit for its ambitions in other states. Half the truth would be out in May with the UP results; the other half in December, when Gujarat goes to polls. (The Indian Express 28/3/07)

Communal violence in 2 UP towns (7)

Lucknow, April 1: Communal tension prevailed in Lucknow and Kanpur on Sunday after more than 24 persons were injured in separate incidents of sectarian clashes and communal violence. In Lucknow, a clash between Shia and Sunni sects led to a pitched battle between the protesters and the police which left over a dozen persons injured. [PTI reported late on Sunday night that one person had been killed in the Kanpur violence and that the Samajwadi Party candidate from Kalyanpur constituency, Satish Nigam, had been arrested on charges of rioting.] According to eyewitnesses, the trouble in Lucknow began on Sunday morning in the Muhasibganj locality of the old city when the Sunni community was taking out a Madh-e-Sahaba procession to mark Barawafat. The processionists apparently defied the prescribed routes and made some utterances which angered the Shias, and this led to an altercation which soon took a violent turn. When the police arrived on the scene, the protesters pelted stones and even opened fire to prevent the police from entering the bylanes of the area. For almost three hours, the brickbattling continued and some vehicles and houses were also set on fire. The district administration asked the Muslim clerics to intervene in the matter and the situation was finally brought under control after they appealed for peace. The Madh-e-Sahaba procession was also taken out under tight security. Though the district authorities refused to confirm the number of arrests, sources said that two dozen persons had been arrested. RAF has been deployed in the area and a constant vigil is being maintained in the affected area. The situation continues to be tense but under control, according to Mr Jyoti Narayan, SSP of Lucknow. In Kanpur, trouble began on Sunday morning after a teenaged boy complained of "inhuman" torture by the police in custody. The boy had been arrested by the Armapur police on Saturday night when he defied the ban on loudspeakers after 10 pm. He was released on Sunday morning and when he narrated his tale of torture by the Armapur SO, local people surrounded the Armapur police station and pelted stones and opened fire at the police. Additional forces were rushed in to control the situation and over a dozen people have been arrested. The SO of Armapur police station has been placed under suspension and an inquiry has also been ordered into the allegations. Tension continues to prevail in the area and security has been beefed up in other communally-sensitive areas of Kanpur. Curfew has been imposed in three police stations — Saadatganj, Thakurganj and Chowk — as even sporadic incidents of violence continued to be reported from parts of the old city. (Asian Age 2/4/07)

130 arrested for Narsingharh violence (7)

Bhopal : As many as 130 people from both the communities have been detained at Rajgarh district's Narsingharh tehsil headquarters, where curfew continued for the third consecutive day after arson following the stoning of a religious procession on April 2. With the confirmation of two more fatalities out of communal violence in the city the death toll went up to three. The Government has announced Ex-gratia of Rs 1 lakh to each of the deceased in the incident. District Collector CP Tiwari while talking to The Pioneer said, "Three bombs were found during the search operation. A two-hour relaxation in curfew from 3 pm to 5 pm was given for women and children and the situation is completely under control." Superintendent of Police (SP) Dilip Arya informed that the search operation is still continuing in the town. Explosives were recovered on Tuesday, but no weapon or firearm was recovered on Wednesday. The officer said that two hours' relaxation in the curfew passed off peacefully and, thus, decision of further relaxation would be taken on Thursday morning. Meanwhile, The Communist Party of India (Marxist) Madhya Pradesh unit on Wednesday has demanded for strict action to be taken against those found guilty of the communal violence at Rajgarh district's Narsingharh town. "The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's sister organisations are responsible for the preplanned riots," the party's State Secretary Bahadur Singh Dhakad said in a statement. Dhakad appealed to the State's secular parties to unite against communalism. The Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education announced that secondary and senior secondary high school examinations, which could not take place at Narsingharh on Wednesday would be conducted on April 13. (Pioneer 5/4/07)

Life miserable in Gujarat relief colonies: court panel (7)

New Delhi: A Supreme Court-appointed committee has found that 4,545 families comprising around 30,000 persons affected by the post-Godhra riots are still living in difficult and pathetic

conditions in 81 relief colonies across Gujarat with acute problems in getting food and livelihood security. In its report, N.C. Saxena, heading the committee of court commissioners, said: "None of the colonies was set up or assisted by the State government. Only five of the 81 colonies had government or government recognised schools, and only four served mid-day meals to children." Of the five schools, which had centres under the Integrated Child Development Scheme, four served supplementary nutrition to children and the other, to nursing and expectant mothers. After scrutinising the report, a vacation Bench consisting of Justices Arijit Pasayat and D.K. Jain on Monday posted the case for further hearing after the summer vacation. The court is monitoring the ICDS and other Centrally- sponsored schemes in various States. The report said the commissioners received disturbing information on acute food and livelihood distress of the internally displaced people in Gujarat. It was brought to their notice that the government was not carrying out the court directions. In response to the committee's letter seeking details, the government said there were no relief colonies of the people displaced by the 2002 violence. Three members deputed by the National Commission for Minorities in October 2006 visited 17 relief colonies and observed the difficulties faced by the residents, Dr. Saxena said. The commission, in its report, said, "The violence put an end to the means of livelihood [of the residents in the relief colonies] since their old clients were unwilling to use their services. The impression the team received is that very few of them were employed in service." Dr. Saxena said the commission report clearly established that the government had misrepresented the situation to the court-appointed commissioners by denying the existence of these colonies. "It also established prima facie evidence of the fact that the directions of the court with regard to food and employment schemes were being violated." Dr. Saxena said, "My colleagues completed a full survey" and found "only three colonies had PDS shops, and only 725 out of the 4,545 families were recognised as below poverty line, although their poverty as internally displaced persons facing an economic boycott was acute." Shocked at the condition of the people in these colonies, the report suggested that a contempt notice be issued to the Chief Secretary and other officials for misrepresenting facts and furnishing incomplete and inaccurate information to the commissioners. "All families who continue to live in relief colonies must be given Antyodaya cards, as internally displaced persons who lost all their belongings, face fear and economic boycott and are too afraid to return to their original homes; primary schools with mid-day meals should be opened in all 81 relief colonies immediately and they should have fully functioning ICDS centres and PDS shops should be opened in all colonies where these are not available within a distance of three km," says the report. (The Hindu 5/6/07)

11 die in Imphal, curfew imposed (7)

Imphal, June 10: Eleven people were killed by gunmen in separate incidents of firing in Manipur's border town of Moreh where an indefinite curfew has been imposed since Saturday evening, official sources said on Sunday. Five persons, belonging to a particular community, were killed at different places at Moreh, about 120 km southeast of here in Chandel district on Saturday morning by some unidentified gunmen, sources said. Shortly after the incident, six labourers belonging to another community were taken out of their houses and shot dead by unidentified men at different places in the border town, sources said. As the tension between the two communities ran high, indefinite curfew was imposed, sources said adding that a strong police team, headed by DGP Y. Joykumar was camping there to prevent any untoward incident. Saturday's incident was a follow-up of killing of a Meitei youth by Kuki militants of Kuki National Army (KNA) some days ago, sources said. Many civil society groups blame KNA for creating communal tension in the border town for the past some months. Earlier, reports had said, four Kuki militants were killed by unidentified gunmen on Saturday. International trade conducted through Moreh has also been suspended. (PTI) (Asian Age 11/6/07)

Took 17 years for a verdict in Bhagalpur massacre of 116 (7)

Seventeen years after 116 Muslims were massacred and buried in the fields of a village during the Bhagalpur riots, a local court today convicted 14 accused. Additional District and Sessions Judge S N Mishra fixed June 27 for announcing the quantum of sentence. The 116 people, including women and children, were killed on the night of October 27, 1989 at Logai village under Jagdishpur police station of the district. The victims were buried in a mass grave, promptly

camouflaged by a cauliflower plantation. Among those convicted are the then officer-in-charge of Jagdishpur police station, Ramchandra Singh, and chowkidar Thakur Paswan. Though there were 24 accused in the case, six died during the trial, while four never turned up, prompting the court to proclaim them absconders and order attachment of property. Singh was charged with not taking action when the mob went on the rampage and tampering with evidence. The chowkidar was held guilty of suppressing information about the killings. Of the 14 convicted, the order against Jaiprakash Mandal was passed in absentia as he did not turn up. This made the court issue a warrant of arrest against him. Justice in this case was delayed primarily because the witnesses never reached the court in time and the police showed little interest in producing them. The accused kept absconding and the police failed to nab them. The riots began when a "Ram shila" procession organised by a local Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader at the peak of the Ram Janmabhoomi campaign was allegedly attacked while passing through a Muslim neighbourhood. Violence soon engulfed several parts of Bhagalpur and adjoining Banka districts, leaving 1981 dead and scores maimed or homeless. At least 886 cases were registered, of which chargesheets have been submitted in 329. Nearly a year after the Logai village massacre, the investigation was handed over to then DIG Ajit Dutt on December 3, 1990. "Within a week, 90 bodies were recovered and by December 15, altogether 105 were dug out. The rest had decomposed," Dutt told The Indian Express today. He said apart from communal feelings, grabbing the land belonging to Muslims was the prime reason behind the massacre. Before the riots, there were 45 Muslim families in Logai village; in 1990, only two remained. The status remains the same even today. Bibi Shakina's husband was one of those killed in Logai that night. She fled the village. "This judgment means nothing for me. Will my husband return? I am still scared to go to Logai and cultivate my land but the district administration is doing nothing about it," said Shakina. (Indian Express 19/6/07)

2 of 45 Muslim families got to hear the verdict here (7)

LOGAIN (BHAGALPUR), JUNE 19: At the epicentre of the Bhagalpur riots, when 14 accused were convicted yesterday for killing 116 Muslims on the night of October 27, 1989, only two of the 45 Muslim families of Logain were there to hear the verdict. The rest had either been killed or had fled, never to return. Today, Jalebi Khatoon and Hadisa Khatoon live with their children in two huts. There's no one else to turn to. Even 17 years under a government which tom-tommed its M-Y (Muslim-Yadav) alliance, nothing changed on the ground for these women. "We have suffered and continue to suffer but that's deep inside. We don't want to say anything and endanger our lives again. The scars will always remain, only the fear seems to be back," said Jalebi. She and her husband Sheikh Bidesi returned to Logain after the riots — their daughter-in-law and two grand children were killed by rioters — because no one was prepared to provide them shelter. Moreover, their land holding was not large enough to attract those making most of the violence. "We only have 2-3 bighas of land. The rioters were targeting those who had large land holdings. So we returned but our son decided to stay away," said Jalebi. Her relative Hadisa lives nearby. She can never forget 1989 — her husband, father, brother and his wife were all butchered. "Life holds no meaning for me. I live because Allah has willed it so," she said. Before the riots, much of the land was owned by the 45 Muslim families. But today, almost all land is with the Hindus. "All land belonging to Muslims here stands sold. Most were sold at throwaway prices," said public prosecutor Salauddin Khan, dealing with the riots cases. Hindus of the village, who make some 200 families, deny the charge. "They sold land to us willingly. There was no pressure from us," said Haldar Mandal whose father Arjun Mandal has been convicted in the massacre case. They also deny the charge that they were behind the killing of Muslims. "No one from Logain was involved. The rioters were outsiders," said Nandlal Mandal. But Jalebi Khatoon does not believe them. "How could outsiders enter a village and kill without support from locals?" (Indian Express 20/6/07)

Godhra carnage: forensic expert grilled (7)

AHMEDABAD: Mukul Sinha, advocate for the Jansangharsha Manch, representing the communal riot victims before the G.T. Nanavati and K.G. Shah judicial inquiry commission probing the Godhra train carnage and the post-Godhra communal riots in Gujarat, on Wednesday grilled for more than three hours a senior scientist of the Forensic Science Laboratory who had claimed the

“presence” of hydrocarbons in the fire in the ill-fated coach of the Sabarmati Express. The cross-examination of D.B. Talati, assistant director (chemistry) of the FSL, was inconclusive and would be resumed on June 26. On repeated questioning by Mr. Sinha, Mr Talati, who submitted to the commission a list of 47 charts and graphs of Gas Liquid Chromatography of the samples of materials collected from the ill-fated coach and outside the coach sent to the FSL by the police for examination, admitted that it was not possible to “detect” each component of hydrocarbons from the charts. He said at best the equipment used for preparing the graphs would only indicate a “group of components” of hydrocarbons present in the samples depending on the “retention time” of each component. He, however, later claimed that it was possible to identify the presence of the hydrocarbons through the “pattern of charts,” but would not indicate whether the materials used were burnt or unburned petrol. Mr. Talati said the charts were prepared in “ISO Thermal Condition” through “packed column” method at a constant temperature of 150 degrees Centigrade, which he claimed was the “established standard procedure” for the detection of the presence of hydrocarbons. Mr Talati’s cross-examination was crucial from the Manch’s point of view which disagrees with the State government’s theory of use of hydrocarbons to set fire to the coach and maintain that the fire was “accidental” or caused by some other reasons. The FSL submitted two sets of records and charts, the first in March, 2002, in two samples of which it claimed the presence of hydrocarbons, while another set of reports submitted on May 20, 2002, did not show any hydrocarbons. (The Hindu 21/6/07)

5 yrs after Gujarat riots, 2 held for murder (7)

RAJKOT, JUNE 20: Five years after the Godhra violence, two persons have been arrested in connection with the murder of three men during riots at Rajkot. The case had been closed in July 2002 but reopened in 2004 following a Supreme Court order. Gopal Rathod and Kanji Bhanushali were arrested following availability of fresh evidence against them. “They have been arrested on charges of murdering the three men and rioting,” Rajkot Commissioner of Police K Nityanandam said. A cleric at Badalshah Peer Dargah, Shahmiyan Ibrahimmiyan (55), had been burnt to death and two brothers, Salim Chauhan (32) and Yunus Chauhan (22), stabbed by a mob on February 28, 2002, after the Godhra train burning. The dargah was also damaged and set ablaze by the mob. An FIR was registered by Nasim Banu, wife of Salim, but the case was closed after six months, on July 6, 2002, by the police saying they could find none of the accused. No case was registered in connection with the murder of the cleric, though the police issued a certificate saying his bones had been found and that he had been charred to death by a mob. Later, following the SC order, both the cases were clubbed together and reopened. A total of 198 cases were registered in Rajkot in the post-Godhra violence, including two murder cases, an attempt to murder case and arson and loot cases. Chargsheets have been filed in only nine cases, while 50 people have been arrested in cases other than murder. (Indian Express 21/6/07)

Riot witness: Arrests have firmed my resolve to fight (7)

RAJKOT, JUNE 21: On February 28, 2002, a day after the Godhra carnage, a mob chased Salim Chauhan (32) and his brother Yunus Chauhan (22) from their residence opposite Rajkot Marketing Yard to the bed of Lalpari Lake where they brutally stabbed the brothers to death and set ablaze their neighbour Shahmiyan Ibrahimmiyan, a cleric with Babdalshah Peer Dargah. Salim’s wife Naseem Chauhan, the lone witness to this gory crime, who was also molested by the mob, filed an FIR with the police on March 4. However, the case was closed within six months, only to be opened two years later with the Supreme Court ordering a review of all riot cases. FIVE years after the incident which altered her life, hope has resurfaced in Naseem Chauhan’s life with Rajkot police on Tuesday arresting two of the eight-member mob that killed her husband, brother-in-law and neighbour. The duo, Gopal Rathod and Kanji Bhanushali, both residents of a slum near Rajkot Marketing Yard, were sent in two-day remand by a court in Rajkot yesterday. The police are now trying to identify other members of the mob. The long fight for justice has been tough for this domestic help from Dariyapur in Ahmedabad. From getting the complaint registered to identifying the accused to the duo’s arrests, her perseverance has finally born fruit. Talking to The Indian Express, she says, “It’s a great relief to know that action has finally been taken. Even though nothing can bring back my husband, the arrest has strengthened my resolve to fight till the end.” “It took four days just to get the police to register my complaint and another two years to

include names of the accused in the FIR,” said Naseem. “Two days a week we had to come to Rajkot to make sure the case has been reopened and names of the accused included in the FIR,” added her mother Sarin. “The police refused to include the names of the accused and the case was closed within six months citing that the accused cannot be identified and located. But, I kept writing about the case to the Chief Justice of the SC and local authorities. Everything fell in place once the SC ordered a review of all the cases in 2004,” said Naseem. In January 2005, she was called to identify the accused in Rajkot. Naseem identified two persons. Later, her testimony helped Ibrahimmiyan’s son Kala Bapu, a cleric, get justice. “Naseembanu was an eyewitness to the murder and because of her testimony we got the accused arrested,” said Bapu. (Indian Express 22/6/07)

Banerjee panel report on Godhra train fire submitted in HC (7)

Gandhinagar : The justice UC Banerjee Commission report on the fire in the S-6 coach of Sabarmati Express on February 27, 2002, which left 59 people dead, was submitted to the Gujarat High Court in Ahmedabad on Wednesday in a sealed cover. The report was handed over to the division bench of Chief Justice YR Meena and Justice Akhil Qureshi by the Railway Ministry in compliance with court orders .The Ministry had set up the panel to probe into the cause of the fire in the train and the Banerjee Commission had ruled the fire in the train as an accident. The Railway Ministry had filed a Letter Patent Appeal (LPA), challenging the October 13, 2006 order of the single judge bench headed by Justice DN Patel which had ruled that the constitution of the Commission was illegal and unconstitutional. Holding that it was not consistent with law, the court had quashed the notification issued by the Ministry constituting it .The LPA filed by the Railway lawyer Megha Jani had challenged the order on the ground that the Railway Ministry was well within its rights to form the panel and that there had been no breach of the Constitution. The next hearing on the matter has been fixed on July 31. The High Court will also conduct a final hearing on the LPA (Letter Patent Appeal) filed by the Railways as well as on the Railway's application seeking permission to table the report in Parliament on the same day. .(Pioneer 22/6/07)

Godhra: 'hydrocarbon samples tampered with' (7)

AHMEDABAD: In a sensational development, Mukul Sinha, advocate for the Jansangharsha Manch representing the communal riot victims, argued before the G. T. Nanavati and K. G. Shah judicial inquiry commission on Tuesday that the hydrocarbon samples collected from the ill-fated S-6 coach of the Sabarmati Express and sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for testing were “tampered” to get the “desired result.” Concluding his cross-examination of the FSL assistant director (chemistry), D. B. Talati, Dr. Sinha pointed out to the commission the discrepancies in the Gas Liquid Chromatography charts prepared by the Laboratory on the hydrocarbon samples and claimed that “liquid petrol” was deliberately added in the samples to “justify” the Gujarat Government’s stand of the fire in the coach being a “pre-planned conspiracy.” Continuing here on Tuesday Mr. Talati’s inconclusive cross-examination on June 20, Dr. Sinha pointed out that the ratio of various components of hydrocarbons in petrol as shown in the FSL charts could be obtained only in fluid unburned petrol and not in the residues of hydrocarbons after being burnt. Giving calculations of the experts, Dr. Sinha said while the ratio of high volatile components should be less in the residues once the petrol was burnt, the charts presented by Mr. Talati showed the opposite result which indicate the presence of unburned fluid petrol in the samples. Mr. Talati, who was repeatedly asked by Mr. Justice Nanavati to clarify if he considered the results in the charts prepared by the FSL as a “discrepancy” as claimed by Dr. Sinha, replied in the negative. He said since he had not tested the samples “quantitatively” and also did not have “text book knowledge” of the ratio of various components in petrol, he was not competent to answer the question. Dr. Sinha later told the mediapersons that he would request the commission to get the charts examined by some more experts to establish the authenticity of the presence of hydrocarbons in the samples. Pointing out that there was nearly 24 hours gap between the fire in the train and the collection of the samples sent to the FSL for testing, Dr. Sinha said during the interim period hundreds of people had entered the coach and visited the site on the outskirts of the Godhra railway station. It was possible for anyone to sprinkle a few drops of petrol both inside

and outside the ill-fated coach before the samples were collected, he argued. (The Hindu 27/6/07)

For these Gujarat riot kids, 5-yr school-shelter shuts down (7)

AHMEDABAD, JUNE 27: Vegetable vendor Ghulam Hussain, one of the many affected by the post-Godhra riots, drew consolation from the fact that his son, Nisar Ahmed, was getting a good education though school in Hyderabad meant they would have to live apart. Nisar was one of the 120 riot-hit children from Gujarat who had been offered free education at the MESCO Grades School, run by the Muslim Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation. Early this month, the school shut down and the children were told to leave. Though MESCO officials say the lease for the school building ran out, their parents in Gujarat — many are camping in Hyderabad — claim there's another reason why only Gujarati children were asked to leave. They suspect it has something to do with the questioning in May of Maulana Tahir Khairu Rehman of Juhapura in Ahmedabad. Rehman was detained by police after his wife alerted them that he made several calls to Hyderabad before and after the Mecca Masjid blasts. Police ran checks but found Rehman had only been speaking to his son who studies at a school not far from the MESCO Grades. Rehman was let off but word spread and parents allege that there was local pressure on school authorities to send back the Gujarat children. "We know this could be the reason but the school or MESCO has not given us any reason why they are asking our children to leave," said Taj Mohammed whose son Irfan Siddique studies in Class VIII at the MESCO school. Barija Saleem, whose nephew Ujeha Mandli is also in the same school, pointed out that "only Gujarat children have been told to leave, not the locals... hostels housing Gujarati children have been closed while others are still functioning." "We are not being given school leaving certificates. I think the Hyderabad mosque blast has something to do with this," said Munir Patadia, father of Zahid and Hassan. MESCO secretary Fakhrudin Mohammed denies it. "The lease for the school building ran out recently, we cannot continue there. We have not asked the children to leave. We asked them to join another school run but the parents are not prepared. No, there is no pressure on us to send back Gujarat children. There's no connection with that incident," he said. (Indian Express 28/6/07)

Bhagalpur riot: Sentencing put off till July 7 (7)

Bhagalpur, June 27: The announcement of quantum of punishment to 14 convicts of massacre of 116 people during the Bhagalpur riots was today deferred till July 7 as one of the convicts was still at large, 10 days after being pronounced guilty. Additional District and Sessions Judge Shambhunath Mishra postponed the sentencing of the convicts as Jaiprakash Mandal, who had not turned up before the court on June 18, the day the accused were held guilty, could not be presented despite an arrest warrant pending against him. The judge directed the police to produce the absconder on July 7 so that all convicts could be sentenced together. Adding a new twist to the disappearance of Mandal, his counsel Abhaykant Jha told the court that the convict's wife Baby Devi had sent letters to state's ADGP, IG and DIG of Bhagalpur range and Superintendent of Police, Bhagalpur suspecting that her husband had been kidnapped. Jha said Mandal had left his house on June 17, a day before his conviction, after which his motorcycle was found abandoned at Sanhaura raising doubts about his abduction. The judge refused to take cognisance of the letter on the ground that Mandal was "not in attendance". When the court asked the police about the attachment of the convict's property to force him to surrender, the prosecution said the absconder had no immovable assets that could be impounded. There were 24 named accused in the case. Six died during pendency of the trial, four never turned up. In October 1989, 116 Muslims were butchered by mobs and dumped in a mass grave at Logain village on which cauliflowers were planted as camouflage to escape detection. The enormity of the Logain carnage became clear 44 days after the massacre that took place on October 27, 1989, when vultures, hovering over the mass grave, gave away the secret. (Indian express 28/6/07)

Riot-hit Gujarat children left high and dry (7)

HYDERABAD: Erasing their gory past, a bright future was promised to them. But now, they see a bleak future due to an insensible act from the "champions of the neglected". Several children of

the riot-affected Gujarat families admitted into the MESCO Grade School in Tolichowki in the city, now find themselves at the crossroads with the school closing their gates on them permanently. The children and their parents are furious over the management's sudden decision and say they have no other option but to drop plans to study further. "They have not given any solid reason for the sudden closure of the school and the hostel," says Nazeer Malik, one of the parents. About 120 boys from the riot-ravaged Gujarat were enrolled in Mesco in different batches on the request of Gujarat Sarwajanik Relief Committee. These included some orphans who lost both their parents in the riots and also children of affluent families. The school promised to provide education till Intermediate. Interestingly, these children were not taught freely. They were paying fee ranging from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000 on a par with other children. "In fact, several individuals and organisations had contributed to the Mesco for the sake of these children. Mesco got all the goodwill for admitting the riot-affected children, but they are now being made to suffer without any valid reason," explained a parent. "The reason is not at all financial since students were paying the fee." Mr. Nazeer says the management was asked to accommodate the children in other schools run by Mesco, but they refused. Where do the children go is the question now. It is not just an issue of shifting from the school for them, but leaving a well-settled student life. "This is not expected from a social organisation like Mesco," says a parent. After spending nearly five years here, the parents are not willing to take their children to Gujarat fearing that it would have a devastating psychological effect on them. Moreover, they would attain non-local status in Gujarat thus affecting their higher education. (The Hindu 29/6/07)

14 Bhagalpur riots convicts get life (7)

Bhagalpur, July 7 : A Trial court on Saturday sentenced 14 convicts, including one in absentia, to life imprisonment in the 1989 Bhagalpur communal riots case for the massacre of 116 Muslims at Logain village. Additional District and Sessions Judge Shambhunath Mishra, who had on June 27 deferred the sentencing as one of the convicts Jaiprakash Mandal continued to abscond, ordered the 13 convicts, including a former police officer, to undergo rigorous life imprisonment. "Since the crime, though serious, does not fall in the rarest of rare category the convicts are sentenced to life imprisonment," the Judge said. The Judge had on June 18 convicted the 14 accused under various sections of the IPC. Those convicted were the then officer in-charge of Jagdishpur police station Ramchandra Singh, chowkidar Thakur Paswan, Kuldip Mandal, Arjun Mandal, Prabhas Mandal, Sukhdev Mandal, Subhash Mandal, Ajablal Mandal, Shivlal Mandal, Naresh Mandal, Jattu Mandal, Ramdev Mandal, Saryu Prasad Singh and Jaiprakash Mandal. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday said his Government was trying to speed up trial in all cases relating to the riots and had also reopened cases that were shut under the previous regime. Asked about grabbing of land of the victims and also extending them adequate compensation, Kumar said Justice N N Singh Commission formed by his Government would submit a report on these issues. (Indian Express 8/7/07)

Probe panel's directive to Gujarat (7)

AHMEDABAD: The G.T. Nanavati and K.G. Shah judicial inquiry commission, probing the Godhra train carnage and the post-Godhra communal riots in Gujarat in 2002, has virtually given an ultimatum to the State government to submit within a fortnight its analysis of the two compact discs (CDs), containing the mobile phone calls of some important political leaders and police officers during the crucial period. The ultimatum was issued when the government pleader sought some more time for completing the analysis of the two CDs before the commission here on Saturday and the Jansangharsha Manch advocate, Mukul Sinha, representing the riot victims objecting to the inordinate delay in completing the analysis. Mr. Sinha had submitted an application for the analysis of the two CDs on October 14 last year, and the government was seeking more time for their "authentic analysis" through Forensic Science Laboratory experts since then. The commission told the government pleader today that if the analysis of the CDs was not completed in a fortnight's time, it would "ex-parte" accept the analysis of the Manch and go ahead with its inquiry. The two CDs contained the list of the calls made to and from mobile phones of two major private sector mobile companies in the State from February 25 to March 7, 2002, both in Ahmedabad and Godhra. The CDs were submitted to the commission by the former Bhavnagar district superintendent of police, Rahul Sharma, who was later transferred to the crime

branch (Ahmedabad) and asked to assist the investigation into the Naroda-Patiya and Gulberg Society incidents in which over 150 people were burnt alive. Mr. Sinha, who believed that a close analysis of the two CDs could lead to vital clues about the location of some of the important political leaders and police officers during the crucial period of the riots, was not allowed to present his side of the analysis by the commission which wanted to see both the reports together. But Mr. Sinha made a separate presentation for media persons clearly demonstrating the dubious role of some of the senior police officials. Considering that the two CDs contained the list of calls made to and from over a million mobile numbers between February 27 and March 1, 2002, the Manich for the purpose of analysis listed 38 crucial numbers owned by political leaders and police officers. (The Hindu 22/7/07)

In Bihar, riots accused got communal harmony citation (7)

Patna, July 22: Kameshwar Yadav, a Hindu activist who had led one of the three shila-pujan processions that triggered the Bhagalpur communal riots in 1989, was given a citation for maintaining communal harmony by the Bihar Police during the RJD rule in 2004. More than 1,000 Muslims were killed in the communal frenzy. This fact has come to the notice of the present Nitish Kumar Government, which has reopened 27 cases relating to the riots that were closed during the previous regime. Among the cases re-opened are the two against Kameshwar Yadav, one of them in final stages of trial. Yadav has attached the citation in his affidavit before the trial court to underline his secular credentials. His name had figured in at least four riots' cases that were later finalised by the police on grounds of lack of evidence and this too happened during the RJD regime. "Kameshwar Yadav of Bhagalpur district has played an important role in maintaining peace and communal harmony during Id and Kali Puja celebrations. For this laudable job he is being presented a citation certificate," the citation signed by then DGP Narayan Mishra reads. Its copies were distributed to media persons on Sunday by JD(U) spokesman Shivanand Tiwary. A disproportionate assets (DA) case has been lodged against Mishra and his premises were raided recently in this connection. Mishra could not be contacted for his reaction. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday reviewed the matter and directed DGP Ashish Ranjan Sinha to investigate and find out how the citation was issued without a CID probe and also to fix responsibility. When contacted, DGP Sinha confirmed it and said directions had been issued to cancel the citation and it would be done in a day or two. "Kameshwar Yadav's name had figured in at least four cases of the communal riots and despite that he was given a citation for maintaining communal harmony. It will be cancelled and the role of the then SP and the CID would be probed," Sinha told The Indian Express. In 2004, citations were given to 12 people. At least four of them, according to sources, had criminal backgrounds. RJD spokesman Shyam Rajak said the state Government had no role in it and it was purely a police matter. (Indian Express 23/7/07)

Call to implement Srikrishna panel report (7)

Mumbai : Nine years after the then Shiv Sena-BJP Government rejected the findings of the Srikrishna Commission report on the 1992-93 communal riots, a minority communities' delegation met Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh and demanded that the Srikrishna Commission's recommendations be implemented. The minority communities revived the clamour for implementation of the report on Tuesday, a day on which three more bombers in the 1993 Mumbai blasts were handed death sentence by the TADA court. The delegation, led by MLA Naseem Khan, filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt and vice-president of the State Minorities Commission Abraham Mathai, demanded that all those indicted in the Srikrishna report be punished. The delegates complained that the minorities were being singled out for punishment in matters relating to administration of justice. They alluded to the ongoing sentencing of 1993 blasts convicts, the accused in the 2002 Ghatkopar blasts accused and the custodial death of Khawja Yunus in this regard. Apart from Khan, Bhatt and Mathai, others present in the delegation included secretary of All India Muslim Personal Law Board Abdul Sattar Shaikh and All India Ulema Association's Maulana Sayyed Athar Ali. On the State Government side, State DGP PS Pasricha, Mumbai police chief Dhananjay Jadhav, Chief Secretary Johnny Joseph, and Additional Chief Secretary Chitkala Zutshi were present at the meeting. "We conveyed the increasing feeling among the minorities that they are being discriminated against. While it is good thing that 1993 blasts convicts are now being punished, we would also like that the people indicted by the

Srikrishna Commission are punished. It is the duty of the State Government to show through its actions that it is fair to all communities," Mathai said. (Pioneer 25/7/07)

Their brief, Mumbai riots report; their work, checking oil and milk (7)

MUMBAI, JULY 30: As a lawyer's petition seeking implementation of the Srikrishna Commission report on the post-Babri Masjid demolition riots in Mumbai comes up for hearing in the Supreme Court tomorrow, the Special Task Force (STF) is unwilling to move against policemen indicted for their role during the riots. The STF says it has already done its bit and its "main job now is to bust milk adulteration and spurious oil rackets in the city". Although the STF was constituted in August 2000 as a prosecuting agency in the riots cases, Satish Gaikwad, DCP (STF), maintains: "Our profile has changed a great deal over the years. We are only meant to monitor the riot-related cases and see that nothing untoward happens in the investigations carried out by local police stations. All work related to the riots was handled by the STF a long time ago and now it's the responsibility of the police stations." Under pressure to implement recommendations of the Commission, Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh has instructed the Mumbai Police Commissioner to take action against policemen indicted by the Commission. Asked whether the STF would follow up cases of indicted policemen and whether it would appeal against acquittal in some cases, Gaikwad said, "That is not our job. Each case is being investigated by a local police station and it is their responsibility to take further action in this regard." "Recently, Crime Branch Control and Sales Tax Cells were placed under me. The STF's main job now is to bust milk adulteration and spurious oil rackets in the city. We have been conducting raids throughout the year and have been busy with such duties. On May 8, we busted a major oil adulteration case, in which 80,000 litres were recovered," he said. Confirming what Gaikwad said, Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Rakesh Maria told The Indian Express: "The STF is only a monitoring body. After an acquittal comes through, it is up to the investigating officer to consult with his superior officers like a DCP and decide whether to go in appeal against an acquittal. The STF is a set-up only to co-ordinate these cases." When asked whether the STF's focus has been diverted to milk adulteration raids, Maria said: "It is only because the CB control branch has been placed under the DCP handling STF that the raids on milk adulteration have been carried out in recent times." The STF, with its office in the Esplanade Court compound, is made up of a DCP, an Assistant Commissioner of Police, two senior police inspectors, two police inspectors, 16 police sub-inspectors and 56 constables. Shakeel Ahmed, the lawyer who has filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking implementation of the Srikrishna Commission's recommendations, said: "It comes as a surprise to me that the STF is still in existence since they have not done any work at all. Out of 1,365 cases it was asked to reopen, the STF chose only 104 cases for scrutiny and took forward only 8 cases, that too half-heartedly. The STF provides no explanation for its inaction in this regard." "There are hundreds of affidavits filed and the STF can make strong cases in each of them as there are plenty of willing witnesses, addresses, recorded statements, details of wireless messages exchanged at that time as well as post mortem details," Ahmed said. According to the Srikrishna Commission report: "Police personnel were found actively participating in riots, communal incidents or incidents of looting, arson and so on." It recommended that the government take strict action against 31 policemen named in the report. So far, only one constable, Sanjay Laxman Gawade, has been dismissed from service. (Indian Express 31/7/07)

Srikrishna report: Maharashtra under pressure (7)

MUMBAI: The Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) coalition Government in Maharashtra is under pressure to examine the implementation of the recommendations of the Srikrishna Commission report on the riots of 1992-93 which took place after the Babri Masjid demolition. Last week, the Supreme Court, in response to various petitions demanding the implementation of the report, said Maharashtra filed a detailed report on the steps taken on the basis of the report. However, the petitioners said appropriate action had not been taken under the law. Hence, it directed them to file a joint affidavit within six weeks mentioning the failure, if any. The case will be heard in the last week of October. After the designated TADA court recently handed over verdicts in the serial bomb blasts case which took place after the riots of 1993, many Muslim organisations and voluntary groups are stepping up the demand to bring the culprits in the riots to book. Signature campaigns have attracted people demanding justice the world over and

petitions under the Right to Information Act said little or no action had been taken against the rioters of 1992-93, including leaders of the Shiv Sena. All cases against Sena chief Bal Thackeray were withdrawn. Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh held a high-level meeting on Monday and directed the police to examine the lapses if any. The Action Committee for the Implementation of the Srikrishna Commission Report filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court in 1998 itself demanding that the Sena-BJP Government which, at that time had rejected the report, be directed to implement it in toto. Naseem Khan of the Action committee and Congress MLA, said a detailed list on the Government's 'lapses' was also filed in 2001 in response to a request from the apex court. The Action Taken Report submitted by the Special Task Force set up to look into the riot cases was also unsatisfactory, he said. On July 24, Mr. Khan and others initiated a dialogue with the Chief Minister and he agreed to look into the issue. Mr. Khan said Mr. Deshmukh had taken a tough stand and would announce some measures to render justice to riot victims soon. (The Hindu 8/8/07)

Maharashtra under pressure over Srikrishna Commission report (7)

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Special cell to re-examine Mumbai riots cases: Commissioner (7)

MUMBAI: The Mumbai police will set up a special cell to re-examine cases related to the communal riots of 1992-93, which killed over 1,000 people. However, City Police Commissioner D.N. Jadhav clarified to the media on Friday that the police did not have the powers to reopen cases withdrawn in the court. He was responding to a question whether cases against Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray would be reopened. Several cases were filed against Mr. Thackeray for his "inflammatory" writings in the party mouthpiece Saamna. But in some matters, they were withdrawn. On Thursday, a delegation led by Teesta Setalvad of the Citizens for Justice and Peace met Mr. Jadhav and asked him to also consider acting against the Saamna for its recent "malicious" writings. Mr. Jadhav said the matter was being examined. However, he said that with reference to the riots he could not go into personal details of cases as the matter was sub judice. The cell would re-examine the cases related to the riots, monitor the ones which had been charge-sheeted and look at the possibilities of reopening cases if there was enough evidence. This was being done in the background of the several cases filed in the Supreme Court seeking the implementation of the Srikrishna Commission report. Last week, the apex court directed the petitioners to file a joint affidavit within six weeks stating the failure, if any, on the part of the State

to implement the Commission report. The case would now be heard in the last week of October. Mr. Jadhav said that as the matter was in court, he could not say much but the police wanted to be prepared and do their homework in case the court issued any directions. This was the fallout of a meeting he held with the Chief Minister earlier this week. He said that of the 31 policemen indicted by the Srikrishna Commission, criminal proceedings were initiated against nine. There were departmental inquiries against 21. Ten policemen were punished while 11 were exonerated and one of them died. (The Hindu 11/8/07)

Justice for riot victims sought (7)

MUMBAI: Prominent citizens, riot victims and various groups came together to demand the implementation of the Srikrishna Commission report on the Mumbai riots of 1992-93 at a public meeting held in the city on Thursday. A citizen's campaign for justice to victims of riots called 'Justice for All' was also launched on the occasion. Speaker after speaker said that revenge was not the motive behind the demand for justice for riot victims. Teesta Setalvad of the Citizens for Justice and Peace, who was part of a delegation to meet Mumbai Police Commissioner D.N. Jadhav said they were making a constitutional demand for justice and it should not be communalised. The delegation demanded that the police take action against the Shiv Sena's newspaper Saamna for its inflammatory reports of the last few days. Julio Ribeiro, who founded the Mohalla Committee Movement Trust in 1994, said that if there was a law it had to be upheld and people who violated it must be punished. He said punishing only one set of people for their terrorist actions and not addressing another section was immoral, illegal and unjust. As a policeman, it was not difficult to find out who the perpetrators of the riots were and punish them. But he pointed out that the law could not be thrown away because of fear of communal violence. There must be efforts to prevent any tension and try the cases openly in court, he added. Pushpa Bhave, writer and critic, called on all Hindus, including Maharashtrians, to come out and say that Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray was not representing them. "People have to reject his contention that valour means cruelty," she said. She said riot cases had to be reopened as a matter of justice. Referring to recent reports in Saamna, Maulana Athar Ali, a cleric, clarified that his statement to the newspaper was misinterpreted. "All I am asking for is that the recommendations of the Srikrishna Commission should be implemented. The culprits must be punished. There is no question of Hindu or Muslim in this," he said. Justice H. Suresh (retd.) who along with Justice S.M. Daud (retd.) had brought out a report on the 1992-93 riots in a short span of six months, said Maharashtra Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh while talking of taking legal opinion on reopening of the riot cases. "All you have to do is register the offences mentioned in the Commission of Inquiry and proceed." (The Hindu 11/8/07)

Activists disappointed with draft of Communal Violence Prevention Bill (7)

AHMEDABAD: Human rights activists, legal experts and others concerned with secular principles in Gujarat have outrightly rejected the draft bill of the UPA government to prevent the recurrence of communal violence in the country. A meeting of the Concerned Citizens of Gujarat to discuss the draft Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, 2005, expressed disappointment over such a half-hearted measure coming from the UPA government which in its Common Minimum Programme had promised a comprehensive legislation for the purpose. With the memory of the scars inflicted during the "state-sponsored" communal riots in the State in 2002 still alive in the minds of the people, the meeting expressed surprise at the Bill seeking to give more powers to the State governments to deal with such a situation. It said many of the State governments had often been found wanting when dealing with such a situation and giving such authorities wider powers would be an uncalled for measure. Terming the Bill a "piece of misconceived legislation," the meeting said a measure that was expected to fill the vacuum in the existing framework and of fundamental importance to address the challenges posed to the secular character of the society was drafted in haste without following the consultative process with civil society. It demanded drafting of a new legislation but only with active participation of the civil society through an open, transparent public process involving civil society, particularly eminent jurists, human right activists, academicians and legal experts. Without making any specific reference to the Narendra Modi government in Gujarat, it said the measure to prevent communal violence should give more powers to the citizens in their struggle against

communalism and provide for stringent measures to curb mass and gender-based crimes committed with political intent. The activists hoped that the Centre would give adequate thought to address the concerns of citizens, in the coming session of the Parliament. (The Hindu 12/8/07)

Shiv Sena threatens protests if report changed (7)

Mumbai, Aug. 12: The Shiv Sena on Sunday declared that it will come on the streets of Mumbai if cases of 1992-93 riots are re-opened and the Srikrishna Commission report is implemented by the Democratic Front government. "We will come out on streets and anything can happen," said Mr Subhash Desai, spokesperson of Shiv Sena. According to the reports, Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray has also warned that if the Srikrishna Commission report is implemented the Sena will not hesitate to come out on the streets. Mr Sanjay Raut reacting on the government's idea to implement the report said, "Why is this issue being raked up after nine years of the report being tabled? The then state government had rejected it." The Sena feels that the communal harmony in Maharashtra will get disturbed if the report is implemented and will cause unnecessary tension in the city and the state. "The motive of Congress party behind the reopening of the 1992-93 riots cases is just to appease the minority community," said Mr Desai. The spokesperson opined that the ongoing debate in the media on the accused of 1993 bomb blasts being getting convicted and the accused in the riot cases going scot free should not be mixed as both the incidents are separate. "All the riot cases have been detected and no cases are left undetected, in all 31 people also have been convicted in the communal riot related cases," said Mr Desai. (Asian Age 13/8/07)

Six killed in group clash at Tenkasi (7)

TENKASI: Six persons, including three brothers, were killed in a clash between activists of the Hindu Munnani and the Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnetra Kazhagam here on Tuesday. Five others sustained grievous injuries. The police said Murugesan alias Abdullah (28) of Achchanputhur and his associate Hanifa (24) of Tenkasi, released on bail in a case of murder of Tenkasi town Hindu Munnani president, S. Kumar Pandian, were returning after signing the register at the All Women Police Station, Tenkasi, as part of fulfilling their bail conditions. Their two-wheeler, which was escorted by their supporters in four autorickshaws, was hit by a car near Koolakkadai Bazaar at 10.15 a.m. Immediately, an armed gang assaulted the duo with deadly weapons. Their supporters in the autorickshaws retaliated with weapons. In the five-minute clash in the busy area, Hasan Ghani (30) and Kumar Pandian's younger brothers S. Suresh (25) and S. Sekar (29) were killed on the spot. Basheer (30) succumbed to injuries at the Government Hospital here. Kumar Pandian's another brother, Senthil, Raja, Abdullah, Abu Anzari, Nagoor Meeran, Meeran Maideen and Syed Ali, who sustained grievous injuries, were rushed to Tirunelveli Medical College Hospital. However, Senthil and Nagoor Meeran died in the hospital. All business establishments in the town downed their shutters and schools declared a holiday for the day. Bus services were not hit, thanks to immediate police deployment, led by the Deputy Inspector General of Police, P. Kannappan. The Additional Director-General of Police (Law and Order), K. Vijay Kumar, the Inspector General of Police, South Zone, Sanjeev Kumar, and the Superintendent of Police, C. Sridhar, are camping here. Speaking to reporters, Collector G. Prakash said that all efforts would be made to bring back normality in Tenkasi at the earliest by instilling confidence in the minds of the public. Anticipating law and order problems in the sensitive areas of Kadayanallur and Melapalayam, additional police forces had been deployed. "After Kumar Pandian was murdered on December 17, 2006, an attempt on the life of Maideen Sait Khan was made on March 2. Due to previous enmity between two groups and subsequent clashes, six persons have been murdered. This is not a clash between the followers of two religions," Mr. Prakash said. (The Hindu 15/8/07)

Srikrishna report revival badly timed for the Congress-NCP (7)

MUMBAI: The demand to implement the Srikrishna Commission report on the 1992-93 communal riots in Mumbai could not have come at a worse time for the Congress-Nationalist Congress party (NCP) Government in Maharashtra. Its relations were at an all-time high with the Shiv Sena. On the eve of the Presidential polls on June 18, the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra actually paid a never-before visit to Matoshri, the home of Shiv Sena leader Bal

Thackeray to thank him for supporting the UPA candidate for President. The Sena broke ranks with its alliance partner in Maharashtra of 21 years, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), to back Ms. Pratibha Patil. Ms. Patil since then has called Sena executive president Uddhav Thackeray on his birthday and last week, her husband Devisingh Patil paid a courtesy visit to the Thackeray senior. The Sena-BJP alliance is on the rocks and even though a glimmer of hope was felt after the Sena voted for NDA candidate Najma Heptullah in the elections to the post of Vice-President, things are not hunky dory. On Monday, the district chiefs of the Shiv Sena held a meeting at the Sena Bhavan and decided to pass a unanimous resolution saying that the alliance with the BJP must be broken off. The Sena rank and file feels that the BJP calling their support to a Maharashtrian woman for President as a "betrayal" was an insult to the party. However, late on Monday night Uddhav Thackeray who was cornered by the press while attending the 47th anniversary celebration of the weekly magazine, Marmik, said he still had to see the resolution. He did not want to comment on the issue as Rajnath Singh, the BJP president, had called his father regarding the elections to the Vice-President and also assured him that the alliance would continue. (The Hindu 16/8/07)

Demand for dismissal of policemen indicted by Srikrishna panel (7)

Mumbai: Many civil liberties groups and activists in the city have expressed scepticism about the implementation of the Srikrishna Commission report on the Mumbai riots of 1992-93 as the same promises were made by the Congress Government in 2000. About 15 organisations at a public meeting on Friday made a forceful demand for the State to act immediately by dismissing the policemen indicted by the Commission and entrusting the cases to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). This would be the first step to instil confidence in the Muslim community, said Shakeel Ahmed of the Nirbhay Bano Andolan. He said the policemen should be charged with criminal offences for their actions and also for registering false cases against people after the riots. The Congress, in its election manifesto in 1999, had said that it would implement the report of the Commission. Recently, Congress president Sonia Gandhi had said that the report would be implemented. However, Mr. Ahmed points out that the same assurances were made in 2000 by both Ms. Gandhi and Vilasrao Deshmukh, who was the Chief Minister then too. "All our posters and pamphlets are old, our demands are old and over the years, nothing has changed," said Mr. Ahmed. All cases closed by the Government and listed as "A" summary cases (true but undetected) should be reopened and the cases under 25 of the worst-affected police stations should be opened, he said. A senior police official should then investigate the "A" summary cases with the help of the documents and affidavits of witnesses, who deposed before the Commission. (The Hindu 18/8/07)

Activists seek proper execution of Srikrishna report (7)

Mumbai : Social activist and Muslim groups here on Saturday came up with a fresh demand that a dozen more cases related to the 1992-93 Mumbai riots be brought under the purview of the two fast-track courts proposed by the Vilasrao Deshmukh Government to deal with two dozen key riot cases. The social activist-Muslim groups, working under the banner Nyay Andolan, also demanded that a Special Investigation Team (SIT), along the lines of the one formed to investigate the fake stamp paper scam involving Abdul Karim Telgi, be set up to probe the riot cases. The Nyay Andolan went a step ahead, demanding that the DF Government initiate a comprehensive "witness protection programme" to take care of the security of the witnesses wanting to depose in the 1992-93 riot cases. Talking to mediapersons here, activist Teesta Setalvad - who is spear-heading the campaign for the implementation of the Srikrishna Commission report - said that the representatives of the activists' group would meet Deputy Chief Minister RR Patil on Monday to present a list of 35-odd riot cases which, the Nyay Andolan wants the State Government to bring under the purview of the proposed fast-track. The statement, in effect, meant that Nyay Andolan wanted the State Government to enlarge the purview of the two special courts, which were initially meant for dealing with two dozen riot-related cases. Setalvad also wants that the special courts be vested with powers to entertain appeals in cases where acquittals have happened in the 1992-93 riot cases in the past or re-open cases where necessary. "Besides these, we would like the State Government to start a comprehensive witness protection programme to take care of the security of crucial witnesses wanting to depose in the

riot-related cases," she said. Maharashtra unit secretary Jamait-UI-Ulema, Maulana Mustaqeem, said that his organisation had formed a panel of lawyers, led by senior counsel Yusuf Mucchala, to go through all the records of the cases. (Pioneer 18/8/07)

Mumbai riots cases: Maha Govt to seek special courts (7)

Mumbai, August 22 : The Maharashtra Government has decided to request the Bombay High Court to set up special courts for speedy trial of cases related to the 1992-93 Mumbai riots. At a meeting on Wednesday, the state cabinet also approved the setting up of a high-level committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary (Home) to expedite the resolution of the cases. "The state Government will now request the High Court to set up special courts so that the guilty are punished quickly," a senior official said after a meeting of the Cabinet. Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh had recently assured a delegation of activists that special courts will be set up to try the pending riot cases mentioned in the Justice Srikrishna Commission report, which inquired into the riots. The committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary (Home) will also include Principal Secretary (Law and Judiciary), the Joint Commissioner of Police concerned and the government pleader, Mumbai. The committee would see which riot cases are pending in which court and examine the reasons. It will then bring the list of these pending cases to the notice of the High Court and request it to transfer them to the special courts and conduct the hearings on a daily basis. The Cabinet decided that a team of special prosecutors will be formed and the committee will review the progress of the cases twice a month. In case it is found that the police did not register some cases, the committee will make necessary suggestions. (Indian Express 23/8/07)

Srikrishna report will be implemented: Dasmunsi (7)

NEW DELHI: The Union government will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that the Srikrishna report on the 1993 Mumbai riots is implemented. This assurance was given by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Priyaranjan Dasmunsi in the Lok Sabha on Friday after question hour. According to the Minister, United Progressive Alliance chairperson Sonia Gandhi was seriously pursuing the matter. He also pointed out that Maharashtra Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh had already said that some recommendations of the report had been implemented. Action would be taken on the remaining recommendations. The issue was raised by Communist Party of India (Marxist) member Hannan Mollah. Stating that the report had not been implemented nine years after it was submitted, he said many policemen held guilty had been promoted instead of being punished. Still others named in the report had been allowed to go scot-free. (The Hindu 25/8/07)

Mumbai riots: NCM to hold public hearing (7)

New Delhi, August 27: The entire National Commission of Minorities (NCM) — its five members and its secretariat — would be in Mumbai on September 5 and 6, to hold a public hearing of all the victims of the Mumbai communal riots of 1992-93. The Commission will be speaking to victims and their families and will record any complaints or grievances they may have on the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. The idea is to prepare a report on the progress over the past 14 years. This move is also being seen as significant in the light of the UPA's anxiety to go full steam ahead on matters relating to minority justice and welfare, in case the current political impasse on the nuclear deal does eventually lead to mid-term polls. While the NCM's public hearing is on the first day, meetings with senior officials and members of the government are scheduled for the next day. Interestingly, as Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh — who had earlier announced his intention to set up fast-track courts on the matter — is traveling on those days, Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister R R Patil would be meeting the Commission. This is the first time that a full meeting of the Commission is being held in Mumbai. Under the chairmanship of Hamid Ansari (before he resigned to stand for elections for Vice-President), the Commission had recently decided to hold every alternate meeting in a city outside Delhi. Meetings have already been held in Chennai and Bangalore under this new arrangement. NCM Member Prof Zoya Hasan, in the Chennai meeting on July 2, had raised the issue of the implementation of the Srikrishna Commission recommendations, before the matter was taken up by the Supreme Court and before the Mumbai blast judgements were announced. However, says Hasan; "the NCM has been taking up incidents like Gujarat and Mumbai (now) very seriously, as

they were cases that involved mass violence. The NCM even sent teams to Malegaon last year." The Srikrishna Commission submitted its report on February 16, 1998. It named several police officers and political leaders (including several prominent names from the Shiv Sena and some from the BJP). The findings were however, rejected by the Shiv Sena-BJP government in the state at the time. However, with the convictions in the 1993 bomb blasts being given recently, there were loud calls for bringing the perpetrators of the violence in the riots to book. The Srikrishna Commission clearly makes the connection between the riots and the blasts and says the blasts were a direct reaction to the rioting in the city following the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. A PIL was also registered in the Supreme Court on the implementation of the Srikrishna recommendations. The Supreme Court is to give its final order the matter in October. (Indian Express 28/8/07)

Justice not in sight: Advocate (7)

Mumbai, Aug. 27: The special court to be set up to look into and implement the Srikrishna Commission report recommendations will not bring justice to the families, who have lost their sons and fathers, said advocate Shakeel Ahmed. Talking to this newspaper he said, "The sarkar is just transferring the cases now in the fast-track courts to yet another special court. The issue is not of setting up special courts. The issue is whether the families will get justice." He cited the case of Akhtari Tahir Wagle, who filed an FIR with the Byculla police station a week ago about her 16-year-old son Shahnawaz, who was dragged out of their house in front of his sister Yasmin and was beaten with rifle butts and kicked by the police. When he was being taken away in the police van, a constable shot him at point-blank range and he collapsed on the spot. Ms Akhtari (58), said, "My son was shot dead in the most gruesome manner in presence of my daughter and neighbours, who witnessed this crime at the hands of police from their windows. My daughter and I tried to reach my son, but the police did not allow us to come out of the building, though we reached the ground floor of the building. When I insisted on going near my son, the police hit me with batons on my legs." She wrote further in her FIR that "My daughter Yasmeen Hasan Wagle has also deposed before Justice Srikrishna Commission and filed her affidavit before the commission. The police, who raided Pathan Chawl on January 10, 1993 and who were present when the said incident took place are responsible for the murder of my son. He was not even an accused in any crime and yet had to pay with his life." (Asian Age 28/8/07)

Pension for families of Bhagalpur riot victims (7)

PATNA: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday decided to grant pension to the families of those killed in the 1989 Bhagalpur riots. Accepting the interim recommendations of the Justice N.N. Singh Commission, Mr. Kumar has decided to petition the Centre to accord the same compensation package given to victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and the Gujarat riots. Home Secretary Afzal Amanullah would be visiting Delhi to hand over the State's petition to the Ministry of Home Affairs and deliver the Chief Minister's letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in this regard. The official death toll in the riots was 853 and the authorities are likely to add the claims of about 25 more deaths. A pension of Rs. 2,500 would be given to only one member of the affected family irrespective of the number of its members killed in the riots. Mr. Kumar said that the Cabinet would meet and clear the proposal at the earliest. He hoped that the Centre would also accept the recommendations made by the commission and provide its share of compensation to the families of the deceased and meet the cost of reconstruction of the property lost by about 50,000 families in 250 villages of 15 blocks of the district. (The Hindu 29/8/07)

Bhagalpur riots panel submits interim report (7)

Patna: Justice (Retd) NN Singh on Tuesday submitted the interim report of the Bhagalpur communal riots to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. The Commission was constituted on February 26 last year to give a report on the infamous Bhagalpur communal riots in which over 1,000 people had lost their lives and property worth lakhs was damaged. The first interim report, however, dealt with only one aspect and suggested ways and means for rehabilitation and giving relief to the victims of the riots that happened in 1989. The interim report has suggested that there were similarities between the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and the Bhagalpur riots of 1889-90 in regard to their enormity, extent, barbarism, devastation and loss of life and property. "The State

Government should take up the matter with the Central Government requesting them to grant similar package for the victims of the Bhagalpur riots as it has done for the victims of the 1984 anti Sikh riots," suggested the interim report. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, while accepting the interim report, said that he would request the Central Government for the required package soon. "Since I've accepted the interim report in toto I've asked the Principal Home Secretary of the State to go to Delhi with the report and request the Home Ministry there for held," said Kumar. He also said that since the Central Government had announced a similar relief and rehabilitation package for the victims of the 2002 Gujarat communal riots he would write to the Prime Minister requesting him for the same to the Bhagalpur riots victims. "The State Government will grant a pension of Rs 2,500 to the victims of Bhagalpur as it was mentioned in the Justice Nanawati Commission of Inquiry probing the 1984 anti-Sikh riots," said the Chief Minister. "Providing pension is the State Government's responsibility and we will definitely go by it," he said. According to the report of the Commission, the State Government might grant pension to all the widows and old aged persons killed in 1984 riots at the uniform rate of Rs 2,500 per month for the whole life. "I would abide by that provision and the Central Government too on its part should provide relief and rehabilitation package," said the Chief Minister. (Pioneer 29/8/07)

Mobs run riot in Agra after mishap (7)

Agra: Unruly mobs ran riot in the city of Taj Mahal on Wednesday morning, indulging in widespread arson and attacking police as well as innocent people. By afternoon, the entire city was engulfed in communal violence. At least one person was killed in police firing and scores of people were injured in the rioting. More than 30 vehicles were set on fire and property worth lakhs of rupees destroyed. The violence erupted after revellers of Shab-e-Baraat blocked the Delhi-Agra highway and went on a rampage to protest the death of four men riding a motorcycle who were hit by a truck on Mahatma Gandhi Road at 3.40 am. The driver was arrested and the truck seized in the Sadar Bazar area. A mob chasing the truck set it on fire. Later, when policemen tried to disperse the mob, it attacked the Nai Ki Mandi police station. District Magistrate Mukesh Kumar Meshram had to hide inside a room at Nai ki Mandi police station to save his life after the mob attacked the police station. Meanwhile on MG Road, mobs stopped traffic at Dhakran crossing and torched another five trucks. A total of 20 trucks were set ablaze through the day. Trailer trucks laden with refrigerators, cars and tractors were gutted. Five factories, including a soft drinks bottling plant, were ransacked, looted and then set on fire. Broken bottles and iron rods lifted from the factories were used as weapons. A senior police official speaking to The Pioneer described the situation as tense. Curfew has been imposed in the affected areas. The rampaging mobs tried to torch some houses. Prior to that, they damaged three religious places belonging to the majority community. Crowds also gathered at Sundarpada, Eidgah and Kajipada. The administration is jittery as Janmashtami, one of the major festivals of the region, is due next week and this is the main access road to Mathura and Vrindavan. By mid-morning on Wednesday, areas around MG Road were marked by burning vehicles and billowing smoke. The streets were strewn with stones hurled by the rioters. The four men who died in the accident were reportedly related to BSP MLA Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Residents of the area claimed that the administration blocks traffic on MG Road on the occasion of Shab-e-Baraat every year but this time it did not do so. "The situation soon took a communal tone after some shops belonging to the majority community were set on fire. Three religious places were also damaged," said a police officer. According to eyewitnesses, the rioters kept on daring the police. After a while, the policemen concealed their identities by removing their nametags and then lathicharged the mob... Pioneer 30/8/07)

Post-Godhra riots: Plea filed to summon Modi before panel (7)

AHMEDABAD, AUGUST 31: The Jan Sangharsh Manch (JSM) has moved an application before Justice Nanavati and Justice Shah Inquiry Commission, submitting that Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi and his personal assistants in the Chief Minister's office (CMO) be summoned by the Commission for their alleged role in the 2002 post-Godhra riots. It submitted that apart from Modi, the Commission should also summon Law Minister Ashok Bhatt and the then Minister of State for Home Gordhan Zadaphia. Advocate Hiralal Gupta, who represents the Congress, has also filed the application on similar lines, submitting that Modi and Zadaphia be summoned to

depose before the Commission. The Commission will take up the applications for hearing on September 3. In the application, Gupta submitted that allegations of serious nature have come up regarding the duo's alleged role during the riots. He has based his claims on the analyses of CDs containing call details of politicians, ministers and Government officials. The CDs were submitted by CBI officer Rahul Sharma in 2004. He has also annexed the analyses of the CDs and submitted that there were evidences to suggest that the 2002 violence was result of a "pre-planned" conspiracy in which several ministers and Government officials were involved. (Indian Express 1/9/07)

Life after '02 riots: a long wait for help (7)

More than five months have passed since the Central Government announced a relief and rehabilitation package for post-Godhra riot victims at par with that given to the 1984 Sikh riot victims, but survivors of the riots here have not received a single penny yet. State's new drive against plastic will have some teeth HIV+ patients pushed to the edge Separatists reach out to people to hog talks limelight Separatists reach out to people to hog talks limelight Northeast calling: It's time to exorcise violence ghost The announcement was made in March this year. The next of kin of the dead were to be given Rs 3.5 lakh in addition to the ex gratia of Rs 1.5 lakh given by the state Government. The injured persons were to be given Rs 1.25 lakh each. No compensation was announced for the loss of property as '84 riot victims were also not given any compensation for damage to property. Official figures said a total of 1,169 people had died in the riots and 2,548 were injured. Unofficial sources put the death toll as also the figure of the injured much higher. "The compensation amount announced by the Union Government has been received and will be distributed to the victims as soon as the methodology of distribution is finalised," said a senior official in the Union Home Ministry. Mankad, however, said the state was yet to receive the compensation money. "The district administration will distribute additional compensation as soon as funds are received," he said. NGO activists working for the 2002 riot victims, including the internally displaced persons, are not satisfied. They are insisting on a separate package of Rs 4 lakh for each internally displaced family. A survey done by them says there are a 6,250 internally displaced families living in makeshift resettlement colonies on the outskirts of cities. However, the state admits the existence of only 3,660 such families. The rest, according to it, have returned to their native places and resettled there. In a report, the National Commission for Minorities had recommended granting them the status of the "internally displaced due to violence" and fair monetary compensation. These displaced families were given only Rs 1,200 as 'ghar vakhari' (assistance to buy household goods) for all they lost, like their homes and means of livelihood. The activists say the total cost for rehabilitation of displaced families would be around Rs 200 crore. (Indian Express 3/9/07)

Nanavati Commission reserves order on summoning Modi (7)

AHMEDABAD: The G.T. Nanavati and K.G. Shah Judicial Commission, probing the Godhra train carnage and the communal riots that followed in Gujarat, has reserved order till September 17 on the Jansangharsha Manch's demand for summoning Chief Minister Narendra Modi and others for cross-examination. The Commission on Monday directed government pleader Arvind Pandya, to file objections, if any, by September 12 to its intention of questioning a few people on the authenticity of two compact discs (CDs) to establish the relevance of summoning Mr. Modi and others. The direction was issued after Manch advocate Mukul Sinha requested the Commission to probe on its own the authenticity of the CDs following Mr. Pandya's statement last month that no such CD was available with the State CID (Crime), main source of material. The CDs contain details of over a million calls made to and from mobile phones held by some Ministers, Sangh Parivar leaders and senior police officers. The CDs were given to the Commission in 2005 by the then police Superintendent, Rahul Sharma, who was attached to the CID (Crime), during his cross-examination. But Mr. Pandya, in his August 5 letter, informed the Commission that no such CDs were available in government records. Dr. Sinha, who represents the riot victims, demanded the summoning of Mr. Modi, his then Minister of State for Home, Gordhan Jhadafiya, Health Minister Ashok Bhatt and a few others after an analysis of the CDs showed the proximity of some Parivar leaders to the sites which recorded the most gruesome incidents of manslaughter, including Naroda-Patiya and Gulberg Society here. Dr. Sinha claimed that the decision to

complete the "so-called" post-mortem on the bodies of the victims of the train carnage on the Godhra railway yard, despite the lack of facilities and equipment there, was taken by Mr. Bhatt in consultation with Mr. Modi. Several affidavits and key witnesses revealed that it was Mr. Modi's "personal decision" to bring all bodies to Ahmedabad the very next day, though some victims were not from the city, and take out huge funeral processions. Accordingly, the bodies were handed over to State Vishwa Hindu Parishad general secretary Jaideep Patel at Godhra for being brought to Ahmedabad. Pointing out that the funeral processions fomented communal passion among Hindus, resulting in large-scale violence, Dr. Sinha claimed that the decisions were taken as part of the Modi administration's "deadly plan" to "instigate" the Hindus to take "revenge" for the train carnage. (The Hindu 4/9/07)

Srikrishna panel said 'fabricated' case, but Mumbai police file new chargesheet (7)

Mumbai, September 14: Over 14 years after the Mumbai riots, the police today filed a new chargesheet against Farooq Mapkar, one of those injured in the Hari Masjid firing, in a case which the Srikrishna Commission report described as "wholly unbelievable" and "fabricated". Last year, a trial court had acquitted 49 other accused in the case for want of evidence. Adnan murder: Fifth accused denied bail, held Adnan wasn't a spoilt brat, say parents Murder was pre-planned: cops Court directs police to arrest Thackeray Adnan murder: Fourth accused changing statement, say cops The case dates back to January 10, 1993, when six people died in police firing at Hari Masjid in Sewri. The police claimed they were attacked by an armed mob of 2,000-2,500 persons, and fired in self-defence. Nikhil Kapse, then a sub-inspector at RAK Marg police station, filed a complaint alleging that the mob set some slums on fire at a Hindu locality near the mosque. The police booked 50 in the case. Mapkar was 35th on the list. He was also one of those injured in the firing. Last year, Mapkar's case was separated from the rest on the charge that "he was not cooperating", according to his lawyer, Shakil Ahmed. The remaining 49 were acquitted. In its report, the Srikrishna panel held Kapse, now an assistant police inspector, "guilty of unjustified firing" and "inhuman and brutal behavior". The commission recorded victims' statements on "how the police resorted to unprovoked firing". Earlier this year, Mapkar filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court demanding that the police investigate the case and book Kapse for murder. Citing new evidence, the police today charged Mapkar with murder and rioting, on the basis of the statement of "eyewitness" Arun Ghadge. "In view of the situation then, the police filed a chargesheet in a hurried manner. We now have fresh evidence and the case looks stronger," said N G Wayal, senior police inspector, RAK Marg police station. Ghadge's statement says the mob attacked his cousin and stabbed him. However, in his deposition before a court last year, Ghadge had claimed that he was not even in the locality on the day of the incident. (Indian Express 15/9/07)

Ex gratia for Gujarat riot victims enhanced (7)

NEW DELHI: Ahead of the Assembly elections in Gujarat due this November-December, the Centre on Thursday enhanced ex gratia assistance and made Rs.70.55 crore available to the victims of 2002 communal violence in the State. In the case of death, involving 1,169 cases, an ex gratia of Rs.3.5 lakh will be paid in addition to the assistance already given by the State government. In case of injury, involving 2,548 cases, it will be Rs.1.25 lakh after deducting the assistance given by the State government. The entire expenditure will be borne by the Central government. Only those who received ex-gratia earlier will be eligible for the enhanced additional amount. All the claims will be verified by the local administration or agency of the State government. In a letter sent last week, the Centre had asked the State Government to ensure that the claims were settled and the utilisation certificates sent to the Home Ministry within 45 days. "We are working on some other aspects of the enhanced package also," Home Minister Shivraj Patil said. Ministry officials said that "other aspects" would include compensation for uninsured commercial and residential properties destroyed in the riots and employment for the riot victims in the State. (The Hindu 21/9/07)

More than 20 held for Betma violence (7)

Indore : Amid allegations and weighty arguments on "who started", tension prevailed at Betma tehsil near Indore on Monday where over 30 persons were injured after a communal violence that

broke out during a religious procession on Sunday night. More than 20 villagers were arrested by the police on charges of disrupting communal harmony in the region. The Congress, however, held the ruling Government responsible for the whole incident. Tension arose after a few people suddenly pelted stones during a religious procession at around 9.30 pm. Soon violence gripped the entire area with stone pelting and arson. More than 25 shops were set afire. Section 144 had to be imposed to quell the situation. On Sunday, many villagers led by saffron brigade pelted stones on Congress leader Subhash Yadav and the party workers when they entered the region to take stock of the situation. The police had to resort to lathicharge to disperse the mob. Addressing the media Subhash Yadav said that violence was a pre-planned effort by the ruling Government. He appealed to put a ban on the RSS and other organisations accusing them of provoking communal violence. Ironically, this was the first time when the members of the two communities clashed with each other. Whereas, they had been celebrating the occasion with mutual understandings and equal participation. The community leaders were seen shifting onus against each other for beginning the violence. The police said that they have launched investigation into the matter and would arrest the culprits within 24 hours. Additional police force was deployed in the area. (Pioneer 25/9/07)

Modi didn't go to massacre site: BJP (7)

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party said on Friday that Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi did not visit Naroda Patiya in Ahmedabad immediately after the massacre, post-Godhra carnage in 2002, as claimed by the Tehelka expose telecast on Thursday night by Aaj Tak and Headlines Today. Party spokesman Ravi Shankar Prasad defended Mr. Modi and expressed "regret" for what happened in Gujarat 2002. As for the allegation that Mr. Modi visited Naroda Patiya immediately after the massacre of some dozens of Muslims to "bless" the rioters, praise their "good work" and encourage them, Mr. Prasad said that Mr. Modi had not gone there that day. "A Chief Minister's movements are recorded. This can be verified." Asked whether the BJP would benefit electorally from the expose, he said: "No comments". He said the "expose" was trying to deflect the current debate focussed on development in Gujarat, and blamed the Congress. Why had Tehelka not done any sting on a Congress Chief Minister or in a State ruled by the Congress, he asked. The timing strongly suggested that it was aimed at impacting the Gujarat Assembly election. Mr. Prasad said some of the men making "confessions" of terrible murders in the expose could be making "empty boasts," some might have been "entrapped" and "if there was some truth as well, this should be dealt with by the judicial process." Could the BJP explain why and how its ideology bred persons who "boasted" on television that they dismembered a person or slit open the stomach of a pregnant woman? To this, Mr. Prasad said: "The BJP does not appreciate comments about dismembering people or roasting them alive in fires." Arun Jaitley, party general secretary and in charge of the Gujarat elections, was away in Ahmedabad. He was not available for comments. BJP president Rajnath Singh indicated that senior leaders would meet to decide on how to tackle the issue, which the party called a "Congress conspiracy to raise the communal temperature in Gujarat." "Why is the Congress hobnobbing with Gordhan Jhadafiya, who was Home Minister in Gujarat at the time of the riots and has now been thrown out of the BJP," some party leaders asked. As for the direct indictment of one BJP MLA who allegedly led a murderous mob in 2002, Mr. Prasad said it was for the party's State unit to initiate disciplinary action, if it was needed. (The Hindu 27/10/07)

See no sting, hear no sting: Ahmedabad Collector pulls plug on television news in city

AHMEDABAD, OCTOBER 26: Claiming that it could evoke "communal feeling," District Collector of Ahmedabad Dhananjay Dwivedi today ordered off the air news channels showing the Tehelka-Aaj Tak sting that purportedly quotes the 2002 riot footsoldiers boasting about carrying out the killings with state support. The channels banned by Dwivedi include Aaj Tak, Headlines Today, NDTV 24x7, NDTV India, CNN-IBN and IBN-Live. Additional chief electoral officer, Ashok Manek, confirmed that the district collector had issued the order. Despite several attempts to contact him, Dwivedi was unavailable for comment. Cable operators in some parts of the city had blocked the channels on their own yesterday evening. But the Collector's order made it official. The state government said it has nothing to do with the Collector's order. Said state information department

director Bhagyesh Jha, "The government has neither directed nor is aware of any such order issued by the Ahmedabad District Collectorate. There is a possibility that he may have done so on his own as District Election Officer." While the Election Commission in Delhi said it hadn't issued any such instructions, the State Election Commission sought a detailed report from Dwivedi. Neighbouring Gandhinagar District Collector Mamta Verma and Vadodara Collector Rajiv Topno have not issued any such order. According to the order, the channels are banned under Section 5 of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the telecasts "can evoke communal feeling, violence and disturb the law and order situation." Copies of the order have been marked to all cable operators, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) and the city Police Commissioner. CBI probe, says Maya; Lalu for Modi's arrest . • Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati has written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh seeking a fresh CBI probe into the Gujarat riots. • "Modi's deep involvement in the mass murder of Muslims has been established. He should be arrested immediately," said RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav. • Questioning the authenticity of the sting, BJP's Ravishanker Prasad said it was "an attempt to bring about sharp communal divide ahead of the Gujarat Assembly polls". • Tapes should be taken as prime facie evidence and the SC and Centre should move fast to ensure all those guilty are brought to justice: CPM (Indian Express 27/10/07)

Summon Tehelka tapes, citizens group urges the Supreme Court (7)

New Delhi: Expressing concern over the revelations in the recent Tehelka sting operation, the Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) on Saturday moved the Supreme Court for calling for the tapes and for early hearing of the Gujarat riots cases pending for four years. The application was filed in the transfer cases related to the Godhra arson; Gulberg, Naroda Gaon and Patiya massacres, and Sardarpura and Ode carnage pending since they had been stayed in November 2003. The CJP alleged that the brazen admission of and gloating by the accused, who were roaming free in Gujarat, over the rape and killing of innocents put the lives of over 190 eyewitnesses and survivors in danger. The application urged the court to treat the issue with the immediacy of a life threatening situation and "protect the lives of witnesses and the evidence which is likely to be destroyed by the state and its agencies." The CJP said, "The safety and security of victim survivors and witnesses, given the high level and brazen patronage of state-sponsored violence in the State, is at stake. As far as criminal trials and the administration of justice are concerned, these revelations [in the Tehelka expose] are indicators that evidence may severely be affected or tampered with by the powers that be in Gujarat." It said, "In the light of this report and the fact that the witnesses are still being threatened and there are allegations of complicity between the killers and not just the police and law and order machinery but sections of the judiciary, the security and safety of the victim survivors and witnesses remains a serious question mark. It is imperative that the matters for re-investigation and transfer out of the State get heard on an urgent basis." CJP secretary Teesta Setalwad said that in the last five years, the State had already harmed the trials to a large extent, by repeated obfuscations, falsehoods and delays. Any further delay would only render these trials impossible to prosecute. The application sought a direction to place the matters for hearing on an urgent basis; summon the original CDs, transcripts and all other material available with Tehelka on its report and to pass other orders the court might deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case. (The Hindu 28/10/07)

Let the people decide: Modi (7)

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday declined to comment on the Tehelka exposé on the post-Godhra communal riots in the State in 2002. Without referring to the exposé, Mr. Modi said he had decided not to react to the "abuses and criticism" being heaped on him from various quarters. It would be for the people to decide the truth and not for him to react to every "abuse hurled at him." Mr. Modi was speaking at a public rally in Surat, where the Nagarik Abhibhadan Samiti handed over new motorbikes to 37 persons whose vehicles were burnt at a rally attended by him at the same venue last week. At the behest of Mr. Modi, the Samiti had promised to raise public donations from BJP sympathisers to replace the damaged vehicles. The BJP had accused the local Congress leaders of being behind the fire at the parking lot outside the rally venue. Mr. Modi criticised the Congress and the Centre for "delaying" insurance payment for the damaged vehicles. (The Hindu 29/10/07)

Life term for 8 in Eral rape and murder case (7)

AHMEDABAD: A Godhra court on Tuesday sentenced eight persons to life term and three others to three-year rigorous imprisonment for the murder of seven Muslims at Eral village during the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat. The two women among the victims were also raped. According to the prosecution, a 100-strong mob hounded the Muslim residents of the village in Panchamahals district on March 1, 2002. While the others fled, the seven, who ran into open fields, were attacked by the rioters. Five men died on the spot. Shabana and Suhana were gang-raped and killed. Shabana's mother Madinabibi, who was hiding behind a tree, witnessed the crime. She filed a complaint with the Halol police and approached the Gujarat High Court expressing an apprehension that she would not get justice in the Godhra court.' (The Hindu 31/10/07)

Activists concerned over sting disclosure (7)

New Delhi/Ahmedabad, Oct. 30: Gujarat-based activists and concerned citizens have expressed strong moral outrage at the shocking disclosures made in the Tehelka-AajTak expose on the post-Godhra carnage of 2002. The expose alludes to the direct involvement of the elected members of the state Assembly, Cabinet ministers of government of Gujarat, the administration officials and the police and judicial machinery in carrying out the carnage, they said. In a statement issued, the Concerned Citizens of Gujarat said, "We also condemn the unilateral and unconstitutional decision of the Ahmedabad district collector of taking six news channels off the air while the telecast was going on. This is a serious and direct infringement of the freedom of the press and the freedom of expression in Gujarat." They added, "We also condemn the arrest of two innocent residents of Bhuj who were called by the police for denying them the permission for holding a peaceful demonstration in support of the victims of the carnage of 2002. In light of the revelations in the Tehelka-AajTak expose, we demand that the Central government should issue an ordinance suitably amending the provision of the Delhi Police Establishment Act which requires the consent of the state government for investigating any matter by the CBI and immediately order the entire matter be investigated by the CBI." They demanded that the BJP, as the principal party in power at the Centre and in the state as well back then, should take moral responsibility for the crimes committed in 2002 and issue a strong condemnation of those involved in the crimes and shown in the tapes. They also said the state administration should take immediate steps to cancel the bail of all those named in the tapes, viz. Babu Bajrangji, Jaydeep Patel and all others accused in the various cases related to the post-Godhra violence, who have been caught on tape confessing to the same and who are currently out on bail. Meanwhile, a fresh affidavit urging the Gujarat high court to take cognisance of a recent sting operation on Godhra riots has been filed here on Tuesday. Widow of former Congress MP Ehsan Jafri, who was lynched and then burnt to death by mobs in the post-Godhra riots, Ms Zakia Nasim Ahsan Jafri has filed an affidavit urging Justice MR Shah of the high court to take cognisance of a sting operation on the riots. Her affidavit demands an FIR be registered against Gujarat CM Narendra Modi. Ms Jafri has said that an FIR should be registered against Mr Modi and others. on grounds of mass murder and criminal conspiracy. She has stated that the voluminous evidence she has placed before the court points to a state sponsored conspiracy at the highest level by the office of the chief minister and his cabinet colleagues but subversion of pre-investigation and post investigation procedures by the Gujarat police and officers of the administration and political outfits. There is also evidence of efforts to subvert the arraigning of accused and ensure justice to the victims of state sponsored mass crimes. (Asian Age 31/10/07)

NHRC gets copies of TV sting tapes (7)

New Delhi, Oct. 30: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has obtained the copies of the tapes which were broadcast on Aaj Tak channel on the Tehelka expose about the Gujarat riots on Tuesday. Taking suo moto cognisance of the sting operation, NHRC asked the channel to send the tapes which were received by the commission on Tuesday afternoon. The full bench of the commission will view the two tapes on Wednesday and only then comment on the expose. Aaj Tak had telecast some excerpts of the sting operation, which in total has 45 hours of material shot, but NHRC has not asked for all that material, said sources. The sting operation caught

various persons who are accused in various cases which occurred during the Gujarat carnage in 2002 and telecast that on the channel. It was also printed in the magazine and put on its website. NHRC has even asked the government to explain the lack of rehabilitation and resettlement of riot victims, many of whom are still living in relief camps and many of whom have not been given any relief by the state government. NHRC chairperson Justice Rajendra Babu (Retd) has told this newspaper that he would visit the state after the state elections to review first hand the situation in the state as far as rehabilitation and resettlement are concerned. So far, the state government has maintained a silence on the issue and has instead counter-attacked the Congress party for their alleged role in the expose. (Asian Age 31/10/07)

Post-Godhra riots sting: Lalu meets Manmohan, demands Modi's arrest (7)

NEW DELHI, October 31: In the backdrop of the forthcoming Gujarat Assembly elections, Railway Minister and Leader of UPA ally RJD Lalu Prasad Yadav stepped up his offensive against Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi and demanded his immediate arrest after the media expose of post-Godhra communal riots. Yadav led a delegation of his party MPs to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday and demanded that criminal cases against Modi be registered in the wake of the media expose of 2002 Gujarat riots, indicating the complicity of the Gujarat administration. "The expose has conclusively established Modi's role in the Gujarat riots which left thousands dead. Modi should be prosecuted under Sections 120B and 302 for criminal conspiracy and killing of thousands of innocents," Yadav told mediapersons after meeting the Prime Minister. The Railway Minister also demanded action against former Deputy Prime Minister and senior BJP Leader L K Advani for his "clean-chit" to the Modi Government. He said Advani too should be prosecuted. Lalu said that the Prime Minister gave him a patient hearing and assured him the matter would be "examined". The media expose had shown several saffron brigade leaders, including Godhra BJP MLA Hareesh Bhatt, Shiv Sena leader Babu Bajrangji and VHP leaders Anil Patel and Dhaval Jayant Patel, bragging about their "feats" during the 2002 Gujarat riots and admitting the complicity of the administration during that period. Speaking to reporters after his meeting with the PM, Yadav added that the expose had only vindicated his stand on riots and criticised those who opposed the institution of a Railways inquiry into the Godhra incident. Fresh from his Chetavni Rally against the BJP-JD(U) Government in Bihar last Sunday, Lalu declared that his party will soon be organising statewide protests in Bihar over this issue. Keeping in view the fluid political situation at the Centre and the speculations of early Parliamentary elections, Yadav's move is being seen as aimed at consolidating his political ground in the state. (Indian Express 1/11/07)

Hindu activist found guilty in Bhagalpur riots case (7)

Patna, November 23: Kameshwar Yadav, the Hindu activist who had led one of the three "shila-pujan" processions that triggered the Bhagalpur communal riots in 1989, was convicted in a riot case on Friday that was re-opened by the Nitish Kumar Government. The quantum of punishment would be announced on Tuesday. The court of ADJ-VII Sambhu Nath Mishra held Yadav guilty for the murder of one Mohammad Munna in the Parbatti locality of Bhagalpur in October 1989. The judge held Yadav guilty under Sections 364 (kidnapping), 201 (destruction of evidence) and 149 (unlawful assembling) and fixed November 27 for announcing the quantum of punishment. This is one of the 27 cases concerning the Bhagalpur riots that have been reopened by the present state Government. All these cases were closed by the police under the previous RJD regime citing lack of evidence. Before reopening them the changed regime had charged the RJD Government of closing these cases despite sufficient evidence. In the present case, Mohammad Munna of Parbatti locality in Bhagalpur was killed by a Hindu mob that was led by Kameshwar Yadav. It was the "shila puja" procession which Yadav was leading and it had triggered the communal riots in which more than 1,000 Muslims were killed. The case was closed in 1995. It was reopened last year by the Nitish Kumar Government. Apart from this, Yadav's name figures in another riot case. (Indian Express 24/11/07)

Main accused in Bhagalpur riot case awarded life term (7)

Patna: Kamehswar Yadav, the main accused in the infamous Bhagalpur riot case, was awarded life imprisonment by a local Sessions court here on Tuesday. Yadav was convicted in the first-ever judgment delivered last Friday after the 1989 riot cases were re-opened by the present NDA Government. Additional District and Sessions judge Shambhunath Mishra found the accused guilty under Section 364/149 of the IPC and subsequently awarded life imprisonment to Yadav. He was charged with instigating the mob and killing a person at Anandpur on October 24, 1989. The case relates with the lynching of one Mohammed Munna who ran a telephone booth in Anandpur. Ironically, during the previous RJD regime, Yadav, a local heavyweight, was not only given a citation but was also awarded cash at the 2004 Sonapur fair for his contribution towards peace and harmony in the town. Earlier, on the basis of information provided by Biwi Walima, mother of the victim and also an eyewitness, the police registered the case against Yadav in February 1990. The police later closed the case citing lack of evidence as the reason. After the NDA Government came to power two years back, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, promising to provide justice to the riot victims, constituted a new judicial panel and re-opened all the 27 cases on recommendations from the State investigative department. The case was finally re-opened on January 9 this year. Yadav had earlier contested Assembly poll twice from Nathnagar in Bhagalpur, though he lost on both occasions. Later he joined the then ruling RJD. "It is now the turn of Lalu Prasad to answer as to why no action was taken against Kamehswar Yadav in the Bhagalpur riot case," JD(U) State president Lallan Singh said. (Pioneer 28/11/07)

Rs. 5 lakh for villager's family (7)

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan Government on Monday sanctioned financial assistance of Rs.5 lakh to the next of kin of Bhairu Lal, who was killed in police firing at Kapasan village in Chittaurgarh district on Sunday during the villagers' protest against alleged slaughter of a missing cow on Id-ul-Zuha. State Rural Development Minister Kalulal Gujjar attended the cremation of the deceased in his native village, Uchnar Khurd, and gave away the relief amount to the bereaved family. Senior district officers were also present on the occasion. The 27-year-old man was part of the crowd on which the police opened fire to prevent it from storming into a Muslim-dominated village, Raghunathpura, with the charge that Muslims had sacrificed the cow. A bandh called by Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal to protest against the alleged cow slaughter was in force in the Kapasan area for the second consecutive day on Monday. An angry mob had indulged in large-scale arson and set on fire three houses and a dozen fields with crops on Sunday. Reports received here said the bandh had an extensive impact in the region on Monday, though no fresh untoward incident was reported from anywhere. The police have arrested three persons on charges of cow slaughter and half-a-dozen others for indulging in arson. A young man seriously injured in the police firing was being treated at a hospital in Udaipur. Official sources said prohibitory orders continued to be in force in Kapasan region. (The Hindu 25/12/07)

Orissa churches burnt (7)

Phulbani (Orissa), Dec. 25: Curfew was imposed in four towns after a youth was killed and six churches and a minister's houses were targeted on Tuesday, Christmas Day, in largescale communal violence and arson in Orissa's Kandhamal district following an attack on a VHP leader who led an anti-conversion movement. A youth was killed in mob violence at Barakhamba, a senior police officer said, adding that he was yet to be identified. At least six churches, mostly built in thatched houses, were either ransacked or the vacant premises set on fire since Monday night as tension built up in the area, revenue divisional commissioner Satyabrata Sahu said. Two police outposts and a police vehicle were set on fire, he said. "Following largescale violence, we have imposed curfew in the district headquarters towns of Phulbani, Baliguda, Daringibadi and Brahmanigaon to prevent any further flareup," Mr Sahu said. Unconfirmed reports said 12 churches were targeted by vandals since Tuesday night and additional forces deployed in sensitive pockets of the district, where of the total 6.50 lakh population more than one lakh belong to the Christian community. The violence, which began at Brahmanigaon village in the Daringbadi police station area on Monday, gradually spread to other parts of the district with miscreants attacking two houses of the state's steel and mines minister, Padmanabha Behera, at Phiringia and Nuapadar villages, 10 km from here. While three churches were set on fire at Baliguda on Monday night, three others were burnt on Tuesday in different villages of Nuagaon block, official

sources said. Churches at Chakapada, Giringia and Phiringia were also ransacked before being set on fire, the sources said. A police station and a police outpost were also set on fire and the official jeep of the circle inspectors of Phulbani and Tikabali were torched by mobs, which attacked the offices of some organisations, including an orphanage run by Christian missionaries, in different parts of the district. Policemen who went to Daringbadi, Phiringia and Chakapada blocks were not allowed access by the mob, which took to the streets after 80-year-old VHP leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati was allegedly attacked on Monday. "The situation is tense but we are trying to get back control," Orissa director-general of police Gopal Nanda said, adding that additional armed forces were being sent to the violence-prone areas of the tribal-dominated district. The DGP said IGP (Special Armed Police) Pradip Kapoor was camping at the district headquarters though police movements were restricted due to the felling of trees on the road. A large number of trains were delayed and the movement of vehicles on the roads hit as bandh supporters blocked railway tracks and highways in Cuttack, Balasore, Bhubaneswar and Bhadrak during the four-hour shutdown. Activists of the VHP and Bajrang Dal blocked traffic in many areas and moved in groups to enforce a four-hour bandh called in protest against the attack on Saraswati. Thirteen persons were taken into custody in connection with the alleged attack, the IGP, Mr Pradip Kapoor, said. Expressing concern over the violence on Christmas Day, Orissa chief minister Naveen Patnaik appealed to the people to maintain peace and communal harmony. Thousands of people were denied entry into churches in different parts of the tribal-dominated district to offer special prayers and services on the occasion of Christmas as saffron activists started picketing during the bandh called by them in protest against attack on Saraswati. (Asian Age 26/12/07)

One killed, six churches attacked in Orissa as VHP, Bajrang Dal call bandh (7)

Bhubaneswar, December 25: Curfew was imposed in four towns of Kandhamal district today after a youth was killed and at least six churches as well as a minister's house were targeted in largescale communal violence and arson, following the reported attack on a VHP leader. Police officials said an unidentified youth was killed in mob violence at Barakhamba. At least six churches, mostly built in thatched houses, have either been ransacked or the vacant premises set on fire since last night. Two police outposts and two police jeeps were also set on fire. "Following largescale violence, we have imposed curfew in district headquarters town of Phulbani, Baliguda, Daringbadi and Brahmanigaon to prevent further flare-up," Revenue Divisional Commissioner Satyabrata Sahu told PTI. Additional forces have been deployed in sensitive pockets of the tribal-dominated district, which has more than one lakh Christians among the total 6.50 lakh population. Tension has been brewing in the area since yesterday, when clashes broke out between some Hindu and Christian groups. The situation worsened after a VHP leader, 80-year-old Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati who leads an anti-conversion movement, was reportedly attacked. VHP and Bajrang Dal activists called a four-hour bandh today to protest against the attack. Kandhamal district SP Narasingh Bhol said establishments and schools run by Christian missionaries were targeted by the bandh supporters. Picketing posts were set up outside churches, denying entry to many who had come to offer prayers on Christmas Day. The violence, which began at Brahmanigaon village under Daringbadi area yesterday, gradually spread to other parts of the district with miscreants attacking two houses of the state's Steel and Mines Minister Padmanabha Behera at Phiringia and Nuapadar villages. Several trains were delayed and vehicular movement hit in Cuttack, Balasore, Bhubaneswar and Bhadrak. (Indian Express 26/12/07)

1 killed in communal violence in MP village (7)

Indore, Dec. 30: One person was killed and three critically injured on Sunday in communal clashes at a village near Dewas town of Madhya Pradesh that followed the killing of a RSS worker. Prohibitory orders were clamped in dewas as saffron workers broke windscreens of several vehicles in an attempt to enforce a bandh in protest against the killing, they said. Gunmen travelling in a car with red beacon fired shots at Sunil Joshi (45) killing him on the spot last night, the police sources said. Protesting the killing, workers of BJP and associated outfits resorted to violence breaking windscreens of several vehicles, the police said adding they took to the streets trying to enforce a bandh demanding immediate arrest of the accused. Violence spread to

Sutarkhedhi village where four persons were injured in clash between two communities and were rushed to a hospital Un Ujjain, the police said adding that one of the victims who was identified as Rashid Khan (60) died while being treated for bullet injuries, they said. Additional forces were deployed and prohibitory orders promulgated in Dewas town to prevent any further flare-up, superintendent of police I.P. Kulshreshtha said adding the situation was tense but under control. (PTI) (Asian Age 31/12/07)