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6 killed in Patel protests in Gujarat: All about Hardik's stir

Here is all you need to know about the Patel community and its protest in Gujarat:

[INDIA](#) Updated: Aug 26, 2015 20:32 IST

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Hindustan Times



The convenor of the 'Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti' Hardik Patel, 22, raises his fist near the statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel during the Patel Patidar community's Kranti Rally in Ahmedabad. (AFP File Photo)

At least six people were killed in clashes between police and protesters in Gujarat on Wednesday after a huge rally by the Patel community demanding more government jobs and college places.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for calm after a **curfew was imposed**

(<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/pm-modi-appeals-for-peace-in-violence-hit-gujarat/article1-1384375.aspx>) and a unit of the army deployed in the state he ran for more than a decade before leading his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to victory in last year's general elections.

Clashes broke out after the arrest of the movement's leader, 21-year-old activist Hardik Patel, prompting police to fire tear gas and to baton-charge protesters.

Watch: Modi appeals for peace in home state Gujarat

Here is all you need to know about the protesters and their demands:

Who are the Patels of Gujarat?

The Patidars or the Patel community, are a largely wealthy business community that has been a driving force in India's economy, dominating trades such as diamonds, textiles and agro businesses. The Patels, who wield wide political power in Gujarat, are divided into three sub-castes -- the Leuvas, the Kadavas and a much smaller group, Anjanas. Together, the community accounts for 12-15% of Gujarat's 63 million people.

Why are they agitating now?

Traditionally, Patels have been seasonal farmers and small businessmen, but over the years high inflation and unhelpful government policy in Gujarat have taken the edge away off their enterprise. According to Reserve Bank of India figures, a fifth of some 260,000 micro, small and medium enterprises in Gujarat, employing about two million people, have gone sick. But at the same time the community says caste-based reservations for other communities deprived Patels of government jobs, education quotas and benefits.

Watch:Curfew imposed in parts of Gujarat after overnight violence

What do they want?

They want the government to scrap quotas for Muslims, Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Alternatively, they want to be reclassified down the caste system to OBCs, guaranteeing them a share of government jobs and school places.

What happens next?

Gujarat chief minister Anandiben Patel has ruled out the demand of the community that they be counted among the OBCs, saying state governments are mandated to set aside only 50 percent of jobs and school seats for economically backward groups and that existing low caste groups already fill those spots. It is likely the Patels will intensify their protests and even find support from higher castes in Gujarat who do not enjoy benefits of affirmative government action. The protests by Patels in Gujarat could also galvanise similar existing demands by communities such as Jats and Gujjars in northern India. The agitation could play a role in the forthcoming elections in Bihar with the chief architect of the Patel protests, Hardik Patel, extending his support to Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar.

With agency inputs

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Hardik Patel: The 'New Modi' spells trouble for BJP in Gujarat

(<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/hardik-patel-the-new-modi-spells-trouble-for-bjp-in-gujarat/article1-1384111.aspx>)

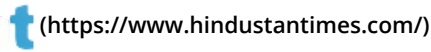
Tension in Gujarat after Patel stir; Hardik detained, then released

(<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/patel-stir-hardik-detained-then-released-protest-turns-violent/article1-1384198.aspx>)

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(<https://www.hindustantimes.com/photos/india/patelsprotest/Article4-1384014.aspx>)

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