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The Holiday

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A harassed professor

We do not seem to get anything right. In a frenzied rush for self-aggrandizement, almost all essentials of so-called civilized life are trampled upon without the slightest thought to the effects on national life. Without being demonstrably on the right side of persons who hold power in various spheres it is impossible to get even what is normally due to you. This can range from getting your grossly inaccurate telephone bills corrected to having someone admitted into a hospital.

The point of highlighting this unpleasant facet of our life is that even when we pretend to be civilized enough to appoint National Professors our very subsequent steps are a dead giveaway of what kind of intentions really are the motive force of our thinking. To cite one instance we may refer to the case relating to Dr. Nurul Islam formerly of the IPGMR who was annointed with a National Professorship sometime back. And yet since then all kinds of obstructions are being propped up thus making it impossible for him to get on with his work.

He has been offered financial backing for his research work by the University Grants Commission and the Bangladesh Medical Council, and he has chosen as his initial subject of work viral hepatitis. And since the IPGMR has the necessary Virology Department, Prof. Islam naturally wants to use the facilities there to carry on with his research work. But for reasons not made very clear various ministries and government departments are playing a game of tennis and not resolving the problems.

Our purpose here is not to grind the ax for Dr. Islam; and there is no earthly reason why we should do so since we have had—and probably will continue to have—a great many differences of opinion with him on a vast number of subjects. But the point here is not just that the person involved in this episode is Dr. Islam, but the more vital issue of how we should deal with those we decide to honor and what we ought to do to utilize their abilities for the national good and at the same time not waste money that can help someone contribute to the storehouse of the country's knowledge.