

Vadodara: Violence on Gujarat's "Gaurav" Day¹

- A PUCL Interim Report, May 1-13, 2006

Vadodara City Vital Statistics

Area: 108.22 sq. km. Total Roads: 1839 km

Population 2001: 13, 05,546 (males 683803; females 621743); (Population: 2006: 17.3 lakhs)

Number of households: 2, 13,540

Population density: 9,527 per sq. km. Literacy: 71.11% (males 76.21%; females 65.41%).

Election Wards: 26 Seats (Corporators): 78

Vadodara: The Context of the Dargah Demolition

The people of Vadodara (also known as Baroda) proudly tell its visitors that their city is a "Sanskar Nagari", that is, a "city of culture". It is also referred to as 'the cultural capital' of Gujarat. The city does indeed have rich traditions of composite culture. But if the post-1969 history of the communal violence in the city, the 2002 carnage (the notorious Best Bakery incident was in Vadodara) and the recent May 1, 2006 demolition of the Dargah and its aftermath are any indication, the cultural capital of Gujarat has been on a serious decline for sometime.

Vadodara, situated on the banks of the river Vishwamitri, was earlier also called Vadpatraka, city of Banyan Trees. Much of what is now known as the old walled city area was developed under a series of Muslim rulers. The Dargah that was demolished was very much part of the old walled city.

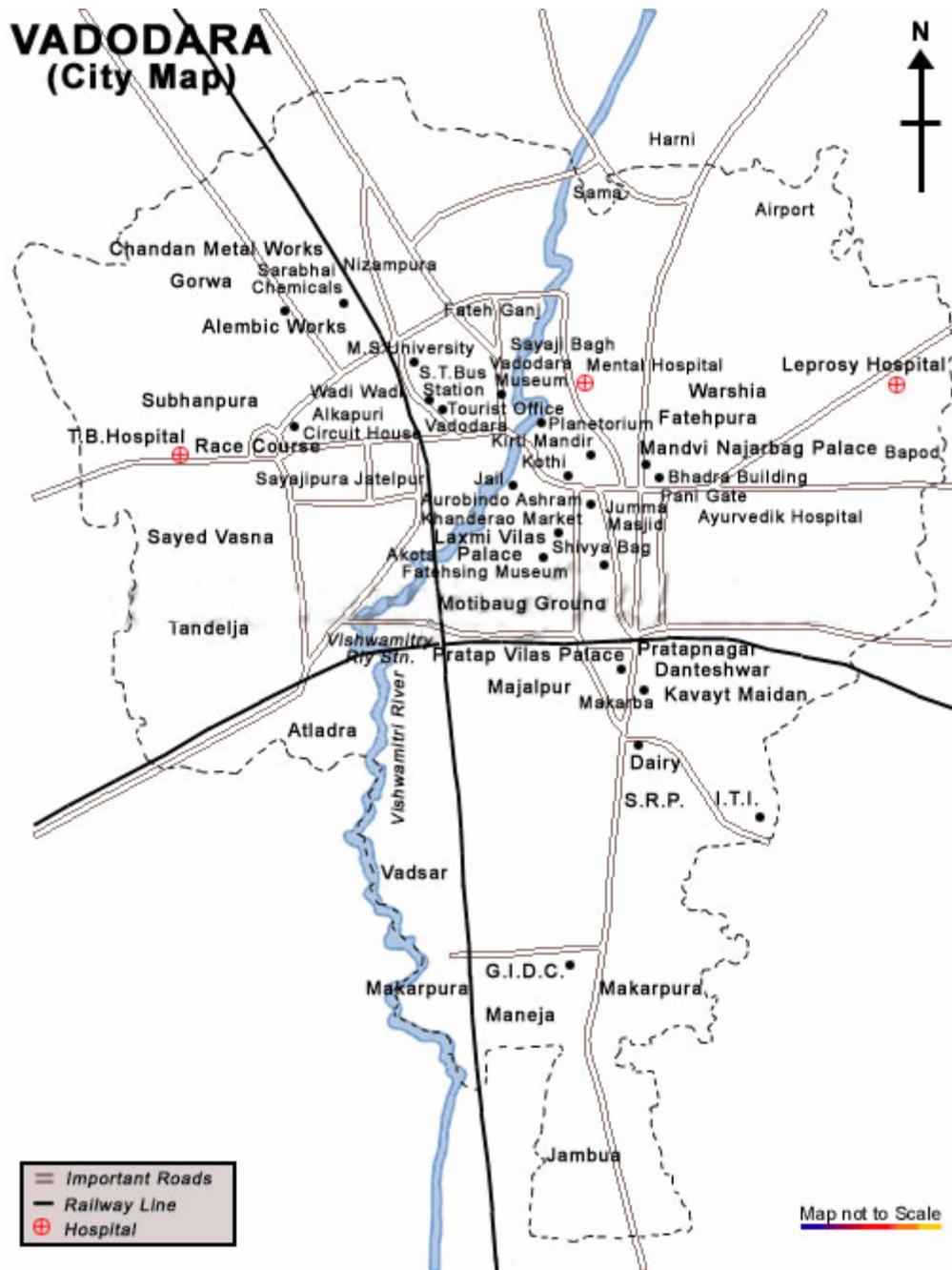
The Moghal rule over the city came to an end in 1732, when Pilaji brought the Maratha activities in Southern Gujarat to a head and captured it. Except for a short break, Vadodara continued to be in the hands of the Gaekwads as their capital town from 1734 to 1949.

Sayajirao III (1875-1939) who did not come from the direct line of the ruling Gaekwad dynasty was the architect of modern Vadodara. Modern Vadodara owes its beauty, its educational institutions and its masterpieces of architecture to the insight and vision of this great ruler who respected and nurtured the composite culture of Vadodara.

Because of the history of the city, there are considerable pockets of Muslims (about 12 percent of the populace), the Marathi speaking citizens who came here because of the Gaekwads and a fair amount of other linguistic groups because of the industrial boom of the 60s and 70s. During the 60s, Vadodara saw the birth of

¹ May 1 apart from being labor day is celebrated by official Gujarat as founding day, Gujarat Gaurav Diwas, a day of "proud" recollection of the formation of Gujarat state.

VADODARA (City Map)



major public sector units, and initiated several GIDCs all around the city; these and other devices to attract capital, were successful after a fashion, but the working class of Vadodara continued to receive short shrift – not even the proverbial crumbs from the high table. Slums, slum lords, shortage of decent living space for every body were the result and then the builder-corporator mafia followed.

Contemporary Vadodara has been ravaged by a series of politicians of all hues at the helm of Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC), who continue to lack vision, a sense of history and a real commitment to the majority of the poor of the city. The rate of growth of the slum population has been greater than the rate of growth of the city's population, mainly because of the marginalization of the working population.

At the root of the recent demolition of the Sayid Rashiduddin Chisti Rahematulla Alay Dargah near the Champaner Darwaja is the skewed idea of what constitutes development: for instance widening of roads, but not housing, garbage collection² nor drinking water services for everybody. Parts of the city has always seen a boom whereas there is a considerable underbelly of Muslims and Hindus especially in the old walled city and in the Eastern part of Vadodara that is ghettoized, underemployed, thrown out of jobs in organized sector as industry reorganizes post-liberalization, living in nasty, brutish conditions and sitting on a powder keg ready to explode, this is thanks to communal minded politicians of the Sangh Parivar as well as of the Congress.

The VMC's demolition squad, egged on by a nexus of some greedy builder-corporators, the Mayor and the Municipal Commissioner, regularly demolish hutments without giving alternative accommodation - in spite of considerable ULC land being acquired or otherwise allocated for this purpose. It is as if the VMC has a monthly quota of demolitions to be fulfilled come what may. Instead, it is the poor and the minorities who are routinely terrorized in the process.

The demolition of the Dargah, directed by Mayor Sunil Solanki and his elected cohorts, served twin purposes: it painted the Mayor in "pro-development" colors among the Hindu majority and it won him brownie points in the Sangh Parivar's competitive fratricidal, and genocidal, politics: witnesses report the indecent thumping foot stamping and frenetic dancing on the freshly carpeted demolished Dargah site by the Sangh Parivar followers, and distribution of sweets thereafter in nearby Hindu majority areas.

Events before and after the demolition of the Dargah clearly indicate that the entire exercise was undertaken by the civic administration and the police at the

² The VMC even today does not have legal, municipal solid waste disposal sites and continues to ignore the Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981 and The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 in the matter. As a result the city's solid waste is dumped in the ravine areas adjoining the Vishwamitri River which courses through the city - and come monsoons the water and the solid waste and the crocodiles overflow into residential areas.

instance of the state to signal, once again, to the Muslim community of its second-class citizenship. It was also clearly meant to intimidate and terrorize the minority community. It was a veiled warning to the minority community that another post-Godhra scenario may follow in its wake.

Though the cause of trouble was the demolition of the Dargah, the site of the communal flare up was more intense in other parts of the city. For example, most of the residential colonies outside Panigate and Ajwa Road on the eastern side of the city were under duress and tension was steadily building up from the morning of 1st May. This part of the city has always been a target of mob attacks, particularly on the minority population. It is a part of ongoing conspiracy to scare away the minority community so that they may move away from the place and accelerate the ghettoisation process. Graffiti on the walls in the eastern part of the city asking the Muslims to go to Pakistan is a normal expression of this sentiment.

Sure enough they destroyed a lot of minor temples that have recently sprouted – but major temples on the path of the city’s traffic have been untouched.

Who encroaches what is always a question? Is the Dargah, masjid or the temple encroaching the road or the road encroaching the temple/mosque/Dargah? Are hutments encroaching the idea of development, or the idea of development transgressing hutments?

Adding to this cauldron is the role of Police who is hostile to the poor and to Muslims, and an unsympathetic and largely communalized language press.

Most women continue to be upset about the manner in which the police behaved with them – using sexually abusive language and gestures - during curfew and as the violence was raging all over the city. That apart, across communities, women have confronted police authorities with respect to arrests of youth in their areas. Muslim women were extremely agitated at the random police firing and this sentiment which rose in one voice that it would have been far easier for everybody concerned, if they were lined up and shot at one go.

Ward-wise Population of Vadodara City

Vadodara city is divided into 10 administrative wards.

Sr. No	Ward	Males	Females	Total
1	City	24563	23072	47635
2	Fatehpura	59901	54819	114720
3	Gajrawadi/Wadi	49101	45487	94588
4	Sindhwaimata Rd/GIDC	115263	102329	217592
5	Shiabaug/Babajipura	41430	36762	78192
6	Sayajigunj (N)	99621	90434	190095
7	Belbaug/Sayajigunj (S)	70083	62032	132115

8	Raopura	59017	55558	114575
9	Panigate/Kisanwadi	84376	77655	162031
10	Subhanpura/Gorwa	80448	73495	154043
	Total	683803	621743	1305546

Figures are of circa 2001

The old city had exclusive localities inhabited by people belonging to the same faith and often of the same class. However Muslims, regardless of class, tended to move into the same areas because of heightened communal tension and insecurity. Hindus, and businesses owned by Hindus, have tried to move out from areas where Muslims have significant presence. The old city areas like Wadi, Fatehpura, Panigate and Raopura have been, and continue to be, communally sensitive

The 2002 riots saw to it that almost all of Vadodara, including the newer parts of the city, was affected and under curfew for several days; and the only exceptions being the Muslim majority area of Tandolja and a few other pockets. What is of interest is that these pockets that were relatively free of incidents in 2002 saw large-scale communal violence in 2006: Dudhwalla Mohalla behind Nyay Mandir, Chitarawada Ranawas in Sultanpura, Kumharwada in Fatehpura, Kotyark Nagar and Mehendi Nagar, JP Nagar and Vohra Colony on Ajwa Road et al.

Demolition of Dargah: What Happened at Yakutpura

The incidents occurred on the main road from Mandvi gate to what is called the Champaner darwaza. The Dargah is close to the Champaner darwaza.

As one comes from Mandvi gate, the Muslim-dominated area of Yakutpura and the Hindu-dominated Mehta Pol is to the right of the Dargah, whereas Jagmal ni Pol and Bajwada are to the left. The Dargah is on the main road - almost to the left of the road. The people of Yakutpura told us that on 1st May they had gathered around the Dargah to protect it from the demolition squad. The people milled around the Dargah and they also said that Nalin Bhatt, ex-BJP Minister, and others had gathered near the Dargah well before the operation began.³ According to the people in Yakutpura they had gathered around the Dargah peacefully. They said stone throwing began from Mehta Pol - a Hindu area near the Champaner Darwaza. Hindus on the contrary allege that the stone throwing began from the Muslim-dominated Yakutpura. As a result, people ran helter-skelter and the police opened fire. Chaos reigned for more than two hours. The warning fire was hardly noticed by the people. The Police did not have a hand mike to give warnings, and seem to have ignored the gravity of the situation. The Police shot straight at the people, aiming at head and chest levels.

Two boys died on the spot. Some women who stay in houses right next to the spot where the firing took place told us that we were all huddled on the first floor and saw everything. They are also very agitated. Some women told us that “if

³ A fact affirmed by Nalin Bhatt himself on cable TV channels and the local print media.

they want us to die they should kill us straightaway," "what if these bullets had hit some young kids in houses, who is accountable for this?"

The police fired 36 rounds according to the people. They have also collected used and unused tear gas shells.

We saw bullet marks on the laris and the walls and it is very clear that it was indiscriminate firing although the Police Commissioner later claimed that the bullets probably ricocheted.

On Dargahs

A Dargah is an Islamic shrine built over the grave of a revered religious figure, often a Sufi saint. Local Muslims perform pilgrimages (ziyarat) to the shrines. Dargahs are often associated with Sufi meeting rooms and hostels, known as khanqah. They often include a mosque, meeting rooms, schools (Madrassas), residences for a teacher or caretaker, hospitals, and other buildings for community purposes.

The term is derived from a Persian word meaning a 'portal' or a 'threshold'. Many Muslims and non-Muslims believe that the Dargah are spiritual media by which they can invoke the deceased saint's blessing and if necessary ask him to plead on their behalf with the Almighty.

Muslim clergy (especially those of Salafi, Wahhabi, or Deobandi views), tend to disdain these lively, raucous expressions of folk spirituality, which are often full of what they see as "un-Islamic" influences and aspects; clerics regularly condemn the widespread use of intoxicants like alcohol and marijuana at these festivals.⁴

Nevertheless a Dargah is a tomb with a difference. Dargahs in India usually have significance for Muslims, Hindus and followers of other religions too, and for even women (who are not otherwise easily allowed in masjids). Dargahs are probably the few symbols still left of the syncretic cultural past of India..

The particular Dargah that was demolished was the resting place of Syed Rashiduddin Chisti Rehmatullah Aley, descendant of the Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, the saint of Ajmer.

Dargahs, masjids and temples -- all were maintained with reverence by Vadodara's Gaekwad rulers from a special trust. Fatehsinghrao Gaekwad used to ride on a horse to read namaz in the local Jama Masjid on Eid days, a far cry from today's combative politics.

⁴ Source: Partly from Wikipedia

Violence in Other Parts of the City

Violence rapidly spread to other parts of the city namely Panigate and Sant Kabir Road. The police also opened fire in Nawapura, Hathikhana and Kumbharwada in the Fatehapura area. At around 2 pm on 1st May, six dumpers carrying the debris of the destroyed Dargah were passing through the Dudhwala Mohalla behind Nyay Mandir (the Court complex). After three dumpers passed through, stone throwing started from the mohalla. A couple of persons inside the dumpers were injured. According to advocate Israt Sheikh, as the stone throwing intensified some people inside Nyay Mandir presumed that the attack was on the Court and shut the doors. Despite the fact that nobody was injured, a security guard of the Sessions Judge fired in the air. There was retaliation from the Court complex -this was confirmed by other advocates.

Advocate Neeraj Jain (a VHP activist) alleged that about 50 persons had entered the Court premises with weapons. 10 people were later arrested in connection to this. Another advocate Malti Vani said that youth from the minority areas came with kerosene and set 6 vehicles on fire and also resorted to stone throwing. Some advocates went to the Police Commissioner to present a memorandum who advised them to file a complaint. However the advocates were unwilling to file a complaint.

Demolition inspite of Ongoing Talks

We met Sultan Miyan Malek, an 81-year old gentleman, who has been living in Yakutpura since the last 75 years. He has tended to the Dargah by keeping it clean and offering flowers daily. He is also the head of the Yakutpura Muslim Panch. Sultan Miyan Malek was part of the Muslim delegation invited by the VMC to negotiate the issue of the Dargah.

He recounts in great detail how they had had several talks. The VMC called for a meeting even on 1st May between 9 am to 10 am. They returned from the talks to see that the Dargah had been razed to the ground. He said that the Muslims had been more than willing to modify the structure of the Dargah as proposed by the Municipal Commissioner. Muslims only wanted to keep the mazaar (the most sacrosanct part of the Dargah) intact. According to him, a Dargah cannot be shifted unlike a temple or a mosque. A Dargah is built around the remains of a saint's body. That makes the area sacred, something that cannot be tampered with. Despite such feelings, the Muslims were willing to themselves remove the extraneous structure around the Dargah. However, they were not given a chance to do this. As a result, Muslim sentiments have been deeply wounded. They also told us that the Dargah was not merely a place of worship for Muslims; many Hindus also visited the place. Ganesh immersion processions and Dev Diwali processions would stop at the Dargah, pay their respects, and move on. They said the owner of the Ranchod Masala Mill - a Hindu businessman - used to oversee the maintenance of the Dargah. As of now the people of Yakutpura are demanding that at the very least the portion of the mazaar should be cordoned off immediately. The reason being that each time Muslims see people

walking over it or vehicles plying on it, their feelings will be hurt. It will lead to an accumulation of anger and can provoke Muslim youth to react.

Farce of Talks and Betrayal thereof

It is very clear from multiple evidences gathered that demolition of the Dargah was slated anyway for 1st May and probably the decision to demolish was taken at least three weeks before.

Talks were on during the previous 10 days (that is 10 days before 1st May) with a select group of Muslim leaders on finding alternatives to the demolition of the Dargah. The Muslim leaders while making clear that the Dargah cannot be demolished *in toto* or shifted (for reasons enumerated above by Sultan Miyan Malek), they offered to trim the dimensions of the Dargah. This more practical alternative was first proposed by the Municipal Commissioner; it was discussed by the select Muslim leaders with their larger community and accepted in principle. This alternative proposal was once again discussed on the morning of 1st May although the Mayor denied that they had discussed any such proposal.

The Police Commissioner Deepak Swaroop had warned the Mayor not to go ahead with the demolition specifically on 1st May as several other events which needed Police bandobast were scheduled for that day. The Police Commissioner made it public that he had written a letter to the effect “all the way to the top.”⁵ Nevertheless the Police prepared for the job by requisitioning additional reinforcements on April 29/30. Some Police troops were stationed at the Dargah site from the morning (5 am) of 1st May – this happened despite differences of opinion between the Mayor and the Police Commissioner on the issue of demolition.

According to a member of the Muslim delegation having talks with the VMC over the Dargah, during the mid-night of Sunday, and morning of Monday April 30-May 1, 2006 (around 1.00 am!) the Mayor rang up the Muslim leaders and told them to come for yet another meeting on Monday 1st May at 9 am. Many of the Muslim leaders did attend the meeting at such short notice – a meeting in which the Mayor Sunil Solanki and Municipal Commissioner Rohit Pathak⁶ and Standing Committee Chairman Dinesh Choksi were present among others. Also in the same meeting, the Municipal Commissioner told the Muslim leaders that their proposal for trimming the Dargah structure was put up before the elected body but was not accepted by the Mayor. The talks apparently failed to evolve any mutually acceptable solution. And the meeting dispersed at about 10 am with an assurance that they will meet again to discuss the issue.

⁵ Cynics may point out that the Police Commissioner by this act of writing a letter “all the way to the top” has only protected himself from future enquiry committee indictments, experienced as he was from the cross-examination by counsel Mukul Sinha in the Shah-Nanavati Commission proceedings – a feeling reinforced by the select disclosure of this letter by Commissioner Deepak Swaroop.

⁶ Rohit Pathak has not given us an appointment till the time of this interim report.

In the meanwhile, preparations for demolition of the Dargah had already begun at the site – which means that the demolition machinery, the mechanized road carpeting equipment, and dumpers, had already proceeded with an intention to destroy the Dargah, before 10 am, even as the meeting was on to find a constructive alternative.

The Mayor, on being asked by the PUCL team, why he did order the demolition even when the Muslim leaders were given the impression that they would meet again and discuss, said that the demolition was anyway scheduled for that day, that is Monday May 1, 2006. “And if we did not do it immediately, they may obtain a stay from the Courts.”

Note the chicanery and the cynicism of Mayor Sunil Solanki and Commissioner Rohit Pathak in the entire process. They promised the Muslim leaders further discussions even as they were planning to demolish the Dargah and had no intention of meeting again, as if the act of demolition was an inevitability, an act foretold.

What indeed was the extreme urgency in sticking to this devilish schedule of demolition?

Would the skies have parted and the gods hurled their wrath at the Mayor and his team if demolition was not carried out on 1st May?⁷

Indeed which of the BJP/Sangh Parivar gods would have hurled their wrath on Mayor Sunil Solanki if they did not demolish on 1st May?

What does it say of an administration that cannot exercise restraint and cares two hoots about what happens to the trampled religious feelings of a people? And what it can do to vitiate the atmosphere of the city?

Why could not the Mayor and VMC resort to routine democratic norms when the Muslim leaders were more than willing to accommodate the needs of development “so-called”?

Why is it that the VMC ignored the firm and clear warning of the Police?

Were the discussions then a smokescreen and a deliberate sham?

When we asked the Mayor why he went to the trouble of having discussions if he was sure the Dargah had to be demolished anyway for the “development” of the city, he said, “discussions have to be held, otherwise some human rights group will pop up and say I have violated human rights.” Obviously Mayor Sunil Solanki

⁷ On the contrary, the ravines (kotar) of Viswamitri illegally dumped with municipal solid waste – in violation of the Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981 and The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 - needed immediate removal as once again there was the prospect of floods in two months and – that is during the monsoons of 2006. Indeed the VMC does not seem to have an idea of real developmental priorities.

is of the opinion that he has not violated human or any other rights if he had discussions, even if it were for appearances. Such wisdom.

Summary of Incidents During 2006

(The figures given in the table are rough estimates. The Police have not given us any accurate figures.)

No	Area	Nature of Incidents	Killed	Injured	Arrested/ Picked Up	Remarks
1	Yakutpura	Site of Dargah demolition (for details see text)	2 Muslim youth in firing as well as 2 Hindu youth stabbed	2 Hindu youth stabbed	13 Muslim youth picked up Three Muslim youth arrested for stabbing	36 rounds of firing by police hits 5-6 feet from the ground—homes and laris. Allegation by Hindu community that Hindu youth stabbing being not investigated properly.
2	Taiwada/ Wadi/ Gajrawadi	Police firing, one Muslim's house burnt	1 Muslim	Information not available	Information not available	One person Ashfaq Arab died in police firing.
3	Kotyarknag-ar/ Mehendi-nagar (Check)	One Hindu's House burnt – severe stone pelting from both sides	-	1 Hindu boy injured on head	At least one Muslim youth	No police response despite repeated calls to the police from both sides.
4	<u>Bawamanpura</u>	35 laris - 33 of Muslim vegetable vendors and 2 of Hindus - and 4 shops of Muslims and 8 Vagri (Hindu caste) hutments burnt	-	2 Muslim women injured	Investigation by PUCL on	No police response despite repeated calls to the police from both sides
5	J.P. Nagar/ Bahar Colony	11 houses damaged (inclgd burnt partially); atleast 1 Muslim's shop burnt -10 houses of Muslims, one of a Hindu and 1	-	Information not available	Several youth from both communities picked up –many feel its not justified	No police response despite repeated calls to the police from both sides

		shop of a Muslim				
6	Kisanwadi, Mahavir hall, Vohra Colony	stone throwing, one Muslim youth (Rafiq) killed and burnt.	1	Information not available	Some Hindu youth arrested.	No police and fire service response despite repeated calls to the police from 9 pm.
7	Sardar Estate	6 factories burnt of Muslims	-	Information-on not available	Information not available	No police or fire service response.
8	Navapura and Mehbub-pura:	Several cycles and two wheelers, a shop, floor mill and an STD PCO as well as at least 3 houses burnt – all houses belonging to Muslims	-	One Muslim youth shot at by police and admitted in Govt Dist. hospital	35 Muslim youth picked up.	No police response despite repeated calls to the police from both sides
9	Bahucharwad	Stone pelting	-	Information not available	Information not available	No police response despite repeated calls to the police from both sides
10	Hathikhana-Fatehpura			Information not available	Information not available	No police response despite repeated calls to the police from both sides
11	Raopura/Dandi a Bazar	At least 3 shops belonging to Muslims burnt	-	Information not available	Information not available	No police response despite repeated calls to the police from both sides
12	Nyay-mandir/ Doodhwala mohalla	Several vehicles of some lawyers and other citizens of the area burnt. One pan lari owner pelted with stones and one Muslim's lari was burnt.	-	Information not available	Information not available	Late police response despite repeated calls to the police from both sides
13	Chitarawada, Sultanpura	One Muslim injured in stone pelting, one Hindu's house burnt as well as a motor bike.	-	Information not available	1 Hindu, 4 Muslims arrested and released.	SRP point stationed in the area did not contain the violence.

Casualties at Civil (SSG) Hospital and Elsewhere

Six persons died during these incidents of violence of which 4 were Muslims and 2 Hindus; 3 Muslim youth were killed by police firing, one Muslim was lynched and burnt, and the two Hindu boys were stabbed. At least 25 persons were seriously injured and admitted in the SSG Hospital (the government teaching hospital). The Resident Medical Officer said that only Muslims were injured and had died by police bullets. Both Muslims and Hindus were injured by stone pelting. In all 12 Muslims and 2 Hindus were in the trauma centre, in the surgical department there were 4 Muslims. Most of them were from the working class population - there were either returning from work or were at work. The police met with the victims in hospital to take their statements. However, the victims are not aware of the sections they were being charged with. This is a clear violation of Justice D K Basu guidelines.

The PUCL team met with five of the six families of the youth killed in the violence. The families of the deceased were not informed by the police either immediately after the incidents, or later. This reveals the indifferent attitude of the police towards the loss of lives. Adequate information about the legal proceedings has not been communicated to the families of the deceased. The on going police investigation should be transparent enough to reassure the affected families that justice is sought to be done. The police should exercise restraint and not make judgmental or pre-emptive statements that would harm the cause of justice.

Role of Police

Police behavior was characterized by the following:

- The 100 control room was constantly either engaged or the phone was received and kept on the side (on the night of 1st-2nd May).
- On 2nd May, Muslims from Bawamanpura, Vohra Colony and Bahar Colony, in the grip of mob violence, desperately contacted PUCL activists on phone asking them to seek police intervention. This was the night when Rafiq Vohra was surrounded by a frenzied mob that was threatening to burn him alive. Some residents were crying on the phone. PUCL activists called 100, but to no avail. They also tried to contact the Police Commissioner on his mobile phone which was continuously ringing. When he did come on the line he was patronizingly advising PUCL activists rather than taking any serious note of the complaint for action. PUCL activists were forced to send multiple faxes to the Police Commissioner (copy of one such fax is annexed).
- Despite police presence, the violence in the old city areas continued to spread. There are also reports that in many places police accompanied mobs of a particular community. In Navapura and Mehboobpura there was unprovoked police firing which injured some Muslim men. They also burst into a Muslim house and began to beat a man with rifle butts saying, 'he is

- a Muslim, beat him'. They opened fired even when there was no threat of a mob. They asked the names of the people and opened fired at them.
- A grim example of this is the case of Mehmood Miyan Aziz, 50 years old, who lives opposite Shankar Ice Factory in Bawamanpura. He was trying to repair his lari and the SRP cornered him, they asked him why he was throwing stones. He resisted and told the SRP to go into the area and stop the stone throwing. The SRP fired at him from 10 feet distance. His 10-year old son took him to the hospital in an auto-rickshaw.
 - The police have been picking up, even at the time of writing this report, and have been detaining a large number of youth without specifying any charges.
 - According to people in Muslim areas, the police strictly maintained the curfew. They would go into Muslim areas and threaten the people who had gathered peacefully outside their homes in the evening. They also used abusive language in the presence of women.
 - The police have not followed Justice D K Basu guidelines which spell out the rights of the arrested and duties of the police.

There is an urgent need to re-orient and stem the communalization of the police force.

PUCL demands:

- The resignations/transfer of the Mayor, the Commissioner of Police and the Municipal Commissioner.
- Setting up a redressal cell for an effective and immediate response to distress call by communities under attack and siege.
- Systematic and planned rehabilitation of all whose homes/hutments have been burnt and/or demolished in the last few months (not only the last few days).
- Compensation to families who have lost their lives in police firing and had their shops, lari gallas and factories burnt.
- Criteria of what is legal, illegal, authorized, unauthorized constructions and/or encroachments to be put in public domain.
- A plan for preservation of religious and historical monuments to be made public.
- Demolition that causes social unrest and division should be negotiated and made public. Consultation with concerned people to be mandatory for the authorities.

- A proactive master plan to promote communal harmony in the city so that such incidents are never repeated and which puts a stop to all actions that vitiate communal harmony.
- Abide by our constitutional commitment to secularism and thereby no citizen or group should be allowed to make pronouncements or initiate actions that increase communal tension and sectarianism in society.
- Opening up for public discourse the long-term master plan for development of the city of Vadodara and the way urban renewal mission funds are going to be used transparently.

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The final responsibility for the contents of this interim report and omissions there of rests with the following.

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Vadodara, May 3 2006
00.28 A.M.

પ્રતિ

શ્રી પોલીસ કમીશ્નર
વડોદરા

વિષય : તાત્કાલીક પોલીસ કાર્યવાહી કરવા બાબત.

મહેદય,

વડોદરા શહેરની પરિસ્થિતિ વધુ ને વધુ કફોડી થઈ રહી છે. અમે આપની ઓફીસને છેલ્લા ૩૦ મીનીટ્સથી અલગ અલગ વિસ્તારમાંથી અટવાયેલા લોકોની ફરીયાદની જાણ કરી આપી રહ્યા છે પરંતુ અમને લાગે છે આ વાત ગંભીરતાથી લેવાઈ રહી નથી.

આપને તેથી આ પત્ર તત્કાલ ફેક્સ વ્હારા મોકલવાની ફરજ પડી રહી છે. લોકોની ફરીયાદ છે કે પોલીસ તોફાનીઓને રોકવાને બદલે ક્યાં તો તે વિસ્તારમાં રક્ષણ પુરુ પાડવા પહોંચતી નથી અથવા તો પહોંચે છે તો તે તોફાની કરનારાઓને રોકતી તો નથી પરંતુ મદદ કરે છે.

અનુરાધા કોલોની, ફરીશ પેટ્રોલ પંપ પાછળને, કોટીચાર્ક નગર તરફથી ટોળાઓ હુમલો કરવા કોશીશ કરી રહ્યા છે. યોરા કોલોનીને, અજવા રોડ કીશનવાડી તરફથી ટોળાઓ ઘેરવા કરી હુમલો કરવાની કોશીશ કરી રહ્યા છે. બાવામાનપુરામાં ગુસ્સી જઈ ટોળાએ પોલીસની હાજરીમાં તોડફોડ કરેલ છે. આ સિવાયના વિસ્તારના પણ સમાચાર આવી રહ્યા છે પરંતુ અમે તેની વિગતો જાણવાની કોશીશ કરી રહ્યા છે.

ઉપરોક્ત હકીકતોના સંદર્ભમાં જણાવવાનું કે આપે તાત્કાલીક તાબડતોડ કાર્યવાહી કરવાની જરૂર છે, નહીં તો લોકોના જાન માલને ન ભરપાઈ કરી શકાય તેવું નુકશાન થવાની શક્યાતા છે. કેટલાક વિસ્તારોમાં તો લોકો ટોળાની હિંસાનો ભોગ બની જ ગયા છે.

ફરી એક વાર તાત્કાલીક કાર્યવાહી કરવાની વિનંતિ કરીએ છીએ. આપના મોબાઈલ ફોન પર સંપર્ક કરતાં કોઈક કારણોસર વાત થઈ શકતી નથી.

કીરીટ ભટ

(કીરીટ ભટ)

રેહિત પ્રજાપતિ

(રેહિત પ્રજાપતિ)

પી.યુ.સી.એલ., ગુજરાત

નકલ રવાના

સચિવ, ગૃહ વિભાગ, ગાંધીનગર.

TRANSLATION OF THE LETTER

People's Union for Civil Liberties

13, Pratap Kunj Society, Karelibaug, Vadodara - 390 018
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Email: sahajbrc@yahoo.com, rt_manav@sancharnet.in

MOST URGENT - MOST URGENT- MOST URGENT- MOST URGENT
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3rd May 2006
00.28 am

To,
The Police Commissioner,
Vadodara

Subject: Regarding Immediate Police Action.

Sir,

The situation in Vadodara city is going from bad to worse. We have been calling your office for the last 30 minutes to draw your attention to the desperate appeals and complaints from the people of various areas of Vadodara. But we get the information that our calls are not being taken seriously.

We are therefore compelled to fax this letter to you. People complain that instead of the helping the people the Police is either not reaching the area in crisis or when they do they instead of stopping the mob, they further egg them on.

A mob coming from Anuradha Colony, behind Harish Petrol Pump, Kotiyark Nagar is attempting to attack nearby colonies. Mobs from the Kisanwadi, Ajwa Road area are trying to attack Vohra Colony by gheraoing it. They have rushed into Bawanmanpura and ransacking the area in the presence of the Police. We have also been getting information about other areas. We are trying to confirm this news.

In the light of the above facts you need to take immediate and urgent action. Failing that there will be untold loss of life and property. In some areas people have already become victims of mob violence.

We once again urge you to take immediate action. For some reason we are unable to contact you on your mobile phone.

Kirit Bhatt
[KIRIT BHATT]

Rohit Prajapati
[ROHIT PRAJAPATI]
PUCL, GUJARAT

CC: Secretary, Home Department, Gandhinagar