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On 23rd September, President Yameen lost the Presidential elections by an overwhelming margin to the opposition candidate Ibu Solih. After conceding defeat publicly, Yameen met the opposition candidate and indeed congratulated him.

But within a week the wily President urged his followers to protest against the election results.

The Election Commission members were threatened and two of them actually left for Sri Lanka out of fear.

Yameen challenged the verdict on the ground that the Election Commission officials used disappearing ink, pen rings and fraudulent ballot papers and cited the evidence of three anonymous witnesses to support his allegations. The Supreme Court took up the case though in actual fact it should have been thrown out such a case with frivolous allegations ab initio.

In the first hearing, Yameen's lawyers made three specific allegations. These were

1. The markers at the Polling Stations had "disappearing ink"
2. Rings with hidden markers were used.
3. Marks made on the ballot paper could be made to disappear by heating.

In support of the allegations, Yameen's lawyers brought in three anonymous witnesses. The Court in its wisdom did not agree to examine the "anonymous" witnesses.

In the meantime, one of the lawyers (Abdul Maniu Hussain) in support of Yameen filed a case making an extraordinary request to the High

Court that the votes obtained by the opposition candidate Ibu Solih should be added onto the votes obtained by Yameen on the ground that Ibu's votes were all made by fraudulent means.

Subsequently, in another dramatic move, the same Lawyer withdrew the case. He said that this case was filed on the claims made by the President's Spokesperson Ibrahim Muaz Ali in a recent rally. He learnt subsequently that the claims made by the Presidential Spokesperson proved to be false. This Lawyer should have been penalised by the Court, but nothing is known about it.

Having realised that his game is up, Yameen made a televised address to the nation on 17th October and declared that he is indeed preparing to step down and this he said even before the Case in the Supreme Court had been decided. He said "I would like to say that I have no complaints or reservations about my decisions." In other words he has no regrets

Yameen wondered how he could not understand the 'psychology' of his people who voted him out. One should say that one cannot understand the psychology of Yameen himself, who instead being grateful to his half brother ex President, put him in jail on flimsy charges! He kicked away the ladder he used to climb up.

I recall the events leading to first round of elections of 2013, when Yameen got much less number of votes (25 percent?) than that of Nasheed. It was a midnight meeting of Gayoom with the third contender Gasim Ibrahim that saved the day and catapulted Yameen to cross the fifty percent mark to become eligible to assume the Presidentship.

In return, Yameen not only arrested Gayoom, but also his son Farris and even his son-in-law!

It is said that Yameen had a troubled child hood in the household of Gayoom's father Sheikh Abdul Gayoom where the elder Gayoom dominated. Yameen should also be angry with what happened to him when he was asked to step down from the trade ministry where he (Yameen) was suspected to have been corrupt!

There have been protests against Yameen in Maldives and even outside in Colombo. The opposition in Maldives has asked the Police to bar Yameen from leaving the country after he had announced his plans to step down.

There are many corruption cases against Yameen which have been quietly buried during Yameen's regime and even before when Waheed was acting President after Nasheed was ousted.

What could have been the reason for Yameen to step down when the case in the Supreme Court is still pending a final decision? One could only guess that he had to.

First, with the Supreme Court in refusing to countenance any evidence from anonymous witnesses on an important case like this, there was enough indication that it is not going to oblige Yameen this time. The Supreme Court perhaps for the first time took courage to take an “objective” view. Subsequently, Gayoom has been granted bail which it would not have dared to do earlier!

Second, he must have realised that he would only receive international condemnation and not support. The Chinese have been silent after making the first move of congratulating Solih and even inviting him to China after he took over. Other countries, USA, UK and India have not supported Yameen’s bid to annul the elections and US, EU and UK have threatened sanctions.

Third, even Saudi Arabia on whom Yameen had relied upon did not encourage him. On the other hand, Nasheed was in Saudi Arabia and received well at that time when Yameen had filed a case in the Supreme Court.

The new Regime will have to face many immediate challenges-.

First, the calls for Yameen and his associates to face justice will grow. With money allegedly stashed abroad, the chances of Yameen running away from Maldives are quite high.

Second- the Judiciary, the Police and the Security Forces need a thorough cleansing. These institutions were all subverted during Yameen’s regime.

Third- will be the looming debt crisis and the inevitable debt trap under the BRI of China. While China cannot be wished away, a more equitable distribution in investments outside the infra structure could also be thought of.

Fourth- For India, there is a good opportunity to restore the good relations which soured during Yameen’s regime. The relations will have to be very carefully handled and I am not sure whether the External Affairs Ministry can manage it.

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