In slating a New Kid on the Block

CHINTITO

I did not receive any internationally acclaimed prize, but if I did I would have chosen to serve my people and my country as simply a guardian figure just as many others before me in other countries.

I did not give our president and the then chief advisor an 'A-plus' when people, albeit led by the then opposition, were agitating on the streets across the country and the country was being subjected to *oborodh* after *oborodh* to stop the 22 January general elections that smacked of deep-rooted conspiratorial manipulation and was destined to be marred by violence because the so-called voters list was flawed, transparent ballot boxes as recommended by even international poll observers were thrown out the window and the judiciary had seemingly taken a side, what with a past president in and out of jail depending on which alliance he chose.

I did not allow the appointment of the president as chief advisor go unquestioned because it was not legally constituted for he had not exhausted all the options laid down in the constitution, a fact corroborated by his later resignation from the post.

I did not sweepingly condemn ALL the politicians, because in effect only some (even if many) of them are to blame for our predicament, for I know

but for them the language movement of 1952 we would not have been fired up as a Bangalee nation, and the world would not have a Mother Language Day,

but for the supreme sacrifice of politician Md Asaduzzman in 1969 and the 11-point demand of the Students Action Committee formed by students of all political beliefs, and the breaking of Section 144 led by student leaders, we could not have ousted the decade-old dictator Ayub Khan,

but for the far-reaching political 6-point manifesto of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League we could not have united as a nation in the 1970 elections against the 24-year old Pakistani autocratic junta, and then being denied we could not have declared our independence, the identity that has been so vital for each of our later individual accomplishment,

but for the united efforts of Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia and other politicians in 1990, we would have been stuck with yet another military tyrant for many more years,

but for the three-year endurance of the activists of the 14-party alliance against Gestapo-style police brutality on the streets of Dhaka, the 2007 elections would surely have been held; the speech of both the president and the new chief of the caretaker government backed up the claims of the opposing politicians.

I did not take an unfair judgmental swipe at the very politicians who were instrumental in creating the environment in which I find the right climate to launch my own political party; action that would not befit the honour the world has so kindly bestowed on me.

I did not visit any of the injured who were protesting against unlawful governance and planned election engineering/doctoring, a verity borne in the speeches of many.

I did not propose to have party volunteers organised under my own name; because if my memory serves me right even Adolph Hitler did that.

I did not take part in any public agitation, even those that were peaceful, nor join in any civic condemnation of the perpetrators of the corruption, money laundering and terrorist activities; and therefore I do not wish today to cash in on the success of those that attained a non-partisan caretaker government.

I did not receive any internationally acclaimed prize, but if I did I would have chosen to serve my people and my country as simply a guardian figure just as many others before me in other countries.

I did not win the prize singly, but I have almost forgotten the other winner of the same prize and have been rather comfortable to receive accolades singly at home and abroad.

I did not agree to be given a civic reception attended only by persons belonging to the parties in power, as the opposition had seemingly boycotted the proceedings; even the reverse would not have been acceptable.

I did not mention even as a matter of gratitude the name of the dictator military ruler-turned politician, who had been instrumental in setting up the business that has brought me so much honour and fame; his contribution is sinking into oblivion.

Today, although I am a very dejected and disappointed *nagorik*, my conscience is clear, and that should be the only, if not the first, criteria of any politician. ■