

# Politicians warned as Sikh terror continues

CHANDIGARH, India (AP) — Police arrested about 300 people yesterday during a general strike to protest against the growing violence in northern India, and a Sikh terrorist group threatened to kill a politician every day until its demands are met.

A home-made bomb was tossed into a crowd near the town of Moga, 305 kilometres northwest of New Delhi in Punjab state, police in Chandigarh reported. Five people were seriously wounded, said police, who blamed Sikh terrorists for the attack.

The Government declared Chandigarh, joint capital of violence-torn Punjab and Haryana states, a "disturbed region." That declaration empowers police to shoot lawbreakers on sight and to make searches and

arrests without warrants.

In Parliament in New Delhi, the opposition demanded that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Government step down for failing to curb the terrorism, which has claimed more than 125 lives in two months.

Militant Sikhs are waging a campaign for greater religious and political autonomy in Punjab state. While a minority in Hindu-dominated India, Sikhs are the majority in Punjab.

Sikh attacks on Hindus and Government officials have prompted some retaliatory attacks, and several members of Parliament have said during debates that they fear widespread rioting if the terrorism is not quelled.

More than 350 people have been slain in Punjab in the past three years.

The Government says the historic Golden Temple in Amritsar, seat of the Sikh faith, is being used as an arsenal and a sanctuary for fugitives.

The Deshmesh Regiment, a little-known Sikh terrorist group, said in a letter to a newspaper in Punjab state that it would murder one political figure a day until the Government lifts a ban on a radical Sikh student organization.

The group has claimed responsibility for slaying two Hindu politicians and one moderate Sikh leader in the past week.

Authorities outlawed the All-India Sikh Students Federation last month, charging that it advocated separatism and fanned tensions between Hindus and Sikhs.

The general strike, called by the right-wing Indian People's

Party, closed markets, businesses and factories in New Delhi, the Jammu region and the states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

In the Indian capital, hundreds of strikers hurled rocks and damaged several city buses. Police used metal-tipped bamboo staves to scatter crowds that attempted to set buses on fire. A post office was ransacked.

Police said about 300 people were arrested, including about 200 activists from opposition parties who were charged with violating a ban on public gatherings of more than four people.

Essential services, banks, schools and Government offices remained open.

During the strike, paramilitary troops patrolled the streets of Panipat, Karnal and other towns

in Haryana state, which borders both Punjab and the territory of Delhi.

Police in Haryana and Punjab also have "shoot-to-kill" powers.

Vishwa Nath Tiwari, 48, was given a state funeral in Chandigarh yesterday.

Mr. Tiwari, a member of the upper house of Parliament and a Gandhi supporter, was shot Tuesday in his living room.

Mrs. Gandhi's Government denied yesterday that it had agreed to amend the constitution to classify the Sikh faith as a separate religion. The administration had agreed only to discuss such a move, Home Affairs Minister Prakash Sethi said.

Sikhs resent being classified as part of Hinduism. Unlike Hindus, they believe in one god and reject the caste system.