

## **INDIA: Delhi violence full coverage: 20 dead in clashes, stone pelting in northeast Delhi**

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Delhi violence: At least 20 people have died and over 250 have been injured in the clashes in northeast Delhi since Sunday.

***In Karawal Nagar, Tuesday. (Express photo: Gajendra Yadav)***

**New Delhi:** In embattled neighbourhood after neighbourhood in northeast Delhi, which has been in the grip of violence for three days, one story played through Tuesday from morning to midnight – groups of young men armed with sticks and rods looking for a fight, setting shops and homes owned by Muslims on fire. All right under the nose of the police who either stood as silent spectators, looked the other way or were plain missing when they were most needed. The death toll from the violence touched 17 by Wednesday morning.

Three days into the violence and reports of arson and attacks coming in even late Tuesday night, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval visited riot-hit northeast Delhi. Doval first headed to the office of DCP (Northeast) in Seelampur, Ved Prakash Surya, accompanied by Commissioner of Police Amulya Patnaik. Sources said he sought details of the dead and injured and the number of those arrested and detained.

At hospitals in northeast Delhi on Tuesday, grief knew no religion. Sitting outside the mortuary of Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital was Hari Singh Solanki (69), who lost his eldest son in the clashes on Monday. His family members blamed BJP leader Kapil Mishra for instigating violence in the area – relatives of some of the others killed or injured too blamed Mishra, and many demanded severe punishment.

An Express journalist, who went for reporting in Delhi's Karawal Nagar, was confronted by a mob that assaulted him. "I was spared momentarily until another mob followed me. A man, seemingly in his 50s, removed my spectacles, stepped on them and slapped me twice for reporting from a Hindu-dominated area". They checked my press card. "Shivnarayan Rajpurohit, hmm. Hindu ho? Bach gaye." Not satisfied, they wanted more proof whether I was a real Hindu. "Bolo Jai Shri Ram". I was silent.

In an unprecedented midnight hearing at the judge's residence, Justice S Muralidhar and Justice A J Bhambhani ordered immediate evacuation of the injured from Mustafabad's Al Hind Hospital. A forum, consisting doctors from various government and private hospitals, had moved Delhi High Court late Tuesday night seeking police protection for ambulances heading towards medical facilities with people injured in violence at North East Delhi's Mustafabad area. The bench also said that the injured be moved to GTB or other nearby hospitals, which had the facilities to treat them.

Under pressure to respond more effectively as violence escalated in the national capital, which he won by an overwhelming majority just earlier this month, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal suggested he had faith in the Centre's handling of the situation. This, even as his own MLA, Atishi, tweeted: "Violence and arson has been continuing for 48 hours now. Police, civilians, Hindus, Muslims are injured in large numbers. At least 10 people have died. If police are unable to maintain law and order, why is Amit Shah not imposing curfew? Why is the Army not being called in?"

***RAF Patrolling the site of the clash at Khajoori-Bhajanpura road in New Delhi on Tuesday. (Express photo by Praveen Khanna)***

For over three hours on Tuesday afternoon, residents of Bhajanpura burnt shops and pelted stones, gradually advancing towards the Muslim-dominated Chand Bagh area. Till afternoon, there was little police presence to push them back. Eventually, at 5.05 pm, reinforcements arrived in the form of the Rapid Action Force and Delhi Police armed in riot gear, who lobbed teargas shells and pelted stones into Chand Bagh as part of their "area domination exercise". Their tactics in dealing with Bhajanpura residents were relatively more muted, and involved asking them to back off minus the teargas.

A packet of halwa and parathas for his children "this was the first thing on Mohammad Zubair's mind when he stepped out of his house in Chand Bagh on Monday." Photos of the brutal assault on Zubair were captured by a Reuters photographer and shared widely on Tuesday. The next thing Zubair remembered is waking up at GTB Hospital. He does not remember much about the attack, but the photograph brings up painful memories. "I don't remember much. I just hoped my children were safe. I can't bear to look at my photograph, my legs shiver with pain," Zubair told The Indian Express.

Hours after an emergency meeting was called by Home Minister Amit Shah Tuesday afternoon in connection with the violence in Northeast Delhi, S N Shrivastava, a 1985-batch AGMUT cadre officer, was repatriated to the Delhi Police from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). He has been appointed as Special Commissioner (Law and Order). Sources told The Indian Express that the decision to appoint Shrivastava with immediate effect was taken after the performance of Delhi Police was analysed by the Home Ministry, which found lack of action on its part since Saturday night.

East Delhi BJP MP Gautam Gambhir Tuesday condemned the violence over the amended citizenship law and demanded strict action against anyone, including his party colleague Kapil Mishra, if they gave provocative speeches. "Whoever, no matter which party he belongs to, whether he is Kapil Mishra or anyone else, who give speeches to provoke people, action should be taken against them," Gambhir said.

***A group shout slogans during the clash between two groups at Khajoori-Bhajanpura road in New Delhi on Tuesday. (Express photo by Praveen Khanna)***

Class X and XII board exams scheduled to take place Wednesday have been postponed for students of 86 centres located in Northeast and East Delhi due to violence in these areas. The announcement was made late Tuesday night by CBSE. Class X CBSE students are sitting for their first exam, English, and Class XII students have the Web Application and Media exam Wednesday.

A 30-year-old TV journalist from JK 24X7 News was shot at while an NDTV journalist was allegedly thrashed by rioters in Northeast Delhi Tuesday. Akash Napa was covering the violence at Maujpur at noon when a group of men shot him in his left shoulder, said his colleagues. He was rushed to hospital.

Three days into the violence in Northeast Delhi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Tuesday held his first high-level meeting with political representatives and said the violence was spontaneous. As the death toll climbed to 13 and violence continued, Shah expressed confidence in Delhi Police and officials ruled out calling the Army.

Saving fellow officers from stone-pelters who had outnumbered them, Delhi Police Head Constable Rattan Lal (42) suffered multiple injuries to his head and body and a gunshot wound before he died, a member of his family said

Tuesday. Around 2 pm Monday, Lal was in Dayalpur with a police force when around "thousands" of people came out together and pelted stones at them, said his cousin Sunder Lal (46).

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