

Religious mobs rampage in India, death toll now 815

AHMADABAD, India (AP) — Rampaging mobs set fire to homes, burning to death five members of a Muslim family in western India, where the worst religious rioting in a decade has killed 815 people over the past five weeks, police said Wednesday.

Violence in Gujarat

Five Muslims were burned to death and more than 40 suffered burn injuries when a Hindu mob set fire to houses in western Gujarat state, India.

Home Ministry said. A Hindu temple was burned by Muslims, police said. The rioters also hurled petrol bombs and fired guns at police. The clashes ended when soldiers arrived.

Opposition parties and Muslim groups have called the rioting "state-sponsored" and demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Narendra Modi, the state's top elected official, because of the government's failure to stop the killings.

Modi is a member of the prime minister's Bharatiya Janata Party and state police are facing accusations that they encouraged the rioters, or did little to stop them.

The violence in Gujarat is the worst in India since 1993, when more than 800 people were killed during Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay. That violence followed the destruction of a 16th century mosque by Hindu nationalists in the northern town of Ayodhya.

The dispute over the mosque site, where Hindu nationalists want to build a temple, is also at the root of the Gujarat violence, as many of the Hindus burned on the train were returning home from Ayodhya.

Firefighters fought the blazes through the night, and the bodies were recovered Wednesday morning, Sahay said.

In Gujarat's Sabarkantha district, seven houses were set on fire in the Vadali village Tuesday night. Five people were injured, said police, who did not immediately give the religion of the attackers and victims.

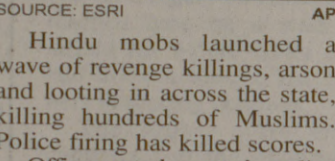
The new violence was reported a day before Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was to visit Gujarat, where the violence began Feb. 27 when a Muslim mob burned a train, killing 60 Hindus.

Hindu mobs launched a wave of revenge killings, arson and looting in across the state, killing hundreds of Muslims. Police firing has killed scores.

Officers at the state's police control room, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the death toll from religious attacks in the state since Feb. 27 stood at 815.

In Ahmadabad, Hindu and Muslim mobs clashed late Tuesday and early Wednesday, and police fired tear gas to disperse stone-throwing groups.

Ten people, including three policemen, were injured, the



SOURCE: ESRI

NEWS IN BRIEF

China frees Tibetan teacher

ZHENGZHOU, China (AP) — An elderly Tibetan teacher was freed on medical parole by China after 19 years in prison — a release one leading activist said was an attempt to please the United States.

Tanak Jigme Sangpo, 76, was set free Sunday from Drapchi Prison in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, said John Kamm, president of the San Francisco-based Duihua Foundation.

Jigme Sangpo was one of five prisoners cited by U.S. Ambassador Clark T. Randt, at least two of

which have now been set free.

Beijing has made a practice in the past year of releasing prisoners when it wants to curry favor with Washington over human rights — the most persistent sticking point in China-U.S. relations.

Sangpo was arrested in September 1983 and sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of counterrevolutionary incitement and propaganda for campaigning against Chinese rule in Tibet, according to Kamm.

The Tibetan had been China's longest-serving political prisoner. With his freedom, the political prisoner held the longest is Zhang Chengjian.

City of College Station News

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April 17 - April 30

College Station City Hall, Training Room, M - F: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.,
CSISD District Admin. Offices,
M - F: 8 p.m. - 5 p.m.,
Post Oak Mall Men's Dillard's Court, M - F: 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

The City/School General Election is Saturday, May 4, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

If you are unsure of your precinct number or precinct location contact the City Secretary's Office at 764-3541.

Fact: Smoke alarms save lives.

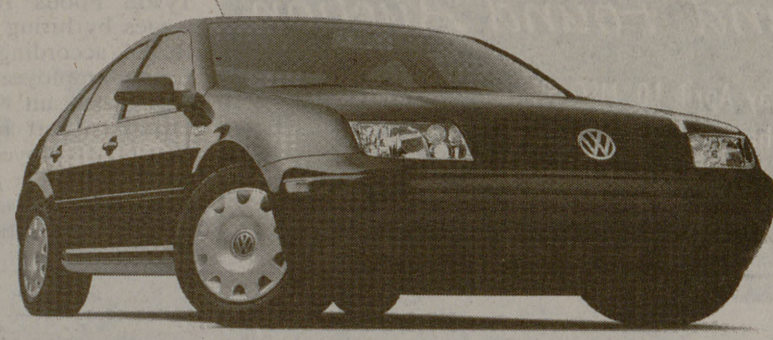
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