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EDITOR'S NOTE

December 14 visits us every year with a deep pain. A pain of great loss. And made even more painful by the fact that these golden daughters and sons of the soil were taken away from us when the nation was in the cusp of attaining independence. It is all but clear now that the killings were a well thought out scheme put in place by an inimical force facing imminent defeat. The objective was to deprive a nascent state of the intellectual leadership it so badly needed in the post-independence phase of the country. After all, the motive force behind the long freedom struggle post-1947 was our right to carve out our own narrative culturally,

intellectually and politically, a narrative that stemmed from factors very germane to the land, rooted in its soil, the people and the environment. That was denied to a people whose nationhood predates the colonial and Pakistani rule. What better way for the enemy to strangle a people than to cut off its source of intellectual sustenance. And they did exactly that, with the active collaboration of a handful of so-called Bengalis.

But we observe December 14 this year with an eerie feeling of déjà vu. There are forces that seem to want to replicate the phenomenon we witnessed in 1971; they seem to want to annihilate our

tradition of intellectual freedom. Several of our freethinkers and intellectuals as also persons of other religions have been targeted and some even killed. It is very clear that the syncretic character of the society, irrespective of our caste, creed or religion, is under threat. There is an attempt to abridge the space of informed discourse by force. This attempt must be defeated, and that is possible only when we collectively coalesce cutting across party lines, putting aside our individual and self-interest and work towards the interest of the nation. It is our hope that the articles would provide some food for thought for our readers.