

Dueling politicians on the road to perdition



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

have to act as catalyst. The responsibilities which today lie on their shoulders are far greater than at any earlier time in our history.

We seem to be oblivious that law moves on a unique plane and that a lawful society reflects man's sense of order and justice. Such society embodies rules and traditions that have a binding effect and provides the enduring element, the dimension of permanence, in history. We cannot have a govern-

destroying each other. The language of reason and moderation is absent while there is hardly any trace of tolerance. This, however, does not come as a surprise as forebodings of a perilous polarisation were there for any keen observer to realise. One feels constrained to comment that the country is held hostage to the partisan ambition of an immoral and acquisitive class whose kleptocratic instincts are no

name of neutralising the highly politicised administrative setup some cosmetic changes only have been made which allegedly favours the immediate previous political government. Political sources and Bangabhaban contacts confide that the President resorts to substantive action only after consulting BNP high command. All such actions have seriously devalued the Caretaker concept and it would be very

threats to our fledgling democracy. The enormity of the issue has not been realised and appreciated. No wonder, therefore, a great deal of slipshod work and adhocism have characterised the movement for creating proper poll atmosphere. Altruism has hardly been the virtue of our politicians.

One may need some guile or perhaps be wily to remain steady in the rough and tumble of politics but must we stoop so low and deadly as to besmirch all the regulatory and corrective institutions only to outwit the opponent and perilously clamber to power? Concerned Bangladeshi wonder if their veteran politicians including the immaculately dressed suave and sweet talking Barristers are aware of the devastating consequences of their politicking. Cynics say that the cabal of few Barristers, Bureaucrats and Businessmen is spearheading the perilous course. A balanced view would, however, suggest that all our politicians should not be reviled the way it is being done now. Perhaps it is a natural weakness to revile that which we cannot do without.

Sadly, politics has been debased to low ends and has unfortunately become a mean pursuit instead of a high adventure. It has been used as a means of livelihood instead of being pursued in the grand manner so as to afford opportunities for a full and fulfilling life. Since our major political parties are not equally committed to shared principles of constitutionalism, we may have to wait for the working class and the peasantry to organise political parties and stronger social movements to push for social equality and justice for ensuring true progress.

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STRAIGHT LINE

STUDENTS of history and law are surely aware of the fact that when William the Conqueror came to England, he introduced a system of ordeal by battle or trial by battle. The fight had to be by the litigant in person unless he was allowed to be represented by a champion. We have to thank providence for the subsequent change in the mode of advocacy. However, cynical observers of the current Bangladeshi political scene entertain grave doubts about a real change in the style and substance of advocacy in so far as our dispute resolution scenario is concerned. Their continued pessimism is not without ground as hapless Bangladeshis sadly watch their guardians unmoved despite the combined onslaught of logic and reason, law and fact.

The optimists are, however, aware that, politically speaking, the current scene is not the first example when otherwise responsible and erudite people have talked irrelevantly and irreverently. The tragedy is that we are forgetting that democracy, with freedom of opinion and opposition, is not the normal way of organising society but is a rare human achievement. In our environment, many citizens may appear unidimensional but our political leaders have no excuse for being so perilously unidimensional. They

ment without order and there can be no order without law. Viewed in the above context, there is no doubt that the country is in the midst of a grave crisis and the premonition is that the downward slide to ominous uncertainty may have commenced. The protracted pain of the polity's descend is being acutely felt after the President's discouraging announcement that he had no other important function but to hold the constitutionally mandated general election on 22nd January 2007. This came as a rude shock to many concerned Bangladeshis who could not come to terms with the President's holding of the post of Caretaker Chief Adviser without exhausting all the constitutional options.

The country is now sharply and dangerously polarised with political adversaries bent upon

secret.

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difficult to regain the image and effectiveness of this novelty in the foreseeable future.

The defenders of the constitution would not admit the manifest reality that during the last couple of years institutions like general administration, Police, Election Commission, Public Service Commission and judiciary have been politicised and made partisan thereby rendering the holding of impartial election extremely difficult, if not impossible. One has to find out why desperate attempts have been made to somehow return to political power. The unfortunate reality is that while sinister politicians have gone full speed on the self-defeating course of sabotaging the state institutions to serve their selfish interests, the political opposition has miserably failed to inform and activise the polity about the real

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