**[Goons let loose in India](https://nation.com.pk/14-Jan-2020/goons-let-loose-in-india%22%20%5Ct%20%22_new)**

Muhammad Tahir Iqbal January 14, 2020

This time, it is Jawaharlal Nehru University – one of India’s most prestigious universities – which came under attack by a pro-government mob. The students and their teachers were attacked by men wearing masks over their faces and chanting “Jai Shri Ram” – a slogan used in India by the charged extremists bent to attack the minorities, especially Muslims.

The mob, allegedly from Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), with rods and sticks entered the JNU premises while Delhi Police stood still, silent and tranquil watching the horrific play of vandalism on the loose. When a journalist asked the wrathful crowd why they were beating up the students and teachers. One of them replied, “Mughalon ki aulaad ko bahir nikalna hay” (These descendants of the Mughal dynasty are to be snuffed out). This is how the Indian state under the Modi-regime crafts to settle scores with the 201 million Muslims of India.

Readers from across the globe will be awed to know that an FIR has been registered against the union president of the JNU – the same student who was savagely beaten by the goons of ABVP. The best befitting response, in this regard, comes from the famous Indian poet, Javed Akhtar, who ironically says: “The FIR against the president of JNSU is understandable. How dare she stop a nationalist’s iron rod with her head? These anti-nationals don’t even let our poor goons swing a lathi properly.”

The cause of the current wave of unrest is the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which was approved by the Indian parliament on December 12. The bill allows Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, and Christians who came to India from nearby Muslim-majority countries — Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan — prior to December 2014 to attain citizenship. But the Muslims were excluded.

This legislation reminds me of a similar citizenship law adopted by the government of Myanmar in 1982 – which was subsequently used to persecute Muslim population residing specifically in Rakhine state of Myanmar.

Perhaps the situation in India would not have been this volatile if the police had not raided Jamia Milia Islamia University on 20th of December. The images of forcible barge into university’s library, beating, dragging and injuring the female students went viral in entire India spurring the students and common folk to come out and register their protests against discriminatory citizenship law.

Jamia Milia Islamia has evermore been carrying a unique example of Hindu-Muslim unity since pre-partition time. The university was founded in 1920 by Hakim Ajmal Khan. The students of Jamia have participated in protests twice in history – in Quit India Movement of 1942, and against the emergency imposed in India in late 1970s. But on both of these occasions, the library of Jamia was not raided – because the viceroy and Indra Ghandi may be authoritarians but not book-enemies.

So, the protests that started off from the educational institutes proliferated to the other parts of India. People from various creeds joined the demonstrations so as to give a robust fight to the intentions hell-bent to alter the secular and pluralistic fabric of Indian constitution.

The administration in other parts of India allowed for the protests and they remained peaceful as well. But when the dissent arose in the most populated province of India, Uttar Pradesh, the state came down hard on the disagreeing voices. 19 people, all Muslims, were killed.

The chief minister of UP, Yogi Adityanath, an extremist Hindu nationalist notorious for his open hatred of the Muslims, has vowed to take revenge on the protestors. In the aftermath, we have witnessed heart-clinching accounts of police brutalities in the province.

The residents of the Muslim-dominated areas say that the police enter their homes, hurl abuses at everyone including women and children, break their doors and beat up whoever is around.

Maulana Asad Raza Hussaini, a Muslim cleric, was picked up by the police along with his some seminary students. Hannah Ellis Peterson writes in The Guardian that the police stripped the Maulana of his clothes in front of his students, beat him mercilessly and shoved an iron rod up his anus causing rectal bleeding.

Hamid Hassan, a 73 years old victim, says that the police stormed into his home and attacked him, his 65 years old wife and 22 years old granddaughter with metal batons. The granddaughter was given so much thrashing that blood spurted out of her forehead. At hospital, she got 16 stiches on her forehead-wound.

Hamid Hassan sobbingly told the news reporters, “Muslims in this country are being made to live in fear, even in our homes we are not safe from violence now.”

In Delhi, the area of Shaheen Bagh is the new epicenter of anti-CAA protests. Thousands of women daily appear here and outpour their angst against the law which makes them alien in their own land. Most of these elderly women may not know the intricacies of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens, but the brutal treatment with the Muslims in parts of India has made them realize that this Modi-Amit Shah-consonance may crush them if they do not come out of their thresholds and stand for a cause.

What may befall next? Will this monster of bigotry keep wreaking its vengeance over the minorities of India? Will the vulnerable denizens of India ever find moments of respite? The answer is that there does not seem to be any sheen of hope in the near future as long as this intractable monster, which has been fed over the years with inordinate sentiments of fear and hatred against non-Hindus, lurks. The only hope is the likes of the president of JNSU, Aishe Ghosh, who have been responding the harsh blows of oppressive regime with brave and honest fight so as to claw out the cherished values of a secular and tolerant polity from the relentless clutches of muscular Hindutva ideology.