

## Haryana town tense after Sikh-Dera clash leaves one dead

Curfew was imposed in a town in Haryana's Sirsa district Friday after a Sikh man was killed by Dera Sacha Sauda sect followers in a clash.

Sikh activists set nearly 15 shops and about 10 houses belonging to the Dera sect followers ablaze in Dabwali town after the Sikh man was killed Friday morning.

Trouble started after about 10 Sikh activists tried to stop a 'naam charcha' (prayer meeting) of the Dera followers in this town on the border of Punjab and Haryana, about 350 km from state capital Chandigarh.

Dera followers retaliated by pelting stones, and in the ensuing violence, a Sikh activist, Mandar Singh, was killed. Police said he had sustained a head injury.

The death triggered retaliatory violence by the Sikh community as they set fire to several establishments belong to Dera followers.

District officials and police reinforcements rushed to the spot to maintain law and order. The police were put on alert in Sirsa town, where the headquarters of the sect led by Gurmit Ram Rahim Singh is located.

Gurmit Ram Rahim has been involved in a controversy with the Sikh community since May last year after he attired himself like the 10th Sikh guru, Gobind Singh, during a religious ceremony. This led to violence in Punjab, Haryana and several other states as Sikhs protested the Dera chief's actions and demanded his arrest.

The hostility between the sect and Sikhs was re-ignited last month when a private security guard of the Dera chief killed a Sikh youth outside a [Mumbai](#) mall when some Sikhs protested Gurmit Ram Rahim's presence there.

Sikh organisations and leaders have been holding meetings across Punjab and in some Haryana towns following the latest flare-up.

( © IANS / India eNews)