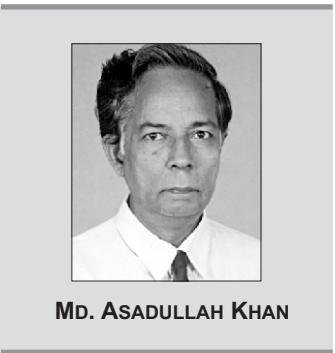


Administration shouldn't remain indifferent

Kibria's killing is a blot on our national psyche



THE grisly killing of SAMS Kibria -- a top intellectual, a high profile diplomat, a statesman-cum-politician, an ex-Finance Minister of Bangladesh and most notably an ardent advocate of human rights -- by grenade attack in a tranquil town of Habiganj magnified a terrifying truth: men driven by hate, extremist ideology and intolerance are there to set the Bangladesh civil society on fire. Ostensibly, Mr. Kibria's liberal views of the statecraft, social structure and welfare of the people at large regardless of religion and sect made him the target of the savage act on January 26 last. There is no point overlooking the fact that the perpetrators of this dastardly killing -- and several others in the past one year -- had an agenda.

The unprecedented violence and killing that the country witnessed through repeated grenade and bomb attacks in meetings and rallies, namely, attack on opposition AL leader Sk Hasina on August 21, last year preceded by attack on Mr. Anwar Chaudhury, British High Commissioner in Bangladesh have turned the country in to a dangerous place in the world. It is sad that Bangladesh till recently a veritable crucible of intellectualism is now in the grip of barbaric and uncivilised forces. Unquestionably true, Kibria had no enemy and he was not involved in any feud. But there are certain attributes in Kibria that a group belonging to an extremist ideology could not countenance. Kibria was a staunch advocate of human rights, a voice against oppression and terrorism and virulent form of fundamentalism that might shape up as threat to liberal democracy.

Terrorism and intolerance of others views, religion and action are the two scourges that afflicted him most. And his writings and columns spoke valiantly against persons,

groups and political parties fanning hatred and unstable situation in the country through portrayal of religion and extremes philosophy as the core issue. When the news Kibria's killing by grenade attack was broadcast over the electronic media, a chill ran up the nation's spine. The spurt of violence and killing of men of name and fame through such dastardly attack is more than alarming.

Shockingly true, as of now, government machinery's have not been able to figure out any motive. These are critical times for Bangladesh. As this coalition government struggles to address a range of social and economic ills, the last thing we need

the anvil. Liberal minded people are wary of the dangerous consequences of the social breakdown marking a growing ideological void. At present, this void is often filled with the destructive ideas of militant nationalism, religious intolerance, violent greed, and cynicism. The result is partisan clashes, social alienation, and rise of crime that has let loose a terrible wave of turmoil in different parts of the country.

To check the maladies from taking the shape of catastrophe a brave new leadership is needed. This must be backed by a massive educational campaign that can fill the minds of millions of disillusioned

Shockingly, government and law enforcement agency stood by silently watching these dastardly acts to occur and rise to such a menacing proportion. Crime breeds crime and inevitably more criminal act plunge the society into chaos and disarray. These dastardly criminal activities of a microscopic section of the populace should have alerted the politicians and administrators to re-evaluate and guard the goals of democratic society. The sooner this reality is understood, the better. It is in this light that our leaders, politicians and custodians of the society must take appropriate measure to curb terrorism.

those who suffer now are the country's hapless millions. The portents are grim but the end results could be apocalyptic. People only wonder if the rot that has started setting in can be stopped from spreading further. Only those countries and people who had something to gain (!) from such overtures encouraged it. It is time that danger from such intolerance is realised and our energy, resources, pragmatism and wisdom are channeled to much-needed development programmes. Only then can usher in any peace and prosperity.

It should be brought home to those self-centred politicians and zealots that this is not only undermining the

The administration apparently has been obliged to play second fiddle to Bangla Bhai group in the northern part of Bangladesh. Having committed the most atrocious crimes including about fifteen murders, Bangla Bhai and his operatives are virtually running a parallel empire. Why were they so emboldened to behave so recklessly? The answer is obvious, there is no rule of law in the country! It seems the country operates on a very simple principle: show me the person and I'll show you the law. There is no equality before the law. Consequently, there is no deterrence either.

SAMS Kibria, a high profile diplomat and a crusader in the Bangladesh liberation movement turned to politics after retirement from govt. service to serve the interest of the country and emancipate people from the depths of despair and poverty. His brutal killing has taken away from us a patriot whose effort to bolster the image of the country outside the borders of Bangladesh had always been admirable. Mr. Saifur Rahman, the Finance Minister of Bangladesh, while expressing his deep shock at the killing of SAMS Kibria, a meritorious son from his own area and the same school he studied in, admitted that this clandestine incident would greatly dent the image of the country and credibility of the government as well. The LGED minister and a stalwart of the ruling BNP also admitted that there might be serious lapses in the investigative machinery that has encouraged terrorists to operate so freely. True, our seemingly inept policing and justice system have become the most favoured alibi of the terrorists operating on Bangladesh soil and their sponsors inside and across the borders. Puzzlingly, our politicians in the ruling party still refuse to admit that until our justice system and policing start functioning properly criminals and terrorists will continue to treat the government's so-called fight against terrorism with disdain. Ironically, our articulate law minister waste so much time explaining the virtues of Rab, Chita and Cobra.



All health information to keep you up to date

When backache returns

MANY people at some stage in their life suffer from back pain. Back pain can be just an uncomfortable annoyance in the beginning but eventually can become excruciatingly painful within minutes.

In general causes of back pain can be quite ill defined and complex. Back pain can be a symptom of a myriad of underlying problems or diseases including abdominal, renal (kidney) and spinal problems.

Back pain onset can be directly linked to trauma or slow linked to disease. Overweight people have greater risk for certain back conditions as their extra weight puts extra pressure on their frames.

Even an office chair can play a big role in causing backache. Sitting in an office chair without enough back support can create a great deal of pressure on the lower back. Many low back conditions can cause a suffering called Sciatica

An exact diagnosis of the low back problem is the most important thing in order to make a decision on the best course of treatment. Sciatica is a set of symptoms caused by nerve compression in the lower back. Back pain is thought to have a hereditary factor.

So if your parents suffered then take extra precautions. If you have severe or chronic pain you should consult with a specialist doctor and a thorough screening will be essential.

Sometimes diagnosing back pain can be very difficult. You need to go for X-rays or even an MRI scan to identify the cause.

Unfortunately there are lots of misconceptions about back pain treatment. Bed rest is NOT the best way to cure back pain.

May be in the beginning, when the back is so painful, Nothing other than bed rest can be tolerated. However, eventually when the really acute phase is over, mobility is extremely important.

According to some studies if backache remains after rest, an inflammatory cause is likely.

So what's the good news for back pain sufferers? There are a number of useful guidelines when selecting a chair especially for the office or a bed mattress as well as suggestions for sleep positions.

Contact a qualified orthopedic/spinal surgeon for proper guidelines which can be important to help you with your particular back problem.

Learn qualified physiotherapist's safe lifting skills. During lifting always bend your knees and keep your back straight.

There are also roles for rehabilitation exercises. Although it's true that sleep/sitting position can aggravate the back pain if the chair/mattress isn't a good selection.

For instance, a lumbar back support is important for an office chair. It helps promote good posture by simply filling in the gap between the lumbar spine and the seat supporting the natural inward curve of the lower back.

There are many causes of back problems and different back conditions may respond better to specific types of beds, mattresses and sleep positions. There is very little research in general about what types of mattresses and beds are best for the back. Similarly, there is no unique sleep position known to be best for all people.

Pain management also known as pain medicine can play a useful role in evaluation, diagnosis and treatment as well as the rehabilitation of painful disorders like backache.

Pain management aims also help to identify the source of neck and back pain, and if necessary may determine areas to be addressed surgically. Pain Management is a well established and defined subject specialty in many countries but still relatively new in our country.

In many cases, back pain is temporary and will naturally heal itself otherwise other simple measures like physiotherapy may help. Most back pain, ultimately does not require surgery.

Less weight + good posture + regular exercise usually result in NO MORE BACK PAIN

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Quebec, Bangladesh and UDI

LUTFUL HAIDER

THE guide's voice quivered as he pointed out from the 31st floor of the observation centre to the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City on the banks of the river St. Laurent and said, "there, in the Plains of Abraham in 1759, (two years after the defeat of Bengal's Nawab in 1757 in the Plains of Plassey) the British defeated the French forces and that was the end of New France." It was the evening of an icy cold day and we were about to wrap up our visit to Quebec City and return to Montreal about 300 kilometers away. Around forty of us were invited as members of joint Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan delegation from two cultural communities by the Speaker of the provincial parliament (in Quebec, the parliament is called the National Assembly and the Speaker is called President of the National Assembly) to witness the parliamentary proceedings and attend an informal reception and lunch with the speaker and members of the parliament.

This unique policy of inviting the new immigrants to observe the

proceedings and intermingle with parliamentarians of all the parties has been initiated ostensibly to make the newcomers feel welcomed in their new home. The policy demonstrates indivisible commitment of the people and government of Quebec to form a just, inclusive, humane society. There can perhaps never be a perfect society but Canadian society especially that of Quebec is perhaps the best that human society ever evolved into.

When we reached the parliament, we were ushered into the observers' gallery to witness the proceedings of question period. The Speaker at the onset introduced us saying that it was his pleasure and pride to welcome the delegations from Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan cultural communities. All the members of 125-seat parliament including the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition rose up to applaud. As the language of communication was in French, the debates seemed a bit dreary, as most of us failed to comprehend French. Though a parliament was created in Quebec by Royal Proclamation in 1763, the

Everywhere in Quebec city and Quebec, the phrase Je me souvien (I remember the past) can be seen. In every number plate in Quebec this phrase is inscribed on the top; an ominous reminder to the rest of English Canada that French Canadian nationalism is very much alive.

institution remained non-representative because the province's 90 percent of population who were French were excluded from participation. Responding to petition of loyalists and the French subjects, a bicameral parliament was created in 1791 for Lower Canada -- as Quebec was then called.

In 1792, the first session of the parliament was held. Both English and French were accepted as official languages respecting the languages of both the communities. In 1968, the upper house was abolished. Since Quebec is the only Canadian province with French majority, its parliament and the government wields wider power than other provincial parliaments. The government of Quebec reserves the right to call for referen-

dum in the province of Quebec and can adopt the result of the referendum to secede from Canada: a target twice attempted by the separatist party, Party Quebecois, in 1976 and 1995, when it was in power in Quebec.

In fact, before the referendum of 1995, the case of Bangladesh independence was cited as the basis in international law to secede from Canada by dint of Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). Though the French people of Quebec were never subjected to atrocities that was inflicted on the people of Bangladesh, the dream of independence and formation of a French speaking country in North America is cherished by majority of the cultural communities and the Eng-

lish Canadians living in Quebec that dream is yet to become reality, a fact intensely despised by passionate French nationalists. In the referendum held in 1995, the separatist side lost by only 50,000 votes. The separatist side was winning with a handsome margin till the vote counts of Montreal ridings were finally tallied.

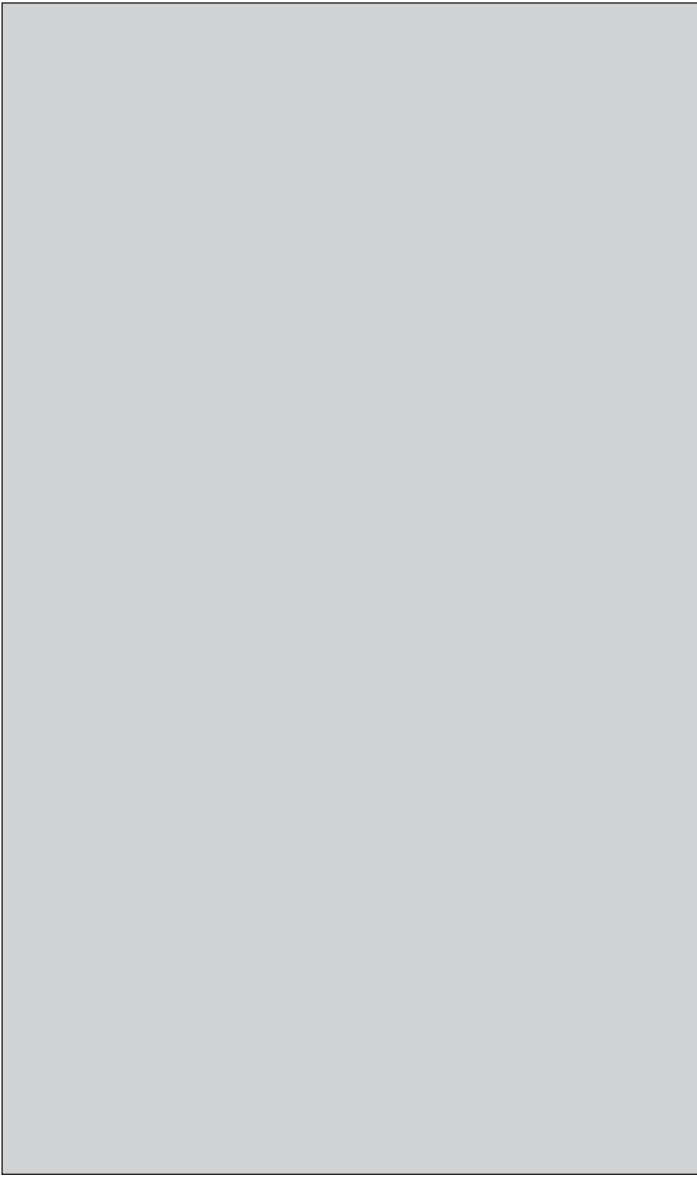
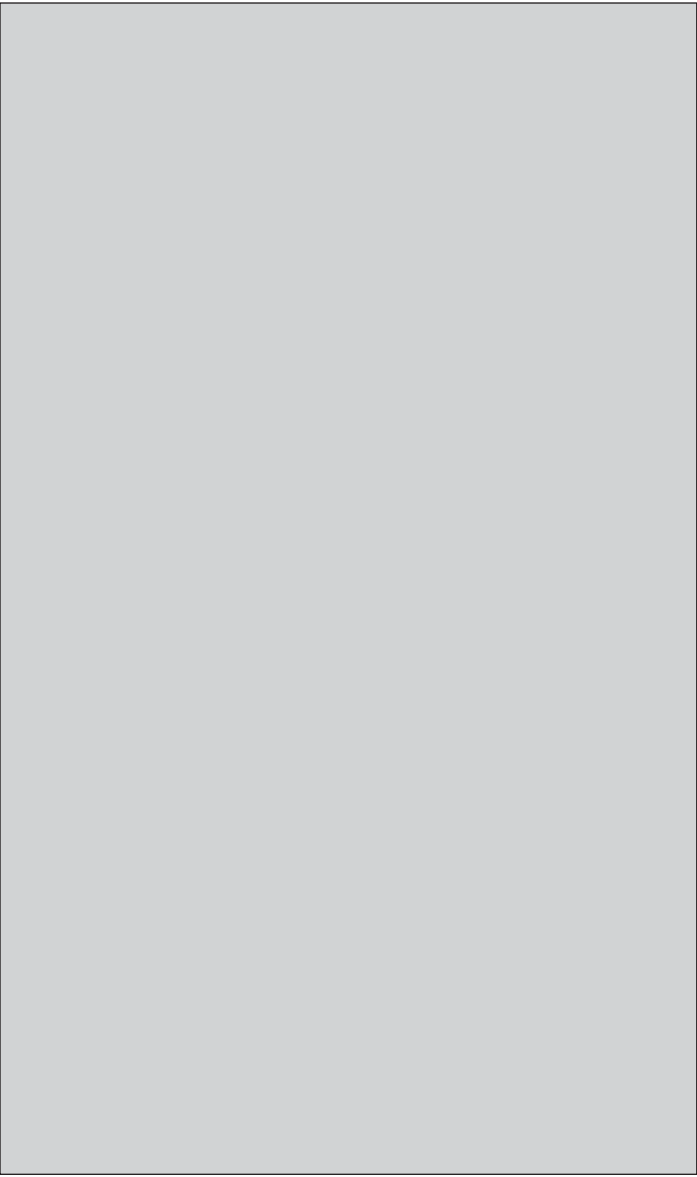
Canada in fact owes its very existence to the votes of the cultural communities living in Montreal, especially to 80,000 south Asians. The recent by-election win in Dorion-Laurier riding of Montreal by a twenty-five-year old Party Quebecois MP, Elsie Lefebvre, is being viewed by PQ analysts as changing of attitude of the cultural communities. Only a rise of 25001 votes in their favour would mean the fulfillment of their long cherished dream. It is in this riding, most of the members of 12000 strong Bangladeshi community in Montreal live, hence one can hardly overstate their disproportionate influence in keeping the integrity of present Canadian federation.

mentarians in Dhaka. He recalled with fondness courtesy extended to him by the Speaker Mr. Zamiruddin Sarkar. He highly praised the quality of the table linens and bags that he brought from Dhaka. It was interesting to see the Leader of the Opposition, Monsieur Landry of separatist Party Quebecois and Ms. Elsie, MP of Laurier-Dorion riding enthusiastically socialising with the members of the delegation; a sign of importance that PQ is presently attaching

to win over the votes of new immigrants.

During the process of introducing the leader of the Sri Lankan delegation, introduced Amudan, a reputed singer whose recent CDs were great hit in Sri Lankan community. Mr. Bissonnet urged him to sing. Though we did not understand the wordings of his Tamil rendition, it was not hard to guess that he was a follower of Saibaba and the Bhakti movement as he invoked the names of Allah, Rama, Buddha, Jessus in his song. Following lunch, during the photo session on the stairs of the parliament the Speaker again egged on Amudan to sing. He began with Allah Huakbar, Lai ilaha... It was almost absurd -- a Hindu chanting Allah Huakbar, in the foyer of a purely Christian parliament to the

discernable disdain of perhaps an atheist cameraman. God works in mysterious ways. Only Ian Martel (booker winning author of Life of Pi Patel) could conjure up such a surrealist scene. We bade good bye with happy feeling and wondering how long we could remain citizens of Canada. Everywhere in Quebec city and Quebec, the phrase Je me souvien (I remember the past) can be seen. In every number plate in Quebec this phrase is inscribed on the top; an ominous reminder to the rest of English Canada that French Canadian nationalism is very much alive and one day, unless innovative solution is found, Canada may regrettably disintegrate.



Though it is true that the cultural communities finds more resonance of their aspirations in the social democratic values espoused the Party Quebecois rather than the fiscally conservative liberal democratic policies of ruling anti-separatist Liberal Party, yet they have so far extended their support to Liberal Party to counter the separatist movement. A shift in their allegiance may mean the end of Canada. I am afraid the Federal government is perhaps not fully cognisant of this reality. The traumatic memories of separation of their native lands are the only motivating factor in resisting the idea of dismemberment of Canada.

An independent Quebec can be economically prosperous and vibrant as the land is blessed with huge natural resources and world class infrastructure and extremely competent labour force. Quebec is the largest of the ten provinces of Canada and has an area of 17000,000 square kilometers inhabited by 7 million people. Quebec is bordered to the north by the Arctic Ocean, to the south by the United States and New Brunswick, to the east by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, and to the west by James Bay, Hudson Bay and Ontario.

Following 45-minute-long question period we were welcomed to the reception hall for drinks. Here the Speaker and the members of the parliament came to engage in informal chat. The Speaker, Monsieur Michel Bissonnet, a very jovial man fondly remembered his recent visit to Bangladesh during the meeting of Commonwealth Parlia-

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