

Bangladesh Govt. Reply to the report published at F.E.E.R.

Since its very inception, Bangladesh has been widely known to be a country with the highest degree of communal harmony. While the population by and large remains deeply religious, there is no place for religious fanaticism in society. Your description of Bangladesh as a Cocoon of Terror [Apr. 4] is at best a figment of someone's wild imagination.

In a country that is deeply committed to democratic practices and tolerance, religious disharmony is farthest from the people's mind. On the contrary, Bangladesh has been universally described as a moderate, functioning Muslim democracy. These remarks have been attributed to the highest political leadership in the United States, Europe and the rest of the world. British Prime Minister Tony Blair in a recent signed message to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia spoke of his highest regard for the people of Bangladesh and has spoken highly of democratic practices prevailing in the country.

The strongest manifestation of religious tolerance was most visible when there were absolutely no repercussions in the country after the recent communal carnage in Gujarat. Firm measures by the government and a supreme sense of maturity on the part of the population enabled complete peace and harmony in the country in the face of grave provocation.

It is clear that your research is extremely superficial. You resorted to dated events and chose to use comments that have little relevance to the situation prevailing in the country.

What is perhaps more surprising is that such a baseless, unfounded story should find a place in a regional and internationally well-known publication like the Review. Your article could only be described as being motivated, if not by malicious intentions, then by reasons best known to you. It is our expectation that the Review will not put its credibility at serious risk, not only in Bangladesh but elsewhere, by resorting to such tabloid journalism.

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