Traditional Media Under Pressure

After the Savar tragedy, the role of media in our country has again come under criticism. Why is our media publishing the picture of dead people? Nowhere else in the world, media shows pictures of the dead in an accident or disaster. Is there a demand for it? Or is the media just being irresponsible? What kind of journalistic ethics teaches a journalist to ask a person who has been trapped under the debris for 50 hours, "How are you feeling?" It seems that a professional attitude based on objectivity is yet to develop in journalism in the country. The media should conduct research on what can be done differently to better coordinate rescue operations in case such terrible accidents happen again. They should also play a role in raising awareness among the people about the dangers of not complying with building codes and safety measures.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Islamic State

I am writing a story in reply to Anika Nawal Ahmed's letter regarding Islamic state published in May 03, 2013 issue of the Star. The islamisation of our Constitution was made in 1979 and 1988, both of which are considered as autocratic regime. As far as I know, democracy, though still stumbling, in Bangladesh returned in 1990. It is true that we still suffer from the shortcomings of majoritarian democracy yet there are active opposition parties and they can make their voices heard if they want to. Therefore Ms Ahmed's claim that Islamisation was done through a democratic process is wrong. Besides the cover story of April 19 was not about islamisation of Bangladesh but about rising extremist forces, who is using Islam to turn the country into a Taliban state. It may be true that 90 percent of the population of this country is Muslim. I am not proud of this fact because this did not happen through voluntary conversion rather through silent exodus which continued even when our Constitution guaranteed equal rights and security to all its citizen — Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim. While an apparently secular state could not protect its non-Muslim citizen from the wrath of Muslim fanatics, does Ms Ahmed think an Islamic state can? I wish Ms Ahmed had given example of at least one Islamic state in the present world, where non-Muslim can practice their religion with absolute freedom and without fear.

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