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Presidency flash-back



STAR ARCHIVE

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Chowdhury, less than happy with the state of politics as it then was, resigned less than two years after entering Bangabhaban. He was swiftly replaced by the speaker of the Jatiyo Sangsad, Mohammadullah, who, however, saw his stewardship of the office end in slightly over a year. On January 25, 1975, through having the country adopt a one-party Baksal system, Bangabandhu once more assumed the office of president of the republic, albeit this time with absolute authority over the state. Parliamentary government had been discarded in favour of a presidential form of government. And

Bangabandhu was its symbol.

The powerful presidency that Bangabandhu established in early 1975 was to continue for a long number of years after his assassination in a coup d'etat on August 15, 1975. But that the presidency could pass into improbable hands was first made obvious when, on the morning of the coup, Bangabandhu's commerce minister Khondokar Moshtaque Ahmed took over as the country's new president. The act was in clear violation of the constitution (which had not been suspended by the imposition of military rule), seeing that Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam was still around.

Moshtaque's illegitimate presidency disintegrated in less than three months' time when Major General Khaled Musharraf staged a coup aimed at ejecting Moshtaque and his cohorts from Bangabhaban in November 1975. And installed as the new president was the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Abu Sadat Muhammed Sayem. The jurist-president was not to last long in office, though. In April 1977, an increasingly ambitious chief of staff of the army, Major General Ziaur Rahman, eased him out of the presidency and took the job for himself. Later that month, Zia organized a referendum to have himself confirmed as

Bangladesh's new president.

The Zia presidency, an unusually authoritarian one for Bangladesh, remains noted for some gross violations of the constitution, notably the tampering with the four principles of state policy as enunciated through the war of liberation in 1971. Zia would survive in office until May 30, 1981, when a coup d'etat led by Major General M.A. Manzoor (eventually to be abortive) led to the president's murder in Chittagong. Zia's successor as acting president, Vice President Abdus Sattar (a former jurist), won the presidency in his own right when he defeated the Awami League's Kamal Hossain at the presidential election held on November 15, 1981.

By any measure, popular legitimacy characterized the Sattar presidency. But within months, on March 24, 1982, the president was overthrown in another coup d'etat, this one led by army chief Hussein Muhammad Ershad. For a few months, the coup leader let Justice Ahsanuddin Chowdhury operate nominally as president. And after that it was back to the old game: General Ershad decided that he would be president of Bangladesh. It was the beginning of a long process of autocratic rule that would lead to the further erosion of whatever remained of the social and political values associated with the armed Bengali struggle against Pakistan in 1971. General Ershad intensified the mutation of the secular Bengali state into a communal dispensation through declaring Islam as the religion of the state. He did something else, perhaps worse: he broke up the High Court into seven different branches, which act was of course revoked by a later decision by the Supreme Court.

Ershad's fall through a mass upsurge in 1990 was a harbinger of change in the nature of the presidency. The military leader was replaced, as acting president, by the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. The acting president, in his capacity as chief of the caretaker administration, presided over general elections that led to the victory of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party in February 1991. And once a necessary amendment to the constitution had been adopted by the Jatiyo Sangsad, providing for the return of parliamentary government (for the first time since January 1975), Abdur Rahman Biswas was elected the new president of Bangladesh. He would continue in the office till 1996, when the Awami League returned to power and went into the business of formally electing Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as the country's new president.

Bangladesh's presidency has been a victim of political manipulation. Paradoxically, it has been responsible for some of the biggest blows that have been hurled at the political system. It has been an emasculated institution at certain points in national history. And at other times, it has been a terrifying symbol of the arrogance of the state.

We will need to wait for quite some time to know whether President Zillur Rahman will make a positive difference or his occupancy of Bangabhaban will be a continuation of the old tale of conflict and controversy. Few presidents of Bangladesh have had the entire population of the country for their constituencies. That has been the saddest of tales.

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জীবনের বিভিন্ন পর্যায়ে বিশেষ কোন সিদ্ধান্ত নেবার ক্ষেত্রে কেবল বিশেষজ্ঞই দেয় আপনাকে সঠিক সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের বাড়তি আস্থা ও নির্ভরতা।

তেমনি গৃহস্থ সম্পর্কিত যাবতীয় সেবা পেতে আপনার প্রয়োজন একজন বিশেষজ্ঞের। আর দেশের সকল ব্যাংক এবং আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলোর মধ্যে কেবল ডিবিএইচ-ই হলো একমাত্র হোম লোন প্রদানকারী স্পেশালিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান, যাদের অভিজ্ঞতালব্ধ বিশেষজ্ঞ সেবা আপনাকে দেবে গৃহস্থ সম্পর্কিত সম্পূর্ণ সমাধান।

তাই আপন ঠিকানা গড়ার স্বপ্ন যখন শুরু তখন থেকেই যোগাযোগ করুন আমাদের সাথে। হোম লোন স্পেশালিষ্ট ডিবিএইচ আপনার পাশে আছে সবসময় ...



নির্ভরতার হাতে নিশ্চিত্তে

ডেল্টা ব্যাংক হাউজিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন লিঃ

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