

COMMUNAL RIOTS-2010

JANUARY TO DECEMBER: 2010

Curfew to continue in Makshi, situation under control (7)

Shajapur (MP): The curfew imposed in Makshi town, some 25 km from here two days ago following a clash between two communities, was relaxed for two hours on Sunday allowing only women to step out and buy essential commodities, officials said. The curfew was clamped in the town on January 1 following a clash between the communities over a controversy during a cricket match. A youth was killed and five others sustained injuries in violence triggered by the controversy. The curfew was relaxed from 10 am and only women were allowed to purchase essential commodities for two hours, District Collector Rajendra Sharma told reporters. Hawkers were permitted to sell morning newspapers, he said, adding no untoward incident was reported. The situation is under control but curfew would be in force as a precautionary measure, Sharma said. He said a special drive will be launched this evening to round up anti-social elements and search for illegal weapons. The official said that around 94 people have been booked in connection with the stone pelting and violence and a case has been registered against two persons for allegedly killing a youth. (Zee News 3/1/10)

Godhra cases: SIT seeks extension from SC (7)

Mumbai/ Ahmedabad January 05, 2010: A special investigation team (SIT) conducting preliminary inquiry on a complaint against Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi and 62 others in a riot case has sought extension from the Supreme Court, officials said here today. SIT, whose term ended on December 31, 2009, has already submitted a progress report on the probe to the apex court and further hearing on the matter is scheduled for later this month, they said. The SIT, constituted by the apex court to investigate the Godhra train carnage and eight other post-Godhra riot cases, was directed by the Supreme Court in April last to examine a complaint against Modi and 62 others by Zakia Jaffery. Zakia, whose husband and former MP Ehsan Jaffrey was killed during the 2002 riots in Gulbarg society along with 69 others, had alleged that Modi, his cabinet colleagues, police officials and senior bureaucrats aided and abetted post-Godhra riots of 2002. (Business Standard 5/1/10)

Karnataka high on communal riots list (7)

BANGALORE: All political parties in the state seem to be equally culpable when it comes to handling communal incidents. The coalition governments involving the Congress, JD(S) and BJP from 2004-2007 and the BJP on its own in 2008 have failed to prevent communal incidents, giving the state the dubious distinction of topping the list of clashes in South India. Maharashtra tops the all-India chart of communal incidents (681) over the same period. Of the 341 incidents in Karnataka, in 2008 alone, 108 were reported with the majority pertaining to attacks on churches. These statistics compiled by the Union ministry of home affairs indicates that Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are equally communal sensitive states recording 654 and 613 cases respectively in the past five years. Interestingly, communal incidents in Gujarat (326) and Orissa (243) are lesser than those in Karnataka. The Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry and Sikkim are free of communal clashes, with not a single incident over the past five years. Only one case has been registered in Jammu & Kashmir. (Times of India 7/1/10)

POTA court convicts 22 in ISI-backed terror conspiracy case (7)

Ahmedabad, January 12, 2010: A designated POTA court in Ahmedabad on Tuesday convicted 22 people and acquitted an equal number in an ISI-backed terror conspiracy case to avenge post-Godhra communal riots in Gujarat. In the case filed in 2003, the 44 accused were allegedly involved in jihadi activities in connivance with some elements in Pakistan. POTA court judge Jyotsana Yagnik sentenced 18 of the 22 accused to 10 years imprisonment, while three got nine years and one three years jail term. Out of the 22 convicted 21 are from the city and one from Mumbai. The accused have been convicted under section 3(1)(a), 3(3) and 4 of POTA. Most of the 22 acquitted for want of evidence are from Hyderabad. The accused had been charged with illegally crossing over to Pakistan for training to unleash terror in order to avenge the 2002 riots. They were also accused of plotting to kill Gujarat leaders

including Chief Minister Narendra Modi, besides hatching various terror conspiracies in the state. Thirty-six other accused including gangster Dawood Ibrahim, his aide Chhota Shakeel, besides Rasool Party and Mufti Sufiyan Patangia are absconding. The prosecution insisted that ISI played a key role in picking up the accused and taking them to Pakistan for arms training to execute terror plans, while defence contested the charge and claimed the accused were illegally detained by city crime branch much before their arrest was shown on record. (Hindustan Times 12/1/10)

22 convicted for jihadi conspiracy in Gujarat (7)

Ahmedabad: A designated Special Court on Tuesday convicted 22 accused in a 'jihadi' conspiracy busted in the State in 2003. Special Judge Jyotsna Yagnik sentenced 22, while 22 others were acquitted. The 44 accused in the conspiracy case had been arrested in 2003 by the Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) from Hyderabad, Mumbai and different parts of Ahmedabad city. Of the 22 convicted, as many as 18 have been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment while three have been punished with a nine-year jail term. Another culprit was awarded three years' imprisonment for conspiring towards an act of jihad which could not be carried out. The jihadi conspiracy was reportedly hatched to avenge the 2002 killings of Muslims during the post-Godhra riots. Since no one was killed, as the conspiracy could not be implemented, nobody was sentenced to death, according to Ibrahim Sheikh, advocate of the accused. The punishments given are for hatching the conspiracy, the advocate explained. The convicted have decided to challenge their convictions in high court. (Pioneer 13/1/10)

Communal clashes in Nigeria claim 192 lives (7)

At least 192 people have been killed in clashes between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, even as the country's Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan ordered country's military to step up efforts to put an end to the communal violence in the north of the country. Exacerbated clashes in the city of Jos, the capital of Plateau state in northern Nigeria has caused the casualty figure to rise to 192. The clashes between Christians and Muslims erupted over alleged burning of a church. Mortuary sources have been quoted as saying the number of dead bodies received are increasing by the day while a witness told PTI some people who wear military uniforms partake in the killings. "We do not know the difference between the military and civilian assailants," a medical doctor and postgraduate student of University of Jos, Chigozie Ibeneme told PTI on phone from the city, adding that everybody is scared and praying. The Red Cross said they are taking care of more than 5,000 displaced persons and some wounded in the fracas. Governments of neighbouring states have beefed up security to forestall spread of the crisis. As if realising the intensity of the violence for the first time, an order was sent to all the northern Nigeria states police command to commence full patrol of their areas and intelligent gathering so as to avoid spread of the riot to their states by the inspector-general of the country's police, (Rediff News 20/1/10)

NCW team to probe Godhra assaults (7)

NEW DELHI: The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Thursday sent a team to Godhra, Gujarat, to probe allegations that some women were sexually as well as physically assaulted by policemen there. NCW chairwoman Girija Vyas said that according to complaints received by the Commission, some policemen went to an area in Godhra on the midnight of December 19 to nab some persons accused of stealing a cow and sexually as well as physically assaulted some women. After going through some photographs of the violence, she decided to send a team there, she told reporters here on Thursday. She demanded strict action against the police personnel involved in the crime. The State government, she said, was not taking the issue seriously. The NCW would take appropriate action after getting a report from the team. (The Hindu 22/1/10)

Gulberg Society victims demand transfer of trial (7)

AHMEDABAD: Some witnesses and victims of the Gulberg Society communal riots massacre in 2002 have demanded transfer of the trial from the special court of Judge B.U. Joshi, alleging a "bias" in favour of the accused. A transfer petition to this effect was filed in the court of principal sessions Judge G.B. Shah, here on Monday. The petitioners said considering the behaviour of the Judge during the trial of the case, they had lost faith in him and that further hearing should be transferred to some other court. Special courts were constituted by the Gujarat High Court at the behest of the Supreme Court for trial of nine of the more heinous incidents of massacres during the 2002 Gujarat riots and Judge Joshi was appointed for the trial of the Gulberg Society incident in Ahmedabad in which 69 people, including former Congress

member of the Lok Sabha Ehsan Jafri, were killed. In the transfer petition, the eyewitnesses alleged that the Judge was showing a “distinct bias” against the victims and in favour of the accused ever since the court started recording the testimonies of the victims and the witnesses. It was pointed out that after two major eyewitnesses, Imtiyaz Khan Pathan and Rupa Dara Modi, recorded their depositions, no other witnesses were allowed to step out of the witness box to identify the accused at the back of the courtroom and objections raised by the witnesses through their advocates were overruled. The Judge was also openly hostile and showed aggressive attitude by repeatedly making derisive comments about affidavits filed by the victims in the apex court and also the complaints filed before the police commissioner of Ahmedabad in 2002 and 2003, when an application to arraign more accused was being heard in the court earlier this month. (The Hindu 26/1/10)

Guiding unemployed youth in riot-affected Udayagiri to productive activities (7)

MYSORE: A citizens' initiative, with the support of the Department of Labour and Employment and the Mysore city police, has taken a step towards bringing school dropouts and unemployed youth from Udayagiri — which witnessed communal clashes last year — to the mainstream, by training them in vocational skills. The programme envisions establishing harmony through economic development. The Alert Citizens' Team (ACT), a forum of dedicated citizens, use the Modular Employable Skills (MES) programme to create employment for the youth. Though the programme for the first batch of youth was launched informally at Udayagiri recently, Director-General and Inspector-General of Police Ajai Kumar Singh will formally launch the programme on Thursday. In an informal chat with The Hindu, Police Commissioner Sunil Agarwal said although it was an ACT initiative in association with the Labour and Employment Department, the city police had decided to support it as the exercise aimed to create communal harmony in the locality which bore the brunt of the communal clashes. “Our aim is to introduce the youth of the locality to productive activities. Perhaps, unemployed youth and dropouts are susceptible to getting involved in violence because of the amount of time on their hands. If they are engaged in some activity, their focus will shift to productive work. This is precisely what we are looking at,” he explained. Mr. Agarwal said the ACT had also conducted health and dental camps in the riot-affected areas. The Labour Department had launched the MES programme for school dropouts, but the ACT proposed that this programme be used to bring youth from these localities into the mainstream. “We readily agreed to support the initiative. Thereafter, a batch of 30 youth started training after a list of beneficiaries was prepared with the help of local schools,” the commissioner said. The programme is spread across 180 hours, 220 hours and 300 hours depending on the skills imparted. “We are gradually making progress; the second batch is ready for the programme,” he said. The programme covers over 80 per cent of the skills used in industries. A nominal fee of Rs. 100 a student is charged; the programme is imparted by industry-training faculty, he said. Registrations for the programme is done at the Hilal High School, the Srikanteshwara School and the St. Anthony's High School, whose students took out a rally in Udayagiri soon after the communal riots with a mission to spread the message of peace and communal harmony. The city police, the ACT and the National Foundation for Communal Harmony had organised the rally. “Once they complete the programme, a platform may be created for them to get employment in industries around Mysore. Industries can also come forward to employ them,” Mr. Agarwal said. (The Hindu 28/1/10)

Gulberg Society victims, witnesses' plea rejected (7)

AHMEDABAD: Principal Sessions Judge G.B. Shah on Monday rejected an application by Gulberg Society witnesses and victims to suspend the trial till they approach the Gujarat High Court for a change of Special Court judge B.U. Joshi, hearing the massacre case. The application was filed after the sessions court here dismissed a transfer petition by them last week that sought to change Mr. Joshi, alleging he was “biased” towards the accused. While dismissing the transfer petition on grounds of jurisdictional limitations, Mr. Shah advised the aggrieved petitioners to approach the High Court, which alone has the jurisdiction to transfer the case to another court or take steps to redress their grievances. “We propose to approach the High Court in the next few days,” S.M. Vora, advocate for the petitioners, said. The petition was filed on January 25. It came up for hearing in Mr. Shah's court on Wednesday and the dismissal order was issued on Thursday. According to Mr. Vora, the court did not go into the merit of the case, but dismissed it prima facie on jurisdictional limitations, pointing out that the sessions court had no powers to change or transfer a judge of the special court appointed under instructions of the High Court which, in turn, was ordered to take necessary steps by the Supreme Court. The High Court formed

nine special courts last year for the trial of gruesome incidents of massacre during the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat and appointed Mr. Joshi to hear the Gulberg Society massacre. Sixty-nine people, including the former Congress member of the Lok Sabha, Ehsan Jafri, were killed in the massacre. (The Hindu 2/2/10)

High court sympathises with Best Bakery convicts (7)

Mumbai: The eight convicts in the Gujarat Best Bakery case, presently lodged at Kolhapur central prison, have a reason to feel optimistic. The Bombay high court on Monday asked the Maharashtra government to find out if they can be sent to Vadodara prison, the home town of most of the convicts. "The law cannot be inflexible. There has to be some discretion," remarked justice Ranjana Desai while asking the government to consider sending them to Gujarat. "Prisoners also have the right to meet their families," she added. A division bench of justices Desai and Mridula Bhatkar has asked additional public prosecutor Poornima Kantharia to "read the law and find out if they can be transferred". The court also directed the petitioner's legal aides, advocate Murtuza Najmi and Sonia Miskin, to find out the legal provisions. Kantharia informed the court that the accused cannot be transferred till their appeal was decided in the state. To which, justice Desai said, "The appeals may take 5-6 years to decide. They cannot be kept away from families for such a long time." The eight convicts, who were sentenced to life imprisonment, have been lodged at Kolhapur central prison since February 2007. Earlier this month, they had sent a handwritten letter to the court praying that they be transferred to Vadodara central prison. They were sentenced by a special court in Mumbai after the supreme court had transferred the trial in the post-Godhra riots in 2002 to Mumbai. Their letter stated that since Kolhapur is far from Vadodara, their families cannot visit them often, and most being in a financial crisis, could not undertake such long travel as it was expensive. (DNA 2/2/10)

Kandhamal Violence Had Impact in Europe' (7)

The communal violence in Orissa's Kandhamal, which claimed 38 lives including Christian Dalits' and Hindu tribals, had its impact on the people of Europe, visiting diplomats from nine European Union countries said today. "The EU diplomats said people in their countries wanted to know about the ground situation at Kandhamal," a journalist present among the group of mediapersons invited to an informal chat with the diplomats here, said. The EU diplomats also informed the media persons that they were anxious to know about the condition of the violence-affected people 25 months after the riot in Kandhamal. Since the EU decided to fund some development activities in Orissa, they wanted to assess the ground situation, especially whether communal harmony prevailed now, said another scribe. While the diplomats met a select group of scribes from particular media houses at a posh hotel here, a large number of journalists, mostly from local media, expressed their displeasure for being left out by the EU team. The visiting delegation said it discussed with journalists different issues relating to riot in Kandhamal. "We collected information from church leaders on how the state government acted after the riot and condition of victims", Christopher Manet, political counsellor in the EU delegation to India, said. The 11-member delegation met church leaders including Archbishop of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar diocese Rapheal Cheenath in the evening. "We have told them that complete normalcy was yet to return to Kandhamal though there had been no violence in the district for the last one year," Cheenath told reporters after the meeting. (Outlook 3/2/10)

Tension at place of worship at Ginjee (7)

VILLUPURAM: Tension prevails at an ancient place of worship at Ginjee because of a dispute between two communities over the access to the place. As no solution could be found in the tripartite talks held a couple of days ago under the mediation of Tindivanam Revenue Divisional Officer Manjula, the place has been kept under lock and key. Yet, a section of the Hindus tried to offer prayers there on Wednesday night, resulting in a heated argument between them and the law-enforcing authorities. Hence, the officials have declared that till the next round of conciliatory talks, scheduled after a fortnight, are held both the communities are barred entry into the place. A posse of police force has been posted there to maintain peace. Official sources said as per the sale deeds the Bommapuram Adheenam at Mayilam sold the 1.60-acre property, located behind Ginjee Traveller's Bungalow (where the small temple stands), to Tharas Adigalar in 1878. Since then the property was in possession of the Christians. At that time the place of worship did not have any idols nor did it have any kalasams. Only recently was an idol of Gothanda Ramar installed there. Now, the Hindus were seeking access to the temple to conduct worship

on the pretext that as per the deed only the vacant site was sold, and not the temple and the mandapam, the sources added. (The Hindu 5/2/10)

European Union team completes visit to Kandhamal (7)

BHUBANESWAR: The 11-member visiting European Union team completed its two-day tour of Kandhamal district on Friday after holding meetings with the district administration officials and some lawyers belonging to the Christian community. Before returning to New Delhi, the team held a two-hour-long meeting with district Collector Krishna Kumar and Superintendent of Police Pravin Kumar at the district headquarters town of Phulbani. The administration officials informed the members of the delegation about the initiatives that they had taken to ameliorate the sufferings of thousands of Christians who had been badly affected by the August 2008 communal violence in the district. As many riot-hit families had not returned to their own villages till date, the administration assured that those wanting to return to their homes from different places would be provided necessary protection, according to sources. One of the members of EU delegation appreciated the rehabilitation work undertaken by the authorities for the riot-hit families, but said that the administration had to take additional measures to help the victims cope with the problems facing them. The delegation had earlier decided to visit one of the fast track courts in Phulbani town to find out about the progress in the trial of the cases relating to the communal violence. The administration, however, advised them to avoid the visit in view of the opposition from a section of the local lawyers, sources said. The delegation, comprising representatives of EU and diplomats in the Embassies of different European countries in New Delhi, had reached the Capital city of Bhubaneswar on Tuesday. The team had visited several resettlement camps in Kandhamal on Thursday and interacted with the riot-hit families. (The Hindu 6/2/10)

Court reserves order on riot witness's demand for lawyer (7)

AHMEDABAD: A witness in the Naroda Gam case on Thursday urged the special court to allow him to be represented through a lawyer. Designated judge SH Vora has kept his order on the application reserved for February 17. Yunus Akbarali Saiyed, a witness to the incident, was in court for the purpose of deposition, and he sought the court's permission to engage an advocate. On October 7, this court had refused the witnesses and victims to be represented by lawyers with observation that such permission cannot be granted because their cause is taken up by the state government. Two victims of the massacre, whose houses were set on fire during the rioting that took place on February 28, 2002, had sought court's permission to assist the prosecution with independent lawyers. Similarly, an NGO Citizens for Justice and Peace' also applied to appear with prosecution, but the court declined their plea, said one of the lawyers Yusuf Shaikh. The lawyers had then argued that the amendment carried out in Section 24 of the CrPC after the Supreme Court's various judgments gave the victim the right to be represented in court in the way accused are allowed to defend themselves. But the judge held that locus is a foreign word in criminal jurisprudence, where there is a "triangulation of interests between the state, accused and victims and society who are affect by mass crimes." This time around, Saiyed told the court that on January 1, the Centre had amended the procedure code allowing the witness to be represented by advocates during trial. The court hearing the Naroda Patia case has also not allowed any lawyer with prosecution to represent victims and witnesses. Meanwhile, the court has granted bail to 78-year-old Suresh Chandra Patel, who was arrested by SIT earlier this month along with two others. SIT also obtained five-day remand of them. (Times of India 12/2/10)

Gujarat High Court orders fresh probe into Kalol riots (7)

AHMEDABAD: The Gujarat High Court has ordered a fresh investigation into the alleged rioting and murders at Kalol in the Panchmahals district during the 2002 communal riots. Judge Akil Kureshi ordered that an officer not below the rank of a Deputy Superintendent of Police investigate the matter and submit a supplementary charge sheet, preferably within four months. However, he rejected a plea for handing over the probe to the Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team. The SIT has been entrusted with re-investigating nine of the more heinous incidents of massacres. The High Court order came on a revision petition filed by five persons, who claimed to be victims at Kalol, and the State government challenging the order of the Godhra sessions court which earlier rejected their application for a fresh probe. Justice Kureshi also ordered suspension of the hearing of the case in the Godhra sessions court until the police completed the re-investigation. It was claimed that though there were several incidents of rioting and murder at Kalol on the fateful February 28, 2002, when the entire State was burning, the police

failed to investigate the matter properly and a charge sheet was filed in the Godhra sessions court without including some of the accused named by the witnesses. The victims, who claimed that at least two persons were murdered by the rioters, alleged that initially the police did not even accept the first information report on several incidents and later clubbed all cases together in one FIR and submitted a single charge sheet. Meanwhile, the Mehsana special court — holding the trial of the Deepda Darwaja massacre case in Visnagar, in which at least 11 people were burnt alive — ordered the inclusion of two BJP leaders as accused. The then MLA, Prahlad Gosa, and a member of the taluk panchayat, Dahyabhai Patel, were named by several witnesses as having been among the riotous mob and also as inciting it to torch the houses of minorities. The witnesses claimed that when the victims went to the police station to register a complaint, the two BJP leaders were present there and pressured the police not to include their names. In another development, the Central Bureau of Investigation, probing the Sohrabuddin fake encounter case, has taken up the case of Tulsi Prajapati, who was also gunned down by the State Anti-Terrorist Squad, then headed by the arrested IPS officer, D.G. Vanzara, in a joint operation of the Gujarat and Rajasthan police. Prajapati, believed to be the “third person” abducted by the State police from a bus along with Sohrabuddin and his wife Kausarbi in Andhra Pradesh, was killed in another encounter about a year after the killing of Sohrabuddin. Prajapati was believed to be a witness to the Sohrabuddin encounter and elimination of Kausarbi. A senior officer of the CBI arrived here and held discussions with the team probing the Sohrabuddin case. A team of the CBI also visited Ilol, native village of Mr Vanzara in Sabarkantha district, where the remains of Kausarbi were alleged to have been disposed of after she was eliminated on one of the farm houses near Gandhinagar. (The Hindu 12/2/10)

Mosque damaged after cow slaughter in Himachal (7)

Shimla: In a rare incident of communal tension in Himachal, about 500 local people staged a protest at Nerwa suburb in the district, about 110 km from here, this morning, and damaged a mosque to protest against cow slaughter by a person who was arrested on Thursday. SP Shimla RM Sharma, who rushed to the spot after the incident, told HimVani over phone that more than 500 people gathered in the local bazaar at Nerwa this morning and lodged a protest after news spread that a cow had been slaughtered a day earlier. He said the agitated protesters burnt down the doors of a mosque and shattered its windowpanes. Later the mob moved toward a local ‘madarsa’ near the bazaar at Kuthar. The protest was continuing till the filing of this report. Police force from Nerwa was deployed in the area to avoid an untoward incident. As many as 200 Muslim families live in scattered hills of this sub-division along with majority Hindus. “Abdul, son of Kasib, a resident of the same area, was arrested for slaughtering his cow at Pujali village in Chopal sub-division yesterday,” Sharma told HimVani. He said the accused had killed the cow in a fit of rage. Abdul slaughtered the cow as it had been dry (not yielding milk) for more than three years. Cow slaughter is banned in the state under the Cow Slaughter and Cattle Preservation Act, 1964. (Himvani 12/2/10)

VHP not involved in Kandhamal riots (7)

Bhubaneswar, February 15, About 18 months after the communal violence in Kandhamal, VHP today claimed it was in no way involved in the bloodbath and opposed recent visit of European Union diplomats to the district. "VHP was in no way involved in the riots. Members of the entire tribal community in Kandhamal were followers of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati. His killing sparked anger among the local people leading to violence," VHP's international president Ashok Singhal said today. Terming Saraswati as a 'maha sant' (great saint), Singhal called upon media not to project the slain seer simply as a VHP leader. "Rather, Saraswati should be described as something more than a VHP leader," he said. Admitting that Saraswati was a member of VHP's 'Marg Darshk Mandal', Singhal said he was a "guide" for all the Hindu leaders. Opposing the recent visit of diplomats from nine European countries, he said there was no need to allow them to interfere in the internal matters of the country. "They (diplomats) had rather come to verify use of their funds in converting people in Kandhamal," Singhal alleged claiming that the visit was aimed to spoil prevailing social harmony in the riot-hit Kandhamal. (Hindustan Times 16/2/10)

Christians, Hindus clash in Batala; curfew clamped (7)

Batala: Members of Christian and Hindu communities clashed and indulged in vandalising public property here today over publication of a picture of Jesus Christ in an allegedly objectionable manner, prompting authorities to clamp an indefinite curfew. Police said members of the Christian community took out a protest march through the town during which some of them turned violent and set afire six two-wheelers,

damaged three buses, a shopping mall and around 50 shops in different areas. They were protesting against the publication of a picture of Jesus Christ in a book by a Delhi-based publisher recently which was reproduced in some newspapers in the state. Protestors belonging to Hindu community also took to the streets and tried to set on fire a church, police said adding, the damage to the place of worship was minimal as the fire brigade and the police reached the spot in time. Sub-divisional magistrate Rahul Chabha said curfew has been clamped to maintain law and order. Police patrolling has been intensified and additional personnel deployed. The building of the Government Primary School in Krishna Nagar area was also damaged, police said. Clashes took place in nearby Majitha town yesterday over the issue with reports of protestors damaging shops and torching vehicles.(DNA 20/2/10)

Violence erupts during Kunigal bandh (7)

TUMKUR: Clashes broke out in Kunigal town on Monday during the Hindu Jagran Vedike's Kunigal town bandh call against the Government's failure to clear alleged encroachments on a school premises, and the vedike's "Shobha Yatra" and "Hindu Samavesh". The vedike, which has been pressuring the Government to evict four shops that have come up on the premises of the Government Urdu Primary School (opposite the KSRTC Bus-Stand), issued a call for Kunigal bandh. Its chief pracharak, K. Ramesh, and the vedike's Kunigal town unit's sanchalak, Manjunath, led about 125 supporters on motorcycles and went around the town enforcing the bandh. As their rally hit Maddur Road in the town, where Muslims own many shops, the shop owners got into an argument with the vedike leaders over the need to close down shops. Even as the police tried to intervene, the groups clashed with each other. Police resorted to lathi-charge to disperse the warring groups. The vedike activists, however, gathered on the controversial school premises and tried to evict the disputed shops and that led to second bout of clashes. Even after large-scale communal disturbances in the town, the vedike activists succeeded in taking out a "Shobha Yatra" from the Shanidevara Devasthanam and traversed through main streets of Kunigal. Police had a tough time preventing the yatra from going into the troubled areas. In the evening, the vedike organised the Hindu Samavesh at the Shikshak Bhavan, much against the wishes of the authorities and the police, who feared backlashes. Raghavendra, the vedike's Tumkur district chief, addressed the gathering and said: "We will give 20 days time to the BJP Government in the State to clear encroachments on the school ground. Use of the school land for commercial purposes by a particular community is not acceptable." He declared: "If you (the BJP Government) do not evict them (the four shops) from the school land, the Hindu Jagaran Vedike will organise kar sevaks in large numbers and demolish the shops. We will free the school land from unauthorised occupation." Harsha P.S., Superintendent of Police and P. Shivashankar, Additional Superintendent of Police, who rushed to the spot from here with more police forces, are camping in Kunigal. It was ascertained that over 600 armed reserve police, headed by four Deputy Superintendents of Police, are deployed in sensitive areas, in the background that the Kunigal Town has a past history of communal disturbances. The police, however, claimed to have gained full control over the situation. The authorities confirmed the developments and said: "We have been waiting for the on-the-spot report from the police to decide upon whether to impose ban orders in and around the town as precautionary measure".(The Hindu 23/2/10)

Ethnic violence continues in Chittagong Hill Tracts (7)

Dhaka, February 25, 2010: Curfew was reimposed as ethnic violence in Khagrachhari resumed late Wednesday night after a day long calm. It's now been six days since the clashes began between Muslim settlers and the Buddhist tribals in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Seven houses in Golabari, the tribal neighbourhood and five houses of Bengali-speaking settlers in Mollah Para and Ganj Para were set on fire Wednesday night. "The flames were licking the night sky while electricity supply in the town was cut off. Screams, yells, wailings, and sirens of rushing fire trucks were filling the air amid a curfew that went into effect at 10 pm, scheduled to be lifted at 7 am Wednesday," The Daily Star said. The six-day violence has claimed three lives and injured 70 while more than 500 houses were set on fire, over 400 of which belonged to tribals. The violence made 3,000 tribals and 500 Bengali settlers homeless, the newspaper said. Journalists visiting the affected areas were pursued on motorcycles by settlers who sought to intimidate them and block their routes, the newspaper said. State Minister for Home Shamsul Hoque Tuku who visited Khagrachhari and Rangamati Wednesday, alleged that the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh "are hatching conspiracies to create unrest in the country". Despite orders banning any demonstration, Parbatya Bengali Chhatra Parishad, a student organisation of Bengali settlers, announced a daylong transport strike in all three hill districts Thursday.

All through Wednesday, security forces comprising the army, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), and police patrolled the streets of Khagrachhari town. The law enforcers arrested 70 people, including 42 tribals. However, the drives ended up flaring the ethnic tension as many indigenous people complained that many of those who were arrested were innocent. Located in southeastern Bangladesh bordering Myanmar, CHT, home to Buddhist tribals, has witnessed ethnic violence. Bengali-speaking Muslims were settled in the area to keep the militancy-affected area under control. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached an accord with the tribals in 1997, but most of the provisions remain to be implemented. (Hindustan Times 26/2/10)

Reconstitute SIT, demand survivors of the Godhra riots (7)

Ahmedabad: The application of the witnesses and survivors of the 2002 post-Godhra riots, seeking reconstitution of the special investigation team (SIT) will be heard in the Supreme Court on March 15. The survivors and Teesta Setalvad of the Citizen for Justice and Peace had filed the application, accusing SIT of having 'biased' attitude. Talking to DNA Setalvad said, "We have asked for reconstitution of the SIT and appointment of members with a direction to them that they should spend at least 15-20 days in a month in Gujarat during the investigation and trial period." The application further states that considering the nature and sensitivity of the cases, senior judicial officers be appointed so that the trials could conclude as soon as possible, and in a satisfactory manner. Imitiaz Khan Pathan, a witness in the case, will file an application in the Gujarat high court on Tuesday demanding transfer of the trial from the special court of BU Joshi, alleging that he is 'biased' in favour of the accused. Earlier, the application was rejected by principal sessions judge GB Shah. Retired IPS officer RB Sreekumar said the survivors are disappointed with the SIT as the inquires/investigations have not been carried out properly in the case, especially regarding the involvement of police officers, civil servants and politically-influential individuals. The victims also alleged that FIRs have not been recorded properly and names of the accused officers and those politically connected have been dropped or excluded. They said some prosecutors appointed in the case had either appeared for the accused or were associated with organisations involved in the offences. The other plea of witnesses is that some significant issues were not reinvestigated by the SIT. (DNA 1/3/10)

Karnataka: Curfew continues in Shimoga (7)

BANGALORE: Curfew continued in Karnataka's riot-hit Shimoga town as did prohibitory orders banning crowds in Hassan, police said Tuesday, a day after two people were killed following protests against an article on the veil by Bangladeshi author Taslima Nasreen. "The situation in the town is peaceful and under control. No untoward incident has been reported since Monday evening. The three-day curfew will be in force till Wednesday evening," Shimoga Superintendent of Police S. Murugan told IANS. Police deployed additional forces in the town, about 280 km from Bangalore, to maintain law and order and stepped up vigil in sensitive areas where group clashes led to the death of two youth, one in police firing and another due to stab injuries. The two victims have been identified as Latif, 25, and Sadiq, 23. "We have booked nine cases under various Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections against unidentified culprits for indulging in riots and group clashes," Murugan said, adding that about 50 people have also been detained as a precautionary measure. Hassan, about 180 km from this tech hub, has seen tension too with a violent demonstration and a protest rally. Police have clamped a ban order in the town under section 144 of the CrPC (criminal procedure code) to prevent any untoward incident and maintain peace. Riots had broken out in the two towns after local language newspapers had published Nasreen's article on the practice of wearing a veil (purdah) by Muslim women, prompting protests by Muslims. Police have registered criminal cases against the two newspapers in Kannada and Urdu which carried the controversial article. "We have asked the newspaper editors and their managements to carry an apology on the front page of their editions Wednesday," Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa told reporters late Monday. The main opposition Congress slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government for the sporadic violence and lawless situation in the state, disrupting normal life. "The government machinery has collapsed in the state as evident from the violence and riots that broke out Monday over an article published in local dailies Sunday," former deputy chief minister and Congress legislative party leader Siddaramaiah told reporters. Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) law maker and former minister N.C. Nanaiah also criticised the government for failing to check the violence in the two towns. "Though the chief minister recently said police firing was banned in the state, the death of a youth in such a firing at Shimoga Monday exposes his claims," Nanaiah pointed out. The opposition parties also lamented the failure of

police intelligence in anticipating the trouble from the publication of such a controversial article. Shimoga is the home town of state Yeddyurappa; Hassan is the home town of former Indian prime minister H.D. Deve Gowda, who heads the JD-S in the state.(Express Buzz 2/3/10)

'Communal violence Bill is a nasty piece of legislation' (7)

Vrinda Grover , a Delhi-based human rights lawyer, is director of Multiple Action Research Group (MARG). She is presently counsel for survivors of the 1984 anti-Sikh carnage, 1987 Hashimpura police killings and the 2008 anti-Christian riots in Kandhamal. She speaks to Humra Quraishi about the Communal Violence Bill expected to be tabled soon in Parliament: A new version of the communal violence Bill has been cleared by the cabinet. How different is it from the earlier version? The most significant change is this Bill gives powers of authority to the states to declare an area communally disturbed and it's this clause which is likely to be misused by the state governments. This Bill is a nasty piece of legislation to hoodwink and dupe the minority communities under the garb they will get protection. On the contrary, it will only make them more vulnerable to the powers of the government and the states. What are the shortcomings of the Bill? Documented experience clearly shows that in communal carnages there is a definite role played by the various state agencies (civil and police forces and the politician). This has not been taken into consideration. The Bill treats communal violence as though it's mere rioting between two communities and does not create any accountability for the state and the various agencies. Another flaw is this Bill does not follow the Doctrine of Command and Superior Responsibility that is, it will not hold the man at the helm of affairs responsible for communal rioting and carnage. For example, in the Ehsan Jaffri murder case, his widow says they had called/contacted the police commissioner when they were besieged by mobs during the 2002 Gujarat pogrom, but he didn't respond and come to their rescue. So the person held responsible for Jaffri's murder/killing should be the then police commissioner of Ahmedabad and not some small players or people who were in the mob. Another flaw is that the Bill is only relying on old offences of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). On the aspect of sexual violence the definition of sexual violence is restricted to rape as under the IPC and it doesn't cover the sexual offences that take place during communal rioting/carnage. Nor does the Bill cover the very consequences of the aftermath of sexual violence. There is hardly any mention of victims' rights. After all, it's the obligation of the state to provide relief. But, in this Bill, it makes rioting appear as though it's just between two communities. So the state moves away from that responsibility/accountability. Psycho-socio traumas of victims need to be addressed but there is not even a mention of these in the Bill. No mention of the need for counsellors, long-term medical relief etc. What does it say about the police? This Bill does not challenge the absolute impunity that the police force enjoys. In fact, it reinforces the impunity by the addition of 'good faith' clause, which ensures that no prosecution of the police and public servants is permitted without the prior permission of the executive. The executive will, for very obvious reasons, shield them. If this Bill is amended and some fundamental changes are brought about which give rights to the victims and accountability falls on the state and its functionaries, only then can it uphold the rights of the targeted communities. (Times of India 8/3/10)

Over 500 massacred in Nigerian clashes (7)

Over 500 people were killed on Sunday in communal clashes near Nigeria's city of Jos, a state governor's advisor told AFP on Monday. "We have been able to make 95 arrests but over 500 people have been killed in this heinous act... by Fulani herdsmen," Dan Manjang said in a telephone interview. The Muslim herdsmen raided three mostly Christian villages, hacking to death people at random. Witnesses in the village of Dogo Nahawa said that Hausa-Fulani tribesmen descended from the hills, firing shots in the air. When people ran out of their homes, they were set upon with machetes or shot. A local Christian group said the violence was an act of jihad. "Eyewitnesses say the Hausa-Fulani Muslim militants broke into homes, cutting humans, including children and women, with their knives and cutlasses," the statement said. Acting President Goodluck Jonathan has put the army on alert in the region, but the Christian group said it had lost faith in the military, which it says failed to respond until the attack was over. (Mumbai Mirror 10/3/10)

Communal violence bill needs change: Activists (7)

Mumbai: Activists have taken up the cause for the Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill 2005. Activists feel that if put into effect in the present form, the Bill will fail to

empower the victims — survivors of violence — and instead make the state more powerful. In a press conference on Tuesday, Nandita Das, writer Irfan Engineer, lawyers Vaheeda Nainar and Saumya Uma sought amendments for better protection of victims. "The Bill does not incorporate any of the suggestions of the 31 commissions that were formed after the riots. It has not spoken to the victims and does not reflect any of their concerns," said Engineer. The changes the activists demand are enhanced punishment, accountability on public servants and the perpetrators among people in command and not just those inciting violence on the street, increasing the ambit of riot offences that are not mentioned in the Bill, changes in investigation, victims' rights, protection of witness, relief and rehabilitation as a matter of rights, lowering the threat level to enact the law and pruning powers to authorities. "The biggest change required is the definition. As per the Bill, if there is no threat to the secular fabric, integrity, unity or internal security of India, the Act does not apply. They need to raise the bar of threat perception," said Engineer. Double click an English word for Macmillan Dictionary definition (DNA 10/3/10)

Hyderabad cops smell conspiracy behind violence (7)

The special investigation team of the Hyderabad police is close to exposing the conspiracy behind the communal violence in the city last Saturday. According to reliable sources they have found evidence of involvement of outsiders, from Karnataka and Maharashtra in the violence. The police have also launched a manhunt for a Telugu Desam corporator and a Bharatiya Janata Party corporator, M Vaikuntam, who have emerged as prime suspects. Another suspect is Raju Singh, who was an accused in the kidnapping and murder of two Christian pastors in Tappa Chabutra area of the city in 2003 and is a member of the Hindu Vahini. The police suspect that Singh played a major role in triggering the violence at Musa Bowli temple and helped spread it to the other areas by sending SMSes. Interestingly while police was looking for him, Singh appeared on a local television channel where he blamed the police and the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen for the violence. Vaikuntam, on the other hand is alleged to have indulged in violence in the Begum Bazar area during the Bajrang Dal's procession on Tuesday which led to imposition of curfew in many areas of the city. The SIT and intelligence sleuths were going through the phone records of Singh and some others to establish the link between the rioters in Hyderabad and some people in other states. "The SMS sent by some people are going to be of key importance in this whole investigation", a senior police official said. Reports in a section of media have quoted intelligence agencies saying that the mining mafia could be behind the riots in a ploy to destabilise the Rosaiah government which was taking tough measures against the illegal mining of iron ore. Meanwhile the state BJP president G Kishan Reddy has strongly denied that he had taken funds from Karnataka's minister and mine owner G Janardhan Reddy. "Even if thousand such Janaradhan Reddys come, they can not dare to do so", he told the reporters. Even as peace was slowly returning to Hyderabad, the mischief mongers seem to be trying to foment trouble in other parts of the state. In an incident in Nalgonda, a group of miscreants demolished the wall and gate of a mosque on Wednesday night, sparking off tension. However the situation remained under control as the community leaders and the police acted swiftly to get the wall repaired. Superintendent of police, Rajesh Kumar, told the media that the police was looking for the miscreants and they will be nabbed soon. In Rajindernagar, on the outskirts of Hyderabad, some miscreants armed with sticks tried to create trouble, shouting slogans during the night. On being alerted by the locals, police rushed to the scene and arrested the inebriated trouble makers. In other places with a history of communal trouble, the police were put on high alert. Adilabad district Superintendent of police, Pramod Kumar rushed to Bhainsa where nine people had died in communal violence two years ago. Additional police pickets were deployed in the town. In Nizamabad, the police frisked the people on the roads. Additional police pickets were deployed in the city as well as other towns of the district. (Rediff News 1/4/10)

Two convicted, 10 acquitted in Kandhamal riots cases (7)

Bhubaneswar, April 01, 2010: A fast track court in Orissa sentenced two people to two years' imprisonment and acquitted 10 people in two Kandhamal riots cases, an official said on Thursday. Ratnakar Pradhan and Parsuram Pradhan of Ketemaha village under Raikia police station area were accused of torching Sanu Naik's house August 26, 2008. They were booked under several charges. The charge of torching the house could not be proved but they were convicted for mischief causing damage, unlawful assembly and rioting, public prosecutor PK Patra told IANS. They were also fined Rs 2,500 by Judge Chittaranjan Mohanty Wednesday. "If they fail to pay the fine, they will have to undergo an

additional six-and-half months of jail term," Patra said. In another case, the court in Kandhamal district acquitted 10 people as charges against them could not be proved. Filima Nayak and others from Tikabali area accused them of torching houses along the way when Swami Laxmanananda's body was being taken in a procession. "The charges levelled by Filima Nayak and others could not be proved," Patra said. Kandhamal district, about 200 km from Bhubaneswar, witnessed widespread violence after the murder of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati and four of his aides at his ashram Aug 23, 2008. More than 25,000 Christians were forced to flee their homes after their houses were attacked by rampaging mobs that held Christians responsible for Saraswati's killing, although the police blamed the Maoists. The Orissa government set up two fast track courts to try the riot cases. (Hindustan Times 1/4/10)

Shimoga violence: vedike report faults police (7)

SHIMOGA: The fact-finding committee of the Karnataka Komu Souharda Vedike in its interim report on the violence in Shimoga on March 1, has found that the police acted arbitrarily and failed to take preventive measures to avoid a flare-up. The report which was released at a press conference here on Monday, said though protest meetings were held the previous night and just hours before the violence started, the police did not act. Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Pandey and Superintendent of Police S. Murugan who rushed to Ameer Ahmed Circle, the site of one of the meetings, on hearing about the violence also failed to avert trouble, it said. It had come to its notice that the "indecent" behaviour of some in the mob, directed at a woman police officer, led to the lathi-charge against the protesters, the report said. Although the police claimed that the lathi-charge, bursting of tear-gas shells and firing on the mobs were necessary, the firing on MKK Road in which one person was killed, appeared to be without justification, the report said. Terming as "condemnable" the communal incidents, which occurred as a reaction to an article in a Kannada daily, the report said that it was the "irresponsibility" of religious leaders that failed to control unruly mobs. In addition to the newspaper article, the "aggressive" publicity given to the Virat Hindu Yuva Samavesh that was to be held in Shimoga angered members of one community, it said. State convener of the vedike K.L. Ashok criticised Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa, Home Minister V.S. Acharya, local MLA and BJP State president K.S. Eshwarappa and Shimoga MP B.Y. Raghavendra for not visiting the affected areas. Elected representatives had failed to inspire confidence among the people affected by the communal incidents, he said. A majority of those who suffered were yet to get proper compensation, the report said. It demanded that the families of the three persons killed in the incidents be paid compensation of Rs. 5 lakh each. However, on a positive note, the report mentioned the show of communal amity, with members of one community providing protection to the other. The final report would be submitted soon, Mr. Ashok said. (The Hindu 13/4/10)

Seventeen acquitted in a Kandhamal riot case (7)

Bhubaneswar, April 17, 2010: A fast track court in Orissa on Saturday acquitted 17 people in a case of rioting in Kandhamal in 2008. All the 17 were accused of torching houses in Shashipadar village Aug 26, 2008. "All the seventeen accused have been acquitted as the charges leveled against them could not be proved for want of evidence," public prosecutor P K Patra told IANS. Kandhamal district, about 200 km from Bhubaneswar, witnessed widespread violence after the murder of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati and four of his aides at his ashram Aug 23, 2008. More than 25,000 Christians were forced to flee their homes after their houses were attacked by rampaging mobs that held Christians responsible for Saraswati's killing, although the police blamed the Maoists. (Hindustan Times 17/4/10)

Harsimrat Kaur raising 1984 Sikh issue to gain political mileage (7)

Chandigarh: Congress MPs Pratap Singh Bajwa and Ravneet Singh Bittu on Saturday alleged that Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal was raising the issue of 1984 anti-Sikh riots again in Parliament just to gain political mileage out of the matter. Speaking to the media, Gurdaspur MP Bajwa said, "It is a totally false accusation that we tried to stop Harsimrat Badal mid-way through her speech during Zero Hour on Friday. All we did was raise our hands gesturing to the Speaker Meira Kumar to grant us time to speak on the issue as well. Not once did we try to stop Harsimrat Badal from speaking." He said that the Bathinda MP had raised the issue time and time in the Lok Sabha, which also prompted Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister and Chandigarh MP Pawan Kumar Bansal to state on record asking her not

to desecrate the memory of those who perished in the 1984 Sikh riots by using their deaths for political mileage. Bajwa said that all Congress MPs from Punjab and across the country were in favour of punishing the perpetrators of communal riots in 1984 and even Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had assured the House that a thorough probe would be conducted into the matter and the guilty would be brought to justice. Bajwa said, "While Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal lauds the PM and goes to the extent of passing a resolution in the assembly congratulating him for his service towards Punjab, his daughter-in-law accuses the same PM of not doing anything for the State. This exposes the double standards of the Badal family." He added that should the Congress MPs be invited to join a contingent to represent Punjab and meet with the Prime Minister seeking his help in any matter related to the state, they would be more than ready to walk shoulder-to-shoulder with other Punjab MPs. Anandpur Sahib MP Ravneet Singh Bittu questioned Harsimrat Badal what her party had been doing in the six years when National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was in power and her husband, Sukhbir Singh Badal, was an MP. (Pioneer 2/5/10)

Gujarat riots and age drive defence (7)

Mumbai May 4: The prosecutor called him a demon who should be hanged, his lawyer said the convict's 22-year-old mind was like mud that could be moulded. Ajmal Kasab's lawyer today cited the Gujarat riots, blasts in Muslim-dominated Malegaon, his client's age and the possibility of reformation to plead for a life sentence before the special court deferred the sentencing in the 26/11 case to Thursday. Defence counsel K.P. Pawar pleaded for a lenient sentence as he urged the court to take into account Kasab's background of unemployment and poverty, his age, that he had no criminal antecedents and the possibility of reformation. "His mind is like mud. Anything can be engraved on it. It can be moulded," Pawar told judge M.L. Tahaliyani. The lawyer said Kasab was mentally disturbed by the Godhra riots of 2002 and the bomb blasts in 2006 and 2008 in Muslim-dominated Malegaon and had been drawn towards the Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Jamaat-ud-Dawa which brainwashed him into carrying out the 26/11 attack. "He has mentioned it in his confession recorded before the magistrate," Pawar said, prompting Nikam to claim that Kasab had never mentioned either incident in his confessional statement. Judge Tahaliyani confirmed that Kasab had made no reference to either Godhra or Malegaon in his confession. Pawar argued that Kasab had no personal enmity with his victims but had come under the influence of the Lashkar and the Jamaat because of these incidents related to his religion. "He was blindfolded (sic) by religion. He was mentally disturbed when he joined the Lashkar-e-Toiba," Pawar said, inviting another objection by the judge. "The LeT or Jamaat-ud-Dawa did not go to his (Kasab's) house to recruit him," Tahaliyani said. "It was he who went to their offices to join them." Pawar cited an earlier judgment by the Supreme Court to say that the top court had fixed parameters for classifying a case rarest of rare for handing down the death penalty. He said the apex court had cited seven mitigating circumstances and ruled that if an accused satisfied even one, courts should take cognisance of it for commuting a sentence to life imprisonment. Pawar said two of the seven circumstances cited in that judgment were extreme emotional or mental disturbance, and if the accused was either too young or too old. "The Supreme Court has not particularly stated the range of age of youngsters (who could be given death penalty.) Besides, the prosecution has not provided any documentary evidence to prove his exact age. It is possible that he is 18 years old or even less..." Pawar argued. Tahaliyani then said Kasab had already submitted that he was more than 21 and did not wish to go into that aspect again. Judge Tahaliyani also intervened in the argument about Kasab's alleged mental disturbance. He pointed out that Kasab had never shown remorse or repentance for his acts as per court records. "Has he authorised you today to inform the court about his repentance?" the judge asked Pawar. "No sir," the defence counsel said. Pawar argued that Kasab had no previous criminal past, and hence could be reformed if he was given a life sentence. "Young age persons are very much innocent. He can be reformed," Pawar said. (Telegraph 5/5/10)

Solemn remembrance of victims of Jaipur blasts (7)

Jaipur: Social organisations and schoolchildren on Thursday organised prayer meetings and paid homage to those killed in the Jaipur serial bomb blasts. Even after two years, the police continue to be clueless and have failed to crack the case. On May 13, 2008, nine blasts rocked the walled city, killing at least 69 people and injuring over 250 others. Indian Mujahideen's hand was suspected in the blasts. Muslim-dominated parts of the city organised special prayers. About half-a-dozen Muslims lost their lives in the blasts. Nagrik Morcha held maha aarti at three temples where blasts caused maximum damage. Several organisations, including Jan Vikas Parishads, Brahmin Mahasabha and Rajput Karani Sena

joined the maha aarti, which was attended by a large number of people. Leaders of these organisations expressed anguish over the slow pace of probe into the blasts. Suresh Mishra of Nagrik Morcha said if police in Mumbai could investigate 26/11 attack and complete the trial of the accused in 18 months, why have the police failed here? Meanwhile, the Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) of the Rajasthan police is unwilling to share the latest status of the probe, though it claimed to have identified all the 11 people who hatched the conspiracy and executed the blasts. The ATS, so far, has arrested five people but in reality the State ATS was able to nab only one on its own as the other four were arrested by the ATS of other states, including Gujarat, Delhi and UP. Highly placed sources in the ATS said chances of arrest of others are remote as they have fled the country. Amir Raja Khan and Riyaz Bhatkar of Indian Mujahideen, the masterminds of the blasts are in Karachi. Arif and Mirza Suddaib Beg have reached Dubai and the other two, Khalid and Sajid Sr have reportedly fled to Sharjah. Among the five arrested, four were involved in the Gujarat serial blasts. Three of them were arrested either by the Gujarat or the Delhi police. One of them was killed in the Batla House encounter. (Pioneer 14/5/10)

Setalvad files affidavit with inquiry commission (7)

AHMEDABAD: The general secretary of the Mumbai-based Citizens for Justice and Peace, Teesta Setalvad, on Friday filed an affidavit before the G.T. Nanavati-Akshay Mehta judicial inquiry commission giving detailed documentary evidence of the location of some mobile phone numbers held by some important persons during the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat. She claimed that the location of these mobile numbers held by officials of the Chief Minister's Office, senior Ministers in the then Narendra Modi Cabinet, senior bureaucrats and top police officers as well as some Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal leaders provided "clinching evidence" of the complicity of the government in the post-Godhra communal riots in the State. There were 15 phone calls from the Chief Minister's Office to the then Ahmedabad police commissioner P.C. Pande, on the morning of February 28, 2002, and still the CP "did not stir out of his office," Ms. Setalvad claimed that it clearly showed that "there were instructions from the top to the police not to act." She also submitted an analysis of the locational details of other important callers, including Health Minister Ashok Bhatt, Minister of State for Home Gordhan Jhadaphia, Home Secretary Ashok Narayan, Director General of Police K. Chakravarthi, top police officers in-charge of the areas where communal riots broke out, the then ruling BJP member of the Assembly, Mayaben Kodnani, and the then VHP state general secretary, Jaideep Patel, both later held as accused in the Naroda-Patiya and Naroda Gaam massacres, the Bajrang Dal leader, Babu Bajrangji, also an accused, and several others to claim that most of them were in the vicinity of Naroda and Gulberg Society areas when tension was building up on the morning of February 28. But all of them refused to act to defuse the situation. "Apparently it was because of the instructions from the top not to act," she claimed. Ms. Setalvad's affidavit, however, mostly contained the same details that the Jansangharsh Manch, which is representing the riot victims before the Nanavati - Mehta commission, submitted before the commission more than three years back. On the basis of the "locational details" of the mobile phone numbers held by these important persons, the Manch advocate, Mukul Sinha, had demanded the commission to summon Mr. Narendra Modi, Mr. Jhadaphia, Mr. Bhatt, and four others for cross-examination, but it has not given a positive response so far. For over two years, the State government pleader contested the authenticity of the compact discs containing the locational details of these numbers and after it was settled, the Commission ruled that it did not find enough reasons to summon Mr. Modi. The commission only directed three personal secretaries of the Chief Minister to file affidavits about their conversations with VHP leaders and others which they have filed but "failed to recollect" what transpired in the conversation. The Commission's refusal to summon Mr. Modi forced the Manch to file a petition in the Gujarat High Court to issue a directive to the commission. The issue is still pending after the Commission told the High Court that it had not taken any "final decision" about summoning him. The entire arguments of the Manch both before the commission and the High Court are based on the same locational details of the mobile numbers which Ms. Setalvad filed before the Commission. (The Hindu 15/5/10)

Mamata deliberately stoking panic among Muslims: CPM (7)

New Delhi: The CPI(M) on Thursday accused Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee of "deliberately stoking panic" amongst Muslims in West Bengal by claiming to have "secret information" that the Left Front may foment communal trouble after the upcoming Kolkata civic polls. Senior CPI(M) leaders Sitaram Yechury and Basudeb Acharia met Home Minister P Chidambaram and submitted a memorandum asking the Government to take note of her statements and set at rest the apprehensions

caused by them. The memorandum included photographs of Trinamool Congress' graffiti in certain areas of Kolkata, newspaper clippings on Banerjee's speeches and a letter in this regard by Left Front Chairman Biman Basu. "The Railway Minister is making very provocative speeches and hurling charges saying she has secret information that the Left Front and a section of police in West Bengal are going to unleash communal riots soon after the ensuing (Kolkata) civic polls," Yechury told reporters after meeting Chidambaram at the North Block. "This is a very dangerous charge. In the last 33 years, there is only one place in the country where there is absolute communal harmony and no disturbance, and that is Bengal. This is a matter of pride for the state, for India and for secular democracy," he said. "Casting of such wild and unsubstantiated allegations, especially by a Union cabinet minister, violates the provisions of the Representation of People Act, 1951," he said adding if Banerjee genuinely possessed such "secret information", then Home Ministry should "obtain it and act on it in consultation with the state government". "If, on the contrary, there is no such information, as surely is the case, then may we request you to set at rest the apprehensions and tensions that have resulted from the Union Minister's utterances," Yechury and Acharia posed. (Pioneer 21/5/10)

Tension continues as CPI(M) activist attacked in Kannur (7)

Kannur: A CPI(M) activist was stabbed today while some houses were attacked by unidentified persons as tension continued to prevail in parts of the politically sensitive Kannur district today in the wake of the murder of two BJP activists in new Mahe. Manoharan, also an employee of the CPI (M) controlled AKG Memorial Cooperative Hospital here, was injured when he was attacked, allegedly by IUML workers, at Koran Peedika early today, police said. CPI(M) leaders here accused activists of IUML and Popular Front of India, a Muslim outfit, of unleashing attacks on its partymen following the murder of two BJP activists at New Mahe locality on Friday last. The CPI(M) worker, with injuries on his hands and legs, was shifted to a hospital in Mangalore. Unidentified persons attacked houses of rival partymen and vandalised select shops and a rice mill, at Koran Peedika, Onaparmba and Pariyaram despite strong presence of police deployed in the trouble-torn localities. Meanwhile, BJP and RSS district leaders boycotted an all party peace meeting held at Thalassery today even as the Congress-led United Democratic Front leaders staged a walkout accusing authorities of adopting "casual approach" on the situation. They sought intervention of home minister Kodayeri Balakrishnan, who represents the Thalassery assembly constituency. (dna 1/6/10)

Tension mounts after students-minority community face-off over burial ground wall

Kendrapada: Tension prevailed on Sunday at the premises of Kendrapada Autonomous College after a face-off between the students and the local minority community burial ground committee members following the students protested the construction of the burial ground wall. Later, the police and the college authorities rushed to the spot and stopped the construction work to prevent a possible communal flare up. Notably, in 2006, the minority community members started the wall construction work of the burial ground just 100 metres from the college by cutting some trees. Later, the students destroyed the wall, which led to communal tension. The students also protested by staging a dharna. As strong resentment brewed, the then DM and SP interfered into the matter with the help of the then college principal by directing the minority community members to stop the construction work, stated principal of the college Praffula Mishra. But on Sunday, some minority community members wanted to take advantage of summer vacation. But some OUAT students, who were appearing an examination, opposed the move of the minority community thereby escalating tension, said the college principal. (Pioneer 8/6/10)

Muslim United Front demonstrates against Modi's visit to Bihar (7)

Patna: Activists of the Muslim United Front today demonstrated here against Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bihar to attend the BJP national executive being held here. The protesters carried black flags and banners with slogans 'Go back Modi', 'Go Back Varun Gandhi', 'Hum Bihar ko Gujarat Nahin Banane Denge' (We will not allow Bihar to become Gujarat in the context of 2002 Godhra riots). They also shouted slogans against chief minister Nitish Kumar for hosting Modi and Gandhi and demanded the resignation of his government. The protesters were stopped from proceeding to the Maurya hotel, the venue of the BJP's national executive, by policemen and Special Armed Police (SAP)

personnel. They were taken to the Pirbahor police station where they were released subsequently, police sources said. (DNA 12/6/10)

Bill to prevent violence in the name of religion soon: Chidambaram (19)

KARAIKUDI, TN: Union home minister P Chidambaram has said that government would soon introduce the Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation) Bill with amendments to prevent violence in the name of caste and religion. Some suggestions had come from parliamentary standing committee for amending the Bill and it had been placed before Parliament, he said in a function organised to unveil a statue of B R Ambedkar here late on Saturday evening. Congress chief Sonia Gandhi had suggested to make it tougher for those instigating caste and communal violence, he said, adding the draft bill would be ready soon. It was not good to hear about caste and communal violence even after several decades of Independence, he said, adding such incidents had no place in the land where great leaders like Kamaraj, Anna (Annadurai-DMK founder) and Periyar (rationalist leader) lived. The amendment would help lawmakers to take stringent action against those instigating and spreading communal violence, Chidambaram said. (Times of India 13/6/10)

Unleashing mob fury (7)

The Maharashtra Police has arrested Moinuddin Shamsuddin Bagwan, the former Mayor of Miraj, Sangli and Kupwad Municipal Corporation, for masterminding the riots that erupted during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in September 2009. The violence had disrupted the festival in Miraj and caused considerable tension across Maharashtra. Bagwan is a member of the Nationalist Congress Party and a close aide of the party's senior leader Jayant Patil, who was the State Home Minister when the riots occurred. Bagwan's goons instigated Muslims to protest against a pandal whose façade depicted Shivaji slaying Adilshahi commander Afzal Khan. The protest turned violent as Muslims, led by Bagwan's henchman Munna, ran amok. What added fuel to the fire was the desecration of Ganesh pandals by Bagwan's men which was a criminal act of provocation. Thankfully, the situation did not go out of control as the Hindu residents of Miraj demonstrated maturity and exercised restraint. However, ripple effects were felt in places like Sangli and Kolhapur. Fearing arrest and prosecution, Bagwan had gone into hiding soon after the riot but has had to give himself up following a manhunt. Bagwan had filed an application for anticipatory bail in the district court through his lawyer. Sensing he would not get any relief, Bagwan surrendered before the police last week. He was promptly arrested on charges of "committing acts for communal tension and encouraging destruction of peace". However, given his links with the NCP, which rules Maharashtra in partnership with the Congress, it is anybody's guess as to whether the police will actually prosecute him or let him go free through the expedient means of not opposing his bail application. The Miraj riot was clearly engineered to polarise voters and mobilise Muslim votes for the Congress-NCP alliance before the Assembly election. It's an old game at which the Congress and its 'secular' allies excel. This is not the first time that communal violence has been instigated by our 'secularists' for collateral political gain. It's a pity that cheerleaders of the Congress tend to gloss over the company the party keeps to stay in power at any cost. This silence is explained by the fact that the Congress is not averse to the idea of using malcontents like Bagwan to incite violence for electoral gains. Be that as it may, the NCP stands exposed with the arrest of Bagwan and the shocking disclosure by his goons about how he cynically plotted the Miraj riot, unmindful of its consequences, at the behest of his party leaders. (Pioneer 15/6/10)

1 killed, 10 hurt in communal clash (7)

Lucknow: Dispute over a petty issue sparked communal tension at a village under Jarcha police station in Gautum Buddha Nagar on Monday evening. In the incident, a person died, while ten other suffered injuries in exchange of fire between the groups. The police have arrested 12 people in this connection and efforts were on to nab the absconding miscreants. Huge police force and PAC jawans were rushed the spot to control the situation. The police and jawans are still camping in the village. As per reports, one Mustkim of Kalauda village, who sells batteries, had a dispute on rate of battery with Sanju, Mukesh and Rakesh-all of same village on June 12. After the locals informed the police, Mukesh and Rakesh were arrested and were challaned under Section 151 of IPC. Later, they were sent to jail. (Pioneer 16/6/10)

Sangli riots: High Court seeks reply from police officer (7)

Mumbai, June 17, 2010: The Bombay High Court on Thursday sought a reply from a senior Maharashtra police officer on a PIL demanding a CBI probe into the communal riots in Sangli last year. A division bench comprising Justices JN Patel and SC Dharmadhikari also sought information from the Superintendent of Police of Sangli regarding the probe of the riot-related cases. Clashes had erupted in Sangli and Miraj in September 2009, at the time of Ganesh festival, over erection of an arch depicting the scene of killing of Afzal Khan by Shivaji. Petitioner Samit Kadam, who is a member of all-party anti-riot action committee, has contended that riots were incited by some people in view of the Maharashtra Assembly elections in October 2009. The PIL stated that 131 criminal cases were registered in various police stations, but probe has been very slow, so CBI should take over. Court has sought a reply from Sangli SP in four weeks. Earlier this month, outgoing SP Krishna Prakash had alleged that Mainuddin Bagwan, a local NCP leader and then Mayor of Miraj, was responsible for the riots. (Hindustan Times 18/6/10)

Gujarat HC rejects petition of Godhra train carnage accused (7)

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat high court has rejected a petition filed by an accused in the Godhra train burning, challenging the trial court decision to consider his confession recorded under anti-terror law Pota as evidence. Justice AS Dave, while rejecting the plea of Abid Hussain Abdulkarim Sheikh yesterday, directed the trial court to go ahead and take his confessional statement on record. This is one of the nine cases, related to Godhra train carnage and subsequent riots, which was probed afresh by the Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT). The apex court has asked the judges conducting trial in these cases to go ahead with the proceedings, but not to deliver the verdict. Sheikh moved the high court after special judge PR Patel, trying the case related to burning of Sabarmati Express near Godhra on February 27, 2002, ruled that his confessional statement recorded under Section 32 of Prevention of Terrorism Act could be taken as evidence during the trial and the court would decide on its admissibility at a later stage. In his petition, Sheikh had contended that since Pota charges were dropped in the case by an order of the high court given on the recommendation of Pota Review Committee, his statement cannot be used during the trial being conducted under the provisions of CrPC and IPC. (DNA 18/6/10)

2002 Gujarat riots: Probe panel gets another six-month extension (7)

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat government has granted another extension of six months to the justices (Retired) G T Nanavati and Akshay Mehta Commission. The Nanavati-KG Shah Commission was formed in March 2002 to probe the Godhra train carnage and the subsequent communal riots in Gujarat. The Commission's term was to expire on June 30. Commission Secretary C G Patel confirmed that the panel had sought another extension of six months, which has been granted. The new deadline to submit the report is December 31, 2010. The Commission has already submitted its first report pertaining to the burning of the S-6 coach of the Sabarmati Express in which 59 Kar Sevaks were charred to death. The Commission had called the incident a preplanned conspiracy involving "some individuals". The Gujarat High Court on Thursday granted the state government a week's time to make a statement regarding the status of the Commission on the issue of summoning Chief Minister Narendra Modi and six others for questioning. Jan Sangharsh Manch, a voluntary organisation, has filed a petition in the HC challenging the original order of the probe panel to turn down its application to summon Modi and others to probe their alleged role in the statewide communal riots. The petition will be heard on June 25. (Indian Express 19/6/10)

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Decide on Riot Victims Compensation: HC to Guj, Centre (7)

Ahmedabad: Gujarat High Court today directed Central and state governments to take appropriate decision on compensation for the newly identified post-Godhra riot victims and those whose uninsured commercial property was damaged during the 2002 communal riots. A division bench of Chief Justice S J Mukhopadhaya and K M Thakar also directed the state government to decide on the demand of the riot victims for employment and scheduled the matter for hearing on September 27. The directions were passed while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) by one Gagan Sethi, member of Special Monitoring Group appointed by National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) after the 2002 riots. When the matter came up for hearing, petitioner's advocate Amit Panchal submitted that 752 riot victims, who were identified by the state in districts of Ahmedabad, Sabarkantha and Dahod, after central government released the compensation of Rs 262.44 crore, have not been paid anything. To this the state government replied that they have sent the details of the newly identified victims to the Centre for release of compensation. Panchal further submitted that the central government had not released Rs 87.75 crore which was allotted for victims whose uninsured industrial or commercial property was damaged during the 2002 riots. The centre in reply to this said that they have to make budgetary provision for the Rs 87.75 crore for which the process was on. With regard to employment for riot victims, the state government had, during the previous hearing, said that it did not have any policy of giving employment to riot victims. The court today, asked the state government to consider the demands of riot victims and take a decision on it by September 27. The state government has already told the court in an affidavit that it has paid compensation to almost all the riot victims as per the direction of central government. The Rs 262.44 crore central government relief package included compensation to the family of over 1,169 people who died during the riots and over 2,549 victims who were injured in the post-Godhra communal violence. The state government have also told the court that they have not been able to disburse compensation in six cases where the victim has died and 35 cases where the victim was injured during riots. The reason for this, the state government, said was infighting between the family members of the victim for getting compensation and lack of documentary evidence on the part of family members in case of some victims. (Outlook India 1/7/10)

Fresh clashes in Kashmir, five injured (7)

July 01, 2010: At least five persons were injured in fresh clashes between youths and police following an attempt by activists of a women separatist organisation to take out a march in defiance of curfew orders in Srinagar [Images], officials said. Activists of Dukhtaran-e-Millat led by their chief Syeda Asiya Andrabi assembled at Mughal Mohalla locality of Chattabal on Thursday afternoon and started a march towards Pather Masjid in old city in response to a call given by hardline faction of Hurriyat Conference, officials said. As the burqa-clad women activists were moving ahead, hundreds of youth joined them. However, police and paramilitary forces stopped the protestors at Chattabal bridge leading to clashes between the two sides, the officials said. Police and paramilitary forces fired teargas shells and used batons to disperse the protestors, they said, adding five persons, including a cameraperson of a local news channel, were injured. Reinforcements were rushed to the area to maintain law and order. Despite stringent curfew restrictions imposed by the authorities, additional police and paramilitary forces including women police have been deployed around Pather Masjid located in Dalal Mohalla to prevent women from reaching there. Barbed wire and armoured vehicles were placed around the masjid and the forces deployed there asked to intensify patrolling, police said. Meanwhile, life continued to remain disrupted in Srinagar and other parts of the valley due to the curfew restrictions, imposed in seven police station areas on June 28, with government offices, banks and educational institutions remaining closed and transport services being off the road. On the other hand, the first batch of Amarnath pilgrims comprising 1,272 people proceeded to the 3,880-m cave shrine through the traditional Pahalgam and the shorter Baltal routes this morning, officials said. The pilgrims had reached the twin base camps of Nunwan and Baltal from Jammu last evening. Additional security forces have been deployed on both the routes to ensure safety of the pilgrims.. (Rediff News 1/7/10)

2 convicted in Kandhamal riots case (7)

PHULBANI (ORISSA): A fast track court today sentenced two persons to six years rigorous imprisonment for killing a polio-stricken man during Kandamal riots in 2008. Fast track court-I judge S K Das convicted Susant Sahu and Mrutunjay Sahu under section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 436 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house), 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting armed with deadly weapon) and 149 (unlawful assembly) of IPC. They were also fined Rs 5500 for the killing of Rasananda Pradhan, a Christian afflicted with polio, during rioting on August 24, 2008 at Rupa village under Tikabali police station area in Kandhamal district, a day after the killing of the VHP leader Swami Laxamanda Saraswati. The police recovered the charred body of Pradhan about a fortnight after his killing. While all the members of the villagers fled from their houses, Rasananda could not. His family members fled to the state capital to take shelter. Welcoming the judgement, Archbishop of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar diocese Rahpeal Cheenath said "this has helped people to have faith in the judiciary." Meanwhile, Fast Track court-II, Phulbani, Judge C R Das acquitted 20 persons while disposing of two cases relating to the torching of houses on August 25, 2008, at Bapalamendi and Hatapadasahi villages. Of the total 891 riot cases, the two fast track courts have so far disposed of 201 cases convicting 152 persons and acquitting 656. (Express Buzz 1/7/10)

Amid curfew, clashes continue in Kashmir (7)

SRINAGAR: Even as Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah asked his Ministers to visit various areas to restore peace, life in the Kashmir Valley remained affected for the fifth day on Thursday with curfew in force and eruption of clashes. With roads wearing a deserted look and uneasy calm prevailing, life remained hit for the fifth day in Sopore and for the third day in Anantnag and Baramulla, besides adjoining areas. Despite restrictions enforced by the police and the Central Reserve Police Force, people took to the streets in Sopore, Sangam, Bijbehara, Malak Nag and Anchidora and staged demonstrations in protest against the killing of 11 youths by the CRPF and the police in the past 11 days. In Srinagar, severe restrictions were in force for the third day. All shops, educational institutions, banks, petrol pumps, business establishments and government offices remained shut on Thursday. Private operators ran skeletal transport service in the civil lines. Protests erupted at Kawdara, Natipora, Chattabal, Parimpora, Bemina and Maisuma in the city, with scores of people staging demonstrations. Twelve people were injured when CRPF and police personnel resorted to a baton charge and burst teargas shells to break up a march at Chattabal. A group of women, led by Duktaran-e-Millat chief Asiya Andrabi, took out the march from Mughal Mohalla. When the women reached the Chattabal Bridge, a CRPF contingent and police intercepted them. As the protesters put up resistance, the troops fired teargas shells after a baton charge proved ineffective. Thousands of personnel, equipped with riot gear and arms, manned lanes, by-lanes, roads and the deserted streets of the city. (The Hindu 2/7/10)

Communal clash in Ahmedabad; police fire in air (7)

AHMEDABAD: A clash broke out here tonight between members of two communities, prompting the police to fire two rounds in the air to bring the situation under control. The incident took place in the communally sensitive Shahpur area after an altercation between two groups over some a "petty" issue, they said. "Two rounds were fired in the air by the State Reserve Police (SRP) jawans when the groups came out on the roads and started pelting stones at each other," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) S M Katara said. "No one was injured in the stone pelting and the situation was under control," he said. Investigation in the matter was on, police said. In wake of the Jagannath rathayatra on July 13, SRP personnel have been deployed in the city's communally sensitive areas, including Shahpur. (Times of India 6/7/10)

Orissa HC grants bail to Kandhamal riot convict BJP MLA (7)

Bhubaneswar: Orissa high court today granted bail to BJP MLA Manoj Pradhan who was convicted in a Kandhamal communal riots case. Pradhan, convicted by a fast track court at Phulbani on June 29 and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for seven years for his role in the killing of a Christian man during communal riots in Kandhamal in 2008, got conditional bail from the high court. The single judge bench of justice BP Das, while granting bail to Pradhan, said the MLA would refrain from influencing witnesses in other cases pending against him. At least six more cases, including three involving murder charges, are pending against Pradhan who had been acquitted in seven other cases. Pradhan, however, could not be released from jail today as he had to make a fresh bail petition in the lower court in Phulbani as per direction of the high court, the BJP MLA's lawyer Sarbeswar Behera said. The BJP's MLA from

communally sensitive G Udaygiri assembly segment was sent to jail after the fast track court judge SK Das had pronounced the punishment for him and another person for their role in the killing of Parikhita Naik, a Christian from Budedi village near Tiangia under Raikia police station limit on August 27, 2008. The fast track court had found Pradhan guilty under section 326 (Voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 147 (rioting) and 149 (unlawful assembly) of IPC. Though the government pleader objected to Pradhan's bail petition at the High Court, his lawyer pointed out that the BJP MLA's name did not figure in the original FIR made at Raikia police station in Kandhamal district. He further argued that none of the witnesses including the victim's wife and complainant Kanakarekha Naik named Pradhan during recording of their statement at the court. Pradhan through his lawyers had also challenged the fast track court's verdict in the high court. (DNA 7/7/10)

Kashmir curfew widened amid call for Friday protests (7)

SRINAGAR: Security forces widened a curfew in Kashmir on Friday, the Muslim day of prayers, after the separatists threatened fresh protests against the killing of locals. "We have widened the curfew to ensure a violence-free Friday," a police officer, who declined to be named, said. Towns such as Kupwara and Handwara in the north, Kakpora and Pulwama in south and Gandherbal in the east were placed under fresh curfew. Violent flashpoints such as Sopore, Srinagar and Anantnag remain restricted. Police and paramilitary forces, who have been struggling to control the wave of protests in the Muslim-majority Kashmir valley, have been accused of killing 15 civilians in less than a month. Each death has sparked a new cycle of violence, since the first killing of a 17-year old student in Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir, during Friday protests on June 11 by the police teargas shell. Hardline separatists urged residents to march to the region's revered Muslim shrine of Hazratbal in Srinagar on Friday. Two men and a woman were killed in the city on Tuesday. "Whenever the curfew is relaxed in any of the areas, people are requested to come out on the streets and continue with a peaceful sit-in," a statement by hardliners said. The army was called in on Wednesday in Srinagar after residents defied curfew restrictions and held protests. Their presence brought calm to the streets. No local newspaper hit the stands for the second day running amid tight restrictions on the local and international media. Passes allowing journalists to travel in Srinagar despite the curfew have been cancelled. "Due to the curbs imposed by the government on media, Greater Kashmir and Kashmir Uzma could not bring out their print editions for second consecutive day, Friday," reads the website of the two leading local newspapers. Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan each hold Kashmir in part but claim it in full. They have fought two of their three wars over the region since the subcontinent's partition in 1947. (Times of India 9/7/10)

Impact of Guj riots on women under review by UN (7)

United Nations: India's report to the UN on issues related to the impact of the 2002 Gujarat riots on women is under review by a panel of top experts here. The experts belonging to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), who are meeting in a 19-day session at the U.N. headquarters, will review India's report on the impact of the Gujarat riots. Following reports submitted previously by India in 2007, the U.N. asked New Delhi to "report on an exceptional basis" with additional information on the several issues, including information disaggregated by sex on the cases relating to the killings, on sexual assault and violence against women that have been reported and the resolution of such cases. It also called for information on arrests made and punishments imposed, including on state officials who were found to be complicit in such crimes and on compensation awarded to women victims, especially of violence against women. CEDAW also asked India to report back on 5,000 or so Muslim families displaced by the violence and measures taken by the government for their resettlement and rehabilitation. In seven-page report submitted in December 2009, India responded to the questions by stating that the cases of 169 persons (146 male and 23 female), who had been reported killed in 2002 in Gujarat, have been reopened and charge sheets have been filed in 12 cases of males and 1 case of a female. It also said that a total of 19 cases of sexual assault and violence against women had been reported. The report also said that New Delhi had sanctioned Rs. 23.6 million for organising training for rehabilitation of the riot affected women and the state government had spent Rs. 23 million for vocational training classes in all districts. Seven other countries are up for review? Turkey, Russian Federation, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Australia, Argentina and Albania. The organisation periodically reviews each country once it becomes a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted in 1979. Currently 186 countries have accepted the Convention. (Zee News 14/7/10)

132 convicted in Kandhamal riot cases: Naveen (7)

BHUBANESWAR: At least 132 persons had so far been convicted in different cases related to 2008 communal violence in Orissa's Kandhamal district, chief minister Naveen Patnaik said on Monday. While replying a question in the assembly, Patnaik said that 38 persons were killed in the communal violence. On the involvement of any person or organisation, Patnaik, who is also in charge of home department, said that 24 activists belonging to Bajrang Dal and VHP were arrested and lodged at jails. (Times of India 19/7/10)

Fresh probe ordered into post-Godhra riot case (7)

The Gujarat High Court has ordered a fresh probe into one of the post-Godhra riot cases, eight years after the incident. Justice Akil Kureshi has asked the Superintendent of Police, Ahmedabad Rural, to open a new inquiry into the February 28, 2002 rioting at Viramgam, in which three members of the minority community were killed and eight injured. The probe has to be completed in three months. The court passed the order on a petition filed by Doshmohammad Bhatti, who claimed that the police had recorded the statement of only one eyewitness though there were more eyewitnesses to the attack. The police had investigated the case and filed a charge sheet against 10 persons. The trial began in the Viramgam Sessions Court in 2006. But Bhatti, claimed to be an eyewitness himself, filed an application in the court in January this year, demanding further investigation. After the Sessions Court rejected it, he moved the High Court. "The assertions of the petitioner that there were other eyewitnesses need a closer examination. If there were other persons, as it is likely, whose testimony may throw some light on the manner in which the incident took place, such an angle should be probed further," Justice Kureshi said. In another development, the High Court has pulled up Advocate-General Kamal Trivedi for the State government's failure to file an affidavit explaining its stand on the demand for a CBI investigation into the alleged fake encounter killing of Ishrat Jahan. Though Mr. Trivedi had submitted before a Division Bench of Justices Jayant Patel and Abhilasha Kumari that the government was opposed to handing over the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation, he was told to file an affidavit. But the government failed to do so within the stipulated period. Now it has promised to file an affidavit in a day or two. The court has also wanted to know from the government whether it would agree to the reconstitution of the Special Investigation Team by taking in some officials of the Central investigating agencies. The demand for a CBI inquiry was made separately by Shamima Kausar, mother of Ishrat Jahan, and Gopinath Pillai, father of Pranesh Pillai alias Javed Sheikh, who was also among those killed with Ishrat. The petitioners claimed that they did not expect the investigation by the Gujarat police to be impartial. (The Hindu 22/7/10)

Punjab town under curfew after clashes

Tension has gripped Punjab's Malerkotla town, where curfew has been imposed, following the burning of a church in the town in the wake of rumours that the copies of Quran were burnt in the US. The district administration held a meeting with the community leaders on Monday in an attempt to defuse the crisis. "If the situation remains normal and peaceful, we will lift the curfew on Tuesday morning at 9 am. As of now, the things are under control," said Harcharan Singh Bhullar, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Sangrur district. The situation flared up Malerkotla town when a mob set on fire certain belongings of a church located on the Milk Road at around 9.30 pm on Sunday night. The police reached the spot quickly, but the mob retaliated, leaving a few police personnel injured as well. Malerkotla town, which has a population of nearly 110,000 over 55 per cent of them being Muslims, had been peaceful even during the Partition. There was also tension in Punjab's industrial hub of Ludhiana when members of the Muslim and Christian communities gathered following the rumours of the desecration of the Quran. However, district administration officials said efforts were on to calm the situation. The town of Malerkotla has turned into a fortress after the rumour spread that the Quran has been burnt in Michigan, US. Soon, a mob gathered and proceeded to the town's only church located at Milk Road on Sunday around 9.30 pm. The mob then set furniture of the church on fire before the police intervened. Police said that as the PCR vehicle reached the spot, the mob started pelting stones on them in which two policemen got injured. A local news channel journalist was also injured during the coverage of protest at the church. The situation in the town remained tense throughout the night and Punjab Police rushed reinforcements and made the area as a fortress with the deployment of heavy police force with a large number of commandos as well. Police officials said the rumour about the desecration of the holy book started following the recent controversy in the US after a pastor in Florida threatened to burn copies of the Quran on the anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks. Religious leaders from the Muslim and Christian communities met the district administration

officials on Monday and appealed to the people to maintain calm. They said that no heed should be paid to rumours about the burning of the copies of Quran in the US. (Pioneer, 14/9/2010)

Tension in Nabarangpur over blasphemous Xmas greeting

Some controversial greeting cards on Christmas created a huge outrage in Nabarangpur. The greeting card was misinterpreted by the Christian community and they resorted to huge protest and blockade on Saturday. Local BJD MLA Manohar Randhari sent greeting cards to people of Christian community on Christmas. He had a noble intention indeed, but some vested interests played spoilsport and created trouble. The printing press that printed the greeting card goofed up. It downloaded a controversial picture from Internet in which Jesus Christ was holding cigarette in one hand and a beer can in the other hand. When people noticed the picture, they got upset and the news spread like wildfire. People from the minority community blocked the roads in the town. They were heavily armed and some of them were in inebriated condition. The police had a tough time to restore law and order in the town. Later, MLA Randhari expressed regret for the incident and said that he never intended to hurt anyone's sentiments. He also decided to visit the churches to tender an apology. But at 12 pm some of the protesters opposed his entry in the church, they further demanded the arrest of MLA. The aggrieved protesters shouted slogans in filthy languages and abused the police. ADM, Narendra Pradhan, directed for clamping of Section 144 of CrPC to maintain peace in the locality, and district Superintendent of Police, Nitin Sekhar deployed four platoon of force in the town and in front of the church. In the evening Jeypore MLA Rabi Narayan Nanda, district BJD president Bhudan Jagya Samiti chairman, Jayadev Parida, and other district party functionaries met at the Circuit House conference hall and said political parties should not be try to aggravate the issue. Meanwhile, local MP and State Youth Congress president Pradip Majhi after a meeting said the party would hold peaceful demonstrations before the 10 blocks in the district and submit memorandums addressed to the Governor through the BDOs demanding arrest of the MLA. Among others, Kodiganga former MLA Sadan Nayak and district Youth Congress president Bhima Harijan were present. In another citizen committee meeting presided over by ADM Narendra Pradhan, in which SP Sekhar was present the Bishop of the church said he has forgiven the concerned person. (Pioneer, 27/12/2010)

Stray incident mars Christmas in Kandhamal

BHUBANESWAR: A stray incident marred Christmas celebrations in Orissa's communally sensitive Kandhamal district when unidentified miscreants set afire the car of a missionary here tonight, police said. The car of Baptist missionary Suranjan Nayak was set afire in district headquarter hospital premises but no injury to anyone was reported, Inspector In-charge of Phulbani town police station, S C Panda said. Police force was rushed to the site soon after the incident and efforts were on to nab the culprits, he said adding Nayak, whose wife works as a nurse in the hospital, had gone to his native place in Raikia area of the district when the incident took place. Barring this incident, believed to have been orchestrated by some mischief mongers, Christmas celebrations in the tribal dominated Kandhamal remained peaceful as people joined the revelry with joy and enthusiasm, police said. Kandhamal had witnessed riots during Christmas festival in 2007 and after the killing of VHP leader Laxmananda Saraswati in August, 2008. Elaborate security arrangements had been made to prevent any untoward incident during Christmas this time. After performing mid-night mass at different churches, Christians thronged their places of worship in colourful attires this morning as people belonging to all communities joined the celebrations showing a spirit of camaraderie and brotherhood. (TOI, 25/12/2010)

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