

## Delhi Violence Warns of Indian Polarization on Communal Lines

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*Shaheen Bagh, in the neighborhood of Indian capital New Delhi, has been the epicenter of [protests](#) by mostly women, with some of them [toddlers](#) in their tows. They were expressing their gripes over the discriminatory Indian Citizenship Amendment ACT (CAA), which fast-tracks naturalization for some religious minorities excluding Muslims.*

Violence sparked in the northeast of Delhi after ruling Hindu-nationalist BJP leader **Kapil Mishra**, who recently lost in state election, urged people “to prevent another Shaheen Bagh” in Jaffrabad, Delhi. He latter tweeted a three-day [ultimatum](#) to the city police to clear the vicinity from sit-ins or he along with his supporters would do it himself following the departure of the visiting US **President Donald Trump**.

As the protests were [peaceful](#) and there was no incidence of mobs on the rampage, burning of homes, schools and mosques or stone pelting before that - how the city quickly dribbled into the chaos was shocking. The worst riots in decades didn't erupt abruptly; there was a gradual buildup that shook Delhi into a warzone.

Mishra, during the state election campaign, had made a number of communal [remarks](#) such as “Pakistan has already entered Shaheen Bagh and small pockets of Pakistan are being created in Delhi” and also equated the local assembly polls with “India versus Pakistan contest”. His comment irked the Election Commission that asked him to remove the thread.

It is due to his rabble-rousing attitude toward the religious minorities that many Indians, including Hindus, [believe](#) that he and his followers have hewed a dangerous ambience in the country and all of them should be jailed. Former district MLA isn't the only BJP leader who incited riots; he was accompanied by the party's Delhi wing.

Days after **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** obliquely [indicted](#) only Muslims for protesting against CAA, the BJP Delhi unit in December [published](#) a cartoon on Instagram showing that its political rival and state's chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and a bearded-man in a stereotype Muslim dress were setting a bus on fire while a lady was trapped inside.

A month afterward, it [shared](#) a controversial meme from its micro-blogging twitter handle that stirred communal [sadism](#). The two pictures of a burning bus and Kejriwal with a skull cap on alongside a Muslim MLA, titled Art and Artist, was a veiled linkage to accuse the students of Jamia Millia Islamia for December's violence even though that wasn't resulted in [detention](#) of a single of them by police.

The preordained connection among these episodes – and BJP MLA Parvesh Verma’s public threat before state elections to [demolish](#) “only mosques” on government land despite the [dismissal](#) of his claims by Minorities Commission – unequivocally had communal overtones and a premeditated plan to orchestrate Hindu-Muslim riots in Delhi.

Smoldering communal sentiments finally broke out a few days earlier and has so far [killed](#) 42 people and injured more than 200 in a deadliest violence in decades. The [transfer](#) of a high court judge Justice S. Muralidhar, who grilled police and [linked](#) the recent unrests with 1984 Sikh Massacre when over 3,000 people associated with Sikhism were killed in Delhi, inferred that the ongoing violence was designed by hard-line Hindu nationalists to avenge its [defeat](#) in state election.

Though Muslims were violent too, but it was largely Hindu mobs that [rioted](#) with impunity as the police stood in silence. They vandalized shops and homes of Muslims, attacked mosques, and stopped journalists from reporting and inquired their religion. Brutally beaten up and injured Muslims were forced to recite the Indian national anthem.

A series of shaking events would essentially brutalize Modi administration’s efforts to improve its moral standing in the world after lionizing Trump’s first trip to India. Lately, he [called](#) for “peace and harmony” but with communal violence keeps on jolting Delhi, the collateral damage to his party’s image is uncontrollable.

Before leaving, Trump too tried to eclipse BJP divisive moves by [promoting](#) Modi’s rise from humble background to Prime Minister of India and [appreciating](#) his efforts to ensure religious freedom in India. But US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USIFR) contravened him and [expressed](#) “grave concerns” on government and police failure to intervene and protect the citizens.

Amid worsening peace conditions in the rocked city, the US twin-pretense – of condoning and condemning hardcore BJP government and law enforcement agencies’ deliberate hatemongering and riot-fueling actions – was a bemoaning hoax to pervert the facts about rising threats to Indian secularism.

Big media is still [presenting](#) the riots as “clashed between ant-CAA and pro-CAA protestors.” If the mobs were infatuated from their backing or denial for the Act, why the supporters of BJP gathered with saffron flags (a Hinduism symbol) and chanted religious and incendiary [slogans](#) like “Shoot the traitors”, “Hail Lord Ram”, “Hail the Shiva” and “only who talk of Hindu wellbeing will rule this country.”

The mantras explicitly insinuate that the extremist Hindutwa [ideology](#) of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – which describes itself “firmly rooted in genuine nationalism” and decries any governmental move to bridge differences between religions with “erosion of nation’s integrity in the name of secularism” and “endless appeasement” – has made the Indian ruling party a hostage.

RSS contends that the 21st century will be [dominated](#) by Hindutwa and is now working with its auxiliary extensions to pursue an [aggressive](#) approach through “Cultural Politics.” This new phenomenon, if not neutralized by the Indian government and people, would spread fear and insecurity among the country’s minorities and eventually could polarize India on communal lines.

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