



A moving menace

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A moving menace-Mob violence in the name of cow protection is shredding civic order

- The violence in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district is yet another notice of the toll being taken on civic order on account of the failure to crack down on vigilante mobs.
- Alongside those charged with the violence, who include members of the Bajrang Dal, an FIR has been filed against seven Muslims for alleged cow slaughter.
- Investigations should reveal whether the mob at the police post formed organically, or whether there was a conspiracy to set up a communally polarising confrontation.
- In the din of pledges of speedy investigation by everyone from police to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, there is no equivalent messaging that no rumour or act of cow slaughter justifies mob violence.
- Ever since the BJP came to power nationally in 2014, its governments in the States have moved to tighten laws prohibiting cow slaughter.
- Attendant to the legislative prohibition, bands of gau rakshaks, or cow-protection vigilantes, have created an atmosphere of fear, purportedly acting on suspicion of cow slaughter to round up and lynch at will cattle traders and passersby alike.
- Probes into the killing, in most cases, move in parallel with investigations into the allegations of cow slaughter or the possession of beef.
- And in a pattern that has crystallised, the hurt sentiments of gau rakshaks are played up to reinforce an equivalence between actual murderous crime and rumoured cow slaughter (often, as in the case of Pehlu Khan in Rajasthan's Alwar district in April 2017, just for transporting cattle).