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How to stop these fanatics?

The new trend of killing by grenade throwing is alarming to all freedom loving and democratic countries of the world. Killing and damaging the target is possible from a distance and the perpetrator can manage to flee mixing with the terrified fleeing general public: chances of being caught and punished seem to be minimum, everybody is running for his life. This process of killing is possibly more advanced than suicide killing or bombing, here the perpetrators go alive. One advanced technology that may be used to detect these possible perpetrators is remote video camera; these cameras will operate, say, at a height of 50 feet and at a circle of 500 feet; this is possibly the optimum distance for the perpetrators to commit the heinous crimes. Washington DC has almost cleared the drug infested street and neighbourhood by remote controlling those cameras and taking close pictures of the drug sellers and buyers, which facilitate the judge to get the pin pointed evidence. These cameras may be installed in a hidden place, mounted on van, even used in darkness with infrared detection. If these type of killings go unchecked and unpunished, the lives of both government and opposition leaders will be threatened.

Blaming each other without concrete evidence beyond doubt does not help anybody. We are utterly amazed that opposition leader Sheikh Hasina after being attacked by grenades on 21st August, 2004 did not cooperate with the government and police saying, "With whom shall I cooperate, the government--the killers themselves?" In a democracy, peoples' representatives, good or bad,



PHOTO: AFP

should be respected or replaced by votes.
Golam F Akhter
Convener, Bangladesh-US
Human Rights Coalition
Bethesda, Maryland, US

Belligerent picket!
When the 8:00pm news of 31.01.05 filled my heart with pleasure as we

watched the ecstatic scene of our ODI series victory against Zimbabwe, the next news item on hartal extension for another three days came to me as an anti-climax.
I felt as though I had drunk quinine. Like a deflated balloon I sank into the armed chair with a sigh and wondered and wondered. In a slumber I recollected a long-forgotten story of Mrs. Packletide and Mrs. Bimberton who avoided each other's sight because of bitter jealousy. When I opened my eyes, to my horror, I saw beheld a strange sight of divine justice. A pro-hartal woman activist pulled down a young passenger from a rickshaw and slapped him publicly!
I could not help admiring this 'tigress' of Aunt Jennifer. How long will it continue?
ZIM Waliul Hye, Khilkhet, Dhaka

A brilliant man
Death is natural: it is the acceptance of the other world and a departure from the world where birth was welcomed.
But death natural becomes unnatural when it is untimely and when it is sudden. Lot of people meet death and birth every second, minute and hour, but remains unheard and unsung. People of excellence, merit are made to be known to the people as dead, whether they die naturally or unnaturally. SAMS Kibria was a man of merit and a government servant of excellence. He held different high positions and brought name and fame to this country. He was a bureaucrat who later on turned himself into a politician. He worked for his country both at home and abroad. As an ordinary citizen he lived his life but as an extraordinary man he did not outlive his utility.
He joined politics as a bureaucrat turned politician, may be following the path of a small number of people. Whether he enriched politics or politics enriched him is a question which remains unanswered.
It is a tragedy for this nation that it had to lose the man of excellence whose contribution to this country will be remembered with reverence. May Allah bless his departed soul and give this nation enough strength to bear this irreparable loss.
Akash Iqbal
New Circular Road, Dhaka

It seems to corroborate our opposition leader's long time claim to cleansing of opposition leaders. The

apparent indifference, especially on the part of the government, seems to promote this deep-rooted belief within general public and civil society.

This is red alert time for the government, either it must take substantial and decisive steps against these concealed perpetrators, or else, it may have to face severe consequences in the near future. The post Jan 27 actions of the government must not resemble the post August 21 ones.
There will be no condoning of the government if it fails to bring the criminals to justice.
Zahedul Amin
Malibagh, Dhaka

The killing of SAMS Kibria is not only killing of a former finance minister or an Awami League leader but it is also the killing of one of the country's top diplomats. I am shocked and outraged at this bloody crime.
Mr. Kibria was one of Bangladesh's key international figures. He was an under-secretary general of the United Nations and the chief of ESCAP. He was one of the country's very few honest politicians and was a perfect gentleman.
This killing demonstrates how weak our democracy is. Things like this would never happen in a true democracy. There must be an independent investigation and its report must be made PUBLIC.
Md. Umrhan Bin Kamran Chowdhury
Gulshan, Dhaka

Hartal, not the solution
It was so shocking to lose our former finance minister SAMS Kibria for which the main opposition enforced a 3-day hartal. Yes, it was a situation of mourning but if we keep on suffering from hartals like we do, then our country would soon be in a disastrous position. Export and import come to a halt due to the hartals and fights break out between the police and the protesters.
So I would like to request the opposition parties to stop calling hartal.
Mohammed Fahim Hara
Universal Tutorial, Dhaka

Dr. Fakhruddin and New York Times article
Through you I would like to convey a

Dark days!

Mr. Abdul Bayes's write up on Kibria's death (DS: 1 Feb) is an impartial and realistic analysis of the current trend of the elected government. One wonders if the people were fooled into being ruled by an unholy alliance that has turned into a Frankenstein in the garb of popular democracy? One wonders! Who knows may be it is the extremist groups who have a cunning blueprint to smear displeasure and blame on the BNP which based on general overview appears to be a rational political party; though fast losing its rationality with its words and deeds. The opposition too is making the scene murkier by hartal ad-infinitum, but at least it is better than a tit for tat assassination and grenade attack which will lead us to an unimaginable quagmire.
As a non-political citizen, I

feel insecure, and do not go out in the dark unless it is necessary. Much that I would like to visit the Ekushey Boi Mela, but "discretion being the better part of valour" I have to avoid it, afraid of violence and bombing there.
A government which by rote states "the perpetrators must be found and punished" ultimately avoids the issue by blaming it on opposition non-cooperation! Has this stopped the government in any other manner including unnecessary police violence upon legitimate protestors? It is fast colouring itself in the hue of a "Nazi" pre World War Two regime! These are dark days for the country. May Allah help us to come out of this dangerous situation; the government having miserably failed.
A non-political citizen
Dhaka

simple message to Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed. I think the article he wrote criticising the New York Time's recent article on Islamic extremists in Bangladesh was completely unthoughtful and out of context of the present situation in this country. The writer interviewed several persons including some victims of attacks in Bagmara area. The writer inter-

'crossfire' without seeing justice. Is reporting all this a crime?
Kamrul Momin
On e-mail

An incomplete mission of '71 losers?
It seems that following the target killings of a number of intellectuals,

the most highly talented politicians who had a long track record of working to build up a free and democratic Bangladesh. His recent writings reflected that he really wanted to bring about a qualitative change in the political system instead of the one based on hero worshipping culture in our country. On 31 January he was supposed to address a seminar on reforming the caretaker government -- the last constructive effort by him!
Unfortunately, the government has always shown a self-denial stand in enquiring into the earlier attacks on opposition leaders and events, and even put the blame on the AL. The government has increasingly lost credibility in solving the problems because of such a stand. It seems that either the BNP is afraid of losing its status in the government composed of its coalition partners, or the PM herself is being misinformed of the gravity of the situation the country is heading for. In this situation will it be unjustified to assume that the trend of killings indicate the continuation of the unfinished job of those who were against the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971? Otherwise, why should the key leaders of a particular political party, intellectuals and progressive elements of our society fall victim to such targeted killings?
KME, Dhaka

Alarming!
I find it extremely hard to understand why our nation... which is not waging war on anyone; which is not under invasion from any foreign power... is being subjected to such heinous acts of brutality. In places like Kosovo, Iraq, Palestine, etc., such violent acts, although extremely horrifying, are perhaps somewhat inevitable.
What is worse is the fact that this

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anything worse than this... And I am thoroughly alarmed to see that I am being proved wrong on an increasingly regular basis! Even more disconcerting is the fact that those responsible are still at large...
Alarmed, Canada

We want to see light...
We are deeply shocked at the sudden death of Mr. Kibria, our former finance minister and one of the great sons of the soil. We don't know how to express our condolence or how to absorb this brutal incident inside. This has been going on for a long time. Unfortunately, we have not seen any concrete action from our governments (past and present). This is really testing the patience of the whole nation.
This goes beyond the party line as has been expressed by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman. This discourages good people to engage in politics and help in changing the fortune of the country. On the contrary, this encourages bad elements to expand their reign over the fate of the country.
We have heard lot of talks and promises from our government. But that have brought no end to these sad stories. Sometimes we wonder whether our government really wants a solution to this or this is just a big talk or a way of avoiding the responsibility. This is time someone took charge of the situation (I assume the home minister and the inspector general police at least)

Image of political activists

With a heavy heart I turned on Channel-I news to get some details of the horrendous grenade attack that killed our former finance minister SAMS Kibria. Irrespective of political affiliation, we, all Bangladeshis, are appalled by this brutal assassination and no word can justly portray our disgust for the perpetrators of this heinous crime. But I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw on television that a handful of women activists of some political parties, that called a general strike, were running after a moving vehicle and kicking it so hard that some parts of the vehicle broke off! One of them was even shouting "agun laga, jalaye dey" (set fire! burn it!). The scared driver stopped. Then those women chased a passenger of the vehicle and as soon as they caught him, they started hitting and kicking him ruthlessly.

Is this the way dignified women behave?
The political activists should be careful about their public image, otherwise general public will feel repulsed by their activities, and it will be more difficult for common people to hold politicians in high esteem. Our political leaders should give instructions to recruit as their party members only men/women who have self-respect, not the belligerent ones.
Moreover, I do not know anyone who doesn't feel disgusted and think that our national wealth is being wasted whenever they see a bus or shop is burning. Destructive activities can make a political party unpopular. Therefore the political leaders should rein in their hoodlums during hartals, because peaceful demonstrations (e.g. the recent human-chain) are more effective.
Shukla Mirza, Doha, Qatar



PHOTO: AFP

Parveen Babi

I came to learn with utter shock and grief about the sudden passing away of my favourite Indian film actress, Parveen Babi. I clearly remember the day when Parveen Babi's name and photo first appeared in the "Star Dust," an Indian film magazine, way back in 1975. I was then in the late teens and in pace with the Hip ways. The Star Dust was quite the magazine acceptable to our ways. Parveen Babi was the contemporary of another Indian actress, Zeenat Aman. Both Parveen and Zeenat had the look and style of that Hip era - open hair, faded jeans, tight skirts with long boots, with a peace medalion on the neck and every other groovy gesture.
During the 1980's, Parveen Babi grew mature and soon adapted herself to the typical roles in demand. But her stay at the top was short lived as she developed mental illness, and had to leave the filmdom once and for all.
K. Tanvir Moinuddin
Purana Paltan, Dhaka



viewed Mr. Shamsur Rahaman. Now would he call him an enemy of Bangladesh? The writer also quoted the head of Human Rights Watch in Bangladesh and Mufti Fazlul Haq Amini who is a good supporter of Islamic law in Bangladesh. She was, I think, like many of us, deeply concerned about the rise of militants in this country and the US government should also share the view.
Mr Fakhruddin must look into the situation in the country: the opposition MPs are being killed with impunity, they cannot bring out processions, they are assaulted by police, all the democratic values are being taken away from us, people are routinely killed in the name of

the assassins have chosen to eliminate the leading political figures of certain opinions. And one by one the AL leaders are falling victim to such attacks. If one follows the media reports of the last few years, it will be evident that a number of local AL leaders including freedom fighters have become the targets of such attacks, the last being at Bagmara, preceding the heinous attack on SAMS Kibria and his colleagues at Habiganj. The nature of the incident at Habiganj, like the earlier ones elsewhere, indicates an extremely well-planned manoeuvre by the perpetrators.
With the assassination of Mr. Kibria, the country has lost one of

cowardly attack was on a person who was a rose in the thorny world of politics. Although I may not have an ounce of respect for most of our politicians, I strongly believed that Mr. Kibria was one of the very few gentlemen who dwell in their midst.
What is the message that the perpetrators are trying to convey to the youth of the nation? Are they trying to indicate that: if you try to excel in whatever you do and try to serve your country in the best possible manner, the only reward that you can ever expect is to have a grenade lobbed at you?
After each terrible incident that occurs back home, I keep telling myself that there possibly cannot be

and let the government find a better solution. We want to believe in the government (we believe in democracy and do not want any other forces to occupy power in the name of anarchy) and want to see positive action from it.
Time has come to see the nation working together. We would like to see the government and the opposition working together to resolve all differences. We would like to see our leaders showing us the right direction. We are ready to give all assistance and support to our leadership.
We would like to see light at the end of the tunnel!
Iftekhar Ahmad, Dubai, UAE

Mission accomplished

What a comeback! From 0-2 down to win the series 3-2 is a rare incident in cricket history. By losing the first two matches Bangladesh saw the nadir & then from that dire straits they bounced back so strongly to win three successive matches and touch the zenith of their prowess. Three wins in a row seem like a fairy-tale to me. I compare this feat only with Australia's resurgence in the 1999 World Cup, after early setbacks.
Thank you both the teams for your exhilarating show. Both the teams presented us some competitive cricket and mesmerised the fans for nearly one month. Though it is said that the series would decide which is the weakest side in world cricket, the competition was truly world class.
The cricketers have fulfilled our expectations.
We have got our first Test win, first Test series win, first ODI series win. Thank you all the cricketers who played for Bangladesh in this series. You have a place in our hearts. You showed the world that we are no

more a whipping boy in cricket. You completed the mission with success.
Bravo. You have made us merry. You are the only hope of this nation.
I wish you will win all over the world. Good luck for the future.
Solaiman Palash
East Jurain, Dhaka

initiative put our cricket a few years ahead.
As winning has become a habit of the Tigers, it should not be difficult for the Board to find good sponsors. The leading business houses of the country, on their part, should organise talent hunt and talent nurturing programmes at the grassroots level, instead of throwing reception parties or cash awards for the winning team.
Ahmed Zamil
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

tant lesson for Bangladesh. They did not lose their hope and zeal for victory. And they showed their hunger for victory in the field very well. The whole country witnessed the great victory of Bangladesh with joy and excitement. We have some very talented players like Rajin, Monjurul, Kapali, Aftab, Rana, as well as the experienced Habibul Bashar, Sujan and Rafique. They are doing a splendid job for Bangladesh. I think it is a balanced team. New players also must be introduced for the future. Now it is time to play as good as they can to maintain the flow of victory.
Under the supervision of the coach, Dave Whatmore, Bangladesh developed much and they proved it once more. Actually he is the unsung hero. I again thank the Bangladesh cricket team for presenting us that extra-ordinary moment in our life, as such moments are generally rare.
Muftah Wali
Department of English
Jahangirnagar University

Cricket lovers are always disturbed by the news headlines as they watch the game on BTV. We, the viewers, do not understand why the BTV authorities cannot delay their news for 10-20 minutes. Just when the game becomes breathtaking, it comes to give the viewers those boring same old news headlines they had read a few minutes ago.
Can't they do anything about it? An earnest question from some of the BTV viewers.
Ashiquel Islam Sudin, Afsana Haque Mou
On e-mail



PHOTO: AFP

position is almost a rare occurrence in the history of one day cricket. So all the members of the team, coach, manager and selectors deserve the words of praise being showered on them. I just hope they will continue

their good performance in the upcoming series also and they will not be carried away by their success against Zimbabwe. And even if they fail to repeat their performance in the next series, we should stand by

them, instead of criticising them only.
Wajahat Anwar
Dhaka College