



THOMAS JANTSCHER

VARANASI. AUSGANGSSPERRE



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Diese Fotos entstanden im Dezember 1992. Wegen der geplanten Zerstörung einer Moschee in Ayodhya kam es in ganz Indien zu Ausschreitungen zwischen Hindus und Moslems. Das Ausgangsverbot in der heiligen Stadt wurde verhängt um Gewalttätigkeiten zwischen den beiden Religionsgruppen vorzubeugen. Während einiger Tage herrschte in der sonst so geschäftigen Stadt eine fast surreal anmutende Stille und Ruhe. Die Geschäfte wurden verbarrikadiert, die Strassen waren fast leer.

## **Hindu-Muslim Riots Intensify; Troops Fire at Crowds**

**By EDWARD A. GARGAN**

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India was rocked today by a third day of rioting as security forces fired on Muslim crowds who violently protested the destruction of a 16th-century mosque by militant Hindus.

By late this evening, the official death toll in three days of riots nationwide rose past 700, but the actual number was thought to be much higher.

Not since India's independence in 1947 and the partition that divided the subcontinent with Pakistan has there been such bloodshed. The challenge to India's constitutionally mandated secular character is profound.

The rioting was set off on Sunday when teams of young Hindu militants stormed the three-domed mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya and reduced the structure to rubble in a matter of hours. Hindus say their god Ram was born on the site 5,000 years ago, and fundamentalists plan to build an immense temple there.

Since the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Hindus at partition, India has sought a reconciliation between the Muslim minority and the Hindu majority, but waves of conflict have undercut the efforts. The partition was forced by Muslim desires to create a separate nation, Pakistan. The Arab world has been unanimous in condemning the destruction of the mosque.

But the crescendo of violence has exposed the extent of intolerance, fear and passion, and has created the gravest crisis for India since independence.

„It would not be entirely wrong to say that,“ said Arjun Singh, a member of the governing Congress Party and the Minister for Human Resource Development.

„I think these events in the last fortnight, and especially on Sunday, have created a sense of unease around the world about the possible dangers India may be facing,“ he said. But „This is not the first time we have faced this sense of unease,“ he continued.

Killings by security forces were reported across India as Muslims continued to vent their rage with rocks, firebombs and lead pipes, attacking Hindu temples, businesses and crowds of people, and Hindus fought back.

The police and paramilitary forces fired on crowds of Muslims in many cities, and 24-hour curfews were in effect in parts of Delhi and in other cities.

Throughout the day, reports of deaths accumulated: 12 people, including 4 women and a child, killed in Malpura, in Rajasthan; 2 people killed in Araria, in Bihar, when police opened fire on a crowd; 17 people stabbed and shot to death in Varanasi.















































