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Coalition to continue?



coupled with ideological contradiction has become the mainstay of our politics and as such, either retaining power or grabbing power at any cost has become the motive force behind our political activities. Gone are those days when the ideologically aligned 'progressive' or 'liberal minded' politicians would regard it as a betrayal of their conscience to align with the rightist and communal forces. The same was the case with the ideologically aligned rightist politicians. Consequently, we find our political parties vying with each other to win favour of the fallen dictator Ershad or of the universally branded 'rajakars'. Is it not a direct affront to the democratic minded people of Bangladesh?

Over the years, Bangladeshi politics, to put it crudely, has been polarised into either the 'Bangladesh Zindabad' or the 'Joy Bangla' pole and all the political parties more or less belong to either of the poles. While the former pole is aligned with the concept of Bangladeshi nationalism, the latter has the Bengali nationalism. The divide is very deep and aggressively pervasive. The leaders have been playing the game to their utmost satisfaction, keeping at bay the 'poor Banglar janata' on the sidelines. There is nothing wrong in it. Having said that, how one would react if s/he finds the diehard camp followers of one pole inviting the diehards from the other pole to join hand in hand just to add to their tally of MPs on their road-map to the citadels of power? As long as another MP is bagged, who cares for political ideology? The onlooking Banglar janata? Care a hoot for them!

I would like to add a note for our politicians: please take a leaf from the recently concluded West Bengal State election and the implication of what happened there. Didn't the democratic-minded people of West Bengal our erstwhile kith and kin with similar socio-cultural traits and expectations -- give a crippling blow to the political elements known for their ever-shifting political ideology as well as political expediencies? If they could do it, why not us?

Ahmed Ghani
On e-mail

Why this case?

Filing of a defamation case based on newspaper reports by Mahmudur Rahman, the Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment (BOI), against the country's most distinguished and prominent citizens was not only the result of misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Mr. Monjur Elahi's words but was also a visible arrogance of power.

I am sure that there are people to raise voice against such activities on the part of those in power.

Khairul Chowdhury
Ph.D Candidate
York University, Toronto, Canada

While the case filed against five prominent citizens is regrettable due to the fact that there is no valid legal reason and the nature of handling a situation like this is lamentable, it should be borne in mind that the lawsuit cannot be considered moronic just because the case is filed against five prominent figures of our country. This lawsuit, however, implies the extreme expression of arrogance.

Sady, Southeast London, UK

The nation is stunned to learn about the arrest warrants against five prominent citizens.

Will not this move hurt the hard earned reputation of the ruling four party alliance for good governance in some areas?

Md. Boduzzaman
North Baridhara, Gulshan, Dhaka

Let's be practical

A significant number of roundtable discussions and seminars were held recently, thanks to our civil society. We saw in media reports that a huge number of people; belonging to different professions actively took part in these-- the time frame being so critical due to intense political unrest.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), jointly with Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and channel-I, organised a series of regional dialogues on "National election 2007: Civil Society Initiative for Accountable Development". The Reporters' Forum for Election and Democracy

(RFED) organised another similar seminar styled 'Election-2007: Free flow of information and Election Commission', held in the capital. Eminent personalities from various professions, respected civil society representatives and representatives from different political parties took part in the discussion.

During discussions, everybody stressed the importance of overall political stability, different constitutional rights and the crisis the nation is facing. However, the speakers emphasised reforms needed in the country's electoral process, in order to hold a free fair election. They also severely criticised the role of the current Election Commissioner and rightly demanded his resignation. The dialogue discussed ways to solve this political crisis, and it came up with several recommendations to be placed in front of both the government and the opposition. Some participants in the discussion blamed the govt. for not taking steps on the reforms and feared that the situation might get worse, as time is a factor.

The seminars brought forth opinions from some of the country's most renowned and respected citizens. Eminent jurist Dr. Kamal Hossain spoke against the current political and electoral atmosphere. Others taking part in the meetings included some of his colleagues from the Supreme Court Bar Association, Editors of some leading newspapers, bureaucrats, economists, and representatives from other socio-cultural organisations.

The opposition also lauded the meetings' recommendations because they have been shouting for reforms since a long time. No nation can move forward without reforms and there is nothing wrong in it. But, the need for serious and critical electoral reforms cannot be fulfilled overnight or in a short time. Why didn't the Awami League at all think of this during their tenure of five years? Now apart from creating anarchy in the country, they cannot do anything to make the BNP accept the demand.

This culture of holding seminars and roundtables is nothing new to

us, but it has very little impact on the political situation. The common people are totally frustrated with the political leaders.

I often try to differentiate between the role of the civil society and the role of the corrupt inefficient political leaders (from all parties). I feel very disappointed when intellectuals like Dr. Kamal Hossain and others cannot come up with any constructive or effective proposals when it comes to solutions to our problems.

I am in no way blaming the civil society solely, the blame should be shared by all. It's time we should start thinking a bit differently and make productive efforts.

Arafat Islam, Dallas, USA

Character assassination

The article in your daily titled 'Character assassination: who is next?' published on 22/06/06 is a timely endeavour to arouse the conscience of the members of the civil society against this sort of abominable activities by a section of the so-called intellectuals.

I fully agree with Dr. Moazzem Hossain that these degenerated intellectuals have polluted the campus atmosphere everywhere in the country through vilification of the honest and dedicated members of the enlightened society. I am particularly talking about Prof. Dr. M. Asaduzzaman, the Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh. I have been working with him for more than three years. My close association with him during this period is a pleasant experience which I shall fondly cherish forever. To me, he has always appeared to be a positivist doing good to others and feeling good about people around him.

Professor Dr. Mahfuzul Huq
Member, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh

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5X3

Teachers' demands



The demand for cent percent salary increase of non-government teachers has been raised for years even if they are crying in the wilderness (or

in vain). The agitation is going on through too much confusion to the detriment of our education. However, we are greatly concerned at the

groupings on political lines among the teachers, which can only cause damage to our system of education.

M Alauddin Ansary, DU

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