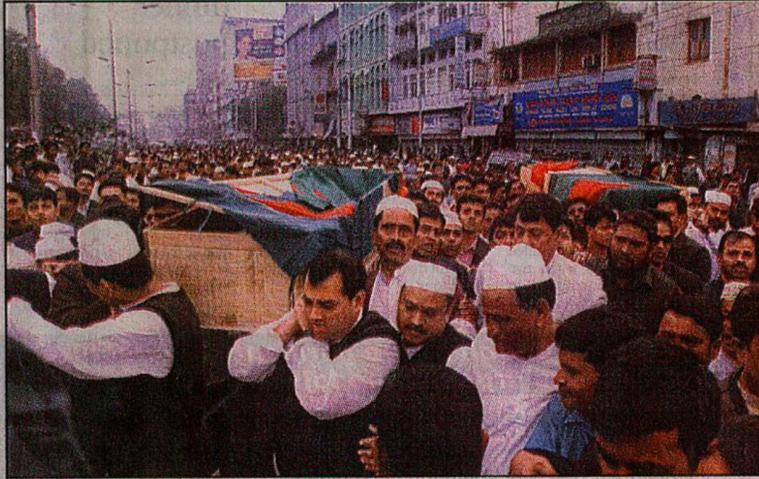


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Mourners carry the bodies of former finance minister and Awami League (AL) leader Shah AMS Kibria and AL activist Abul Hossain to Central Shaheed Minar from the party headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue, left, and a bus, a microbus and a motorcycle set on fire by protesters at Doyal Chatter yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

The same group used the same Arges grenade

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK, from Habiganj

Criminals who carried out last year's grenade attacks in Dhaka and Sylhet used the same Arges brand grenades on an Awami League rally at Boilder Bazar in Habiganj Thursday. Former finance minister SAMS Kibria and four others were killed in the attack.

After inspecting the spot and examining the pieces of evidence, a bomb squad of Rapid Action

Battalion (Rab) yesterday identified the grenades.

Rab bomb experts said grenades of the same brand were hurled at AL chief Sheikh Hasina's rally in Dhaka on August 21 and at Shahjalal shrine in Sylhet in May last year, injuring the British envoy to Bangladesh.

Rab official Captain Mamtazur Rahman told The Daily Star, "We're certain these were Arges model grenades."

"Another similar grenade was

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Storm of protests, 60-hr hartal

Mourners pay last respects to Kibria, protesters set vehicles ablaze, AL and allies call countrywide non-stop shutdown from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of mourners yesterday paid their last tributes to former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria by joining his namaz-e-janaza after Juma prayers in the capital while angry demonstrators clashed with police and set ablaze at least 12 vehicles and a business house protesting Thursday's carnage.

The main opposition Awami League and its left-leaning allies have called a 60-hour non-stop

hartal beginning at 6:00am today condemning the grenade attack on an AL rally in Habiganj that killed the frontline AL leader, his nephew and three other AL activists and injured over 70 others.

Many an opposition party and socio-cultural organisation yesterday staged demonstrations across the country and some of them accused the ruling alliance of killing Kibria, lawmaker of Habiganj, as part of what they said was a blue print to eliminate the core leader,

ship of the main opposition.

Kibria's body was brought to the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue at 12:30pm. The body of Habiganj district AL leader Abul Hossain, who also succumbed to his injuries in the grenade attack at Birdem hospital on Thursday night, was also brought and kept in front of the AL office.

After holding two namaz-e-janaza one at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque and the other on the nearby Bangabandhu Avenue --

a huge mourning procession escorted the two coffins covered with the national and the party flags to the Shaheed Minar through Paltan crossing and Topkhana Road. People from all social strata lined up all along the way paying respect to the assassinated statesman and his party colleague.

From the Shaheed Minar, Kibria's body was taken to the Birdem hospital mortuary, from where it will be taken to his village home in Habiganj sometime today.

His family is awaiting his daughter Naznin Kibria's arrival from London before starting for Habiganj.

"Naznin is scheduled to arrive in the early hours today and his family will then take a decision about his burial," said Saber Hossain Chowdhury, organising secretary of AL and political secretary to the party president, earlier in the evening.

On way to the Shaheed Minar, a section of the mourners locked in a clash with police at Doel Chatter at

about 2:30pm. At least 20 people were injured in the nearly 40-minute clash between enraged opposition workers shouting anti-government slogans and law enforcers, while people were placing flowers and floral wreaths on Kibria's coffin in front of the Minar about a hundred metres away.

Ahead of the 60-hour hartal, traffic movement on the city streets was thin yesterday, most of the shops and businesses closed early

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Clashes mark Habiganj hartal, no arrest yet

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK from Habiganj and IQBAL SIDDIQEE from Sylhet

The weekend in the district was numbed with the shock and horror of Thursday's carnage while police were yet to make any arrest in this connection.

The dawn-to-dusk strike called by the district Awami League (AL) protesting the macabre grenade attack on a rally at Boilder Bazar was enforced amid sporadic incidents of clash, and ransacking and burning of vehicles, houses, shops and other business establishments, mostly belonging to ruling alliance members.

Businesses kept their shutters down and even rickshaws were kept

off the roads.

Panic coated with anger and resentment has gripped the entire district following the outrage that killed former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and four other AL activists, besides injuring more than 70 people.

Large number of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) troops have been deployed in addition to the normal police force to keep the situation under control.

Officials of law enforcement and intelligence agencies including Additional Inspector General Farrukh Ahmed Chowdhury of the Criminal Investigation Department,

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PHOTO: JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

From left, daughter, wife and a relative of slain AL activist Siddique Ali wall at their village home at Bongaon in Habiganj yesterday.

'My son won't return, but I want to see killers in dock'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In tears, relatives of the dead in Thursday's carnage in Habiganj demanded trial and punishment of the killers, while five more injured were admitted to the Birdem yesterday.

Abdur Rahman, the centenarian father of a victim of the grenade attack on Awami League (AL)

rally in Habiganj, demanded punishment of his son's killers before he breathes his last.

"I know my son will not return but I want to see the criminals in the dock," the wailing father of day labourer Abdur Rahim, 50, said in Bongaon village.

Speaking in response to his grandfather, Rahim's 14-year-old son Sohail Mia said: "We'll not get

justice because the attackers are against the AL and in power as well."

"There would be an opportunity for them to claim the parliamentary seat in the next election when Shah AMS Kibria is no more. I think that's why they've assassinated him," the teenager observed.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

President terms it barbaric, PM for finding out culprits

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of former finance minister and Awami League (AL) leader Shah AMS Kibria MP and four others in Thursday's grenade attack on an AL rally in Habiganj.

In separate messages, Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Jamiruddin Sircar, Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddique, BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Finance

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'Culprits can't be nabbed likely due to admn lapses'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is firm on finding out the attackers on Awami League (AL) rally in Habiganj and ensuring punishment to them, BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told a press conference at his official residence yesterday.

"We could not arrest the culprits involved in bomb and grenade attacks. It may be due to our weakness or of the administration," he said.

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Commentary

One by one Opposition leaders are being killed

MAHFUZ ANAM

We are outraged, shocked and deeply saddened by the brutal murder of SAMS Kibria, one of the most educated, experienced, internationally reputed, highly cultured and mild mannered politicians of the country. We condemn the killings and express our disgust at the fact that our government has done practically nothing so far to unearth the criminals who have, with near impunity, carried one brutal politi-

cal murders after another.

One by one Awami League leaders are falling victims to terrorist attacks. Some are being killed in grenade attacks and others like Ahsanullah Master of Gazipur in brushfire by armed hooligans in broad day light in front of hundreds of people. What sort of a democracy are we living in where opposition leaders get killed, their rallies are systematically attacked, their activists constantly brutalised by police and ruling party thugs, and where

those who kill opposition leaders and activists are never caught, leave alone punished.

With the murder of SAMS Kibria the country loses one of the most highly talented bureaucrat-turned-politicians who genuinely wanted to serve the country. He wanted to bring about a genuine change in our political system. Compared to what goes on in the name of political rhetoric, Kibria was always mild in his comments and measured in his

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Asma Kibria expects no justice from government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asma Kibria, wife of late Shah AMS Kibria, said she hardly believes the BNP-led coalition government will ensure justice for the killings of her husband and others in the grenade attack on the Awami League (AL) rally in Habiganj.

"We don't expect justice from the government as it only patronises the criminals and commits crimes," an

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Living dangerously

INAM AHMED and ZAYADUL AHSAN

Lies, half-truths and propaganda -- that are what we are living through now.

No-one can say exactly what has been happening, but everyone fears about where Bangladesh is heading for. The death of SAMS Kibria has once again made it clear what can happen to a country when the government is in a self-denial mode, when lies are concocted to bury the truth, when propaganda is woven to

protect the perpetrators and when truths are told halfway to lend meaning to meaning.

They all create a dangerous living. And we are living one right now.

The story began long ago when bombs were thrown on a Udichi function in Jessore killing 10. Later, when a bomb was found at Gopalganj where the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina was scheduled to visit, the motive became

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Envoys call for transparent, urgent probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Envoys from countries of the European Union (EU) yesterday blasting the government for failure to probe the previous explosions properly said it encouraged the recurrence of incidents like Thursday's attack on Awami League rally in Habiganj.

Besides, the United States, India and Japan yesterday urged the government to conduct transparent and immediate probe into Thursday's blasts.

Anwar Choudhury, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, said, "We are deeply concerned that the apparent failure to properly investigate previous similar attacks have

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Expose those fuelling political terrorism: US

AFP Washington

The United States on yesterday strongly condemned a deadly bomb attack on an opposition rally in Bangladesh and sought prompt government action to expose those behind what it called "political terrorism."

"Like the August 21 attack in Dhaka, this incident is an assault on the principles of free speech, democracy and peaceful political

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