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Doesn't SAMS Kibria's death remind us of the killing of our intellectuals in '71? I have no words to express my shock, but we are moving far away from the dreams of our heroes in 1971. We are passing our time bickering with one another, but nobody pays attention to the welfare of the people. Can't we have a permanent answer to all these crimes? How long will these dark days last?

Can anybody please show us the ray of light? We can't let the blood of our heroes go in vain and we can't let our next generation suffer the same way we are suffering at present.

Asad  
One-mail

The Human Right Congress for Bangladesh Minorities (HRCBM) is shocked and outraged by the brutal murder of the former finance minister of Bangladesh, SAMS Kibria, and four others recently at a peaceful political rally in Habiganj. We strongly condemn this gruesome crime and the subsequent attacks on the opposition rallies in the country.

Bangladesh has turned into a lawless jungle where terrorists roam and operate freely, committing whatever crimes they wish. The government of the BNP-Jamaat coalition has repeatedly failed to apprehend the attackers who evidently have been systematically eliminating opposition political leaders. The government has shown no sign of solving the bombing incidents at opposition rallies. It has failed to solve the biggest arms seizure incidents in Chittagong and Bogra in recent months. According to your newspaper, "Major bomb blasts that left 150 people killed and about 1,000 injured in the last six years still stand unre-



PHOTO: AFP

## SAMS Kibria's death

solved as the attackers remain unpunished revelling in the politicisation of the probes."

We demand that the government of Bangladesh take the lawlessness in the country seriously, apprehend the criminals, and bring them to justice; thus making our beloved motherland look like part of the civilised world.

Finally, we express our condolence and the deepest sympathy to Asma Kibria, wife of SAMS Kibria, and to the families of other victims.

Dhiman Deb Chowdhury  
President  
Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities

As NRBs (Non Resident Bangladeshis) we are an avid reader of your newspaper that provides not only the latest news covering the nooks and corner of the country but also objective views. These may not shape the policy or the politics

of the country but give an idea about the psyche of its citizens and the world at large, which is so important to us.

We were shocked to read about the grenade attack and the sad death of Mr. Kibria and others. Over the last two years the over all law and order situation in the country has progressively deteriorated to the point where the British High Commissioner Mr. Anwar Chowdhury escaped death in May. Reading about it sitting in the US, we felt embarrassed at the life threatening reception that was given to the son of the soil who had done it proud by returning as a diplomat. We thought that now the government would wake up from its long hibernation and state of complacency and we would surely witness a wave of change. Witness we did another attack on a rally in August 2004 that killed a leading political figure. That is not to mention the regular incidents of mafia style

gang killings, hate killings, muggings and other crimes that the common citizens are subjected to all over the country. In fact, lately we were afraid to open the newspaper in the internet and constantly feared for our families and friends that we had left behind.

Life away from homeland and loved ones is never easy. But in most cases we are compelled to make this choice because of lack of opportunities in our native land. We work hard and diligently in a competitive and foreign environment so that we can create a niche for our fellow countrymen and a name for the country. It seems like a cliché for us now when the local daily here which hardly carries any news of foreign land provides this piece of information about Bangladesh. As a result, and not withstanding our constant efforts in promoting Bangladesh as a moderate and tolerant country, we face questions that deserve

the credibility of our government and us as well. Unlike the Honourable Foreign Minister we cannot say, "Such incidents take place in countries all over the world, not just in Bangladesh. We cannot bring an end to these incidents overnight." So according to him we should start consoling ourselves by relating to countries that are rated as having a violent and volatile climate. And maybe someone should wake up the Honourable Minister - that it has been five months since the last incident of this magnitude - not mere overnight. We cannot even remotely think of an end to it when instead of diminishing these violent scenarios are erupting in regular frequencies and becoming more intensive and devastating.

It is rather humorous at times when we reflect on the dramas of the ministers holding different portfolios. About a month back I recall reading in

The Daily Star the finance minister's urgings to the NRBs to return to Bangladesh and bring investment ventures and their expertise. He gave examples of the neighbouring countries and how their overseas population are slowly coming back. As an NRBF I would like to question, return to what? Insecurity, instability, lawlessness and alienation! The neighbouring countries in reference are improving the socio-economic condition with special emphasis on their non-resident population. Do the politicians and the government realise the enormous braindrain that has accelerated in recent times? Anybody, who has a little bit of self esteem and ethics left, is trying to get out of the quagmire that Bangladesh has now become.

This process if not slowed will leave the country with a majority of unscrupulous people who will be at the helm of affairs. During our growing up forma-

tive years we had experienced the war of independence - now I cannot help but wonder - did we as a nation liberate ourselves from tyranny to become a realm of terrorism!!

I would request The Daily Star, that has over the years actively promoted socio-economic issues and forums, to start a public awareness campaign, to raise the apathetic people of the country to a collective consciousness.

Habiba Tasneem  
Galveston, US

On 27 January, I saw in ntv news bar that the former finance minister and a well respected diplomat, SAMS Kibria, had been injured in a grenade attack. But I was stunned when in 28 January Friday newspaper I saw that the AL leader was no more. Three AL MPs of the current JS have been brutally assassinated so far. These attacks have probably been

carried out by the people who attempted to kill Sheikh Hasina on 21 August last year. They used the same Argos grenade to kill Kibria.

It was very sad that the mortally injured political leader could not be brought to Dhaka by a helicopter. I don't know whose duty it was to arrange a helicopter, but someone had to shoulder the responsibility. There was nobody to arrange quick medical assistance for the man bleeding to death.

Shame on the government!  
A reader  
Motijheel, Dhaka

The recent murder of Mr. Kibria, considered one of the renowned politicians of the country, was an act of sheer barbarism. I could hardly believe that this barbaric and inhuman incident could happen in our country. It seems we all are helpless at the moment. If the lives of senior politicians are not safe, then the security of the lives of common citizens can easily be guessed.

The government has failed to ensure law and order. They have failed to capture the actual culprits. This kind of incidents cannot just go on for ever. They must be stopped. The government must take the initiative to capture the criminals. They must find out who are involved in these bombing incidents. If the government were strict and firm in its actions, then these tragedies could have been avoided.

I still wonder when our country will come to a stable position.

Will that happen in our lifetime?  
Minhaj Ahmed  
Uttara, Dhaka-1230

### Teaching English

Reading the excellent article on the teaching of English spelling, I still fear that, if an English teacher is not both skilled and careful, then a lot of class time spent in this way may not only be ineffective but horribly boring for most pupils. It is a job to be done but, surely, please, 'on the backburner'.

Besides, there is evidence that William Shakespeare himself spelt his own name 16 different ways! (But don't say that too loudly in front of the children!)

Angela MV Robinson (Rev Mrs)  
Principal of The British School in Dhaka, Lalmitia

### Teaching grammar

My thanks to Khan Md. Iqbal Hossain, English teacher, Bangladesh Rifles College, Dhaka, for initiating a lively academic debate on "teaching grammar" at the earlier stages of the academic life of students. What is the purpose of language? Is it for itself or for communicating with others? Whether language first or grammar first? It is a question. Our main purpose is to learn a language, formal or corpus (informal) language, not grammar. Formal language should be accurate writing and speaking. However, corpus language sometimes needs accuracy but not always. It needs flexibility, looking at whether the purpose is served or not. The point I mentioned in my comments on 26.05 was that how teaching of grammar could be taught. It could be taught consciously or subconsciously.

Consciously learning a language whether it is L1 or L2 has practically no difference at all. Conscious learning retards acquisition of learning. Learning subconsciously is spontaneous and natural. Effective learning occurs when students enjoy complete safety and independence. Students will correct themselves by the discovery way of learning. Imitation is one of the important ways of learning. We can't ignore it. We can allow students to talk and exchange their views and ideas in classrooms, transmitting information among themselves even with the teachers forgetting any mistakes made by them. If any mistakes are found, direct correction should not be done. Because they may feel embarrassed. Opportunity should be given to the learners to be corrected by themselves. The sense of grammar (structure of language) will automatically grow up through practice.

Language is for communication. If one can communicate with others, the purpose of language is served. In general we need to speak English fluently, because it is important in our socio-economic culture.

I am not opposing teaching grammar; I am stressing teaching grammar inductively. Nothing can be shortcut. Learning needs perseverance and determination.  
Bijoy Mohan Gosswami  
Instructor  
Comilla PTI

### BTB mobile service

It is learnt that the Bangladesh Telephone & Telegraph Board (BTB) is going to launch mobile phone service in February 2005. Our people have been looking forward to it for a long time to have relief from exploitation by various mobile phone companies. Regrettably, our expectations have been belied by BTB as it has set a very high price for sim cards and relatively higher call rates than the neighbouring countries. I don't think BTB would ever enjoy profit from its mobile phone service.

I have the following proposals to make the BTB mobile phone lucrative, popular and acceptable to the people in general. Sim cards should be provided with a nominal price of Tk 200 only. Call rate should be Tk 2 per minute.

There should be no pulse. Call charge should be deducted automatically on the basis of actual talk time and the last call duration and cost would be shown on the mobile screen after each call & SMS. There should not be any roaming nationally and the call rate would be the same across the country. A charge could be imposed for international roaming facilities. SMS charge should be Tk 1 for national and Tk 2 for international destinations. Necessary arrangements should be made as early as possible so that SMS could be sent and received from abroad. There should be same charge for calling local, NWD and ISD and in addition the actual talk time charge could be added for using mobile. There should be some off peak hours like the BTB land line. All types of incoming calls should be free. An additional 30% charge could be added in case of

calling from BTB land phone to BTB mobile phone. All mobile connections should be pre paid at the moment as BTB would be free from the hazards of issuing and collecting bills, connecting and disconnecting lines etc. In course of time, post paid mobile can be made available if found feasible.

There should be only Tk 300 pre paid cards available and the validity period of the card should be 30 days. The validity time of the next card(s) should automatically be added with the previous card(s). The total validity period would be the sum total of the validity time of the number of cards recharged multiplied by 30 days with effect from the day of installation.

I have made these proposals considering the demand of subscribers and to make BTB mobile phone convenient to the users. I also request the existing private mobile

companies to take into account my proposals for providing better service at a cheaper rate.  
Dr. Rezaul Kareem, M.D.  
Associate Professor, Pediatrics  
Rangpur Medical College.

### "Keeping off from extremists"

As I read Mr. Kazi Anwarul Masud's article, "Keeping off from extremists," (The Daily Star, January 30), I was surprised by his full endorsement of the views expressed by Eliza Griswold, in her anti-Bangladesh article, "The Next Islamist Revolution," published in The New York Times Magazine. Like Ms. Griswold, Mr. Masud only criticises Bangladesh; he has nothing good to say about Bangladesh in his entire article. Mr. Masud quotes the notorious anti-Muslim Zionist, Bernard Lewis, and pro-Israeli Jewish American scholar Stephen Cohen to strengthen his anti-Bangladesh case. Two months ago, in a letter to The Daily Star, I took exception to the title and content of Mr. Masud's anti-Iran article, "Can Iran be tamed?"

Earlier this month, after USA Today divulged his dark secret, African American conservative columnist Armstrong Williams admitted to receiving \$240,000 from the Department of Education to promote President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" programme on his talk show and TV appearances.

So can we rely on those foreign columnists?  
Rashed Firoz  
230 Amsterdam Avenue,  
New York, NY 10740

### Bangla Bhai, no minor threat

Ms. Griswold was simply trying to portray the current picture of Bangladesh where certain Islamic groups are being patronised by government to intimidate progressive forces. These are well known facts that have been raised by many local newspapers but ignored by the authorities until they appeared on NYT. What a surprise! It's a shame that things need to be pointed out by Westerners! It hurts but there is nobody to blame except us! If Mr. Khan (Brisbane) thinks that the fundamentalist activities are nothing but some simple nuisance and should be tolerated as a legitimate response to western hegemony, I think he got it wrong.

And, if he thinks that the ruling coalition got nothing to do with Bangla Bhai's activities, I say hogwash! Bring law and order in your own house before you blame Westerners and their defence industries! Let's be responsible and take charge of our own house and look for no excuses. Western critics are not without merits! Griswold has done a great service by putting the Bangladesh government on spot. And, if the government chooses not to do anything about it, that would be entirely the internal matter of Bangladesh. But it would be Bangladeshis who will be paying the



PHOTO: AFP

## We have won

Standing at the foot boys, gazing at the sky... The boys can now really look up. The fine win over Zimbabwe fetched them everything that they might have asked for. We have overcome... Well done, Tigers. You have justified having the name of the ferocious carnivore by pouncing on the rivals!  
An ecstatic fan  
Dhaka

Yes, nobody is going to call you starters, immature, too young to be reckoned with in the realm of cricket. Yes, now the Tigers fully relate themselves with the name of the game. The wins against Zimbabwe in both the Test series and one-dayers are a deciding milestone.  
Earlier wins against

Kenya, Pakistan, and most recently India have been the indicators often negated by sceptics. What would they say now?

Keep up the good work Tigers, the days are not far away when you would be ranked among the top ones, as did New Zealand and Sri Lanka. Bravo.  
Manik Chowdhury, Wari, Dhaka

ultimate price.

Thus wearing religious mantles should not have any sanctuary no matter what religion they belong to!  
Dev  
Boston University

### Law minister's comments

I am dismayed by the reaction and the comments of the law minister, Mr. Moudud Ahmed, in the aftermath of the killing of former finance minister SAMS Kibria in yet another grenade attack. With reference to the report of the Justice Joynul Commission on the August 21 grenade attack on the Awami League rally, Mr. Ahmed is quoted as saying, "I believe that whenever an inquiry commission is formed, its report should be made public". Yet when pressed on whether that report would be made public, he replied, "It depends on the government". Am I the only fool who finds such musing of a veteran politician, a former prime minister himself, and an incumbent senior cabinet member of the present government, at best devoid of sincerity if not completely ridiculous?

While refuting the allegation that a faction within the ruling alliance was involved in the most recent grenade attacks, the law minister pointed out that successive Bangladesh governments including the previous one led by the Awami League, have been "clueless" and have failed to unearth the conspiracy of "those trying to undermine the nation as a fundamentalist and

failed state". Isn't it ironic that in this instance, his own clueless and inconsistent remarks do very little to project an image of a "responsible government"? Furthermore, isn't this also the government that has failed to take any remedial or preventive measures against the same failures of the previous regime?

While commenting on the investigative efforts behind the killing of SAMS Kibria, Mr. Morshed Khan, the foreign minister, quite rightly expressed the sentiments of the nation by saying, "We make this commitment out of our obligation to the electorate, and the actions of the government of a sovereign state are based on this principle, not on statements made by foreign diplomats." Rather than pointing fingers at anybody and everybody (minus alas any specifics) regarding an incident which falls under the jurisdiction of someone else's (home) ministry, Mr. Ahmed could instead focus himself on reminding the electorate what exactly the law ministry is doing about separating the judiciary.

If I am not mistaken, the government has asked for no fewer than 19 extensions from the Supreme Court regarding this matter, and its resolution in the near future remains uncertain. In order for a country to prosper, its citizens must feel that the state is there to lend them the full support of a strong legal system thus guaranteeing their natural rights in all spheres of life, be that politics, business, academia or otherwise. If public perception of

the judiciary is low, the nation will be naturally undermined without the need for a mythical "conspiracy" - and sadly that is the stark reality in today's Bangladesh.

This trend can only be reversed by working towards a law enforcement that upholds justice and a judiciary that is concerned only with implementing the law rather than policy dictated to it. And for that to happen, the judiciary must be independent from the executive and legislative branches of government. Separation of the judiciary is not only a major election pledge of the BNP but is also mandated by the Constitution of Bangladesh: Part II, "Fundamental Principles of State Policy", Article 22 quite unambiguously proclaims, "The State shall ensure the separation of the judiciary from the executive organs of the State". However, I wish -- given that the law minister is also a legal and constitutional expert -- that he would concentrate more on strengthening the legal fabric of the country which is badly needed now more than ever, instead of bringing his own credibility into question.  
Shabbir A. Bashar, Ph.D.  
San Francisco Bay Area,  
California, USA

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We have a new e-mail address for the Letters to the Editor page. Please send your letters to letters@thedailystar.net