Who will Bell the Cat?

MUHAMMAD MUINUL ISLAM analyses the anomalies in the existing warrant of precedence

IN 763 A.D. Al-Mansur, the Abbasid monarch offered Imam Abu Hanifa the post of chief judge of the state. Abu Hanifa declined to accept the offer, choosing to remain independent. In his reply to Al-Mansur, Abu Hanifa recused himself by saying that he did not regard himself fit for the post. Al-Mansur, who had his own ideas and reasons for offering the post, lost his temper and accused Abu Hanifa of lying.

"If I am lying," said Abu Hanifa, "then my statement is doubly correct. How can you appoint a liar to the exalted post of a chief qadi (judge)?" Incensed by this reply, the ruler had Abu Hanifa arrested, locked in prison and tortured. He was never fed or cared for.

Now let me tell you another story. Do you remember Montesquieu -- the great French political thinker? Montesquieu often used to say, "government should be set up so that no man need be afraid of another." He was famous for the popularising the idea that a free and stable foundation of national government requires a clearly defined and balanced separation of powers.

Montesquieu's most influential work divided

