



# Wave of lynching's

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## Highlights

- The events that led up to the brutal assault on Monday of two men in Uttar Pradesh's Hapur district on the outskirts of New Delhi are unclear — but one of them died and the other sustained injuries.
- Elsewhere, from Tamil Nadu in the south to Assam in the Northeast, men and women have been lynched on suspicion that they were out to kidnap children. To give just a few examples, in May, a homeless man in Pulicat, north of Chennai, was battered to death on such suspicion, as was a car-borne woman pilgrim in Tiruvannamalai district, who offered some sweets to children while seeking directions. This month, in Assam's Karbi Anglong district, two men from Guwahati were killed by a mob on the same anxiety that they were looking to kidnap children. In many cases — including in Tamil Nadu and Assam — such public concern was created or heightened by warnings that were circulated on social media.
- Murder is murder, but the killing of another human being by a murderous crowd out to enforce mob justice or avert an imagined crime takes an extraordinary toll of the civilities of wider society.
- A new challenge: the use of social media, especially WhatsApp groups and forwards, to spread fear and panic have escalated the security concerns
- Responses such as surveillance and Internet shutdowns are not just impossible — in a free society, they are inadvisable
- What is needed is an administration that reaches out to local communities to keep them in the loop in order to check trouble-makers — and that conveys sufficient good faith so individuals will trust it to keep the peace and sift real threats from mischievous rumours.

**Source: The Hindu**

