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Press Release

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The Government of Bangladesh has attached utmost importance and taken immediate and stern actions to address the recent unfortunate incidents of arson attacks on the Buddhist Community of Bangladesh on 29 September 2012 that damaged some religious sites as well as homesteads of some local Buddhist families. The initial investigation testifies that the attack was pre-mediated and there is a possibility of involvement of the extremist groups with alleged links to certain Myanmar-based Rohingya outfits operating in those areas.

The affected places were visited by the highest level representatives of the Government including by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who, terming the incident 'deplorable', assured the Buddhist Community that the attackers would be brought to book. Immediately after the incident additional forces have been deployed to avoid recurrence of any untoward incident. Till 1st October, as many as 84 persons were arrested, in connection with the incident and intensive investigation is being carried out to unearth the motive and to identify the perpetrators. A four-member Inquiry Committee has been formed in this regard. Apart from this, Government has taken a number of rehabilitation steps which include rebuilding of religious sites and homesteads, humanitarian and cash supports to the affected families and restoration of confidence among the Buddhist Community by continued assurances from the highest level of the Government and by forming inter-faith committee to address the concerns of the minority community through collective efforts. Mentionable, the incident has triggered widespread public outrage by political, cultural and civil society members of the country who considered the incident as a deliberate attempt to undermine secular ethos of the nation.

In the meantime, the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa has offered to provide some Idols of Lord Buddha to place them in the reconstructed temples. The Government of Bangladesh has welcomed the offer. Bangladesh Government's reconstruction work is going on in a full speed. The law-enforcing agencies are seriously trying to find out the culprits behind the tragic incident so that justice to the Buddhist Community could be ensured at the earliest. The

Government is firm to its constitutional commitment of secularism and communal harmony and taking every step to fulfill such commitment.

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