

## The awesome fight against corruption



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productive one is increasing. Foreign assistance is not all that steady. Everyone is talking about self-reliance and sustainable development. No stigma is now attached to black money in our society. Tax incentives have been given to black marketers, tax evaders, drug barons, gun runners, smugglers etc. The corrupt have their promoters, supporters and partners everywhere in business, trade, industry, agriculture and even in media.

Under circumstances as above,

Enlisting cooperation from taxation officials to prove criminal cases pertaining to ill-gotten wealth is a time-consuming labourious process.

Similarly, incidents of custom duty and sales tax evasion thereby depriving the public exchequer of its rightful dues are difficult to establish without a proactive approach from the cus-

trial without spontaneous cooperation and assistance from persons who until recently were his colleagues or may even have been accomplices?

The above comments are not meant to exonerate, by any means, the unprecedented fraud and criminal misappropriation in education, public works, law and order, land revenue and so on. The extent of corruption and related difficulties of countering the same are highlighted to impress upon the unfortunate development concerning near total absence of departmental vigilance and corrective action.

Somehow there is a belief that

crept in the judiciary including substantial part of the apex outfit. It has been reported that 41 judges of the High Court are clear political appointees and the chief justice entertains doubt about the integrity of the process of appointment. Already many distinguished lawyers are making disparaging comments about the competence and honesty of such superior judges.

In a situation as above, there can be apprehension that many judges may

have the services of the best and expensive lawyers. Such forethoughts are definitely relevant and one can expect that the government will be generous to use its financial resources in the fight against corruption. The adversary is too strong to be taken lightly.

The expected lifting of the ban on indoor politics in the not-too-distant future will no doubt have an impact on the momentum and tenacity of the graft enquiry and investigation. The inescapable irony is that the absence of democratic activities has time and again facilitated the process of anti-corruption drive. Once political governments have taken charge the drive has inevitably slackened and has bared its teeth only when the accused happened to be the political opponent. Events of yesteryears are a credible testimony to this sorry state of affairs.

We now have a classic catch-22 situation. The popular demand for tough measures against corrupt elements may not be adequately realised on account of relaxation of embargo on political activities which again fits well with the expectations of a democratic polity. There would be fence-sitters in the establishment who would like to move cautiously.

The bottleneck of inexperience in investigating criminal cases relating to corruption has already been highlighted with the observation that training courses would be organised to ward off the shortfall. One can hope for the best but there is ground for concern when one finds that our supreme graft fighting body is not adequately prepared to properly investigate delicate cases of financial crime. The worrying part is that the accused would be entitled to all the benefits of doubts and the defence will

be brushed aside.

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Nobody would dispute that when

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