

Building unity in diversity

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BANGLADESH achieved independence in 1971. Until 1990, we did not have any democracy in real sense. Since the last 22 years, we have been able to develop a culture of democracy in Bangladesh. We expect to maintain and continue this culture. Many factors including politics, democracy and bureaucracy are essential to develop a country. However, problems are too many to discuss. Political parties in power try to stay in power all the time and for ever. In this effort, they try to politicise almost everything they can. The politicians in power offer undue advantages to its people, supporters and its own political men and women, supporting bureaucrats and businessmen etc.

Democracy means that the political parties will form the government by majority votes of the common people. Members of the Parliament are responsible to make the laws by getting it drafted by the bureaucrats, reviewed by the Ministry of Law and finally by getting it passed through 'Yes' votes in the Parliament. 'MPs' function is limited here just to make these laws for the governmental executive to implement.

But there are MPs who do not stop here just by making laws. They poke their nose everywhere in the country in order to obtain their personal, family and social gain, political and non-political gain and exercise their power over bureaucrats. It is not the job of MPs to deal with corruption of bureaucrats. Bureaucratic corruption would be treated by the existing law and order and the country's judiciary system. For personal gain the MPs try to exchange the favour with bureaucrats. Finally, the bureaucrats and the political people in power form a societal oligarchy to favour each other and both the groups get corrupted.

Source of financial gain is the business elite of the society who does the business in its own way to maximise profit. Businessmen need to commit a seed money corruption to start their business and speed money corruption to move their business file from table-to-table under the official possession of bureaucrats. Sometimes the businessmen obtain indirect help from of the people in politics and direct help from the bureaucrats in the office of administrative executive. Shortly speaking, three groups of people: political people in power, bureaucrats and the businessmen - all of them negotiate with each other by forming a strong societal oligarchy to obtain their personal, family and professional gain. Finally, the whole society gets corrupted. In other words, they are the different elite groups of society including politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen who have been directly or indirectly holding back the rein of Arabian horse of development in Bangladesh. "This is an unpleasant truth in the society of Bangladesh." The political objective is to ensure peace by respecting the law and order, judiciary system and earning the stability in politics, development and security in life and living. All these help move to achieve the great objective of national growth and development. Political philosophy might differ among political parties. But, party in power must understand that political parties will have some good things in their mind. Political party must understand what is good and what is bad. For example, some party may believe in open market and open economy under which economic growth and development may be

maximised as is the case of the South Korea. Other political parties may target equal distribution of income and alleviation of poverty only, regardless if the economic growth and development is maximised or not as is the case of North Korea. A third political party might want to take all the good objectives to achieve such as maximising the economic growth and development and minimising the poverty with equal distribution of income. So even in a democracy, struggle between parties is not very similar. But the democratic government is obliged to listen to the common people what they would like to have in life. The political party with the majority people's vote can pass the election and form the government. So people's opinion go beyond the difference in policies, ideology, manifestos of different political parties. The common people look for achieving the objectives of peace, stability and national development.

In Bangladesh, we can see a lot of eviction, murder, extortion, violence, extra-judicial killing and penalties etc, the cor-

ruption technology in Bangladesh is praiseworthy. Technologically skilled labour can be hired cheap. Many investors and entrepreneurs from foreign countries including China are interested to come and start their labour intensive business in Bangladesh. The literacy rate in Bangladesh is 67% as against 72% in India as of 2012. We have 110 universities for 160 million people or we have seven universities, on an average, for 10 million people. India is a country of 1,200 million people with 110 universities only or for 10 million people India has only one university on an average. We in Bangladesh, hope to over strip India verysoon in terms of the rate of literacy. According to the recent statistics, the rate of maternity and child death has decreased substantially in Bangladesh, due to improved health services. The longevity of people in Bangladesh has been increased to 79 years, on an average, as against 67 years in India. The Prime Minister of the current government has been internationally awarded in 2011 for the achievement of better health serv-

democratic regime of more than two decades since 1990's that the opposition would like to show up their existence by strike, hortal, demonstration etc by raising some political claim against the party in power. If it is a culture of continuous demonstration by opposition against the party in power, people's life and living and their business, education, health care activity and production of goods and service, import-export, and the environment of domestic and foreign investment get stuck. The wheel of development does not move. It does not matter who are in opposition. All it matters to the opposition that they have to demonstrate against the party in power. They try to maximise their effect of demonstration by the fall of the Government. The party in power tries its best to sustain position by law and order, police administration and penalty through the judicial system.

Democracy is very important for the mass development of a nation. Bangladesh has been lucky to gain a democratic culture since 1990's. We should be able to maintain this democratic culture. Autocracy, non-democracy and armed forces' administration are not expected in any civilised society. Bangladesh is the 9th largest country in terms of population with 160 million in number. None of political parties should play a political game of anything other than democracy. Since 1990, Bangladesh has been developing at a steady rate with higher economic growth and standard of people's life and living. We would like to improve our political culture and democracy.

Parties in power should be careful about commitment and manifesto. They should listen to the common people and the opposition in particular. The opposition must be patient and should raise its voice about the problem and prospect of the country before the Parliament. The opposition therefore, can perform a constructive demonstration which is helpful to the growth of economy.

The political sector of Bangladesh has been suffering from lack of leadership. We do not have ideal leaders to guide us, our politics and democracy. People are also conservative in their view of politics. They like to see the politics as an inherited property instead of respecting a potential political leader.

This country needs very sincere, honest and dedicated political leaders. At the same time, our political culture has to be improved when we can learn that politics is not an inherited property. Bangladesh has been suffering both from the lack of political culture and the honest leader. According to the financial express of 2 June 2012, our vision is that of a democratic nation characterised by good governance as reflected in all its structure and operation at all levels and in all our institutions. We would like to see Bangladesh as a nation united in its diversity, with flexibility, freedom, tolerance, and peaceful co-existence. We should be a nation that respects the rights of all its citizens regardless of creed, gender, age, race and ethnicity as defined in the Constitution. We need leadership that puts the interest of the people above all personal gains. It is our collective responsibility to create a better future for our next generation. We should not turn back the clock.

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ruption of which is the responsibility of the administration, law and order and the judiciary system. These have been happening during the periods of any government in Bangladesh even after the introduction of democracy in 1990's. All these problems have been accompanied by instability in economic development, insufficient production of goods and services, low exports, shortage of fiscal budget and domestic expenditure, inflation and higher prices of goods and services of necessity in life. Opposition is not providing its representation in the Parliament. It blames the Government for everything and the Government has been trying to run the country the way they want. The over majority of the MPs and government can create a kind of dictatorship which has long been a problem in Bangladesh during any democratic government since 1990.

The development prospect of Bangladesh is very good. It has been standing basically on two legs: export of Ready Made Garments (RMG) and Manpower. During the regime of World depression, export earnings have been decreased to some extent due to decrease in export prices of RMG garments exporter and manpower. Still then these two sources of export earnings are the major one in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has recently been the 2nd largest RMG exporter of garments after China. Over 10 million people have been working outside Bangladesh who have been earning and sending foreign currencies at home. Our export sector has been extended to include pharmaceuticals, frozen fish, handicrafts and the related other labour intensive products.

ices in Bangladesh.

All citizens of a country can participate and express opinion in the governmental activities. In any democratic culture, the majority gets the opportunity to be in power. Because of the over majority in Bangladesh, the Parliament becomes almost a single party Parliament as if there is no any other political party in the country. The hidden problem is even more serious. The Speaker tends to collect 'Yes' vote openly in the Parliament. Even some members of the political party in power with a different idea cannot say 'No' before the prime Minister or the Speaker. They simply keep quiet even though they differ because they belong to the same party. We can resolve this problem by a secret ballot voting system providing an opportunity for both 'Yes' or 'No' vote in a democratic way to pass a bill. That way we can improve the citizen participation in the government. Finally, the opposition must attend the Parliament to express their opinion and it does not matter how small they are. In Bangladesh, it is very common to see the abuse of power and to commit financial and non-financial corruptions by the political men in power and by the bureaucrats in executive administration. Committing corruption and abusing power mainly takes place because of the weak law and order and cultural immorality. Among the recent sad stories in Bangladesh as of 2012 are crossfire, gun-fights, encounters, disappearance, threat and killing journalist, fight for tender and business etc.

If some parties do not come into power in the national election, they become upset. It has been observed during the