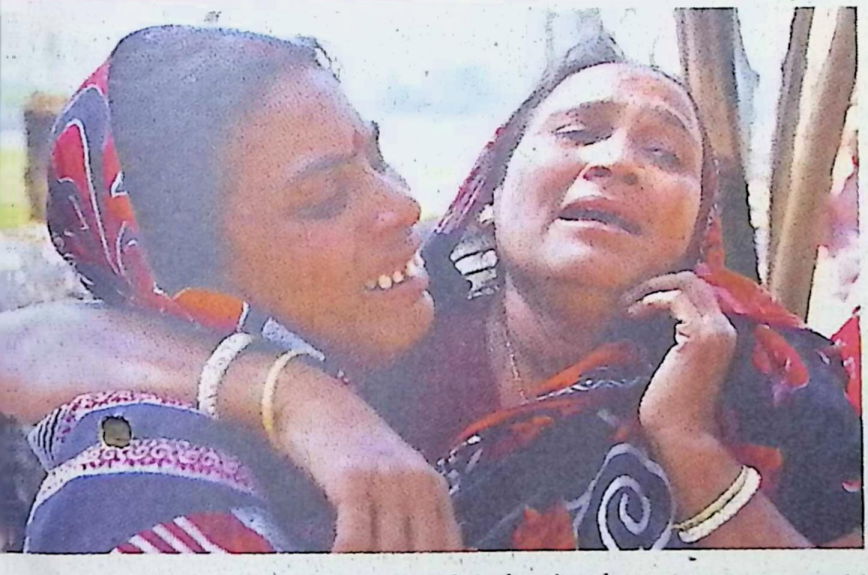




These people living at Dhopapara,Bashkhali in Chittagong had nothing to do with politics whatsoever.

Nipu Sheel, whose house had been grounded on March 2, breaks into tears seeing a relative. They deserve safety and justice rather than pity after such events take place. *(left)*

PHOTOS: ANURUP KANTI DAS

pletely unrelated to whatever political rationale being used to justify the attacks."

Even when the sub-continent was under Muslim rule, the Hindu people did not experience such maltreatment and persecution. Akhtaruzzaman reaffirms that the situation had never been similar, "Our sub-continent was an example of communal harmony since the Medieval Ages despite the Muslims, having conquered the subcontinent, were in charge of authority over the masses – the Hindu and Buddhists people."

The professor notes, "There were some stray incidents of inter-communal conflicts throughout the Sultanate to Nawab periods but the authorities addressed the problems with due attention, the offenders were brought to justice and the sufferers compensated." If medieval state apparatuses could successfully subdue communal conflicts, our constitution does not leave room for depriving the Hindu people of their rights to safety.

The closest resemblance to the recent atrocities against a minority, says the scholar, would be the persecution of Buddhist people under Lakhsman Sen's rule. But resurrection of that medieval barbarism towards a minority group as "a means of protest" makes no sense whatsoever. "The image of Islam is being tarnished," says the professor, "Societal forces against this abuse of religion must rise to fend off these events from taking place."

When internal conflicts amongst us dismayed the nation, it may not be too late to rethink about how our collective identity is being stigmatised and what best we can do to restore peace. There must be a unified effort to end the plight of the Hindu people while the government has the biggest role to play in bringing the miscreants to justice. ■