

When Democracy's Pillars - Judiciary and Free Media - become an Embarrassment in Bangladesh

News:

Chief Justice (CJ) of Bangladesh Surendra Kumar Sinha and retired Justice Shamsuddin Manik tore into each other over a statement by the CJ that judges writing judgments after they have gone into retirement is illegal and unconstitutional, whereas the latter reacted saying that the CJ rather undermined the judiciary, the law and the system of justice with his anti-constitutional opinion. Another heated debate has cropped up regarding honesty and integrity of the journalists when the prominent journalist Mahfuz Anam, Editor of the leading English newspaper, *The Daily Star*, confessed in a TV talk show that he had printed unsubstantiated and military-fed allegations of corruption against top politicians in 2007 and 2008, when a military-installed caretaker government ruled Bangladesh.

Comment:

The above two news have been dominating national headlines and stirring uproar in the media and political arena throughout the month of February. Ongoing hot debate between the two justices of the apex court is being considered as a sheer embarrassment to the country's democracy. Both the civil society and politicians are now divided along the stances of the two justices and are finding merit in both of their opinion. But all of them agreeing to one fact that such unwanted situation hurts the interest of the public and the society at large. In TV talk shows and newspapers, civil society members are also expressing their grave concern relating to this debate, saying this would give more leeway to anti-democratic forces to make use of their differences to denigrate judiciary and harm democracy in Bangladesh.

All these backlashes coming from the pseudo-intellectuals and policymakers are nothing short of inexcusable intellectual dishonesty, an extraordinary deception in the name of democracy by taking peoples' attention away from the fatal consequences of man-made democratic system. It is not the anti-democratic forces that are bringing any harm to the nation, rather democracy, in theory and practice, itself is inherently flawed that will inevitably produce an inharmonious society with its various elements colliding with one another. When the judges accusing each other of violating the constitution, the discussion should not have been whether their debates were harmful for the society or not, whereas experientially it has already been proven that democracy has failed to bring cohesion universally. Useless debates of the two senior most judges only epitomize the fact that no free reign can be given to human mind.

Another essential pillar of Democracy, namely free media, on the other hand, is going through dangerous moments when ruling party-backed affiliate organizations kept on harassing one of the most influential media personalities Mahfuz Anam with sedition and defamation cases. And with all these barrage of cases, Hasina government has given clear message to all the media outlets that no anti-government news would be tolerated. Naturally, such a shocking fate awaited Mahfuz Anam as his newspaper was not sincere enough, like all the other pro-western media outlets, to debunk the myths and fallacies of "freedom of speech", an essential element of democracy. Even to do justice to the very concept he himself advocates for, i.e. free speech, Anam could have taken stances in favor of the truthful political party Hizb ut Tahrir, which has been going through severe government persecution just only for its speech and bravery to save the nation from falling into the trap of Western conspiracy. But he and his newspaper have always been active to falsely link Hizb ut Tahrir with militancy, which goes along with government narrative. Hence, secular media outlets in Bangladesh is also guilty of misguiding the people by still keeping the discussions of 'true democracy' (!) alive. However, the reality is that whatever Bangladesh is experiencing now in the form of government tyranny is in fact the 'real democracy' because client regimes of Muslim lands are in place only to serve western countries. Hence, without criticizing the West and their capitalist ideologies which are the root of all evils, expecting good from their client regimes are nothing but illusion.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir

Imadul Amin

Member of the Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir in Wilayah Bangladesh