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MAKING A RIOT: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON THE COMMUNAL CLASHES IN HARYANA

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August 04, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 08:36 am IST

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At a time when the tremors of ethnic clashes in Manipur have not yet settled, communal clashes in Haryana, in regions abutting the national capital, claimed six lives this week. [Two Home Guards and four civilians were killed](#) and 70 injured in clashes in Gurugram, Sohna and Nuh. Property worth crores has been destroyed, and hundreds have fled their workplaces. The trigger for the mayhem, when local Muslims pelted stones at a Hindu religious procession on July 31 in Nuh, was in the making for a long time. The day-long yatra between two temples in this Muslim-majority district used to be a local affair and has been held without incidents. But in recent years, the yatra has become a political event, with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad mobilising participants from neighbouring Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. In the procession this year, participants raised slogans and carried firearms and other weapons, according to reports. Facing attack, the pilgrims returned to the first temple and had to wait until police reinforcements arrived from neighbouring districts. The administration was caught off-guard and unprepared. Following the violence, 176 people have been arrested and 93 FIRs registered. The Haryana Chief Minister, M.L. Khattar, has said the violence was premeditated — it appears to be so.

Tension had been building up for days, beginning with a Bajrang Dal member and self-styled cow vigilante uploading videos on social media platforms, announcing that he and his team would be part of the yatra this year. The fresh threats from a person who is accused in the kidnapping and murder of two Muslim youth from Rajasthan's Bharatpur in February this year, evoked strong resentment among the Muslim population. Local social and political leaders had alerted the administration that there could be violence. On the day of the yatra, another Bajrang Dal activist uploaded videos that used provocative language, asking Nuh's residents to be prepared for their arrival. The violence spread to the Sohna sub-division of Gurugram; a mosque was also vandalised. An Imam at the Anjuman Jama Masjid in Sector 57 was killed by an armed mob around midnight on Monday, a staff member seriously injured, and the shrine set ablaze. The police at the mosque, who were outnumbered by the rioters, remained mute spectators. Policing in Haryana has been shown up to be inadequate in the face of communal incitement by groups associated with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. The Haryana administration must take strict action against the perpetrators of the violence, and be vigilant and impartial to ensure peace.

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