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# A great loss to the nation



Bangladesh lost one of its most honest and brave journalists Ataus Samad on 26th of September. It was very hard for me to accept the news. Samad bhai was a true democrat. He was truthful and was not biased to any political party. I consider myself lucky as I had the opportunity to work with him closely as a civil society activist. He was polite and nice to everybody. He never tried to get privilege from any quarter. He was jailed for telling the truth during Ershad's regime. His journalist colleagues loved him very much. In this hour of need, absence of a journalist of his stature is being felt more than any time before.

Admittedly, journalists have been playing a crucial role in keeping democracy thriving in the country. The nation will never forget this great journalist. Through The Daily Star I would like to request everybody to forgive him if any of his activities hurt anybody. A quote from Hugh Prather is applicable for Ataus Samad: "Almost any difficulty will move in the face of honesty. When I am honest I never feel stupid. And when I am honest I am automatically humble."

**Dr. M. Mahboob Hossain**  
Microbiology Program  
Department of MNS  
BRAC University  
Dhaka

## Outrageous!

What happened to the Buddhist community in Ramu and other places is a shame. We decry when others exhibit intolerance towards us. Shouldn't we all raise our voice when a minority group amongst us are subjected to the same kind of, or even worse, intolerance?

**Reza Islam**  
California, USA

## SC verdict on caretaker govt

The Supreme Court in its full verdict on the legality of non-party caretaker government observed: "Although the 13th amendment to the constitution is illegal, parliament may take measures to constitute the caretaker government in new form to hold the tenth and eleventh national polls."

The full verdict suggested that the House might enact a law scrapping the provision for making a retired chief justice or an Appellate division judge the chief adviser of the caretaker government. This part of the final verdict is identical to what was in the short verdict delivered 16 months back.

But the final verdict adds further that such a government should be formed with only elected lawmakers. It seems fully legal to form a government with elected lawmakers. This can be done even if the parliament is dissolved. Clause (4) of Article 56 of the constitution reads: "If occasion arises for making any appointment under clause (2) or clause (3) between a dissolution of parliament and the next following general election of members of parliament, the persons who were such members immediately before the dissolution shall be regarded for the purpose of this clause as continuing to be such members."

I would request the legal experts to examine the issue.

# Thawing permafrost and global warming

Due to global warming, permafrost is melting faster. Permafrost is a soil or rock mass that remains frozen (below 0°C/32°F). Permafrost is found in the cold climates where the mean annual temperature remain below the freezing point. Such climate prevails near the North and South poles.

In recent years the Arctic ice is melting faster which is causing thawing of permafrost in that region. When permafrost melts, it releases methane that accelerates global warming.

Adverse effects of climate change are a reality and drastic measures need to be taken to reduce greenhouse gasses. Search for fossil fuel in the Arctic region should be stopped because drilling for oil may cause rapid collapse of permafrost soil. Use of fossil fuel has to be reduced and search for exploring clean and green energy sources has to be intensified through strengthening global cooperation and partnership.

**Professor M Zahidul Haque**  
Dean  
Faculty of Agriculture  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University  
Dhaka



## It's a crying shame!

I am losing interest in writing letters in newspapers expressing my views on many issues and maybe one day I will stop writing altogether as it seems futile. Many conscious citizens are also writing regularly but we see the authorities are not at all concerned about these.

The news published on September 25, 2012 in many newspapers is so outrageous that I had to write again to show my contempt. The news says Labour and Employment Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju was visiting Narsingdi after one year and he had to take help from the law enforcing agencies because people of Narsingdi were resisting his visit.

His younger brother Bachu was the main accused in the killing of Lokman Hossain, the popular mayor of Narsingdi. Lokman Hossain was elected mayor twice and had received gold medal as the best mayor of the country. Lokman Hossain was gunned down in his office and died on November 1, 2011. Only at age 43 his life came to an end.

We learned that during the minister's visit the present mayor, the brother of slain mayor Lokman Hossain, was detained in his house along with his family members. And in the final charge sheet of the killing of Lokman Hossain, many of those mentioned in the FIR were not included and one person named in the charge sheet was on the dais with the minister! It is despicable and unacceptable. We are unlucky to have such ministers in our country.

**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong

## NU students' plight

As the number of public universities is limited, many students are compelled to enroll themselves in the private varsities. In private universities, students have to pay lakhs of taka to get a degree. Many universities do not maintain the quality, rather they sell certificates to their students. National University is the biggest educational institution in Bangladesh.

Generally students from poor and middle income families and those who could not get admitted into any public and private varsities, seek admission here. The teachers of the NU are of course good. But the students here do not get proper care because of a number of reasons.

At present, session jam is the number one problem in NU. There is session jam in public universities too but compared to NU it is nothing. Many students of the NU, their guardians and other conscious people have been writing on this issue in the newspapers. The NU students even brought out processions demanding session-jam-free education but to no avail.

The education minister is doing many things in this sector but I fail to understand why he is silent about National University.

**Rashid Harun**

# Supplementary dredging of smaller rivers



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Recently we learned from the media reports that the government has undertaken a project to dredge 24 major rivers to increase their navigability by June 2018. A total 101.4 million cubic metres will be dredged at a cost of cost of Taka 18.73 billion.

On completion of the project, heavy water vessels will be able to ply throughout the year that will facilitate the movement of passengers and goods, and at minimum costs. Thanks to the government for taking such a commendable step.

To get full benefit from the dredging work, a supplementary project needs to be undertaken in order to dredge the small rivers which are connected to the 24 major rivers. It will facilitate irrigation, plying of boats and fish culture in all seasons.

Bangladesh Water Development Board can undertake this supplementary dredging project to dredge small rivers connected to the bigger rivers under the BIWTA's major river dredging project simultaneously.

**Md Ashraf Hossain**  
Central Bashabo  
Dhaka

## Unclean utensils infect food in hospitals

This has reference to a front page report published on 23rd. September in a local English daily. Unfortunately, the writer put emphasis on the grime and dirt in the hospital kitchen, and the infected food served. The fact of the matter is that this dirt or unclean environment of the personnel or the place has practically nothing to do with germs in the cooked food!

The actual problem is the issue of cleanliness of the crockery, cutlery and the personnel involved with the delivery of the cooked food! Please note that despite squalid and dirty environment in which the food is made ready for cooking, there is practically no possibility of any germ infecting the food cooked! The simple reason is that over 99.999 percent of germs are killed at over 80 degree Centigrade temperature.

Almost all cooking involves temperatures of over 100 degree Centigrade, the boiling point of water, which actually kills all germs. Germs get into the food chain when the cooled cooked food is set out in pots and plates and these are put on the delivery trays at slightly above room temperatures, when germs from the air and environment can get into the cooked food!

Unfortunately this basic scientific fact is not known to most of us, including hospital staff responsible for dishing out the cooked food and then delivering it to the patients. This is the area that needs all the care and attention to minimise the chances of infection to the patients.

**Engr. S.A. Mansoor**  
Dhaka

## READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Tearing out the soul"

### Nasirullah Mridha, USA

Our sacred religion never supports this arson attack. Those who are involved in this heinous crime, exemplary punishment should be given to them. We condemn this attack on Buddhist people.

### Dr. Iftikhar-ul-Awwal

The mayhem committed in Cox's Bazar against the Buddhists was a cold blooded premeditated incident. We strongly condemn such acts of violence perpetrated against a peace loving community. In fact, entire Bangladesh is awestruck at the sudden horrific incident. The government and people in general are beside them to ensure their safety and security. The gangs of religious zealots who carried out such heinous crimes against humanity are being gradually rounded up and causes of the violence determined.

### Suahmed

I am always with the oppressed people of all communities. I believe in co-existence of all for the sake of humanity, peace and harmony. I want elimination of all evil-doers who committed such heinous crime against humanity. The government must strictly deal with the real perpetrators through a proper investigation.

### Parag Barua

Home minister must comment based on reality. He should bring to book the culprits without any delay and should not blame anybody without any investigation.

### Neutral

The incident reflects government's failure to protect minorities in Bangladesh.

### Zakir

I am a Muslim and I am ashamed that these minority people are suffering in my country. Please show respect to all religions if you are a real Muslim. Our religion teaches us to show respect to all religions.

### Habibullah Mizan

I think there should be a neutral investigation to find the criminals and also to avoid such communal violence in future. An all-party parliamentary probe committee should be formed in this regard as early as possible.

### Sabir Majumder

This is simply unacceptable. I had a pride all along that Bangalee Muslims are more tolerant than any other Muslim groups/nations around the globe. These days, I am gradually losing my faith in that respect. Humanity is in banishment now!

### Saleh Md. Shahriar

The attack is a security threat to our country. The geopolitical location of Cox's Bazar must be seriously taken into consideration.

### Ferdous Jalil

This is sad. I apologise to our Buddhist brothers and sisters for this act. At the same time, I call upon the authorities to apprehend those directly involved in this incident.

### Translucent

There should be an all party committee to investigate this heinous crime. Both parties must be in sync to condemn the atrocity instead of blaming each other. It is, however, surprising that the law enforcing agencies allegedly delayed in taking action.

### Kazi Salim

The SP and the entire police command of Cox's Bazar should be sacked immediately for failing to protect the Buddhist temples, valuable properties of the temples and the houses of the Buddhist population. There was a complete co-existence between the Muslims-Buddhists-Christians and Hindus in the Cox's Bazar area. There should be a robust investigation and all the security agencies should be deployed in the entire Cox's Bazar area to maintain peace, stability, communal harmony and reconciliation.

### Mayen Uddin Tazim

The nation is shocked at this barbaric attack on the Buddhist people. This is immoral in terms of religious philosophy of all the religions. Definitely, there are some vested inter-