

A EULOGY FOR ABINTA

GABRELLA NORDLUND

ONE blast of the maelstrom from the murky world of terror and she was gone. Nipped mercilessly before she could come to full bloom.

That was Abinta Kabir and she was only nineteen.

She was killed by a group of terrorists while having dinner at a Gulshan restaurant with two friends.

The anguished question we keep asking is: Why? We will never know except for the fact that they were cold blooded murderers from the cesspool of some terror organisation. But what did these poor children do to deserve this?

Abinta was born in Bangladesh to Ruba Ahmed and Ehsanul Kabir. She was their only child. She spent her early years in the United States, and later moved back to Dhaka with her mother who got involved with the family's business. Meanwhile, she acquired an American citizenship along with her father and became a dual passport holder of both Bangladesh and the United States. Abinta graduated from the American International School-Dhaka. Afterwards, she was admitted to Emory University where she was currently studying Business.

According to news reports the terrorists let all of the Bangladeshi Muslims go, but Abinta was Bangladeshi and Muslim yet she was not spared. She spoke Bangla fluently and was proud of her heritage. Her dorm room at Emory was draped with a large Bangladesh flag and a pennant written "Dhaka" hung on the wall. All she wanted, all of her life, was to be in Dhaka. Her



Abinta Kabir with her mother

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grandfather offered her a trip to Spain this summer, but she declined, saying she only wanted to stay in Dhaka with her family and friends. Abinta was also a true Muslim. She could recite the Kalema by the time she was three years old and was very well versed with her faith. The Allahu locket she wore every day was hanging on her neck the day she

died. These men judged Abinta by her appearance, and that is how we lost a wonderful human being. She was a victim of senseless killing in the name of the very religion she belonged to.

But more than that, she was kind, strong and brilliant. She has received numerous merit certificates and honours

throughout her education, finishing freshman year at one of the most prestigious universities in America with an almost unheard of 3.971 GPA. She was also mature for her age. Even at this tender age, she knew what she wanted to do with her life and was very focused about her goals. She had plans of completing her

education in business studies and come back home to join the family business but her dream was to open a non-profit organisation in Bangladesh to help those less fortunate than her. She wanted to open schools to educate underprivileged children as well as career centres to help adults facing difficulties to find work.

Abinta's closest friend was her mother. Whenever they were together they were inseparable, walking hand-in-hand like two close friends. When she was at school in America they would talk on the telephone at least a dozen times a day, no matter what. She is now gone leaving a hole in her mother's heart, which will never be filled again. We all loved her dearly; she was the best part of our world.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has given her state honour along with the other hostages who perished in that horrible attack. President Obama sent his condolences to her mother and the Governor of Florida State called her mother to express his solidarity with her. The national flag flew half-mast in Florida State for a day. The President of Emory University called her mother to express his grief.

She had so much to look forward to and so much to give to her motherland and to the world. It is still inconceivable to those who knew and loved her that her life was snuffed out this way.

We keep asking ourselves over and over again – why such a beautiful human being would be taken away from us this way. It is a question we may never find the answer to.

The writer is Abinta's best friend since kindergarten.

Brexit: Some legal questions

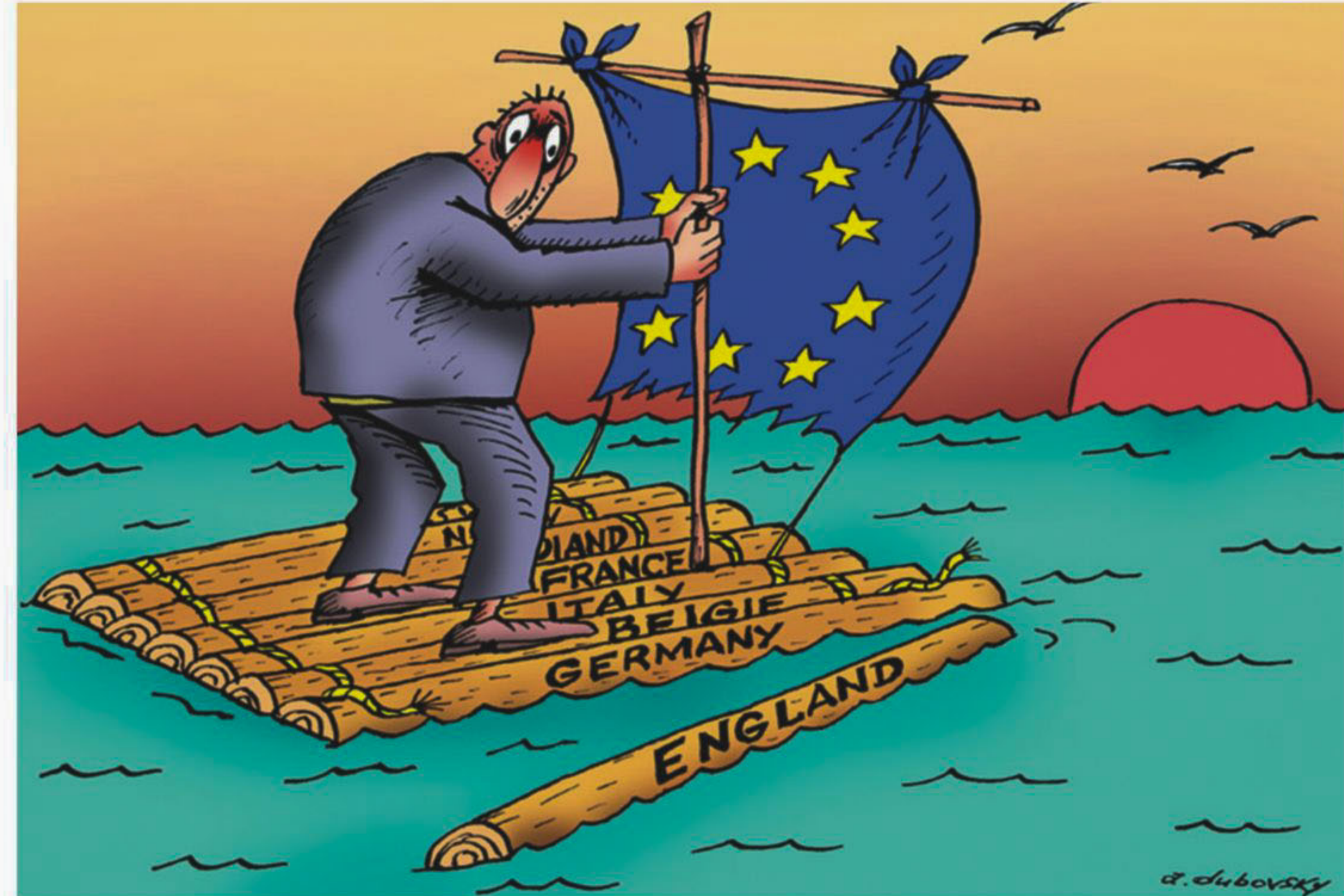
KHANDAKAR QUADRAT-I ELAHI

IN his post-referendum speech, UK Prime Minister David Cameron said: "The country has just taken part in a giant democratic exercise. Over 33 million people – from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar – have all had their say. The British people have voted to leave the European Union and their will must be respected."

Cameron reflects the general sentiment about the UK referendum on EU membership. However, difficulties in understanding this general view arise from the fact that the post-referendum actions and reactions are pointing to a different picture. Mr. Cameron has resigned. Why should he do that if what he says is right? Recently 4.1 million British voters petitioned the UK government to call for a new referendum. While Scotland's political leaders are hinting at the possibility of holding another independence referendum, a similar demand has been expressed in Ireland. All these seem to prognosticate the dissolution of the empire after Brexit.

In this confusing and chaotic situation, a question may be put up for debate that might lead to its resolution: Does the UK Constitution authorise this referendum? This question, although awkward in appearance, is very valid. For, referendums and general elections differ in some fundamental ways, which suggest that the electoral rule might not apply to vote counting procedure in referendum poll.

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A referendum is a special poll in which voters of a country or a part of it are asked to give opinions on an important political or social issue. At the extreme, the question concerns secession or independence. A referendum concerns a policy issue and depending upon the nature of policy, the decision suggested by the referendum could be irreversible. This is true in the case under debate. Once the UK ends its EU membership, there is no guarantee it can get back, even if it wants to. The ball is in the court of the EU Commission. Does this irreversibility feature matter?

A referendum, however, is not constitutionally mandated. This feature underlines two very important political points. First, the government is under no obligation to honour the referendum result. Second, since it is not constitutionally mandated, the choice of the referendum topic is a matter of convenience.

For example, Tony Blair went to the Iraq War against the proven opposition of British voters. If a referendum were held, he could not have involved Britain in the War. One might argue that the Iraq War was a right referendum issue, because the kingdom was going to war against another country. It was a sovereign matter and therefore the sovereign needed to be consulted!

A general election is a regular feature of democratic governance. The democratic political system is founded on the principle that voters own the state and for that reason become its sovereign authority. This sovereign power is vested in the institution of government, which is governed by laws scripted in the Constitution. General elections are routinely held to choose representatives for leading and running the government machinery. The fundamental concern of a general election is therefore selecting public representatives. The general

electoral principle used in this regard is called the majority rule: candidates bagging majority votes are declared elected. And this choice is absolutely reversible; the voters are able to change their choices in the next general election.

The UK Parliament passed a legislation to conduct the referendum, which received the Royal Assent on 17 December 2015. A similar legislation was passed in the Gibraltar parliament. These legislations mainly deal with conditions of voter eligibility and procedural issues involved in withdrawal from the EU. But it says nothing about how the votes would be counted to determine the referendum result. Nor does it say anything about the proportion of votes required to make a decision. This simply means that the referendum would be conducted in the way a general election is held for the UK Parliament.

This electoral procedure raises a question

that needs to be seriously debated: Was the electoral rule of the UK Parliament appropriate for counting this referendum votes?

UK is an empire composed of four independent countries – England, North Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Gibraltar is included with England). They are independent in the sense that each country has its own Parliament, which has the right to leave the Kingdom following appropriate constitutional methods. While the Parliament of each country is constituted by her representatives, the UK Parliament is made up of representatives from all the four countries. The feature of the UK parliament that is particularly important for the referendum issue is its membership structure. This structure is extremely skewed; England alone controls about 84 percent seats. This structure simply reflects population size of the four countries.

This feature of the UK Constitution creates some un-addressable difficulties in applying the UK parliamentary rule to conduct referendums of this type. For, the referendum result will be determined according to the English voters' preference.

In this referendum, 33.6 million UK voters exercised their right, of which 17.4 million or 52 percent supported the 'Leave' option. Out of these 17.4 million, 15.2 million or 87 percent voters were English. This means that the referendum result was decided by the English voters. This is confirmed by country-wise votes. Although 53 percent English voters supported the 'Leave' option, Scottish and Irish voters rejected this option respectively by 62 percent and 56 percent. But their votes had little effect on the referendum outcome for obvious reasons. This referendum, one may argue, reflects the wish of English people, not necessarily that of the Empire, which include the people of Ireland and Scotland.

Does this situation violate the provisions of UK's Constitution? This is a question of mammoth importance; it needs to be debated passionately. As independent countries, Scotland and North Ireland are EU members on their own right. The UK government represents them in the EU because of the agreement they made in becoming partners of the Empire. And they have the right to end that agreement

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QUOTABLE Quote



ALBERT CAMUS

The evil that is in the world almost always comes of ignorance, and good intentions may do as much harm as malevolence if they lack understanding.

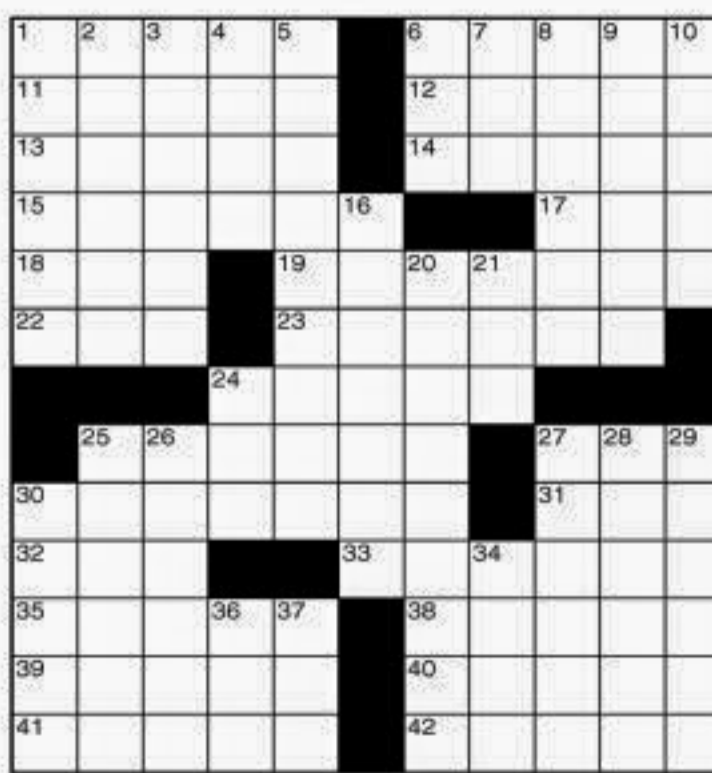
CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Wears out
- 6 Explorer John
- 11 Turn aside
- 12 Without support
- 13 Aladdin's aide
- 14 Clark's partner
- 15 Children's welfare org.
- 17 Auction buy
- 18 Historic time
- 19 Is attentive
- 22 Roulette bet
- 23 Hampers
- 24 "Stormy Weather" composer
- 25 Bro's greeting
- 27 Director Craven
- 30 Chewy candy
- 31 Pen fill
- 32 POSSess
- 33 Tanzania neighbor
- 35 Trap
- 38 Planet's path
- 39 Music genre
- 40 Uniform color
- 41 "Golden Boy"

DOWN

- 1 Black spotted cat
- 2 Redress
- 3 Said no to
- 4 Rock's Clapton
- 5 Trinidad instrument
- 6 Baseball's Ripken
- 7 Hoppy brew
- 8 Lane user
- 9 Burger toppers
- 10 Battery makeup
- 16 Diamond figure
- 20 Scouring aid
- 21 Kayo count
- 24 Nabokov novel
- 25 Showed boredom
- 26 Fancy
- 27 Triumph in a landslide
- 28 Salad base
- 29 Rink need
- 30 Vodka cocktail
- 34 Singer Guthrie
- 36 Squealer
- 37 High trains



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

D	E	C	K	S	B	A	S	K	S
A	T	A	L	L	A	M	M	A	N
M	A	N	I	A	H	A	I	T	I
A	N	T	I	S	T	E	P		
S	I	D	E	D	I	S	H		
P	S	I	C	A	R	E	F	U	L
A	L	A	M	O	I	D	I	N	A
R	E	N	A	M	E	S	E	T	C
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F	R	A	T	B	R	A	D		
R	A	C	E	S	A	S	H	E	S
E	R	O	D	E	S	T	A	R	E
T	E	N	S	E	H	E	M	A	N

BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES

by Kirkman & Scott

