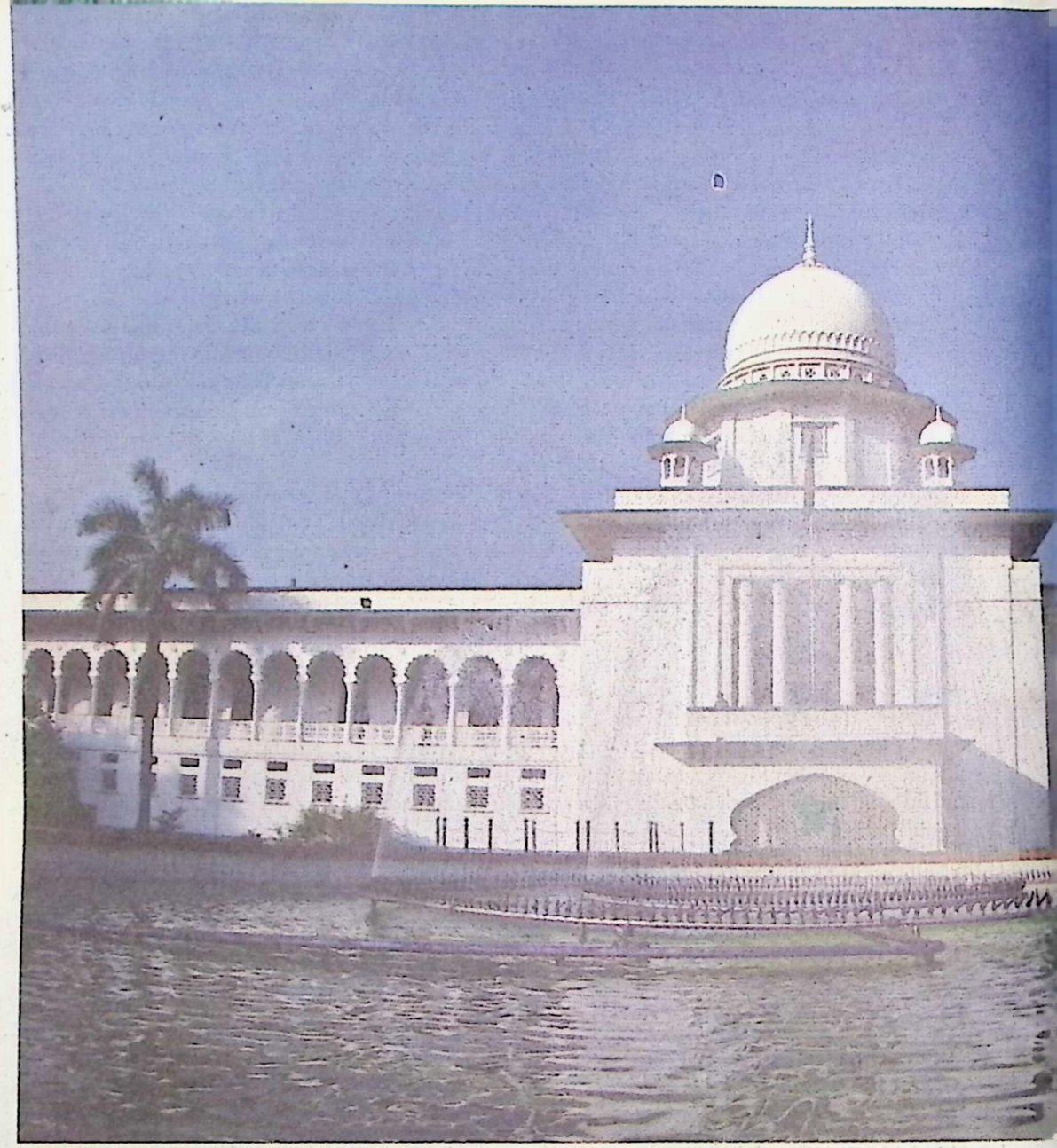


Living by the rule, dying by the rule

Fifty years after the inception of Judicial Review, the US Supreme Court gave a controversial verdict in the case of *Dred Scott v Sandford*. In 1856, it ruled that 'a free negro [sic] of the African race, whose ancestors were brought to this country and sold as slaves, is not a "citizen" within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States'. Such interpretation of the Constitution by the Judiciary fuelled the slavery-debate in the North and the South.

Denoting the Scott case, Abraham Lincoln during his first inaugural address in 1861 noted: "*...the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the government upon vital questions, affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, ...the people will have ceased to be their own rulers*".

With that, the US entered into the Civil War. After the War, in 1868, the Congress overturned the citizenship decision of *Dred Scott* case by adopting the equal citizenship and equal protection clauses through the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution.

Then on August 14, 1876, a Sheriff named RG Harris of Crockett County, Tennessee led an armed mob into a Tennessee jail and captured four African American prisoners. The