

ZEE NEWS

BJP 'actively involved' in Muzaffarnagar riots, say activists

Tag: Muzaffarnagar Riots, Uttar Pradesh, Samajwadi Party, Akhilesh Yadav, Muzaffarnagar Violence

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New Delhi: The BJP played a "major role in spreading lies and rumours" and was "actively involved" in the communal violence that engulfed Muzaffarnagar and claimed at least 48 lives, a fact finding team of activists said Tuesday.

The team of noted civil society activists also criticised the Uttar Pradesh government for its failure to deal with the situation.

The Centre for Policy Analysis (CPA), which took the fact-finding team of six eminent people to Muzaffarnagar on Sep 14 (Saturday) to look into the genesis of the violence and the reasons for its spread, presented its report to the media at the Indian Women's Press Corps here.

The team concluded that the violence against Muslims was perpetrated to "end decades of coexistence and cleanse certain villages of Muslim presence".

It said the Akhilesh Yadav government appeared to have been "taken by surprise" with the enormity of the violence and that there was "probably a deliberate disregard of rising tensions and intelligence reports".

The report said that police presence in the affected areas was negligible and that there has been no attempt to arrest the perpetrators of the killings.

It said the Samajwadi Party-led state government, though faced with the threat of communal strife, failed to undertake the essential steps needed at the time - of prevention, control, rescue, rehabilitation and providing justice, that would have helped avert the violence.

According to National Integration Council member John Dayal, the area was "abuzz with rumours", but there was no state government machinery to stop the rumour mills that were adding to the communal tensions.

The report said the state government "chose to ignore the rumours, contributing to a volatile atmosphere".

The state government has yet to arrest a Bharatiya Janata Party legislator who posted a fake video that sparked widespread violence, it said.

The report said it does not accept the explanation of the district authorities that they did not know of a mahapanchayat, or gathering of village councils, to take place where communally incendiary speeches were made, leading to the mass violence.

It said only after the army was called in that the level of violence came down.

The report said: "The BJP has been actively involved in the violence and could emerge, when the embers die down, as the major gainer". It said at the mahapanchayat slogans in support of the BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi rent the air besides slogans against Muslims.

It also attacked the Congress, saying that the party saw the situation as an opportunity to garner votes. "As a result of this, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi paid a flying visit to Muzaffarnagar" on Monday.

The panel has proposed that a Supreme Court judge be appointed to carry out a time-bound probe into the violence, that the communal violence bill should be made a legislative priority and that the immediate arrest be made of political leaders who incited violence at the mahapanchayat, among other things.

The team comprised John Dayal, rights activist Harsh Mander, former Border Security Force chief E.N. Rammohan, Jawaharlal Nehru University professor Kamal Mitra Chenoy, senior journalist Sukumar Muralidharan, and CPA director Seema Mustafa.

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