

## **Razing of Muslim Shrine in India Brings Violence, and a Court Ban**

**By HARI KUMAR**  
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NEW DELHI, May 4 — The Supreme Court ordered Gujarat on Thursday to stop demolishing buildings that the state says were constructed illegally. Six people died and dozens were injured this week during protests against the demolition of a Muslim shrine in Gujarat.

More than a thousand Indian Army troops were dispatched to Gujarat on Wednesday to contain further Hindu-Muslim violence.

The riots were set off by the demolition of the Syed Rashiduddin shrine in Vadodara, part of the state's effort to tear down buildings that it said had been built illegally. Several other houses of worship, including about a dozen small roadside Hindu temples, have also been torn down. But the demolition of the Muslim shrine — a larger and older structure used by Chishti, a mystical Sufi sect, which stood in the middle of a road — has become a touchstone of tension.

The court order was in response to a petition by the central government, which cited the violence and said the demolitions had been authorized without proper review.

Vadodara, also known as Baroda, remained under a curfew and was largely calm on Thursday. But Reuters quoted police officials as saying that three factories had been set on fire, and that mobs had pelted each other with stones. Army troops fanned out across the city, along with the local police.

Of the six people who died in three days of rioting, four were Muslims and two Hindu. One of the dead was Mohammed Rafik Vohra, the owner of a transport company, who was pulled out of his car by a Hindu mob and stabbed to death on Tuesday night, his brother, Mahmood, said.

The latest violence recalled Gujarat's ugly past and drew fresh scrutiny of its chief minister, Narendra Modi, of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. Four years ago, also during Mr. Modi's tenure in Gujarat, a prosperous and highly industrialized state, a train fire that killed 59 Hindu pilgrims set off reprisal attacks that left more than 1,100 dead, most of them Muslims.

Those on the train had been returning from a mission to build a temple in Ayodhya, on the site of a mosque whose destruction by fervent Hindus in 1992 set off riots that killed more than a thousand.

The police were accused of doing little to contain the anti-Muslim violence four years ago, and even less to see that wrongdoers were punished.

"The Gujarat government must be vigilant against extremist violence against helpless civilians," Brad Adams, Asia director of Human Rights Watch, said in a statement. "Instead of allowing this violence to deepen religious hatred, the authorities should launch an immediate, thorough and transparent investigation to ensure that those responsible are prosecuted and punished."

Several Muslim residents of Vadodara said this week's violence, and the delayed and biased response by the police, left them unconvinced that they would be protected.

M. I. Pathan, 60, a retired Gujarat policeman and a Muslim, said he called the police control room repeatedly on Tuesday night as a mob encircled his neighborhood looting houses and beating up anyone in sight. The police never came.

"We were really scared and praying for our lives," Mr. Pathan said in a telephone interview. "At one stage an operator in the police control room said: 'We do not have any police. You bring police from Pakistan.' I asked for his name but he did not tell me."

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