wounded. And yet we have not lost hope. It has been there on the horizon, consistently. The rainbow has always called us.

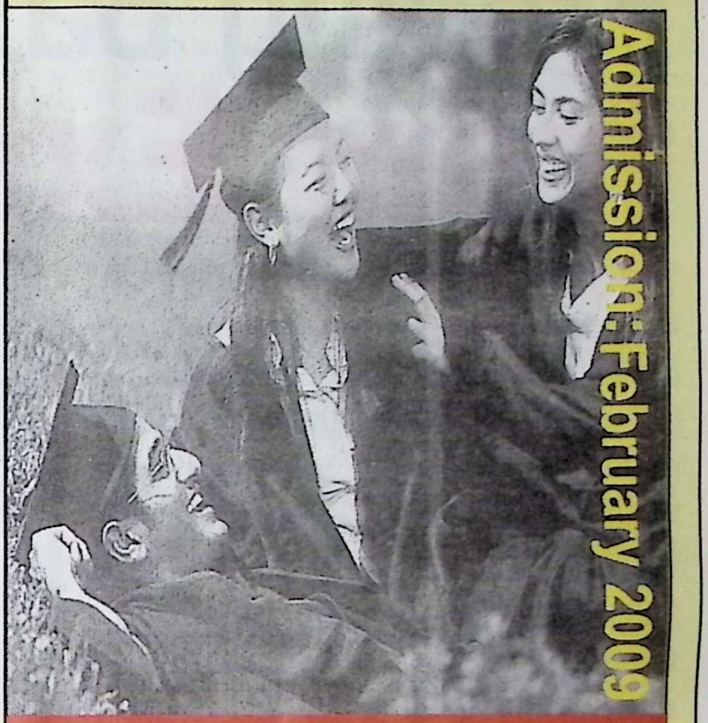
It is the rainbow we seek once more. The elections we look forward to carry special significance for this country, for they will inform us, through the way the nation votes, if we are ready to turn a new leaf and go back to a restoration of values; or they will deaden us into an acceptance of the thought that nothing great and good will come to this country, or of our expectations of it. Those doubts notwithstanding, that dichotomy between hope and fear apart, we wait for good news when twilight descends on Election Day. That a new leadership, or an old one keeping the faith of our fathers, one not tainted by the corruption and immorality of the past, will arise to give us renewed faith in ourselves and in our old, lost values is the dream we weave in the tapestry of our collective being today. Yes, the past is another country. And, yes, this is no country for old men. But the past holds in its bosom some of the shining moments of our history. And old men, veterans from the war and in the region of experience, remember tales we have forgotten or have chosen to cast aside. It is those moments and those tales we expect to reclaim as we trek to the polling stations a few days from now.

And our goal is simple: we will recall the glory that went into the struggle for freedom through doing the morally right thing. And that will be a rejection of the enemies of freedom, of war criminals today masquerading as politicians, of elements who have for years together undermined our history by disfiguring it at nearly every turn. Our dream is equally simple: to ensure for ourselves the basic minimum in terms of food, shelter and clothing. The state will ensure the welfare of all its citizens; government will not treat men, women and children as so many insects to be squashed; power will be responsibly exercised and will not worm its way into our lives as coercive force. On the dawn after voting has closed and the political landscape has been mapped for the next five years, we will prepare to welcome in a government that will be as good as the peasants in our villages and the workers in our factories, that will no more be the intimidating factor administration has regularly been but will be caring and vibrant and will be armed with a sense of positive purpose as it goes about the job of setting our priorities for the future. This election should be about the rule of law, about a strict enforcement of it. It should be about a resurgence of all the values and aspirations that have fallen by the wayside since the day a band of murderers turned our lives upside down in the darkness of a night in August.

We wait, to spot a lighthouse somewhere in the darkness-infested sea around us. For we mean to find a path to that shining city on the hill that has always eluded us. ■

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