



Angry Sikhs demonstrate at Indian Embassy in Ottawa.

27 die, scores hurt in riots over assault on Golden Temple

NEW DELHI (AP) — The bloody military invasion of the sacred Golden Temple in the northern city of Amritsar and the death of radical Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale touched off a string of violent protests yesterday that left 27 dead and scores injured.

Sikhs in New Delhi and elsewhere vowed to avenge the army assault on Wednesday night on the seventeenth-century temple complex, holiest shrine in the Sikh faith.

Mr. Bhindranwale, accused of masterminding a two-year reign of terror by Sikh assassins, was found dead — his body rumored to be riddled with 72 bullets — after the onslaught.

More than 250 Sikh militants and 59 soldiers were killed when a battalion of troops, backed by tank and rocket fire, invaded the fortified complex after three days of fighting.

Police shot and killed at least 11 protesters as angry Sikh mobs went on burning and looting sprees in Srinagar, New Delhi and Ludhiana district in Punjab. At least 72 policemen were injured by brick-throwing mobs in New Delhi.

Sword-wielding Sikhs hacked five people to death in a village southeast of Amritsar and shot to death a shopkeeper in Ludhiana.

After the raid
Page 6
Screaming for blood
Page M1

But Home Secretary H. K. Wali described the violence as "small and manageable," adding: "We believe the Sikh community, most of them, have felt relieved at the new state of affairs in Punjab."

Several opposition parties issued statements yesterday supporting Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's decision to storm the temple.

"The entire nation stood behind her in this step," said Kalpana Rai, leader of the Janata Party.

Moderate Sikhs did not share the sentiment. "I am very distressed," said Khushwant Singh, India's best-known Sikh writer. "The Government made a martyr of Bhindranwale. It was an act of folly because this could be the real beginning of Khalistan," the name proposed by Sikh militants for an independent Sikh nation in Punjab.

The violence began soon after the announcement yesterday morning that Mr. Bhindranwale's body was found in the Akal Takht, the heart of the Golden Temple. Mr. Bhind-

Indian riots

● From Page One

ranwale, 38, was a fundamentalist Sikh preacher and the most popular and powerful leader of the Sikh independence movement.

Police accused him of masterminding the 2-year-old Sikh terrorist campaign in Punjab. Nearly 400 people have been killed in the past four months.

How Mr. Bhindranwale died is not known. He had vowed frequently to kill himself or die fighting rather than be captured.

The youth wing of the Sikhs' Akali Dal party, an outlawed radical group at the core of Mr. Bhindranwale's support, said in New Delhi that he was murdered and his body had 72 bullet wounds.

From his home in the temple, Mr. Bhindranwale had frequently exhorted his followers to buy guns, kill Hindus and Sikh traitors and to eliminate others he perceived as "slave-masters" of India's 13 million Sikhs — a religious minority in India, but a majority in Punjab.

His tape-recorded speeches, complete with an assassination list, were sold in shops outside the Golden Temple, along with his photographs.

"You should obtain guns, sub-machine guns, bombs and grenades and kill all the suckers of blood of Sikh martyrs and come back to me in this shrine," he told hundreds of devotees in his daily sermons.

The leader of the Sikh youth group, Amrik Singh, was one of Mr. Bhindranwale's chief lieutenants. His body was found in the basement of the temple alongside Mr. Bhindranwale's and that of another Sikh militant, Shuhbeg Singh, a former major-general in the Indian Army who was believed responsible for amassing many of the weapons used by the militants.

SikhMuseum.com