

Bashkhali, January 5, 2014. PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Salimullah Khan says, Jamaat-e-Islami (founded in 1941) is a post-modern organisation, formed in the tenets of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1928). The Brotherhood itself was formed at the wake of the abolition of the institution of Caliphate in 1924 post World War I, in Turkey.

It operates on certain articles of faith common to peasant consciousness but also employs technical modes in postmodern capitalism. Coming to the nitty-gritty of it all, modern media proves no match for rumours, says Salimullah.

The Sayedee incident may be taken as a broad measure of the degree of alienation of the ruling class. Salimullah says that the fact that people are buying the rumours and reacting to them indicates that the media has failed largely to play its role.

There are allegations against Awami League leaders of playing significant roles in the vandalism and attacks. Law enforcers invariably set the perpetrators free, sometimes on bail. About three years ago, the judicial commission that probed the 2001 post-polls violence submitted a report in April 2011 to the Home Minister. However, the suggestions went totally unheeded. Mohammad Shahabuddin, chief of the three-member judicial commission, reportedly said that "no recommendation has been implemented yet. Had our recommendation been implemented the post-poll violence would not have returned."

According to the report, after the post election violence in 2001 spread, at least 355 people were killed and the BNP-Jamaat perpetrators committed 3,270 other offences against minorities between October 2001 and December 2002. To bring harmony in the community the report recommends setting up an investigation committee in each district to bring the criminals to book. It also suggests, among other recommendations that the government needs to form social groups in each community to protect the minority living under continuous threat of attacks.

The commission's report finds that during the tenure of the four-party alliance, 409 cases had been filed in connection with the post-polls violence, out of which police submitted final reports in 145 cases. The commission had identified around 22,000 persons involved in the violence. However, the findings had not been incorporated in the report.

The most disheartening reality is that the authorities failed to provide help to the minority communities when Jamaat and its student body let loose their brutal attacks. A teacher from Chapainawabganj Kansat Ranihati College expresses his disappointment: "People thought the ruling party leaders would be on the side of Hindus during the vandalism. However, despite having their party in the throne they were too afraid to come to their help or protect them." The minority communities are considered to be a major vote-bank for Awami League during the national polls. The attackers did not even spare the Muslims who stood by their Hindu neighbours.

The government has expressed its intention to stop these communal attacks and punish the perpetrators. If this is a sincere promise then the government should start by implementing the recommendations given in the Judicial Commissions report submitted three years ago. ■