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DEATH OF KIBRIA



PHOTO: AFP

SAMS Kibria is now no more; he is a name of the past, a part of history, another statistic to be remembered by many. He was outspoken, passionate, dedicated, and deeply committed to his vision. Not every one agreed with everything he said, but that's the way of politics.

Yet, he stood firmly for his beliefs, while pricking and prodding the nation's conscience and consciousness in a forthright manner. In the process he apparently made himself an unwitting target...of hate, intolerance, and petty partisanship.

What is this nation coming to? Is a different perspective no longer allowable? Is dissidence no longer tolerable? Is a voice of opposition destined to an abrupt, brutal, and premature end?

If the record of political misdeeds and growing atrocity is any indication, this nation is beginning to forget its blood-soaked history of emergence that is rooted in "emancipation from oppression." In SAMS Kibria and all others who similarly fell victim to their untimely, horrific and unnatural demise, that hard-won emancipation, today, stands despondently on the sacrificial altar.

A resonating conscience on e-mail

I was shocked to read about the death of the former finance minister SAMS Kibria in a grenade attack. It seems to be a repeat of the incident that killed Awami League's Ivy Rahman. The government of Khaleda Zia has once again failed in its duty to uphold the bare minimum level of law and order necessary to provide a sense of security in the country.

Your newspaper quoted the PM as declaring, "Legal action will be taken against those engaged in terrorism" at a recent rally in Munshiganj. May I ask what legal action has been taken against those who attacked the British High Commissioner in Sylhet? What legal action has been taken against those who hurled grenades at the main opposition rally last August? What legal action has been taken against Bangla Bhai? Or is this just another one of those "tall on rhetoric, short on action" statements designed only to draw applause?

When a senior and well-respected opposition leader like Mr. Kibria has to die at the hands of cowardly killers whom the government has repeatedly failed to keep under control, the government has no choice but to take the responsibility for the gross incompetence. Who is in charge of the country? The elected government or pompous civil servants who have all the authority to rule but neither the responsibility nor the mandate and who have quite deliberately and successfully meddled in delaying separation of the judiciary? The parallel administration within the BNP that we hear about? The anarchists that are going around hurling grenades at will?

This is indeed a very sad day

for democracy in Bangladesh. I pray for the departed souls of SAMS Kibria and others who were killed with him. I pray that the government has the sense to realize how grave the situation has become and that both the nation and the world are expecting it to take some kind of decisive and sincere action, instead of the usual whitewash as in previous cases of this nature.

Shabbir A. Bashar
San Francisco Bay Area, California, US

The former finance minister SAMS Kibria and four other Awami League (AL) activists were killed in a grenade attack on an AL rally at Baidyer Bazar in Habiganj. Only Awami League leaders and the progressive minded people have been targeted in the series of attacks. How long this kind of killings will continue? Can anyone tell us? The killing had been started with the assassination of Bangabandhu and four national leaders by the anti-liberation forces. The same forces are now killing our leaders. They want to destroy democracy. They preach Islam and use it in politics to gain support of people. How a true believer in Islam can commit murders or even support such activities. They should know that though they may escape mundane justice, they would not be able to escape the justice of Allah.

The founders of the BNP were the beneficiaries of the assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975. The



PHOTO: AFP

party was formed with many who were anti-liberation. The recent killings have been taking place while the BNP is in power. Both the BNP and the AL are responsible for the rise of fundamentalist forces in the country. The AL fought against the BNP with fundamentalists in 1996 and the BNP has inducted them into power. I think more blood will spill until the BNP and the AL give up support for the fundamentalists.

Now the AL leaders are being killed. That day is not far away when the BNP will fall prey to the fanatic forces. For the sake of democracy and for the people, I urge all to unite against this evil force.

Mallik Akram Hossain
The University of Hong Kong

Again a grenade attack? It has never happened in any Jamaat or BNP rally - but always in rallies organised by

progressive elements! What is happening in our country? Do we have to think that there is a rise of anti-liberation elements and that they are in power?

Will the government again say that the AL is bombing its own rallies? The democratic forces across the world do know the facts.

Kazi Firoz
Slovak Academy of Sciences, Kosice, Slovakia

Who said that? There was never any Kibria in Bangladesh and there will never be one. These are all propaganda to damage the "Bhabmurti"! Let's pray to God that Kibria is heavily punished in the post-humous world for carrying a bomb in his pocket and thereby causing unrest and embarrassment to all of us.

I know I sound like a cynic. But it is exactly that sort of ostrich like attitude of the people whose voices matter has led to the growth of these monsters. We crossed the stage of "wishing away" problems a long time back.

I only hope it is not too late to start "acting".

Subrata Sarker
Ph.D. Student, Department of Economics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

I'm shocked. SAMS Kibria was one of the few brilliant political leaders of the country. These grenade attacks are taking place because of the indifference of the government. Our government could



PHOTO: AFP

not do anything after the gruesome 21st August attack. Recently, Ahsanullah MP was killed. A question pops up in mind, does the government really want to see the opposition party?

My heart bleeds. Sometimes it seems to me that the lives of the people in our country have become valueless.

CWR (An unhappy citizen)
One-mail

We are deeply shocked and feeling outraged by the incident of grenade attack on an Awami League meeting in Habiganj which killed the former finance minister SAMS Kibria and three other people and injured many. A number of them are now in critical condition.

We are very frightened and upset, not knowing who are behind this heinous Act. It is quite clear that these are being done to destabilise the coun-

try. The government must unearth the mystery, it cannot go on like this. The opposition leader Sheikh Hasina pointed her fingers at the government, accusing it for the grenade attacks but it seems most illogical because this sort of incidents harms the image of the government and puts it in a difficult position.

We think that a conspiracy is being hatched to destroy our country. The government and the opposition must join hands to unravel it and save the country from falling apart. They must stop blaming each other which is giving the culprits the chance to commit such crimes.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

We are shocked and appalled at the killing of elderly politician and former finance minister Shah A M S Kibria and four other Awami League (AL) activists in a grenade attack on an AL rally in Habiganj on the evening of 27 January 2005.

We are deeply concerned at the lack of security of the opposition leaders, activists and the public in general.

Sabbir Khan
Sweden branch of Resisting Killers & Collaborators of Bangladesh War of 1971

We are greatly shocked to hear the news of SAMS Kibria's demise. May his soul rest in peace. I wonder who's next. What are these guys up to? They are planning to assassinate all the intellectuals, one by one. I don't care who is doing it but this must be stopped immediately and at any cost. If necessary, we should take up arms again. A simple hartal and demonstration by the people will not suffice. On the contrary, hartals cause inconvenience to the general public mainly laborers, rickshaw-pullers, peddlers and so on. Lots of other people have died too leaving behind several orphans and widows. What's their fault and why should they suffer? Is this what Tagore had dreamt of in his "Where the mind is without fear"?

We have been harboring the terrorists and saluting people having a proven criminal record. It's about time we come to our senses and turn the table on terrorism. You are basically destroying a country if you are killing the intellectuals. They are our assets and we look up to them. December 14, 1971 was not only a traumatic experience but it was also devastating with respect to the effect it had on the development of the country. We are probably heading for a similar experience and it seems no one like Dr. Kamal Hossain, Prof. Yunus, Poet Shamsur Rahman and other progressive intellectuals will be spared.

Right now, we need a mass awakening to stop this slow poisoning & we need to invoke our conscience that has been inhibited and lying dormant for quite a while. A boomerang will come back and hit you if it's too heavy!

Soumen Sengupta
One-mail

Congratulations, Tigers!

Congratulations to the Tigers for the 7th triumph in ODI and second at home. A great comeback by the boys.

They have the ability to fight and stay in the series after losing the first two ODIs.

Muhammad Bin Abdullah
Cox's Bazar

Poor performance?

This letter is a response to Mr. Badal Hasib's (26 January, "Poor performance"). I strongly oppose his line of thinking. He failed to identify the cause behind Bangladesh's failures against Zimbabwe in the first two ODIs. He questioned whether Bangladesh were still suffering from the hangover of their first ever Test series victory.

The Tigers lost the matches because of a dismal middle order collapse, there was no other reason.

Mohammed Fahim Hara
Universal Tutorial, New Eskaton Road, Dhaka

Hartal

The news item, "Hospitals, ambulances, newspapers' vehicles, kitchen markets, drug stores, food shops, utility service vehicles and garbage carrying vans will remain outside the purview of the opposition-called 60-hour hartal from 6:00 am today to 6:00pm on Monday," surprised me. There should have been some reference to the party or parties calling the hartal.

Tariq Abd'allah
One-mail

Admission ordeal

I have read the article by Tahsin Hyder on "Child Admission" published on 28 Jan. I am fully aware of the wild competition for admission in the schools like Viquarunnessa and Govt. Laboratory. Most of the parents are often desperate to admit their children in these schools, though there are a lot of other good schools to admit to, which follow the same syllabus of the board. They are often trying once, twice and even thrice wasting three valuable years of their lives. As a result, in one class there is a wide range of age of the students and the competition gets even tougher.

Moreover, the candidates are taught more than enough before admission in class 1. I think it is the responsibility of the school to teach the basics instead of giving such a load of burden to the children. It's time the Ministry of Education started thinking about it.

Saminur Majumder
One-mail

Freedom fighters

We have talked many great things about them but have hardly done anything for their welfare. Many freedom fighters have no food, no education for their children. They have daughters waiting to get married, but where is the money?

Can the government help them?
Samad Sikder
Gulshan 2, Dhaka

Perils of the leaning head

Everybody knows the story of the drunkard who was looking under the lamp-post for the key he had lost a hundred meters away in the dark, because he thought it would be easier to see it in the light. The present government is very efficient in finding and punishing minor offenders, or those without direct affiliations with its party, while perpetrators of ghastly crimes remain mysteriously undetectable.

The vandalizers of Gasuddin Mamun's palatial home have been arrested, tried and sentenced in record time, but there is no trace of the real killers of Ahsanullah Master, while the main witness has been murdered, again, leaving our "law-enforcing" agencies clueless. The Chittagong arms haul case, the 21 August carnage, attacks on the

British Ambassador, Humayun Azad or on Prof. Yunus -- all these high profile cases as well as hundreds of other cases are awaiting dead-end final reports. What this government will do about the murder of SAMS Kibria and his companions, orchestrated professionally with even appointed light managers who turned the electricity on and off as per direction, need not be guessed.

This government has the choice of illuminating its dark corners, or face the consequences that all power-drunk people face, eventually.

Sudhir Mitra
Boston, US

BTV news

BTV needed a major reshuffling and reorganization years ago, but, nothing has been done so far. The bla-

Teaching grammar

I came across a letter (Teaching grammar, Khan Md. Iqbal Hossain, English Teacher, Bangladesh Rifles College, Peelkhana, Dhaka) on Fri. January 28, 2005 in your newspaper. As I am both an English teacher and a former IELTS examiner I thought I might have something to contribute to the subject.

Candidates for the IELTS test are measured by how well they can communicate. If their communicative ability is inhibited by poor grammar or lack of vocabulary then this will affect their score. There is a lot of debate between English teachers concerning teaching grammar. Some teachers hold to the "communicative approach". This approach was put forward by Dell Hymes in the mid-1970s and further championed by Stephan Krashen. They feel that teaching grammar rules to

expressed his view, fair and square. He can do this, as he is living safe across the seas, far away from the wrath of our corrupt politicians and public servants.

But do we dare to do so? Since the ACC picked up the cudgel on the subject; the public servants have challenged the very legal authority of the ACC. Meanwhile, the politicians to avoid the smear may propose to pass into law possibly unanimously, their right to own a squadron of cars for official, political, private and other conceivable use for self, family, *chancha* and whatnot!

I would appeal to all the print media to go deep into the matter and follow up on this singular public awareness initiated by The Daily Star which deserves our unqualified appreciation.

However I wonder if any storm has been created anywhere as opined by Mr. Hasan. Our public servants and politicians are known to be thick skinned enough not to care about public or media opinions. They are out to set the dubious record for Bangladesh to be the most corrupt country five years running. They may then claim a permanent gold cup to record their being World No 1 on a subject in which possibly they are second to none!

Acitizen
Dhaka

Saarc spirit: A hope or a reality?

The hope and aspiration generated by the formation of Saarc 20 years ago need to be made a reality with substantial change in the lifestyle of about 1400 million people living in these seven countries. The prevailing scenario of poverty, education, health and nutrition, employment generation, transport and communication, credit facilities etc. at the rural areas is much below the expectations, in spite of repeated commitments and declarations.

Rural development is possible with the capability building of the rural people. There is need for intensive training on improved agricultural system, HYV of seeds and use of modern agricultural implements.

The Saarc Agricultural Information Centre located in Bangladesh and the Saarc Human Resource Development Centre at Islamabad must take more extensive measures in collaboration with BARD, RDA, of Bangladesh NIRD of India, LDIA of Nepal, NCRD of Pakistan and HARTI of Sri Lanka.

The benefits of Saarc must reach the people. Millennium Development Goals must be achieved and poverty must be eradicated by 2015.

Dhiraj Kumar Nath
Former Secretary, Rural Development and Cooperatives Division, Dhaka

Democracy and Rab
For months, the elite force Rab continues its operations. It has become a subject of debate around the country. In every newspaper, people are presenting their comments, in both offensive or defensive manners. A question has been raised: do we need Rab? Yes, definitely we do. We need a strong, reliable force for our own security and for the security of our great nation.

How can we say that we are not safer with Rab? Our country's security forces' guns must be pointed at the terrorists. To prompt freedom and democracy we need to have patriots, who can hunt down wanted criminals, by risking their lives, not even thinking about their family. In the past, the news of murders was a daily affair in local dailies. The criminals were becoming more powerful than police. They were often found with assault rifles like AK47 or M16. Therefore, we need some effective band of patriots to stop these kinds of activities.

To secure our country's future, and the future of our upcoming generations, we need to get united and help our security forces to break the backbone of the evil elements.

Tahsin Hyder
Maple Leaf International School, Dhanmondi, Dhaka



tantly biased news that is broadcast leads everyone to believe that there is no point in watching such news.

We cannot expect BTV to become like CNN or BBC overnight, but its state has been pathetic for many years now. It seems that the channel exists only for the sake of keeping it, and, and serves as a tool for the government to misinform the public according to its will.

Arbab Quadri
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Are they humans?

The recent exposure of the inhuman brutality of the British soldiers on the arrested Iraqis is an unusually shocking act that reminds us of the barbaric treatment of the war-victims by the Nazis of Hitler.

Nevertheless, the unprecedented brutality of the British forces that is vividly exposed through the photographs is heartrending enough to look at or think about. They subjected the captives to brutality (my pen feels sorry & ashamed to pen down them) that the world has come to notice for the first time in the history at this time of humans reaching the peak of civilization!

Lord, please don't remain as a mere spectator--do save thy creations from the unheard of cruel clutches of these two monsters on stage...

It is surprising that the whole world, Islamic and non Islamic, looks over the worst act of humanity with an indifferent attitude!

Sensible hearts do bleed at the brutality that is being unleashed by the British and the Americans.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Hasina's comments on Rab

Much has been written about Rab activities over the last few months, with people expressing both positive and negative views. But the most untenable comment has been passed by our opposition leader.

The Awami League in the early seventies had unleashed a reign of terror throughout the country and we would confine ourselves to homes after sunset. The Rakkhi Bahini, the greatest ever killing machine in the history of Bangladesh, was also the brainchild of the Awami League. After returning to power in 1996 they enacted the infamous Public Safety Act. Also they patronised terrorists like Shamim Osman and Joyal Hazari.

The Awami League perhaps apprehends that its fostered terrorists will be caught in the crossfire net and is vehemently opposing the most successful crime eliminating force.

Altaf Hossain
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Where have 4,000 cars gone?

Mr. Khairul Hasan writing from the UK (DS: 20 Jan) has openly

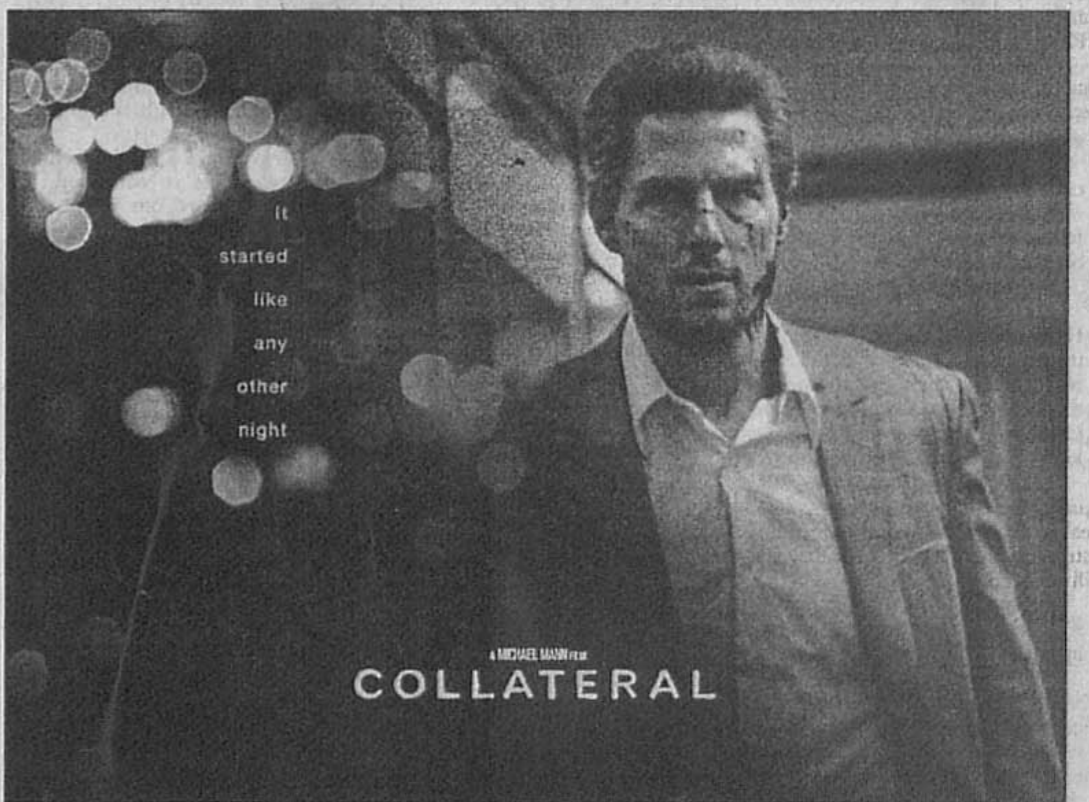
Star Cineplex

Star Cineplex authorities would like to respond to Wasim's request to maintain the standard of the print, sound quality etc. Star Cineplex, the first international quality multiplex theater in Dhaka, uses 35 mm xenon Christie projectors with xenon lamps and cinemascope lenses and Dolby DTS surround sound. Star Cineplex has been screening international blockbusters as well as local films since October 9, 2004 without customer complaints on sound or picture quality.

All our speakers are always on for all movies at halls 1, 2 and 3.

We will try to live up to the viewers' expectations.

Ms. Mirka Kristina Rahman
MD, Star Cineplex
Bashundhara City, Panthopath, Dhaka



COLLATERAL