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Villagers raze structure 'built over graveyard by top cop'

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Lucknow: Hundreds of residents of Ujariyaon village in Gomtinagar came out on the streets to oppose construction on the centuries-old graveyard in the locality on Monday. While the villagers alleged that the construction was being carried out at the behest of an IPS officer, the officer denied the claims, maintaining that the structure was only a temporary one meant for his support staff.

Director general of UP police's vigilance department, Bhanu Pratap Singh stays with his family at a two-storey house in Vijay Khand II. A 1985 batch officer, Pratap has been residing in Gomtinagar for at least 15 years. Over time, the posse of security personnel, driver and other staff members who work for the family had made wooden structures opposite the bungalow and stayed in it. The local residents, especially members of Salmaani community, have vociferously opposed the 'encroachment' for the past few months and have moved petitions before local administration as well as Sunni Waqf board.



On Monday morning, a truck unloaded bricks, cement sacks and other construction material at the site and some construction work began. Soon, news spread in the village that permanent structure was being erected on the graveyard and people started coming out in large numbers. By 12.30pm, the crowd began razing the structure, brick by brick.

Gomtinagar police arrived at the scene but it had allegedly not taken any action when complaints were made earlier, the crowd refused to retreat. Circle officer of Gomtinagar area DySP Satyasen Yadav, however, managed to pacify the agitated group eventually. The villagers subsequently put a mesh along the boundary of the graveyard, demarcating the area. While the IPS officer remained in his office, his family members had to face the crowd.

Satyasen said a report will be forwarded to the district administration. "Status quo has been maintained at the site," said Yadav. No FIRs were lodged as neither of the two groups gave written complaints to police.