

AN ASSASSINATION

MORE THAN THE REPRISE OF A family's Greek tragedy in hapless Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto's plotted murder signifies a nation's misfortune and threatens its existence. As to who the assassins are is not much of a mystery nor worth wondering. It would not remain a secret, since it is not meant to be one. To strike terror in the heart of the nation this planned murder will be useful, as a deterrent - this seems to be the argument of the perpetrators and their mentors. Gods will always have their Savarkars.

Besides the local guinea pig candidates for the heaven, there may be several, foreign strings. Their money and direction are essential ingredients of such murders, Bhutto being no exception. That they cannot be traced is a myth fostered by a compliant media. That they should not be punished is another.

Civil war or uncivil war (branded as terrorism by the global mega terrorists), it will riddle Pakistan with a honeycomb of holes. Military cannot repress enough. Snipers cannot intimidate enough. The asymmetry of force will ensure longevity to the lethal regimen.

Is this all unexpected? No. It is both a consequence of the current contingencies, and an offshoot of the political culture forged over several decades. The civil or "uncivil" war may not impel a drastic change overturning an aggressively calibrated state structure deemed coeval, with Pakistan as a nation state.

The concern here is not so much with Pakistan. Its splintering through massive bloodshed may or may not come about right away, but the nation coercively maintained as an entity will keep inwardly bleeding, alienated and anomic. No wizard can put together a fallen and shattered Humpty Dumpty again.

What does this murder presage beyond the victim involved? Here one must pause for a serious reality check.

Hindu terrorism, which has gone unpunished and goes burgeoning, which has been soft-pedaled and indulged for several decades, will prove the undoing of India. The Indian state has been partial to it and condoned its heinous crimes, thus weakening the state and nullifying its own authority. It will bear fruit. Foreign money and alien strings of the saffronazis will rupture India. Pakistan shows how; Bhutto's assassination shows why. □□□